

Khuda Bakhsh Lectures INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

Vol. I

(English)

by

- * Dr. Md. Zubayr Siddiqi * Prof. Jamal Khwaja
* Prof. S. Vahiduddin * Dr. Hashim Amir Ali
* Mr. B. N. Pande * Mr. Ali Ashraf
* Prof. Mohibbul Hasan * Mr. Badrud-Din Tyabji
* Dr. Bruce B. Lawrence * Prof. S. H. Askari
* Dr. Z. A. Desai * Dr. A. Roest Crollius
* Prof. A. A. A. Fayzee & Mr. A. J. Kidwai

Khuda Bakhsh

**Oriental Public Library,
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**Khuda Bakhsh Lectures:
INDIAN AND ISLAMIC**

Vol. I

(English)

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Foreword

The present volume is a collection of Khuda Bakhsh lectures on a few subjects of its specialisation, namely, Islamic Studies, History & Indo-Islamic Culture, delivered by a galaxy of distinguished scholars during the last 20 years.

These lectures, earlier published individually, are now being presented in a single volume to facilitate the reader finding his material at one place.

Editor

About the Contributors

DR. MUHAMMAD ZUBAYR SIDDIQI (d. 1976): Took his early education at Patna and Rampur (U.P.). After Matriculation from Calcutta University in 1914, he got his B.A. & M.A. (Persian) from Patna University; and got his Ph.D. from Cambridge in 1925. Appointed as Lecturer of Arabic in Lucknow University in 1926, he joined Calcutta University in 1929 as lecturer in Arabic & Persian Literature, became Head of the Deptt. in 1940, and retired in 1962.

His works include (i) A critical edition of the Firdausu'l Hikmah, by Ali b. Rabban al-Tabari, (Berlin, 1928) (ii) A critical edition of the Tarikh Nama-i-Herat, by Syed b. Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Harawi (Calcutta, 1944), (iii) Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature (Calcutta, 1959), (iv) Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development, Special Feature and Criticism (Calcutta, 1961), (v) Social position of women through the Ages (Calcutta, 1971).

In 1970 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on Islamic Studies, Secular Sciences and Islamic Libraries.

PROF. JAMAL KHWAJA (b. 1926): Took his education at Allahabad, Aligarh and Cambridge. In Cambridge his specialised field of study was contemporary western thought under the guidance of world-reputed philosophers namely Broad, Wisdom & Ramsey. Appointed as lecturer of Philosophy in the Aligarh Muslim University in 1953, he was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1956 and actively participated in the Indian politics upto 1962. He returned as Professor of Philosophy in Aligarh Muslim University in 1989.

His works include: Five approaches to Philosophy (1965), Quest for Islam (1977) and Authenticity and Islamic Liberalism (1987).

In 1986-87 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh lectures on (i) Democracy and Islam (ii) Tolerance and Islam, and (iii) The Concept of Islamic Economic System.

PROF. S. VAHIUDDIN (b. 1909): Was educated at Osmania University, Hyderabad and Marburz University, Germany. Was Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Osmania & Delhi Universities. Worked as Research Professor in the Hamdard Institute of History of Medicine and Medical Research, New Delhi and as Head, Deptt. of Comparative Religion in Hamdard, the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, New Delhi.

His works include, besides works on Philosophy, Sufism, Ethics and Comparative Religion, some 2 dozen books on Iqbal, Hafiz and Goete. His Doctoral thesis for Ph.D., entitled "Experience of Value", in German Language, was published in 1937.

In 1980 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on "Muslim Thought in a Changing World".

DR. HASHIM AMIR ALI, (1903 - 1987): Ex-Director Rural Institute. Jamia Millia, Delhi; Trustee of the Private and Religious Trusts of Nizam.

Wrote several books on the Qur'an and sociological themes, among them: "Student's Qur'an : An Introduction", the message of the Quran; Moes of Mewat. His life-work, almost his mission, is the discovery of the lost Islamic Calendar.

In 1977 he delivered his Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on Reconstruction of Islamic Chronology.

Mr. BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE (Formerly Governor of Orissa): Born 1906, Chhindwara (MP). Educated at Theosophical Institute, Adyar (Madras) and Vishva Bharti, Santiniketan. Joined Indian National Congress in 1920 and took active part in the Freedom Movement of India.

Besides various other social and political activities, he was Principal Editor, the Spirit of India; Gen. Editor, Centenary History of Indian National Congress; Editor, Golden Jubilee Commemoration Volume, All India Institute of Local Self Govt., Bombay, Concise History of Indian National Congress; Executive Director of Comprehensive Congress History Project. His works include Zoroastrian Religion and Iranian Culture; Judaism and Semitic Culture; History of Egyptian Civilization; History of Greek Civilization, History of Babylonian Civilization; History of Roman Civilization; History of Islamic Culture; Cultural Unity of India; Gandhiji and Hindu-Muslim Unity; Is Par Bharat Us Par Bangla Desh; Parichit Itihas Nahin Aise Shivaji Se (Poems); Han Yad Ata Hai, Tha

Ek Mahatma (Poems); A Diary of Muslim Sufi; Muslim Patriots; Muslim Deshbhaktas; Islam aur Manavata; Gandhiji aur Hindu-Muslim Ekta; Bharat ki Sanskritik Ekta; Bhartaya Sanskriti ki Samagrarupta; Hindustan Men Qaumī yakjahti ki Rewayat; Karmaer Pandit Sundarlal, Sadbhavna ke Setu (Autobiography, edited); Allahabad: Retrospect and Prospect; India and Islam; History of Hindu-Muslim Problem; Re-orientation of study of Medieval Indian History; National Integration (A collection of Seminar Papers). The Glimpses of Mahamanya Madan Mohan Malaviya. Was awarded Padmashri, 1976, nominated to Rajya Sabha, April 1976, elected to Rajya Sabha, 1982.

Mr. Pande alongwith Late Pt. Sundarlal has been waging a war throughout his life against lingual and religious communalism. He served as Governor of Orissa for a few years — but soon resigned on the call of the nation, so poor at social service and anti communal drives. He is now devoting his whole time to the nation, nay to humanity.

In 1985 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Islam and Indian Culture'.

MR. ALI ASHRAF (born Patna, 1918): Graduated from Patna University. Founder Member and General Secretary of Bihar Provincial Students Federation (1937-38). Founder Member of CPI, Bihar Unit (1939). Secretary Urdu Unit, party headquarters of Bombay (1944-47). Secretary, Bihar Committee of the party (1952-65) and Member, National Council of the party till 1965.

Imprisoned at Hazaribagh during 2nd World War under Defence of India Rule. The All India S.F. Conference named its locale for 1942 session as Ali Ashraf Nagar. Released from Hazaribagh Jail in 1943, he became editor of Hindi weekly daily "Janshakti", Patna. Served as joint editor 'Soviet Review' during 1965-72.

Worked in the Information Department of USSR Embassy in India from 1916 to 1982 and in Progress Publishers, Moscow from 1972 to 1975. His wife Dr. Maimaon Jafri, now retired, was a teacher of Urdu in Aligarh Muslim University. Mr. Ali Ashraf now lives in Aligarh.

In 1991 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lecture on 'Islam in the Subcontinent'.

PROF. MOHIBBUL HASAN, (b. 1920 approx.): Educated at Lucknow and London. Worked as lecturer in Islamic History and Culture in Calcutta University (1943-1956), Reader in History in

Aligarh Muslim University, (1956-1963), Professor and Head, Department of History, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi (1963-1970), Senior Professor and Head Department of History in University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Member of the Executive Committee of the Regional Records Survey Committee, West Bengal (1947-1955), and the Archival Legislation Committee, Government of India (1959-1960). Presided over the Medieval Section of the Indian History Congress in 1957 and 1967.

His well works include: History of Tipu Sultan; Kashmir under the Sultans, Historians of Medieval India; Babur : Founder of the Mughal Empire in India; Readings in Democracy; Introduction and annotation to the Babur Nama (Part III) translated by Bacque-Grammont (Paris, 1981) and Waqai-i-Manazil-i-Rum (Diary of an Indian Embassy to Constantinople).

Besides, he contributed a number of articles to various Indian and foreign Journals including the Encyclopaedia of Islam. Presently he is settled at Aligarh.

In 1988 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Haider Ali, Tipu Sultan & Islam in Kashmir'.

MR. BADR-UD-DIN TYABJI (b. 1907): Belonging to the distinguished Tyabji family, educated at Oxford, held the position of an ICS. He was also in the Constituent Assembly Secretariat, where incidentally, he designed the National Flag Emblem. After independence he joined the Indian Foreign Service and was the first Indian representative to Belgium, Commonwealth and Special Secretary, External Affairs Ministry, Ambassador to Indonesia, Iran, Germany(W) and Japan; and, in between, Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University (1962-65). Mr. Tyabji is a versatile man: a keen and accomplished sportsman, connoisseur of literature and the arts, writer and public speaker. He has written for many leading Indian papers and magazines, a selection of which was published under the title "Chaff and Grain" (1962) and another one as "The Self in Secularism" (1971). Recently his autobiography has been published under the caption "Autobiography of an Egoist".

In 1981 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Hindu-Muslim Syndrome and Islam in the Modern World'.

India declared itself a secular state more than forty years ago, but the problem of national integration still looms large on the horizon. It is here that Tyabji becomes most relevant. He is convinced that secularism does not mean the obliteration of individualism; rather it

should create conditions in which "a thousand flowers may bloom irrespective of their colour, size, shape or perfume".

DR. BRUCE LAWRENCE (b. 1941, Newton, New Jersey, U.S.A.): Professor of Religion at the Duke University, U.S.A., his field of specialization both for teaching and research being the historically important subject of Islam in India. He has an excellent background in history, having won his A.B. from the Princeton University after long years of work (1958-62) in the field of Near Eastern History. He has also a deep background in religion, having worked on the Old Testament for his B.D. for an almost equally long period (1964-67) at the Episcopal Theological School Cambridge. After another long ordeal (1967-71), he was awarded the Ph.D. by Yale University for his work on the History of Religions, his field of specialization being Hinduism and Islam.

In 1976 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Sufi Literature in the Sultanate Period'.

PROF. SYED HASAN ASKARI (1901-91), Born at Khujwa, Siwan (Bihar), Graduated, 1922, from G.B.B. (now L.S.) College Muzaffarpur. Got his M.A. (in History) 1924, and B.L. 1925, from Patna University. Was lecturer in History, Patna College, 1927, Asstt. Professor from 1934 to 1950 & Professor of History from 1950 to 1956. Was Associate Member of Indian Historical Records Commission, Member of Bihar Research Society's Council & was on the Editorial Board of the Medieval India Quarterly. Served as Hon'y. Secretary of the Regional Records Survey; Hon'y. Joint Director of the K.P. Jaiswal Research Institute & Member Khuda Bakhsh Library Board. In recognition of his valuable contribution to Medieval Indian History and Culture, he was conferred 'Honoris-causa' by Magadh University & Padmashri by the President of India.

He has been one of the two most distinguished users of Khuda Bakhsh Manuscripts.

In 1976 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Maktub and Malfuz Literature as a source of Socio-Political History of Bihar'.

DR. Z. A. DESAI (Ziyud-Din Ahmad Desai) Born 1925, Ahmedabad (Gujarat). M.A. (1948), Persian & Urdu, Bombay University; D.Litt. (1959) Tehran University. Thesis: Life and works of Faizi with special reference to Nal Daman. Lecturer in Persian, 1947-1953. Epigraphist in Archeological Survey of India, Head of Arabic

and Persian Inscription Branch, 1953-1976. Director (Epigraphy) Deptt. of Archeology, Government of India, 1977-1983. President Award (Persian) 1983.

His works include: Mosques of India, Indo-Islamic Architecture, Centres of Islamic learning in India, Muslim Inscriptions of Rajasthan, Life and works of Faizi, Perso-Arabic Epigraphy of Gujarat, A topographical list of Arabic Persian and Urdu Inscription of South India. Contributed more than 200 articles in English, Urdu, Hindi and Gujarati on epigraphy, architecture, calligraphy, history, Indo-Persian literature etc.

In 1991 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Malfuz Literature as a source of Social and Cultural History of Gujarat & Rajasthan'.

MR. ARY ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J. (b. 1933, Holland): Entered the Society of Jesus on 7.9.1952. Ordained priest on 30.6.1967. Doctoral thesis "The Word in the Experience of Revelation in Qur'an and Hindu Scriptures"; Gregorian University, Rome; published in 1974.

Currently Professor of theology and the history of religions in the faculty of missiology in the Gregorian University; Director of the "Centre for Religion and Culture". Editor of the magazine, "Inculturation". Member of Pontifical commission for the religious contact with Muslims. President of "The Permanent Mediterranean Conference for International Cooperation", and of "The Association for International Unity". Director of "The Ricerca Centre F.I.U.C."

In 1978 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on 'Interfaith Dialogue as Historical Challenge and as Religious Experience'.

PROF. ASAF ALI ASGHAR FYZEE (1899 -1982): Was educated at St.Xavier's College, Cambridge, where he secured a first class in Oriental Languages Tripos with Arabic, Persian and Islamic History as his subjects. While at St. John's, he was elected MacMahon student and Foundation Scholar.

Called to the bar by the Middle Temple in 1924, Mr.Fyzee began his legal career at the Bombay High Court in 1925. Between 1938 and 1947 he was Perry Professor of Jurisprudence and Principal Government Law College, Bombay. He was a member of the Bombay Public Service Commission during 1947-49. In 1949 he was appointed Ambassador in Cairo. He returned to India in 1951 and was appointed

Member Union Public Service Commission. From 1957 to 1960 he was Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu & Kashmir. He was awarded **Padma Bhushan** in 1962. During the year 1962-63 he held a commonwealth scholarship at St. John's College, Cambridge as Commonwealth (visiting) Fellow, with the status of University Professor.

Among his works, the "Outlines of Muhammadan Law", "A Modern Approach to Islam", "Compendium of Fatimid Law" and "Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India & Pakistan" may be mentioned. He has also edited the chief legal text of the Ismailis, the "Da'im-ul-Islam".

In 1969 he delivered Khuda Bakhsh Lectures on Middle Eastern Studies, North Africa and the Middle East.

MR. ANWAR JAMAL KIDWAI (b. 1917): Formerly Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting & Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India; and, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, and, right now, Hony. Director, Mass Communication Research Centre: worthy son of a worthy father, Vilayat Ali Bamboq, who assisted Maulana Mohammad Ali in the editing of "Comrade" & "Hamdard", and Raja Ghulam Husain (Lucknow) in the editing of "New Era" (Lucknow) and who died in 1918 at an early age of 32, leaving behind Anwar Jamal, a mere child of hardly 2 years.

Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai - the cousin of Mr. Anwar Jamal Kidwai - grew up under the tutelage of, and was nurtured into a firm nationalist, by his uncle who belonged to the left wing of the Muslim League, in those days a Muslim nationalist party.

Mr. A.J. Kidwai has gone through the private papers relating to the political evolution of Rafi Saheb. He has undertaken to write a biography of Rafi Saheb as a project of Khuda Bakhsh Library. Were it not a project paper, it would have been delivered as Khuda Bakhsh Lecture. We are, therefore, including it in this collection.

* * * *

It is an interesting cultural phenomenon of great importance that the ignorant people of Arabia became the saviours of science and wisdom, and not only cultivated and preserved partly by themselves and partly through other peoples, but also made considerable additions to its various branches, spread it in the East and the West and kept up its glory and grandeur for more than a millennium.

The Arabs of the 6th century A.D. were generally an ignorant lot and were quarreling and fighting among themselves. One of their distinguished poets, Tarafa, lost his life because he did not know how to read. Another of them could save his life by getting a letter read by one of his friends. Another distinguished Arab poet who knew how to read and write, wanted to keep his knowledge secret, because it was considered by the Arabs to be a defect. Their language did not have any word for the writing materials. They borrowed the words for them like Qalam, Qirtas, Kaghaz and Hibr from other languages.

But within two or three centuries they developed calligraphy into a veritable art, and invented several styles of it. Not only their men but also their women excelled in it. They used it not merely for the purpose of writing but also for decorating architectural monuments. They borrowed the art of paper-making from the Chinese and established its factories in several places in the East as well as in the West, like Khurasan, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordava etc. From some of these places, paper was exported to certain parts of Europe also.

The advent of Islam revolutionised the character of the Arabs and developed among the contemporary Arabs great love for

knowledge. The Qur'an, their sacred book, laid stress on the acquisition of knowledge. It said: "Are those who know and those who do not know, alike"—(xxxix, 9). It recommended that people should write down their contract (ii, 282). The prophet of Islam asked some of his associates, including some women, to learn the art of writing. He released such of the captives of the battle of Badr as taught the art of writing to ten Muslim boys.

As a matter of fact, under the guidance of Islam the Arabs as well as the non-Arab Muslims cultivated, encouraged and helped the scholars of different nationalities professing different religions, to cultivate and work for the advancement of the different branches of knowledge in which they were interested. The Jews, the Christians the Zoroastrians, the Greeks and the Indians, all were brought together in the courts of the Umayyads and the Abbassids and their governors, as well as in those of the Muslim rulers of the conquered countries. Everywhere they were supplied with all facilities to continue to serve the science of their choice.

The interest of the Arabs as well as of the non-Arab Muslims, was at first confined to the learning of the Qur'an and the Hadith i.e the Traditions of the Prophet of Islam. The very word "Ilm" (knowledge) was used by them to indicate these subjects only. Their cultural activities also were confined to the learning of the Traditions of the Prophet of Islam from all the available sources and in writing them down in the form of books and treatises

It is therefore that the term 'Islamic Studies' has been used by some scholars to indicate the religious sciences of Islam only like the Qur'an, the Traditions of Islam, Islamic law, Jurisprudence etc. This narrow interpretation of the term "Islamic Studies" spread so widely that some Muslims held that the study of any science other than the Islamic religious subjects, is irreligious. But this is entirely wrong. As a matter of fact, every branch of knowledge which originated with Islam, or was developed under its protection, in any period, is included in the connotation of the term "Islamic Studies". I am personally of the opinion that just as the study of every thing created by God has been recommended by the Qur'an, so every branch of knowledge which is created and developed by the intellect of men, and which helps in the uplift of the human society and its members is included in the scope of Islamic Studies.

The Hadith or the Traditions of the prophet of Islam, however, received a very keen attention of the Muslims since his life time. Some of them put down some of the Traditions during the very life time of the Prophet. These treatises are known as *Sahifas*. Several of them are mentioned by some of the Traditionists and also by Goldziher among the modern Orientalists.

After the death of the Prophet, Muslims showed extraordinary activities in learning and in collecting them from their custodians who had settled down in the various parts of the far-flung Islamic empire.

They went from place to place in the different countries, met those who knew even a single tradition of one single sentence, learnt it from him and put it in black and white. Thus developed a movement, known in the history of the Traditions as "Talabul'-Hadith" or search for the Traditions. Several of the Companions undertook long journeys in order to learn one single Tradition from him who had learnt it from the Prophet directly. Their examples were followed by those who came after them, some of whom boasted that they travelled round the world for the sake of knowledge. From the middle of the 2nd century after the Hijra, it became customary among seekers¹ of the Hadith to undertake long journey in order to gather the knowledge of the Traditions. "From one end of the Muslim world, to the other, from Andalusia to central Asia", says Goldziher, "wandered the arduous indefatigable seekers of Hadith and gathered Traditions from every place in order to relate them to their listeners. The humble title of *al-Rahhal* (the great traveller) or *al-Jawwal* (the great wanderer) is seldom used for them in any other sense than what is generally understood by them. The title *Tawwafu'l-Aqalim* (the wanderer round the world) is no hyperbolic designation for the travellers among whom there were some who could boast to have travelled four times throughout the East and the West". "They travelled throughout these countries" adds the learned Orientalist, "not for the sake of seeing and gaining experience, but in order to meet the Traditionists at these places, to hear Traditions from them and to profit by each of them, just like the bird that sits on a tree in order to pick its leaves"¹.

1. Moh. Studies vol. II p. 177.

Islamic Studies

The extensive development of Hadith-literature led the Arabs to create and develop the special branch of literature which is known as *Atraf ul-Hadith* and consists of the indices of several of the Hadith works some of which extend to more than a dozen of volumes.

Indexing is considered to be a modern art. The earliest index of a book in a European language consisted of the concordance of the Bible. It was compiled by Anthony of Padua (1195-1231). The first authentic concordance of it was prepared by cardinal Hugh (1263) who is said to have employed 500 brother Monks to assist him in its compilation. But the first complete concordance of the Bible was prepared by Alexander Cruden (1737) and his example was followed by other contemporary indexers. Thus in Europe the indexing of books was begun in the 13th century¹, and it was made a necessary part of every book in the 19th century.

But the Arabs began the indexing of the Hadith works about the end of the 9th century and continued it up to the end of 19th century. They were the earliest people to prepare the indices and the concordances of voluminous manuscripts of the collection of the Traditions. These works are technically known as *Atraf ul-Hadith*.

They consist of snort extracts, or the description of the titles of the Traditions included in one or more collections of them, and give references to the books, chapters and parts of the book or books in which the complete text of the Tradition are found. The extracts are generally arranged in alphabetical order of the names of their earliest reporters which are arranged in different chapters according to their different categories. They do not attach any importance to the expressions used in the Traditions, nor to their subject matters.

Some of the *Atraf* works relate to the two "Genuines" of al-Bukhari and Muslim ; some of them relate to the four *Sunan* works ; some of them relate to all the Six Cononical collections, and one of them relate to certain parts of the two Genuines and their four important commentaries, which consist of more than thirty large volumes.

These works serve as the indices of the various versions of the

1. *Manual of practical Indexing*, A. L. Clarke, p. 20 ; *Index and Indexing* by Collison Robert 1959, p. 17.

Traditions narrated by their earliest reporters, and of their different *Isnads*.

The earliest of the *Atraf* works relating to the two "Genuines" were compiled about the end of the 3rd/9th century by Abu Muhammad Khalaf b. Muhammad of Wasit. (d. 401/1011) and Abu Masud Ibrahim b. Muhammad of Damascus (d. 401/1010) independently of each other¹.

After them several competent Traditionist compiled many *Atraf* works. An important one among them is the *Tuhfatul-Ashraf bi Ma'rifa-til-Atraf*, by Abul-Hajjaj Yusuf b. Abdul-Rahman of Mizza, a village near Damascus. It consisted of the *Atraf* of the six cononical collections and of those of other small collections of the Traditions.

He was one of the most celebrated Traditionists of his time. All his contemporaries including his teachers, acknowledged his excellence in the Traditions. He had wide knowledge of their narrators, as it is shown by his book "*Tahdhibul-Kamal*."

After having got the Qur'an by heart and learnt Arabic grammer and literature, he began the study of Hadith in 674/1275, acquired its mastery as well as that of the various branches of Islamic Sciences, from one thousand of their masters, delivered lectures on them for fifty years and held the post of the professor in the Ashrafiyya College for twenty three years. Many celebrated doctors of Islamic sciences, like Al-Dhahabi and Ibn Taymiyya were among his students. He composed several books. But he had special interest in the *Atraf ul-Hadith*. He devoted to it a large part of his life and time. He studied all the previous works on the subject and, after twenty three years of labour, produced the *Tuhfatul-Ashraf*. In it he has prepared the *Atraf* of 1959 Traditions including the repeated ones, which are found in eleven Hadith-works the names of which he has mentioned in the introduction. He corrected the mistakes of his predecessors and added the results of his own study to their works. He has always made his own additions distinct, by adding a letter before them³.

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1. *Tarikhul-Baghdad* Vol. VIII, pp. 334-5; *Tarikh Dimashq* vol. 1, p. 262; *Tuhfatul-Ashraf*, by al Mizzi vol. I. p. 4.
 2. *Al-Tabaqatu'l-Kubra* vol. VI, pp. 351.4
 3. *Tuhfatul-Ashraf*. vol. 1, pp. 3.4

Islamic Studies

But this book also, like the previous works on the subject, suffered from the mistakes of omission as well as of commission. Some of them were realised by the author himself who wrote a supplement to it, in which he corrected his mistakes. But several other mistakes also were noted by some later Traditionists like al-Mughlatai, (683-762/1292-1361) Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373) and others. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani collected all these errors and their corrections, added to them many more by his own researches, and published them with the title *Al-Nukat uz Ziraf 'ala'l-Atraf*.

The book of Al-Mizzi, however, in spite of its defects, was considered to be the best and most useful index of Hadith literature, for several centuries. Ibn Hajar himself described it as one of the most important works on the science of Traditions and that it was used in the West as well as in the East¹.

But the largest of the *Atraf* works was compiled by Abul Fadl Muhammad b. 'Ali al-'Asqalani, generally known as Ibn Hajar. (773-852/1372-1449). He was born in Egypt, got the Qur'an by heart at the age of nine years, acquired excellence in Arabic literature and the Islamic sciences at an early age, delivered lectures on them for more than 40 years and also worked as a judge in Egypt for 20 years. He was liked and respected by all classes of people. He produced more than 140 books and treatises. Some of them consisted of several volumes. Three of his books consisted of the indices of such of the Hadith-works as were not indexed before him.

There were prepared several other indices of Hadith-works after the above-mentioned ones. The general method adopted by their compilers have been already described.

But this method itself had several defects which were noticed by 'Abdul-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1150-1143/1641-1730). He, therefore, introduced certain changes in it. There are also certain other *Atraf* works in which the extracts from the Traditions are arranged in alphabetical order and the names of the narrators are mentioned only incidentally.

1. *al-Nukatuz-Ziraf* vol. I pp. 4-6

This method has been followed by the indexer of the verbal Traditions contained in the *Genuines* of al-Bukhari and Muslim, Muhammad Sharif b. Mustafa al-Tuqadi, a Traditionist belonging to modern Turkey, who completed his concordances in 1312 A.H. They were printed at Constantinople in 1313. His concordance of the Traditions contained in al-Bukhari's *Genuine* give the references to their commentaries by al-Qastalani, al-Asqalani, and al-Ayni also. His concordance of the *Genuine* of Muslim give references to its commentaries by al-Nawawi also. Thus the preparation of these two concordances involved the study of more than thirty large volumes.

This short account of the indices and concordances of Hadith-works, shows that the Arabs were the earliest people to prepare the indices of large books extending to several volumes on the basis of their manuscripts. But books on other subjects were never indexed by them till the beginning of the 20th century, whereas the European writers made the scientific index of every book a necessary part of it, before the beginning of the present century.

An important and vast branch of Arabic literature which was originated and highly developed by³ the Arabs, independently of any foreign influence, consisted of biographies. It originated with the biography of the Prophet of Islam. The earliest scholars who collected material for it, according to Horowitz, lived before the beginning of the 2nd century of the Hijri era¹. Some fragments of some of them are preserved in the library of Heidelberg in Germany. The necessity of the critical study of the Isnads in Traditions however led to the compilation of the collected biographies of their narrators, containing their short biography, a critical estimate of their characters as well as their chronology. According to Otto Loth, such works were in common use among the Traditionists in the second century². According to Horowitz, the earliest work of this type was composed about the middle of the second century³.

The biographical dictionaries of the narrators of Traditions, being begun in the middle of the second century, were continued

1. *Islamic Culture*, Vol I, pp. 550-558.

2. *Z.D.M.G.* xxiii, p, 600.

3. *Der Islam* vol. VIII, p 42.

with unabated vigour, till the last century. Their magnitude may be estimated from the fact that al-Bukhari's *Tarikh* contained the short biographies of more than 40000 Traditionists. And the *Tarikh Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asakir, which contains the biographical notices of such Traditionists only as either lived in Damascus or visited it, extends to 80 large volumes, all of which are preserved in the Zahiriya Library and are being edited by Salahuddin al-Munajjid.

Ibn 'Asakir was born in a literary family and learnt the Quran by heart at an early age. He at first studied with his father and other eminent scholars in Damascus, travelled very widely in pursuit of learning, sat at the feet of more than 1300 teachers of whom more than 80 were women. Finally he settled down at Damascus and devoted his life to the service of Traditions and the connected subjects.

The development of the biographical dictionaries of the Traditionists created similar interest among the devotees to other subjects also. Therefore, there were composed in Arabic, the biographical dictionaries of poets, of grammarians, of physicians, of saints, of jurists, and judges, of calligraphers, of lovers, of misers, of idiots and other classes of peoples. It has been, therefore, remarked that "the glory of Mohammada. literature is its literary biography". Margoliouth writes that the biographical literature of the Arabs is exceedingly rich.

The study of the Quran and the Hadith led to the origin of Arabic linguistics and lexicography also, just as it led to the origin and development of many other branches of Arabic literature. As a matter of fact, the interest in linguistics among most of the nations arose and developed out of their study of their religious or semi-religious literature.

Among the Chinese, the origin and early development of the linguistics was very largely due to the study of the Buddhist and Taoist texts. Their earliest extant dictionary was composed by Hsu Shen, in order to explain the expressions found in the important canonical treatises.¹ Among the Hindus, the keen interest in

1, John A. Haywood, *Arabic Lexicography*, Leiden, 1960, p. 6.

grammar and vocabulary arose out of the study of Vedic literature. Among the Greeks, it was the study of the ancient epics which had quasi-religious importance, that led to the origin of linguistic studies¹. Similarly, among the Arabs, it was the study of the Qur'an and the Hadith which led to the origin and early development of linguistic studies.

The earliest treatise on Arabic grammar by 'Ali, the fourth Caliph, or by his disciple Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 69/688), was composed in order to keep up the purity of the Qur'an and of the Arabic language. The personality and character of Abu'l-Aswad, as well as the circumstances which led him to the composition of the book, have been discussed by Haywood in detail². As a matter of fact, the period in which the treatise is said to have been composed was the most suitable for such a work. The treatise was seen by Ibnu'l-Nadim³, Ibn al-Zubaydi, (d. 379/989), al-Qifti⁴ (d. 646/1248) and Ibn Khallikan⁵.

About a century after the composition of the earliest treatise on Arabic grammar, al-Khalil b. Ahmad (d. circa 170/786) wrote the Kitab al-'Ain, the earliest book on Arabic lexicography. Being an extremely religious and godly man, brought up and educated at Basra, an important centre of Islamic learning, and being well-versed in the Hadith, it cannot be doubted that al-Khalil's main object in composing the Kitab al-'Ain was to serve religious literature⁶.

It was not long after the composition of the Kitab al-'Ain that treatises and books on *gharib al-Hadith* (vocabulary of the Tradition) began to be compiled. A short critical account of the origin and development of this branch of Arabic literature, till about the end of the 6th century of the Hijra, has been given by al-Mubarak b. al-Athir in the introduction to *al-Nihaya fi gharib*

1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. Ibid., pp. 11.17.

3. al-Fihrist, Discourse 11, Section 1.

4. Inba' al-ruwat 'ala anba' al-nuhat, vol. 1, p. 13.

5. The article on Abu'l-Aswad.

6. al-Khalil and his Kitab al-'Ain have been thoroughly discussed by Haywood, op. cit.

al-Hadith wa'l-Athar. Haji Khalifa, after having summarized it, has described partly its later development also. All these treatises and books explain the rare expressions found¹ in the traditions of the Prophet of Islam as well as those in the remarks of his 'Companions' and the 'Followers' and illustrate them with the early Arabic poetry, proverbs and idioms.

The earliest of these treatises was compiled by Abu 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna (d. 208/13/823-28). He descended from a Jewish family of Bajarwan, a small place in Armenia. His father, al-Muthanna, was converted to Islam and settled down at Basra. Here Ma'mar learnt Arabic linguistics and Islamic Traditions and became thoroughly conversant with these subjects as well as with the history and geneology of the Arabs. Al-Jahiz considered him to be the greatest master of all the branches of Arabic literature during his time. Ibn Qutaiba and al-Mubarrad held that Ma'mar excelled specially in the history and the genealogy of the Arabs. Among his eminent students were Abu Nuwas the poet, Qasim b. Sallam, the biographer, and Abu Hatim of Sijistan, the Traditionist. In spite of the wide knowledge of Arabic poetry, Ma'mar, however, could not recite it correctly, nor could he read the Qur'an properly.

Faql b Rabi called Ma'mar from Basra to Baghdad, honoured and respected him, and asked him to recite some poems, and enjoyed and appreciated what was recited. Ibrahim b. Isma'il, the secretary to the minister, who was present, asked Ma'mar to explain the use of such expressions in the Qur'an the exact significance of which was not known to the Arabs, e.g., "ru'us al-shayatin" (the heads of the Satans). Ma'mar replied that the Qur'an had followed the usages of the Arab poets in this respect. Imra'u ul-Qays, for example, he said, referred to the tusks of the demons (anyab al-aghwal) in one of his poems.

There was strong rivalry between Ma'mar and al-Asma'i. Both of them were great scholars. Each of them made distinct contribution to Arabic literature as is evident from the list of their books given by Ibn al-Nadim². Al-Asma'i was more cultured and

1. *Kashfal-zunun*, Vol. p.p. 322-32.

2. *al-Fihrist*, Leipzig, 1871, p.p. 53-56.

better equipped in the art of discussion, but Ma'mar possessed more sarcastic humour and a sharper tongue than his rival and, therefore, was dreaded and avoided by him. It has been related that once the servant of one of Ma'mar's host dropped soup on his clothes. The host apologized for it, saying that he would replace his clothes by ten garments, But Ma'mar replied: "it did not matter, because the soup contained no grease".

He was the first author to compose a vocabulary of the Traditions. It was very short. But it served as a model for the works on the subject, for more than two centuries.¹ Ma'mar composed about two hundred other treatises on Arabic linguistics and the history of the Arab tribes and their battles. A list of some of his works is given by Ibn al-Nadim² and Yaqut.

Almost simultaneously with Ma'mar, another linguist of Basra school, Nadr b Shumayl (d. 203-4/819-9) composed another vocabulary of the Traditions. Unlike Ma'mar, Nadr was an Arab and belonged to the Banu Mazin branch of the tribe of Tamim. Some of the members of this tribe had settled down at Marw after its conquest by the Arabs and Nadr was brought there. He was taken out by his father to Basra³. Here he was brought up and educated. He also lived with the Bedouins in the desert for a long time. There he acquired mastery of the Asiatic language and poetry. He studied Traditions with the competent Traditionists of his time. At Basra he acquired good reputation as a master and teacher of these subjects. Among his students were reputed Traditionists like Yahya b. Ma'in and al-Madini.

Reduced to extreme poverty, Nadr had to migrate from Basra to Marw, where he settled down. Here he became rich. But he always lived like a poor man.

He was respected by the scholars on account of his learning and unimpeachable character. When he was leaving Basra for Marw, three thousand scholars, including Traditionists, lawyers and linguists, came to bid him farewell.

1. *al-Nihaya*, vol. I, p. 4.

2. *al-Fihrist*, p.p. 53-54.

3. *Tadhkiratul Huffaz*, article on al-Nadr.

Almost simultaneously with Ma'mar and al-Nadr, al-Asma'i and some other linguists also compiled small vocabularies of the Hadith. Each of them made some additions to the work of his predecessors and all of them, except Abu 'Adnan, quoted the complete texts of the Hadith, leaving out the Isnads, and explained, illustrated and commented upon the rare expression found in them. They included in their treatises the sayings of the 'companions' and of the 'followers' and commented upon the unusual expressions in them also.

Far more important and comprehensive than all the Hadith vocabularies mentioned above is the vocabulary compiled by Abu Ubayd Qasim b. Sallam who worked on it for forty years. He collected materials for it, from all the available sources, written as well as oral. In it he put together 526 traditions of the Prophet, added to them their Isnads, arranged them under the names of the Companions, who narrated them, like the collection of the Traditions called the Musnad, explained the rare expressions in them and illustrated them with the early Arabic poems, proverbs and idioms. He also included in his book the important sayings and remarks of about forty-seven 'Companions' and of more than forty 'Followers' and explained them like those in the Traditions. It is one of the most important works on Hadith-Vocabulary. For a long time it was utilized and relied upon by the Traditionists as well as the jurisconsults and the linguists¹.

He was the son of a Greek slave of an Azdite Arab of Herat, with whom his father worked as a porter. He was born between 154 and 160 A.H.² He received his education in Arabic linguistics, Hadith and Fiqh at Basra and Kufa. He lived at Baghdad for some time, where he worked as a mu'adhdhin in a mosque and as a teacher, and delivered lectures on some of his books³, which were attended by many eminent Traditionists⁴.

He was at first appointed by Harthama, the governor of Khurasan, as a tutor of his sons, and later on by Thabit b. Malik, the governor of Farsus, to teach his son. Thabit also

1. *Tarikh-u-Baghdad* Vol. XII pp. 403-15; *al-Nihaya* Vol. I p. 2.

2. *al-Fihri* p. 78

3. *ZDMG* vol. XVIII, p. 782

4. *Mujamu'l Buldan* vol. IV p. 162 ;

appointed him as a judge in Tarsus. He held this post for eighteen years. After this he attached himself to 'Abdullah b. Tahir, the governor of Khurasan, who recognized his scholarly attainments and encouraged him in his literary activities. He gave him handsome rewards and a large permanent pension, for the books which he composed and presented to him. Once 'Abdullah was asked by his friend, Abu Dulaf, an eminent general and *amir* and also a scholar of some merit, to send Abu 'Ubayd to his newly-founded town, al-Karaj, to keep his company for two months¹; Abu 'Ubayd went to Abu Dulaf who enjoyed his company very much and offered him thirty thousand dirhams at the time of his departure. But Abu 'Ubayd refused it, saying that he lived in the company of a man who had made him free from the need of any help from any other quarter. When he returned to 'Abdullah' he granted him thirty thousand dinars. Abu 'Ubayd accepted the gift and said: "O Prince, you have already made me so rich by your munificence, that with this money I would purchase weapons and horses and send them to the border area, so that you might get rich reward from God." In 214/829 Abu 'Ubayd went to Mecca to perform *hajj*, and stayed there till he died at Mecca, or at Madina, in 223-224/837-838².

He composed more than twenty books and treatises, Ibn al-Nadim has mentioned twenty of them, and I. A. 'Arshi has mentioned twenty-five of them³ in his introduction to the *Kitab al-Ajnas*⁴. All his books are valuable. But perhaps the most valuable of them is *al-Gharib al-Musannaf*, to which he attached great importance⁵. It was probably his earliest work. According to al-Zubaydi, it contained Abu 'Ubayd's comments on seventeen thousand nine hundred and seventy unusual Arabic expressions⁶.

His *Kitab-al-Amwal*, according to Ibrahim al-Harbi (198-285/831-898), is the weakest of his works.⁷ But according to others it is

1. *Mu'jamul-Buldan*, vol. iv, p. 249

2. *Irshad-al-Arib*, vol. vi, p.p. 162-6; *Tarikhu Baghdad*, vol. xii, p.p. 403-16

3. *al-Fihrist*, p. 71.

4. pp. 8-18

5. *Irshadul-Atib*, vol. vi, p. 166.

6. *Ibid.* pp 164-65.

7. *Tarikhu Baghdad*, vol. xii p. 413, *Tahdhibut Tahdhib*, vol. viii, p. 316.

the best book on Islamic Law of taxation. It is a mine of information concerning the Islamic system of taxation on various kinds of commodities and shows Abu 'Ubayd's wide and deep knowledge of the subject¹.

He based all his works on some earlier books which he greatly enlarged and improved upon. He based his *al-Gharib al-Musannaf* on the work of a Hashimite author, and his *Gharib al-Hadith* and *Gharib al-Qur'an* on the works of Ma'mar. In his *Ma'ni'l Qur'an*, he brought together what was compiled by Ma'mar, Qutrubi and others and added to them their Isnads and a good deal of the results of his own researches.

Ishaq b. *Rahuya* (Rahawaih) observed : "Abu 'Ubayd was a greater scholar than Ahmad b. Hanbal and al-Shafi'l. Hilal b. al-'Ala of al-Raqqa is said to have remarked : "God showed his greatest kindness to us, through four scholar : (i) through al-Shafi'i, who laid down the foundation of Islamic law on the basis of the traditions of the Prophet ; (ii) through Ahmad. b. Hanbal, who held out till the end against the cruelty of al-Ma'mun ; (iii) through Yahya b. Ma'in, who protected the traditions of the Prophet against forgery ; and (iv) through Abu 'Ubayd, who explained the difficult expressions in the Traditions and without whom people would have committed mistakes with regard to them". His command over all the branches of Islamic literature has been generally acknowledged. His zeal for literary work cannot be denied. He divided his nights in three parts. In the first part he offered prayer, in the second part he slept and in the third part he did literary work. His piety and truthfulness have been admired by all those who have written about him. He was neither vain nor irritable. When he was told that he had committed more than hundred and twenty mistakes in *al-Gharib al-Musannaf*, he calmly replied that it was not such in a book in which ten thousand errors were explained, and added that perhaps if he and the critic discussed these mistakes together, he might be

1. Kurd Ali's, *Kunuzul-Ajdaa*, p. 70.

able to justify some of his statements¹ The traditions related by Abu 'Ubayd are included in the Sahih of al-Bukhari and in the Sunan of Abu Da'ud and al-Tirmidhi.

M. J. de Goeje, in his learned article on the *Gharib al-Hadith*, says that Abu 'Ubayd's memory was as good as that of any Arab narrator which was a matter of wonder. "Of his knowledge of Arabic grammar", writes de Goeje, "he could not be a judge. But as a grammarian he followed the school of Kufa" "The *Gharib al-Hadith*", the only book of Abu 'Ubayd which he had read he adds, "certainly showed his exactitude as well as his learning; but it did not show his originality²." Shaikh Kurd 'Ali says that the *Kitab al-amwal* shows Abu Ubayd's wisdom, his deep insight into the subject as well as his wide knowledge of it³.

The *Gharib al-Hadith* of Abu 'Ubayd, however, did not deal with the whole of the wide range of its subject. Abu Abdullah Muslim b. Qutayba (213-276/828-889), therefore, wrote a large supplement to Abu 'Ubayd's work in which he followed his general plan and explained a large number of such traditions as were missed by him. Ibn Qutayba wrote in the introduction to his book that for a long time he was, under the impression that Abu 'Ubayd's work completely satisfied the requirements of the Traditionists. But its deeper critical study convinced him that he had missed a large number of the Traditions. He therefore, compiled its supplement in which he explained such Traditions as were missed by Abu 'Ubayd, on the lines adopted by him. He explained the Traditions more thoroughly and supported his interpretations by a larger number of authorities than his predecessor, and pointed out many of his mistakes. He also wrote an independent treatise on them. But he himself also committed many mistakes⁴. He expected however, that after these two books, there would be no more room for further investigation on the subject. But actually he had also missed a large number of such Traditions as needed explanation⁵.

1. *Irshadul-Arib*, vol. VI, p. 163
2. *Z. D. M. G.* vol XVIII. p. 78.
3. *Kunuzul-Ajdad*, p. 70
4. *Fathul-Mughith*, p. 349
5. *al-Nihaya*, vol. 1, p. 5.

This was realized by Abu Sulayman Ahmed al-Khattabi (319-388/931-998). He put together such of the Traditions as were missed by both Abu 'Ubayd and Ibn Qutayba, and commented on the rare expressions in them, according to their plan and standard. In the introduction to his book, he praised the work of his two predecessors and remarked, like Ibn Qutayba, that for a long time he had held that after their works, there was no need for any other vocabulary of the Traditions. But by the actual study of the Traditions he found that both of his predecessors had missed a large number of such of them as needed explanation. He compiled therefore, a supplement to their works according to their plan and standard. But, unlike Ibn Qutayba, he confessed that there still remained Traditions which he could not explain, and hoped that they might be collected and explained by some one who might be favoured by God with the ability to do so¹.

The book of Abu 'Ubayd and its two supplements were recognized as standard vocabularies of the Traditions and were depended upon by the Traditionists for centuries in spite of the fact that several authoritative linguists and Traditionists after them, like al-Mubarrad and Ibrahim al-Harbi and others, compiled after it, many small or big vocabularies of the Traditions. This was because most of them added little to what was collected by their predecessors and some of them were too voluminous to be easily available.

Abu 'Ubayd and his followers, however, had collected the texts of such Traditions as contained unusual expressions, gave their complete Isnads and explained, under each Tradition, such words as were generally unknown, without following any system in arranging their materials. They also did not mention the sources of the Traditions quoted by them. None of these vocabularies, therefore, could be utilized without due care and deep and thorough study.

These defects were realized by Abu 'Ubayd Ahmad b. Muhammad of Herat (d. 401/1010). He left out, therefore, the texts as well as the Isnads of the Traditions while compiling his *Kitab al-Gharibayn* and collected and explained the rare expressions

1. Ibid. vol I p. 6.

occurring in the Qur'an and the Hadith, out of the works of the previous writers. He added to them many more by his own investigation, and arranged them in alphabetical order. This book is more comprehensive and easier to consult than all the previous vocabularies. Therefore, it became more popular than all the previous works on the subject.

Al-Fa'iq of al-Zamakhshari also lost its position after it. For al-Zamakhshari had arranged the whole or part of the Traditions alphabetically and explained all the rare expressions in them, under the root of one of them. Many of them were, therefore, included under entirely different roots. In fact, the arrangement of the various roots of words in *al-Fa'iq* is extremely confusing¹.

Al-Harawi had also, however, missed a large number of such of the rare expressions as were found in the Qur'an and the Traditions as needed explanation. Abu Musa Muhammad b. Abu Bakr of Isfahan (d. 581/1185) compiled, therefore, a supplement to the book of al-Harawi. These two books supplied a very large part of the needs of the students of the Qur'an and the Hadith. But they did not include many of the rare expressions used in the Sahih of al-Bukhari and of Muslim and many of those in other important Hadith-collections.

Abu'l-Sa'adat Majd al-Din al-Mubarak b. al-Athir, therefore, extracted the vocabulary of the Traditions only out of the works of Harawi and al-Isfahani, made considerable additions to them by his own study of the various important collections of the Traditions, explained them on the lines of his two main sources, and compiled them in his book *al-Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith wa'l-Athar*. In its introduction, he gave a short critical account of all the important previous works on the subject. It is on this book that the above remarks are mainly based.

Al-Mubarak b. al-Athir was an excellent scholar. He combined the wide knowledge of Arabic literature and linguistics with that of the Qur'an, the Traditions and Islamic law. He was well-versed in the biographies and the character of the Traditionists. He possessed

1. Haywood, op. cit pp. 105-6

critical knowledge of the genuinness and of the defects of the Traditions. He wrote books on all these subjects. These books were well-known at al-Mausil and other places.

He was born at al-Jazira in 544/1149. He studied the various branches of Arabic literature with the reputed masters of them, at various centres of learning and settled down in 565 A.H. at al-Mausil where, at first, he delivered lectures on Islamic subjects. Afterwards he was appointed to responsible posts at al-Jazira by the Zanji chiefs and Sultans. During the reign of Nur-al-Din Arsalan Shah I, he rose to an important position in the Zanji-Sultanate. The Sultan frequently visited him at his residence and consulted him about important affairs of the state. He offered him, several times, the post of the minister of the state. But he always refused it in spite of protests by his father and brother. Indeed, once he was actually appointed as a minister. But when he came to know of it, he wept bitterly. The Sultan having come to know of his grief, went to his residence, excused him from the post and consoled him. About the end of his life he became invalid and was unable to move about. It was during this period that he composed most of his books. He endowed his house and all his properties for the mystics. He died in 606/1210¹.

He was a versatile writer. He wrote several books not only on Islamic subjects but also on arithmetic. His important books are *Jami' al-usul li Ahadith al-rasul* and *al-Nihaya fi gharib al-Hadith wa'l-Athar*.

In the *Jami' al Usul*, which is in ten volumes, he collected the Traditions contained in the six canonical works, in the alphabetical order of their subject matter, explained the rare expressions found in them, gave critical accounts of their transmitters and pointed out all that was necessary in connexion with the particular Traditions. Yaqut has remarked that "he was absolutely certain that on Hadith no book like it was ever written nor shall it be ever written"².

1. *Irshad-al-Arib*, vol. VI, p. p. 238-9 ; *Wafayatul A'yan*, the article on Abul-Sa'adat al-Mubarak.

2. *Irshad al-Arib*, vol. VI. p. 241

In *al-Nihaya*, which is in four volumes, he arranged about four thousand and fifty rare expressions found in the Traditions. He put the letters of increase under the letter of the roots to which they are added, as it has been explained by him at the end of the introduction to the book.¹

Al-Nihaya is the most important, most useful and most popular vocabulary of the Traditions. Ibn Manzur, who has criticised it in the introduction to his *Lisan al-'Arab*, has also admired it, saying that its author illustrated excellently the rare expressions contained in the Qur'an and the Hadith and surpassed all the limits in this respect. J A. Haywood has remarked: "All in all, *al-Nihaya* is a most efficient book within its limited scope".²

Simultaneously with the works mentioned above, as well as after them, were composed a large number of books on the *gharib al-hadith*. But the works mentioned above form the landmarks in the history of its development. It is on the one or the other of them that the general plan as well as a large part of the contents of the later works on the *gharib al-Hadith* are based. They influenced the Arabic lexicographical works in general, in their plans as well as in the arrangement of the roots of the words according to their subject matters, followed by Ibn Sida in his *al-Mukhassas* at a much later date. Similarly, the alphabetical arrangement of the roots of the words was first introduced by Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Umar (d. 330/941) in his *gharib al-Qur'an*³, and was followed by Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Harawi in his vocabulary of the Qur'an and the Hadith and was thoroughly utilised by al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 501/1108) in his vocabulary of the Qur'an before being consistently taken over by the Arabic lexicographers⁴. "It is perhaps significant that almost all the dictionaries so arranged were restricted to religious vocabularies. The system did not, then, affect the main stream of Arabic lexicography"⁵, says Haywood. "Of course," he

1. *al-Nihaya*, vol. 1, p. 9

2. *Arabic Lexicography*, p. 108

3. Brockelman, *geschichte der Arabische literature* Vol. I, p. 119.

4. *Arabic Lexicography*, p.p. 102-103.

5. *Ibid* p. 103.

adds "the alphabetical method was used by some vocabulary writers as well as lexicographers, like Ibn Durayd (d. 321/934), before al-Harawi and al-Isfahani. But they used it only partially. The earliest lexicography in which alphabetical order was used in its entirety, is the *Asas al-balagha* of al-Zamakhshari¹ (b. 538/1144)."

Arabic linguistics and lexicography, as has been already remarked, originated and developed in connexion with the Islamic religion and its original sources. All the important philologists have emphasised the religious importance of the subject. Ibn Manzur has remarked that around the lexicography revolve the commandments of the Qur'an and of the Hadith². Al-Suyuti has said that lexicography is a part of religion³. He has applied in his *al-Muzhir* the whole method and technique of the Tradition of lexicography.

The Arabs, however, gave serious consideration to the application of the alphabetical method to the lexicography and vocabulary in the early period of the history of Islamic culture. Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 175/791) discussed the importance of the alphabetical method in the introduction to his *Kitab al-'Ayn*. But he changed the order of the Arabic alphabets on account of philological considerations. After him, Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Hasn b. Durayd discussed the matter further. He confessed the greatness of Khalil as a lexicographer, but he discarded his theory, introduced certain other changes in the order of the alphabets and compiled his *al-Jamhara*, mainly on the basis of the alphabetical order of the radical letters in the words. Al-Zamakhshari also composed his *Asas al-Balagha* entirely on the basis of the commonly accepted order of the radical letters.

Among the compilers of the vocabularies, Abu Bakr Muhammad of Herat, Abu Musa Muhammad b. Abu Bakr of Isfahan and Majd al-Din Mubarak b. al-Athir used alphabetical method in their works. In fact, the alphabetical method had been in use among the Arabic writers since the 9th century. Imam Bukhari (d. 256/873) used it in a part of his *Sahih*. It was also used in the *Kitab al-Du'afa al-Saghir*, as well as in the *Kitab*

1. Ibid, p. 101.

2. *Lisanul-Arab*, Introduction.

3. *al-Muzhir*, vol. II, p. 157.

at-Du'afa' wa'l-Matrukin and after them a large number of biographers used it in their works¹.

But it is not correct to say that the European scholars began to use the alphabetical method long after the Arabs², for it has been shown that in the *Corpus Glossary* which is believed to have been written about 725 A.D. and has over 2,000 entries, alphabetical order has been observed upto two initial letters³; and in a glossary of the 10th century (British Museum, 3376) the alphabetical arrangement has been carried as far as the third letter⁴. It cannot be said with certainty, whether the Arabs or the Europeans were the first to use the alphabetical arrangement in their vocabularies and lexicographical works. But there is no doubt that Haywood has rightly remarked that "the truth is that in lexicography—as in many other fields—the Arabs occupy a central position both in time and space, between the ancient world and the modern, between the East and the West"⁵.

The influence of Arabic *linguistics* and *lexicography* on Hebrew and Syrian linguistics and lexicography cannot, however, be doubted. The earliest Hebrew lexicographer, Sa'diya b. Yusuf (892-942 A.D.), who was the founder of the scientific activities in Judaism, wrote in the introduction to his dictionary that the works of the Arabic authors served him models for his book. "It is significant", says Haywood, "that the terminology of Hebrew grammar—even to the vowel names—is to a great extent borrowed from Arabic." In Syriac grammar and lexicography also there are unmistakable signs of indebtedness to Arabic grammar and lexicography⁶.

Like the linguistics and the lexicography many other branches of Arabic literature, like history, geography, scholastic philosophy etc. originated and developed out of the study of the Qur'an and the Traditions.

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1. *The Sunan of al-Tirmidhi* ed. by Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, Cairo, 1938, p. 47-58.
 2. *Ibid*, p.p. 44-46.
 3. *A survey of English Dictionaries*, London, 1933 p.p. 89.
 4. *The Romans Lectures*, Oxford, 1900, p. 12.
 5. *Arabic Lexicography*, p. 2
 6. *Ibid*, p. 121.

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SECULAR SCIENCES

by
Dr. M. Zubayr Siddiqi

It is a peculiar phenomenon of the history of the nations that an ignorant people ill-equipped with war materials and without any resources, whose sacred book and leader condemned aggression in the strongest terms, was forced by circumstances to measure sword with two most powerful states of the time, simultaneously, and defeated each of them. They entirely neutralised one of them and secured the possession of some of the most prosperous provinces of the other.

These were the Arabs of the 7th century. They not only conquered several countries and continents in a short time, but also acquired from the conquered peoples, their arts and sciences and soon excelled in them, tested their correctness, introduced considerable improvement in them, and spread them far and wide. The sciences and the arts thus produced by the United efforts of the Arabs and the non-Arabs and the Muslims and the non-Muslims, in the garb of Arabic language and under the supreme guidance of the Arab Caliphs and governors and the Muslim noblemen, are known as Islamic studies.

These studies represent the minds and cultures not only of the Arabs, but of all the thinking people of the medieval period. The striking features of this vast and varied literature is: (1) the boldness of conception and their straight-forward, clear and exact expression, (2) a sympathetic approach and assimilation of the cultural attainments of the previous nations and their critical appreciation, (3) a sincere attempt for a critical study of the natural phenomena and (4) the application of the inductive method to them for the sake of their scientific interpretation.

Most of these peculiarities of Arabic literature can be abundantly illustrated by the pre-Islamic poetry itself and may be easily discerned by those who may take the trouble of perusing "*The Ancient Arabian Poetry*" of Sir Ch. Layall or the English translation of the *Mufaḍḍaliyāt* by the same great Arabist. The Arab character of expressing his mind boldly, fearlessly and clearly has been recognised by all those who have made a study of Arabic

literature. The Arab told his chief plainly, "If you act discreetly as a chief should, you will lord over us, but if you are a prey to pride, go and be proud." "The Arabian Ode", says Layall, "sets forth before us a series of pictures, drawn with confident skill and first hand knowledge, of the life its maker lived, of the objects among which he moved, of his horse, his camel, the wild creature of the wilderness, and of the landscape in the midst of which his life and theirs was set; but all, however loosely they seem to be bound together, are subordinate to one dominant idea which is the poets unfolding of himself, his admirations and his hates, his freedom and the prowess and the freedom of his spirit¹. "It is a poetry", remarks Nöldeke, "which makes it, its main business to depict life and nature as they are, with little addition of phantasy".²

These features of Arabic literature, however, are found in its Islamic theological branches also. The Quran and the Traditions abundantly show them. The boldness of numerous principles clearly and repeatedly preached in them must be recognised even by the superficial students of the Book as well as of the Tradition. Let us think of the life led by the people of Arabia and its adjacent countries, under the Persians and the Romans, and of their social, political and spiritual ideals, and then ponder over the preachings of the Quran and the Traditions: that man occupies the highest position in the universe, and every thing else including the forces of nature has been created for his sake, and he should not bow down before any of them but should try to harness and control them; that man is created for service (of God); that all men have one common origin; that they are all equal and no nation or individual has any inherent superiority over another; that man is essentially good and all his evils are due to bad association and improper guidance; that the ideal pious life is not that of devotion in lonely quarters cut off from human society, but that of purity within human society etc. These are only a few of the bold revolutionary principles which have been repeatedly, clearly and unequivocally preached in the Quran and the Traditions. The respectful recognition of all the true previous prophets, the acceptance of their principal teachings as well as those of the earlier books and other similar statements contained in the Quran show the sympathetic

1. Charles James Layall, *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, xviii

2. Nöldeke, *cit. Layall. op. cit.*, p. xviii

appreciation of the attainment of the past ages, whereas the stress laid on the observation of the natural phenomena and the repeated reference to past peoples and their sufferings on account of their evil deeds gave a lead to the method of study based on facts and not on mere fantasy and speculation. Great efforts for correctness and exactitude, however, is particularly displayed in Tradition literature.

It is in connection with these studies that several other branches of Arabic literature originated and developed. Biography, History, Law, Jurisprudence, Lexicography etc. all originated and developed in the beginning in connection with study of the Quran and the Tradition. But the most important branches of literature which originated and developed in this connection are the sciences of "formal" and "material" historical criticism which are known as *Ilmur-Riwayāt* and *Ilmud Dirayat*. These sciences lay down the methods and rules which should be observed in handing down and in recording and preserving the historical reports. These Arabian sciences, I think, are unique in the literature of the world. But unfortunately they have not received that attention from the modern Arabists, and critical scholars which they so richly deserve.

The same care and caution which characterised the theological literature in Arabic was also shown with regard to the works on exact sciences. This branch of Islamic studies originated in the Umayyad period. But it took a definite methodical form under the early Abbasids, Since the very early part of the Abbasid period it appears to have been the rule that the translation of the works on technical and exact sciences from Greek, Sanskrit and other languages should be taken up only by such scholars as might be well-versed in their subject matter. We find for example that the Greek and Indian Medical works were translated into Arabic by scholars like Bitriq (?), by his son Yahya, by Stephen, and by the experts in Indian systems of Medicine respectively. Similarly the Mathematical works were translated into Arabic by Mathematicians like al-Fazari and Thabit b. Qurra. The translation of a work done even by a competent translator of recognised merit, if he was not a specialist in the subject matter of the book, was revised and corrected by a specialist. A book on Mathematics translated by Hunayn b. Ishāq, for example, was revised by Thabit b. Qurra

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But in spite of the technical knowledge of the translators, the Arabic translations of the Greek works rendered in the early Abbasid period have been criticised by the later Arabian authors themselves, because of the wrong system adopted by these translators. "John the son of Betriq and Naima of Emessa," remarks Bahaud-Din in his *Kashkul*, "took into account every word of the original text and replaced it by its Arabic equivalent." "This was not," he continues, "a sound method, for firstly Arabic equivalents could not be found for all Greek expressions and therefore a large number of Greek words had to be used by them in the translations, and secondly because of the great difference in the grammatical construction of sentences in the two languages. Over and above all this the idiomatic and metaphorical expressions which are so largely used in every language, could not be properly translated according to this method".³

This system of translation was, therefore, soon overhauled and many of the early translations were either revised or translated afresh.

The important translators of the new school were Hunayn b. Ishaq for medical books, certain members of his family for Mathematical works, and al-Farabi for philosophical works. They revised many of the early translations and translated many other works from Greek and Syriac languages into Arabic, which were not translated before them.

They have been credited by all the modern competent critical scholars with great care and caution in their difficult literary task. Dr. Max Simon, who has published the Arabic translation of Galen's Anatomy, books 9-15, and compared them with their original Greek text, such parts of it as were now extant, makes the following remark on the merit of the translation by Ḥubaysh, the nephew of Ḥunayn b. Ishaq :

"He has endeavoured to translate all that is essential in the text. Of course he has dealt with the conjunctions freely, very freely, indeed. At any rate he has taken the trouble to convey all the component parts of a sentence including the Grammatical ones

3. *Kashkul*, Bulaq, 1288 A.H., p. 191.

in some form or other i.e. he has followed a principle which a modern translator also may follow if his aim be a translation faithful to the sense. It is more than a purely literal translation and presupposes familiarity with the nature of the subject." "On the whole," continues Dr. Simon, "the Arab has thoroughly succeeded in his object."⁴

The colophon of the Ms. on the basis of which Dr. Simon edited the Arabic text, shows that the translator had used three copies of the Greek text together with one copy of the earlier Syriac translation of it. This shows the great care and caution taken by the Arabic translator in connection with his work. The same high tribute has been paid to the Arabic translators by other competent authorities on the subject also. Professor E. G. Browne, for example, who had made a careful study of the subject, pays high tribute to the Arabic translators in his *Lectures on Arabian Medicine*, whereas he finds serious faults with the Latin translations of Arabic Medical Works done in the last century.

An interesting example of the efforts of the Arabic scholars for scientific exactitude is supplied by the history of the translation of the great work of Dioscorides on plants. The work had been translated into Arabic at first at Baghdad by Stephen, as Ibn Abi Uşaybia relates on the authority of Ibn Juljul. But this translation was very defective for many of the plants mentioned in the book could not be identified by the translator; he just borrowed and utilised their Greek names without making any effort to identify them. When a copy of it was brought to Spain it could not be fully utilised either by the botanists or by the physicians. In 337 A.H./948 A.D. Romanus, the emperor of Constantinople, sent to 'Abdur-Rahmān III (al-Nasir) of Spain, rich presents in which was included an illustrated copy of the book of the great Greek botanist. 'Abdur Rahmān wrote to the Roman emperor requesting him to send to him some one well-versed in Greek language who might instruct the Amir's employees in that language. A monk named Nicholas was sent to Spain in the year 340 A.H./951 A.D., a council of eminent physicians and botanists of Spain was appointed to decipher and identify the plants which could not be

4. *Anatomic des Galen*, vol. 1, Int. p. 45.

identified by Stephen, the earlier translator. They sat together with Nicholas and discussed with him the doubtful plants and identified them with the help of the Greek Monk. Only a few (12 or so) of them remained unidentified".⁵

The same keen effort after scientific truth and exactitude characterises the independent technical scientific Arabic literature also. It began to develop from the end of the 8th century of the Christian era when al-Rashid according to the suggestion of Yahya, the Bermakid, got astronomical instruments prepared by able expert artisans and sent out Yahya b. Abi Manşur and other Astronomers to make scientific observation of the celestial phenomena and test the theories of the Greek writers on the subject. They produced as the result of their experience the table known as *al-Zijul Musta'mal* i. e. the Verified Tables. Sind b. Ali made other similar observations in 832 and 833 A.D. Again al-Ma'mun sent out a group of Astronomers in order to measure the degree of the Meridian. They went to the North just upto the point where the altitude of the pole varied by sixty minutes and discovered the value of the terrestrial degree. After this a very large number of observations were made by various scholars, at different places. Banu Musa, Moḥammad b. Jábir, al-Battáni, the results of whose observations have been published by Nallino, Abul-Wafá of Buzján, Ibn Yúnus of Egypt, al-Zarqáli of Spain, and Naşiru'd-Dín al-Túsi, are only a few of the Arabic writers on the subject who introduced great improvements in the Greek theories in the field of Astronomy, Mathematics and Geography, on the basis of their own observation of Natural Phenomena. Sedillot and Nallino have done important researches in these branches of Arabic literature. But it is the French Mathematician and Arabist M. Sedillot, however, to whom we are greatly indebted for his wide and penetrating study of them. He has summarised the results of his continuous, long, patient, hard work in his *Histoire des Arabes* in which he has pointed out their definite discoveries in these sciences, the credit for many of which has been wrongly given to the modern European scholars.

In the field of Chemistry, Professor Julius Ruska of Heidelberg University, who has done admirable work on the history of the

5. C. Elgood, *Medical History of Persia*, pp. 113-15

subject and whose monographs on Khálid Yazíd and Ja'far al-Sádiq, show his great ability for acute scientific criticism, has paid high tribute to Abu Bakr Zakariya al-Razi, in his article on Razi's *Kitábu Sirri l-Asrár* (The book of the secret of secrets). He says that the book supplies the missing link between the ancient alchemy and modern Chemistry. It is a complete systematic first class text-book on old Chemistry. The author has divided the book in several Discourses dealing with substances instruments and processes. In this book, instead of theologico-mystical speculation, experiment and chemical technique is given the greatest importance. In it the author shows his great enthusiasm for experiment and complete confidence in final result. This is a feature which is entirely wanting in the earlier literature on the subject.

Al-Razi's works on medicine also, however, show the same objective approach of the subject. His *Magnum Opus* on this subject, al-Háwí, has a particular section in which he describes 25 of his cases with all clinical details. This is extremely rare in the earlier medical literature.

In the branch of Ophthalmology, however, Dr. Julius Hirschburg in his *Gescht der Ophthalmology* dealing with that under the Arabs has brought to light the independent achievement of the Arabic writers in this field. As a matter of fact every branch of science and literature in Arabic on which thorough sympathetic research has been done, has shown that a good deal of independent additions have been made to the subject by the Arabic authors.

The same is the case with the geographical literature of the Arabs, according to V. V. Barthold "it is the most valuable monument of Musalman culture of the 9th and the 10th century." Some of their historians like al-Ya'qúbí and al-Mas'údi, and all their geographers have handed down valuable information which are wanting in the earlier works on the subject. The earliest maps and astronomical calculations, which were made under the guidance of al-Ma'mún in the 10th century as well as the researches of Abu Zayd al-Balkhi were endorsed by al-Istakhrí and were confirmed by the later writers.

The Arabic geographical works, however, contain the description of all the countries of the Muslim world from Spain to

Turkistan and the Indus as well as of those visited by their authors. They describe the important towns of the various countries and their physical features and climate, their natural and industrial products, the cultivated and waste land as well as various particulars with regard to their inhabitants.

The earliest Muslim geographer was the Persian Ibn Khurdazbih. His grand father who was a Zoroastrian had accepted Islam, and his father was for sometime governor of Tabaristan. He himself was appointed as a postmaster in the province of Jibal. He wrote a good book on the Roads and the Countries. In it he has described the postal stations and the taxation in each province.

He was followed by many other geographers belonging to the eastern and western parts of the Muslim world. But the greatest of them Yáqút b. Abdalla. He was Greek by birth, was taken as a captive in his childhood, and sold at Baghdad to a merchant who dealt among other things in books also. He got him carefully educated in all the sciences in vogue at that time, associated him in his business and sent him out on long journeys in connection with his work. He visited various distant places some of which served as important business-centre between India and Europe. Before the death of his master he secured his freedom, and obtained his livelihood by copying and selling manuscripts. He wanted to settle down at Marw which was then an important centre of Islamic culture. He was highly impressed by the sweet benevolence and attractive manners of its inhabitants and was particularly charmed by its several libraries of which he speaks in most impressive terms. But having encountered the Mangols in 1219, he fled on account of their fear, from place to place "naked as he would be raised on the day of judgement" and at last he died at Mausil in 626 A. H. detailed account of interesting adventurous life is given by Ibn Khallikan in his charming valuable biographical dictionary.

Among the several important books left by him is his great Geographical Dictionary, the *M'ujamu'l-Buldán*. It is described by Mr. Le Strange as "a storehouse of geographical information the value of which it is impossible to over-estimate". It is extremely

rich in detail and in parts it is very poetic. Yáqút first gives the description of the towns and of the province in alphabetical order, and then adds the biographical notices of their illustrious personages. The book contains many beautiful rhetoric passages. One of them is in the notice of the Valley of Bewa'n. But the poetic character of such passages do not affect the quality of precision of the book. "It is this quality" says Carra De Vaun, "which does the greatest honour to the culture of Islam."

The Arabs made not only great progress in Descriptive Geography, but also corrected many of the mistakes of Ptolemy and others in the theoretical part of Geographical science. They found out correct longitudes and latitudes of many places, and performed very delicate observations in order to find out the correct measurement of the arc of the meridian.

They were also masters of Nautical Geography and science. They had thorough knowledge of the Red-Sea and of its western and Eastern coasts and of ports, of the Persian Gulf, of the Indian Ocean and of the Indo-Chinese Archipelago, piloted ships along their ancient routs for several centuries and made valuable contribution to Nautical Sciences. It was an Arab captain, Májid b. Al-Májid of Najd in central Arabia, who showed a map of the entire Indian littoral to Vasco De Gama and personally piloted the portuguese ship from Malindi to Calicut. It was he who made known to the Portuguese the direct sea-route from African port to India.

As a matter of fact during the middle ages several of the Arabian coastal towns like Basra, Oman, Sihr, Aden, Masqat etc. served as important ports.

The Arabian ships sailed under the direction of experienced Arab Captains of established reputation having strong keen sense of duty towards their passengers, who consisted of officers, merchants, sailors and other classes of people of different nationalities. The merchandise and provisions which they carried were of immense value.

This perfect mastery of the various branches of Nautical Sciences and of their knowledge of the various sea-routes and ports

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through which they passed is abundantly shown by the several books and treatises on these subjects by Shihábuddin Ahmed b. al-Májid of Najd in central Arabia, and by Sulaymán al-Mahri, which are preserved in *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris and were published by M.M Gabriel Farrand and Gaudefroy. These works are of great importance not only by themselves but also because they yielded permanent influence on the later development of Nautical Science.

The father and grand father of Ibnu'l-Májid were great captains and masters of Nautical Science. They left certain treatises on the subject. Ibnu'l-Májid describes them as "lions of the sea" and admires them a good deal. He says "My grand-father navigated the ships on the Red Sea through its routes to the coastal towns leading to Mecca and knew these routes precisely and in detail. No one equalled him in this respect. My father inherited the nautical knowledge of my grand father. I renewed their experience during the last forty years and made the necessary corrections in the scientific works of these two great Captains. I have put down the results (of my experience) and laid down principles and facts which are not to be found together anywhere else. They may be found scattered in different works".⁶

It appears that they had great reputation among the Arab sailors for several generations. According to Richard F. Burton who visited Aden in 1854, "the Arab mariners of this period regarded Shaykh Májid as a saint and inventor of compass. They recited his *Fatiha* before entering into deep sea".⁷

The Arab sailors had produced several treatises on Nautical Science particularly during the 10th century. But unfortunately all of them are lost. But Ibnu'l-Májid refers to them with appreciation. He says that in the 10th century there lived three celebrated mariners: (1) Muḥammad b. Shaddán, (2) Sahl b. Abán and (3) Layth b. Kahlán. They composed in prose, a guide for the sea. Ibn Májid has criticised this treatise but he says that they found out new and nearer sea-routes from Siráf to Khurasan. He has also mentioned several other captains who composed

6. Kitabu'l Fawaid, Paris Ms. No : 2292, ff 78a-b.

7. Richard F. Burton, First Foot steps in East Africa. vol, I p. 2-3

treatises on Nautical Science. This shows that Arabic literature on the subject had already developed considerably. But unfortunately it is entirely lost.

Ibn'l Majid pays compliments to all his predecessors in the field, for what they attained. But he says that all of the earlier works are out of date now in the 15th century. All that was of any utility in them has been included in his own works. "Whatever I have written" he says, "is based on actual experience. There is nothing in it which is not verified by experience." He claims that every page of his book is more exact and useful than all that was written before.

The Paris manuscript of the work of Ibnu'l-Májid consists of two parts : Nos 2292 and 2559. One of them consists of 19 treatises and the other of 13 booklets. They have been edited and commented upon by Gabriel Farrand in three volumes. Some of these books are in poetry and some of them are in prose. The most important of them is *al-Ḥa'wiya* (The Inclusive). It is a short treatise on the principles of Nautical Science. It contains large amount of materials on the subject. It deals with (i) the signs indicating the nearness of the shore ; (ii) the mansions of the moon ; (iii) the wind : (iv) the chronology ; the law of the wind. They are followed by the description of the sea-routes—the routes to coasts of Arabia, to Western India, to Bengal upto Java, to Formosa and to China ; the distances from Arabian coasts to those of Western India, the latitudes of the ports of Indian Ocean. The discussion of these subjects shows a thorough practical knowledge to the countries referred to.

Another important book of Ibnu'l -Májid included in the Mss. mentioned above, is *Kitábu'l-Fawa'id*. (The book of Utility) It is dated 1490 A.D. and according to the editor, is the maturest of the author's works. It is divided into 12 chapters. They deal with ; (i) The Origin of Navigation and the Magnetic Needle ; (ii) The Qualities and the Knowledge which the Pilots Must Possess ; (iii) Lunar Phases ; (iv) Points of the compass ; (v) The Geographer and Astronomers the Predecessors ; (vi) Sea-Routes ; (vii) Astronomical Observations ; (viii) Steering of Ships ; (ix) Description of Coasts and of Three Group of Pilots ; (x) Description

of the Nine Greatest Islands of the World : Arabia, Madagascar, Sumatra, Java, Formosa, Ceylon, Zanzibar, Bahrayn and Sokotra ; (xi) Monsoons and Navigation ; (xii) The Red Sea, Its Islands and Reefs.

The other works of Ibnu'l-Májid also show his mastery of Nautical Science and his thorough experience of the navigation in the Red-sea, the Indian Ocean as well as in the Chinese waters. His works serve as dependable mine of information regarding Nautical Science and its history.

More important than the discovery of a few technical principles, however, is the application of the inductive and objective methods to the scientific enquires instead of merely speculative principles, which had been the main drawback of the ancient scientific works. In this connection the services of the Arabic writers is of immense value.

“The Savants of the school of Baghdad”, says Sedillot, “passing from the known to the unknown gave an exact account of the natural phenomena, so that the effects might be connected with their causes. They never accepted but what was demonstrated by experience. Such were the principles enunciated and followed by these masters. The Arabs of the 9th century had been in possession of this productive principle, which long after them, in the hands of the moderns, led to important discoveries”.⁸

There is no doubt, that the utility of the positive inductive method was emphasised by the Arabic writers. Avicenna in his *al-Shifa* questioned the validity of deductive form of reasoning and raised the same objection against it as has been raised by the British Logician J. Stuart Mill. But Avicenna was too much influenced by the Greek thought to reject it altogether. We find, however, that three out of the four well known Inductive Methods are described with precision in the most popular book on Logic, the *Sullamul-'Ulum* of Muhibbulla of Bihar. These methods are also largely used in the Arabic works on Law and Jurisprudence especially in the Chapter on Qiyas or legal reasoning.

8. L. A. Sedillot, *Histoire Des Arabes*, vol. II, p. 12

One of the important branches of literature, however, was that of Comparative Religion. "Surprising though it may seem, it is in Arabic that we find the first work on this subject" Says H.A.R. Gibb. He has mentioned in this connection the *Kitabu'l-Milal-wa'n-nihal* and the *Al-Fisal-fil-milal* of al-Shahristani and of Ibn Hazm respectively.

But the fact is that it is the Qura'n which laid down the foundation for the comparative study of religions. When it was revealed there were living in Arabia peoples professing several religions. Among them there were idol worshippers, Jews, Christians, Sabians, and Zoroastrians. The Qura'n refers to some of the beliefs and practices of each of them which differed widely from one another. But the Qura'n affirmed that they were due to misconceptions of the people professing them or the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of what was actually preached by their prophets.

The idol-worshippers held that their idols have influence on God, that the angels were His daughters and some of them held that after death, one has no more life nor will he have to account for his deeds in this world. The Jews believed that Moses was the first and last prophet, they made changes in the Old Testament, and disbelieved some of the prophets. Some of them considered Uzayr to be the son of God attributed great evils to Hazrat Maryam the mother of Jesus. The Christians believed that there were three Gods and Jesus was God's son ; they also introduced changes in the New Testament.

These and several other beliefs and practices of the above three groups of the Arabs are mentioned in the Qura'n. But it has not mentioned the beliefs and practices of the Şabian and the Zoroastrians. But Ibn Hazm and Shahristani have discussed in details their beliefs and practices.

According to the Qura'n all the prophets of every period belonging to different nations preached the unity of God, life after death and responsibility of the man for all his deeds and that all the prophets were true and God-sent. Sir W. Budge, who is a great authority on ancient Egypt, is of the opinion that the Egyptians

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of the ancient period believed in the unity of God and their conception of Him was similar to that of the Jews. The statement of some of the Chinese scholars also shows that the ancient Chinese also believe in the unity of God.

From what has been said above on the basis of the Qur'an, it will appear that it laid down the foundation for the comparative study of religion.

Before the advent of Islam the believers in different religions were almost always at loggerhead with one another. Islam established amity and peace between them. It laid down that in matters of religion there is no room for compulsion. The peoples professing different faiths, therefore, lived together, under the Muslims, peacefully. They held religious discussion among themselves, the reference to some of which is found in *Hadīth* works. Some of the treatises written by the Christians in this connection are mentioned by Dr. Mingana in the introduction to his English translation of the *Kitāb'ud-Din-wad-Daula* (the Book of the Religion and the Empire). But the earliest book written in the defence of Islam against Christianity and Judaism is the above mentioned *Kitāb'ud-Din-wad-Daula* which was written by 'Alī b. Rabban al-Tabari, in 855 A.D. at Baghdad. Several other books also were written on the subject. Ibn Ḥazm has written in the introduction to his book mentioned above, that there were several books written on the subject by different writers. Shahrastāni also has written in the preface to his book that he had read the treatises of believers of different religions about them, and he wanted to put together their contents so that it might serve as a guide to its readers.

Ibn Ḥazm whose full name was Abu Muḥammad 'Alī Ibn Ḥazm, was born at Cordova in an influential family in 994 A. D. He was endowed with extraordinary ability. He acquired excellence in all the Islamic sciences at an early age, was appointed as a minister, and was accepted as the leader of the Zāhiriya sect. But he was more interested in the scientific activities than in political career. He soon, gave up the post of the minister and devoted himself fully to the cultural activities. He was very often subjected to trials and tortures. But he is accepted as the most prolific muslim writer. He wrote 400 books in 80,000 pages. But

he was very strict in his ideas and criticised bluntly many of the important muslim authors like al-Ash'ari, Abu Hanifa, Imám Málik and others. He was, therefore, disliked by the muslims in general. He was extened from several provinces, and most of his writings were burnt. Very few of his books have come down to us, one of them being his valuable and original work on the comparative religion *al-Fisal-fil-Milal*. It is in five volumes.

About 80 years after it Shahrístáni wrote his book on the subject. His full name was Abúl Fath Muḥammad b. Abdu'l-Karím. He was born at Shahrístan in Khurasan in 1086 A.D., was educated in Islamic sciences and philosophy at Nishapur and other places and performed pilgrimage in 1116 A.D. While returning from Mecca he stopped at Baghdad for three years and completed his education. After that he returned to his native place and devoted himself entirely to teaching and writing. His most celebrated book deals with religious and philosophical sects. H. A. R. Gibb remarks about it that there are few works in Arabic literature that reflect more credit on medieval Mohammadan scholarship. Like the work of Ibn Ḥazm, this book also contains the accounts of the Muslim sects as well as of the Jewish schools and Christain churches as well as of the Indian religious philosophies. Like Ibn Ḥazm he was also strictly orthodox. "He presents," says Gibb "the arguments and views of even the most heretical schools with remarkable fairness, only occassionally interposing incisive comments at the end of some peculiarly obnoxious or hair-splitting doctrine".

From what I have just discussed it is obvious that the Arabic writers not only considerably improved the sciences which they had received from their predecessors, but also laid the foundations of several important branches of knowledge.

But the proper and exact valuation of Islamic Studies in its various branches, depends on the critical study of this huge literature, a large part of which still remains unexplored and unnoticed, in the private and public libraries in the East as well as in the West. In our country itself there are many important and extremely valuable and some also unique Arabic Persian books, in private possession or public libraries, which are entirely unknown to the scholarly world.

ISLAMIC LIBRARIES

by
Dr. M. Zubayr Siddiqi

THE Library constitutes an important cultural institution which originated and highly developed in the various parts of Islamic dominions, without any foreign influence. Its origin has been traced back to the ancient period when Ashurbanipal (689-630, B.C) assembled at Ninevah, a large number of cuneiform texts, which are now in the British Museum. In Greece, in Rome and in certain other parts of Europe also there existed some personal or private libraries during the ancient period. But they had lost their importance and were reduced to insignificance during the middle ages, and none of them were public libraries.

The Arabs were generally completely ignorant of reading and writing. Many of their distinguished poets did not know how to read or write. One of them, Tarafa, lost his life on account of his ignorance. Another of them Dhu'r-Rumma knew how to write but wanted to conceal it from the people, because it was considered by them to be a defect. As a matter of fact there were no words for the writing materials, in their otherwise rich language.

But under the influence of Islam, its Caliphs and governors and kings, they became lovers and preservers of books. The Prophet encouraged and popularised the art of writing in various ways and paid tributes to those who sought, and served knowledge. 'Umar the second Caliph, had made the teaching of writing and reading compulsory¹

Perhaps the slogan of the burning of Alexanderian Library may be raised against him. But it has been proved to be a mere myth started 500 years after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs². In Iran also there did not exist any library at the time of Islamic Conquest according to the statement of Hamza, Isfahani.

Mutanabbi, however has said, in his Qasida in praise of Káfur : "The most honourable seat in this world is the saddle of a

1. Al-Faruq, 1898, part II P. 105.

2. See Buttler's *Conquest of Egypt by the Arabs*, chap. XXV.

horse, and the best companion at all times, is the book." Muhallab said to his sons : "Whenever you stand in the market, then stand either before the shop of the weapons, or before those of the books."³ "For the Arabs," writes an Italian Orientalist, "Every book commencing from the great book, the Qura'n, represented a whole world in itself, for them more than for any other people of antiquity, it was the only and inexhaustible fountain for the inner life."⁴ Fath b. Kháqán, the general, Jáhiz the scholar and Ismá'il b. Isháq the judge, had great love for books.⁵ The first of them always carried a book with himself and read it even in the lavatory. The second died because the heaps of books which he kept round himself fell on him when he was old and ill. And the third was always found reading a book. Şáhib Ismá'il b. 'Abbád always carried numerous books with himself whenever he went out of his state, and refused to accept the ministry offered to him by the Samanids, because he could not carry his large library with him.⁶

Most of the Arab rulers of the different dynasties of the early period and most of the Muslim kings of different dynasties of the various Islamic dominions took keen interest in the collection and preservation of books on different subjects. They developed several arts which helped in the production of books and in adorning and preserving them.

They developed calligraphy into a veritable art and used it not only for writing books but also in order to decorate and adorn architectural monuments. They learnt the art of paper making from the Chinese and established its factories in several important towns like Samarqand, Baghdad, Cairo, Shatiba and other places. From several of these and other places, paper was exported to different parts of Europe for several centuries⁷. The earliest Arabic manuscript written on paper, received by us, is the *Gharibu'l-*

3. *al-Fakhri*, Egyptian edition pp. 3-5.

4. *Islamic Culture* vol. III, p. 211.

5. *Irshad*, vol. VI. pp. 117. ; 56.

6. *Ibid* vol. II. p. 315.

7. *The Medieval Library* by James W. Thomson, pp. 631-33.

Hadith of Abu 'Ubayd. It is preserved in the Leiden library and is dated. 243/857 They produced inks of different colours out of different substances. They developed book-binding into a veritable art, bound the books in valuable leather of different colours, adorned and ornamented them with silver and gold, and supplied them with nice covers in order to protect them from dust and dirt.⁸ They used all these arts for the production & preservation of books. They founded numerous libraries some of which supplied the students and the scholars with the necessary materials for copying books peacefully and comfortably.

For some time just, before the rise of Islam, the Kufi script was used by such of the Arabs as knew this art. The first four Caliphs and a few other eminent associates of the Prophet had excelled in it. It continued to be followed by the Muslims till the end of the Umayyad period. The last great scribe of this period was Abdu'l-Hamid b. Yahya, b. Sa'id who was a Syrian slave converted to Islam, had mastery of Kufi script and introduced several useful innovations in it. He became the chief scribe of Marwán II and was killed with him⁹.

With the advent of the Abbasids, like other branches of culture, Calligraphy also improved by leaps and bounds. The first important calligraphers of the period were Ishaq b. Hammad and his brother Ḍahhák. They secured mastery of Kufi script and introduced several improvements in it.

But the first important pen-man of this period was Abu 'Alí' Md. b. Ḥusain b. 'Alí, generally known as Ibn Muqla. He was born in 272/886 acquired excellence in literature and the various religious sciences in vogue during his time. But the special field of culture in which he secured lasting reputation was Calligraphy. Having realised the difficulties of the Kufi script he invented several other scripts like Muḥaqqaq, Rayhani, Thulth, Tauqi', Riqá, and Naskh. The last of them assumed great popularity and replaced the Kufi and every other script which was in vogue at that time.

8. Ibid.

9. Sahifa-i Khush Nawisan, p. 23

It was, therefore, called Naskh or Naskhi. He laid down detailed rules governing it, for the guidance of those who wanted to learn it. He became famous as a pen-man throughout the Islamic world and people from every part of it, crowded round him to learn this art. His house was always crowded by the students and the learned people, to all of whom he was always extremely courteous and generous.

All this was done by him in spite of the fact that he was very often busy with the various administrative duties also. He served as a governor of a province or as the minister of the Abbasid Caliphs. But he had to pay very dearly for his qualities of head and heart and for his popularity. His properties were confiscated, his right hand was cut and he was imprisoned more than once. But in spite of it, he made beautiful copies of the Qura'n with his left hand and also by fastening pen to his right hand. At the end he was put to death while he was in prison in the year 328/948. "It was strange", says al-Fakhri, "that he Ibn Muqla¹⁰ became a minister three times, was exiled three times and was buried three times. He was buried in the house of the Caliph just after he was killed there. This happened shortly after his hand was cut. Then his relatives wanted that his dead body should be made over to them. It was exhumed and made over to them and they buried it. Afterwards his wife wanted his dead-body, exhumed it and buried it in her house"¹¹.

The next great pen-man of the Abbasid period was Abu'l-Hasan 'Alí b. Hilál, generally known as Ibnu'l-Bawwáb.

The Naskh script was followed throughout the Islamic world for more than a century after which Ibnu'l Bawwáb who introduced many improvements in the script originated by Ibn Muqla, made it more regular and simple and introduced in it greater grace and beauty. He also further explained the rules laid down by Ibn Muqla.

10. Ibn Khallikán, English Tr. vol., 3, pp. 266-271 ; al-Fakhri ed, Ahlwart. pp. 318-321 ; Khat wa Khatatan, Ali Rahgiri, Tehran 1346, pp. 57-65.

11. *al-Fakhri*, pp. 318-321.

He was the son of one of the attendants at the gate of the Audience Hall of the Caliph. He was, therefore, generally known as Ibnu'l-Bawwáb. Like Ibn Muqla, he possessed good knowledge of Arabic literature and of its various branches, but was especially devoted to the art of calligraphy. He learnt it at the feet of almost all the pen-men of his time and ultimately excelled all his contemporaries in this art. He improved and carried the Naskh script to perfection so that his method is followed by the various calligraphers of the script till the present day. His house was always crowded by the students as well as masters of calligraphy, all of whom accepted his superiority in the art. He died between 413/1022 and 423/1034. His style and method of writing was followed for more than two hundred years¹².

After him flourished numerous master Calligraphers in different parts of Islamic dominions. The most important of them was Jamaluddín Yáqút Musta'shimí who died in 698/1298¹³.

The progress of the various arts, to which reference has been made, helped in the production and preservation of books and in making their collection and libraries popular among the Muslims

The beginning of Islamic libraries, however, must be traced back to the personal collections of the various parts of the Qura'n and of the Tradition of the prophet, by some of his associates. These small personal collections of some of the Companions must have grown larger in volume on account of the activities of the next generation in search of the materials on the life and character of their narrators. Soon after it Khalid, the grand son of Mu'aviya, got greatly interested in al-Chemy. collected together the Greek works on it, from Egypt, and got them translated into Arabic. Almost about the same time was translated from Greek into Arabic a medical book also, by a personal physician of Hajjáj b. Yúsuf, the then governor of Kufa. Soon after it we learn of the royal library of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Aziz (d. 720) as well as of a literary club which was furnished with books as also with the game of chess¹⁴. Simul-

12. *Ibn Khallikan*, English Translation vol. 11, p. 282-283

13. *Tadhkira-i-Khush-Nawisan*. Ed. H. Husain, Asiatic Society, 1910. p.

14. See M.Z. Siddiqi, *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical literature*. Calcutta University, 1959, pp. 15-16.

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taniously, Arabic linguistics and vocabularies also began to be developed at Kufa and Basra. All this presupposes the existence of small personal libraries at these places.

With the advent of the Abbasids, the libraries also, like other cultural institutions, developed very highly, on account of the keen interest of the Abbasid Caliphs in the acquisition of books and their preservation. Some of them laid it down as a condition for the establishment of peace with a Byzantine emperor, that he should make over to the Caliph the Greek Mss., and sent a deputation to Byzantine towns to acquire and collect scientific works. To Abdu'l-Rahman III of Spain was a most welcome gift, an illustrated copy of the *Kitābu'l-Hashā'ish* of Dioscorides.¹⁵ This keen cultural interest of the Caliphs was shared by their ministers and governors as well as by the semi-independent rulers of the various Islamic dominions.

It is, therefore, not surprising that during the middle ages, there existed several well-equipped and well-managed libraries in good many Muslim towns. In Baghdad, during the 13th century, there were more than thirty-six libraries. In most of the towns in Syria, like Aleppo, Tripolis, Antioch also there were big libraries. The library of Aleppo, possessed 20,000 volumes¹⁶. In the towns of Andalusia there were seventy libraries¹⁷. At Marw there were ten libraries from which Yáqút borrowed 200 books without giving any security. Many Iranian towns also had large libraries¹⁸. Ar-Ray's library had its catalogue in ten volumes. At Shiraz was the well-organised library founded by the Buwayhid chief Addu'd-Daula which will be described in detail later. At Bukhara was the large well-equipped library which was established by the Samanid ruler Núh b. Manşúr in which were found books which were not found anywhere else¹⁹. As a matter of fact during the middle

15. *Tabaqatu'l Atibba*

16. *Letters of Abu'l-Ala* Ed. Margoliouth, Intr. p. xvi.

17. *Islamic Culture*. vol. VIII p. 115.

18. *Irshad* vol. II, p. 35. ; *M'ujam u'l-Udaba* vol. IV. p. 11.

19. *Tabaqatu'l-Atibba*; vol. 2. p. 4

ages there was no Muslim town worth the name which possessed no library. Ibn Jubayr the traveller has remarked in his *Travels* that the glory of Islam consisted in its hospitals and colleges. And every college must have a library. Every Muslim town must have mosques also, and to a mosque was generally attached a madrasa to which the scholars generally endowed their books. Most of the libraries in Turkey were endowed to mosques.

Many of these libraries were well organised and well-equipped. A graphic description of the library founded by Aḍdu'd-Daula at Shiraz and of its building is left by al-Maqdisi in his *Aḥsanu't-Taqasim* and has been translated into English by F. Krenkow.

F. Krenkow has translated an article by Dr. Olga Pinto from Italian into English. She has quoted the relevant passage from the *Aḥsanu't-Taqasim*. It says : "Aḍdu'd-Daula, the Buwayhid, (949-982) founded in Shiraz a residence which had not its equal in East or West. No ignorant person entered it, but was enchanted, nor any learned person, but his imagination was filled with delights and perfumes of paradise. He made it intersected with water courses. The buildings were crowned with domes and surrounded by gardens and parks ; lakes were excavated, and every kind of comfort that could be thought of, was provided. I have heard the servants say that there were in it 360 rooms and pavilions, in each of which he resided one day of the year ; some were on the ground floor and some above. The library constituted a gallery by itself. There was a superintendent, a librarian and an inspector chosen from the most trustworthy of the country. There is no book written up to this time in whatever branch of science, but the prince has acquired a copy of it. The library consists of one long vaulted room connected to which are store-rooms. The prince has made along the large room and the store-chambers, scaffolding about the height of a man, three yards wide, of decorated wood, which have shelves from top to bottom ; the books are arranged on the shelves and for every branch of learning there are separate scaffolds. There are also catalogues in which the titles of all the books are entered. Only persons of standing are admitted to the library. I myself inspected this library down-stairs and up-stairs, when all was still in order. I observed in each room carpets and curtains. I also saw the ventilation chamber, to which the water is carried by pipes which surround it on every side in circulation.

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“The rooms set apart for the books had, along the walls, shelves which did not surpass the height of a man so that it was not necessary to use dangerous ladders, to reach the books on the top-shelves. The scaffolds were all furnished with shutters, some on hinges, while others were let down from the top, and with locks. These locked shelves though not very commodious for the distribution of the books had the advantage that they preserved the rich and beautiful bindings from dust and sun-light.

“The books were placed on the book-shelves divided in sections so as to form little heaps. The names of the authors and the titles were written on the backs of the books. The arrangement was according to the subject ; and to facilitate the search for a book required, the content of each of section of a book-shelf was written upon a piece of paper which was attached to the shelf outside. These papers also indicated of works which were incomplete or defective²⁰.”

Almost simultaneously with the Buwayhid chief, the Samanid Amir Núḥ b. Maṣṣūr established a large library at Bukhara which was visited by Avicenna who writes that it consisted of many rooms. “Each room was full of books arranged in cases, row upon row. Books on Arabic literature and poetry were kept in one room, those on law and jurisprudence in another. Thus to every particular science was allotted a particular room. I went through the catalogue of the books of the ancient (Greek) authors and searched from it the books which I needed. I found in it books of which many people never heard the name even, and also never saw before or after. So I read these books and benefited by them and realised the position of every author in his field of science.”²¹

These were the state libraries of the Muslim rulers. It has been already seen that they originated during the early Umayyad period. Many others of the later period will be described and discussed later. But over and above them there were also many other collections of books which were gathered by individual scholars and lovers of them during the various periods. They

20. *Ahsanut-Taqasim* vol. I, p. 449.

21. *Tabaqatu'l-Atibba* vol. II, p. 4.

originated earlier than the state libraries. During the life time of the Prophet, Abu Hurayra, 'Amr b al-'Aṣ, Anas and some others, had their collections of the Traditions of Islam. After them 'Urwa b. Zubayr, Imám Zuhri and several other followers had large collections of materials concerning the Traditions and the life of the Prophet. After them many scholars like Ibn Isháq, Waqidi, Ibn Sa'd and others collected good personal libraries. During this very period, different scholars possessed large materials on Arabic poetry, Arabic linguistics, Arabic vocabulary etc.

This keen interest among the scholars, for books and libraries continued for many centuries.

Abu'l-Wafa b. Salama a well-to-do scholar of Hamadán possessed a rich library consisting mainly of early Arabic poetry. It is out of this library that Abu-Tammám (807-846), selected his anthology of early Arabic poetry which showed that the art of poetry was successfully cultivated among all ranks of the early Arabian Society, and proves his better taste for poetry than his own poems. Like Abu'l-Wafá, 'Alí b. Yahya the Astronomer also possessed a rich library in a village near Baghdad. Faḥ b. Kháqán (d. 247/A.D.) the descendant of a royal family and bosom friend of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil also had a nice big library, like which no one ever saw. It was built up for him by Ali b. Yahya the Astronomer, and was visited by the scholars of Basra and Kufa. He was himself an extremely intelligent and literary man, highly social, well-behaved, sincere, kindly and generous towards all those who met him²². He had great love for books and always carried one with himself, and read it whenever he got an opportunity²³.

He built up a rich library for himself also, at a later stage of his life. He was a man of short stature and ugly appearance but possessed the highest qualities of head and heart. He was well-read in Arabic literature and Arabian sciences. He had ready wit and possessed all the qualities which are necessary for the pleasant

22. *Irshad*, vol. VI pp. 116-19.

23. *Ibid.* p 56

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Companion of a king. He was introduced to al-Mutawakkil by Fath b. Kháqán, continued to be a great favourite of all the Caliphs from al-Mutawakkil to al-Mu'tamid, and was respected by all of them. Each of them bestowed upon him large gifts. He became very rich during the later period of his life, had a nice estate with a big palace, in the vicinity of Baghdad. In it he had a rich library which contained books on all subjects. People from various places came and stayed there, consulted the books, and all their expenses were defrayed by 'Alí b. Yahya himself. Abu-Ma'shar the well-known Astronomer while going from Khurasan for the pilgrimage of Mecca, visited this library, and having realised its value gave up the idea of pilgrimage, stayed there for a long time, and learnt Astronomy thoroughly which he did not know when he came there²⁴.

During the Muslim rule, not only the Caliphs and kings and their courtiers in all the Islamic dominions possessed big or small libraries, but many of the Muslim scholars also possessed their own libraries. Muhammad b. Hazm of Spain who was a poor teacher, had gathered a good library, partly by purchasing them and partly by personally copying them. Many scholars visited and made use of it²⁵. Abu Mutarif Futays b. Sulayman the judge, accumulated a rich library, which was sold after his death for 40,000 Dinars²⁶. Shaykh Mubarak, (d 1001) the father of Faydi, had in his personal library, according to his own statement, about thirty thousand volumes before entering the court of Akbar. Most of these books were autographs of their authors and five hundred of them were copied by Mulla Mubarak himself²⁷. His son Faydi had four thousand and six hundred books in his personal library. Many other libraries belonging to the Indian kings of the different dynasties, and the governors of the various provinces and their courtiers and the Muslim scholars are mentioned by S. Abu Zafar Nadwi in his articles on the subject²⁸.

24. *Irshadu'l-Arib*, vol V. pp. 459-476

25. *Takmila*, by Ibn Abbar, No. 312.

26. *Kitabus-Sila*, by Ibn Bashkual. pp. 3, 4-5.

27. Introduction to the Ms, of Mulla Mubarak's Tafsir, which is preserved in the library of the late Sayyed Taqi of Lucknow.

28. *Islamic Culture* vol, 19, pp. 329-347.

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There were so many large libraries in the various parts of Islamic dominions during the Muslim rule, that it will take several volumes to describe all of them in detail. I will, therefore, give some details of about half a dozen of the most important of them, from different countries :

(1) The pride of place must be given to the library of the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad. It was founded by Maṣṣūr, organised by Hárún al-Rashid as a part of the Baitu'l-Hikmat, and further improved by his illustrious son al-Mámún. In it were collected together all the Greek works which were acquired by Hárún at the conquest of Asia Minor as well as those which were collected by the commission which was sent by al-Ma'mun to Byzantium to get the Greek scientific works. The books translated from different languages into Arabic as well as those independently written in it before or during the Abbasid period also must have been added to it. There must have been attached to it a large number of scholars, calligraphers, book binders, and supervisors. It must have been far more richer than the library of the Daru'l 'Ilm founded by Sabúr b. Ardshir, in the Karkh quarter, which had hundred thousand volumes some of which were copied by most celebrated calligraphers.

(2) Similar to this library was that of al-Hakam the illustrious Umayyad ruler of Spain. "He had collected such a large number of books," says Ibn Khaldun, "as were never collected by any king before him".* There were four hundred thousand volumes in his library. Their catalogue consists of 44 volumes, each of which consisted of twenty leaves in which were written only the names of the books. Al-Hakam had sent his agents in every direction in order to purchase manuscripts. He sent one thousand Dinars to Abúl-Fāraj of Isfahan and obtained his first copy. Similarly he sent money to Abu Bakr al-Abḥarí and other reputed authors also in order to get the first copy of their works. He had read all the books in his library and annotated most of them. He had collected in his palace, master calligraphers and expert book-binders. During his reign Cordova became a good market for books.

* Ibn Khaldun vol, 4, p. 146

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(3) The third important library of the middle ages was that of the Fatimids of Egypt. The first three Fatimid rulers were highly educated and extremely interested in arts and sciences. This cultural interest was shared by several of their successors also. They had founded several colleges and established among others, a large state-library which was housed in their palace but was open to public who was provided with all possible help to make the best use of the books which it contained. It is difficult to fix the number of the books it contained, for the various authorities give different numbers. But there is no doubt that it contained, several hundred thousands of them, on all the various arts and sciences, for 120 thousands of them was given away by Şalaḥuddīn to his secretary as a gift, and a large number of them was auctioned twice a week for a whole year²⁹.

(4) Another important library was that of Tripolis in Africa. Here Qāḍī Abu Ṭālib b. 'Ammār had established himself as master of the place, and founded an academy in which his son, Fakhru'l-Mulk also took keen interest. This academy was considered to be one of the wonders of the world. It had a rich library. The Banu 'Ammār had bestowed great care upon it. Like al-Ḥakam of the Cordova, they had agents in all the of Islamic world, in order to procure books for them. They had accumulated three million books in it and employed 180 copyists, thirty of whom worked day and night. All of them were well-paid. Scholars and students from all parts of the Islamic world visited and used it³⁰.

(5) Muslim India did not lag behind the other parts of the Islamic world, in its interest in books and libraries. Most of the rulers belonging to the different dynasties as well as their governors and the independent and semi-independent chiefs of the various provinces were educated men and possessed their own libraries. Many of them have been described by different scholars. Khan Khanan, for example, built up an excellent library at Ahmedabad when he was its governor. In it he employed numerous translators, paper-makers, calligraphers rubricators, gilders, painters, copyists, cutters, book-binders, and librarians and their assistants. Each of

29. Islamic Culture vol. 111. p. 230.

30. Islamic Culture vol. 3. p. 236.

them was an expert in his own profession. Most of the books in his library were either autographs of their authors, or were copied by illustrious calligraphers³¹.

Over and above the regular independent libraries and those attached to Madrasas, or some of the mosques and Khanqahs, there were also several academies and clubs in which, in addition to the materials for enjoyment of the members there were kept large number of books. A club of this type in Damascus of the Umayyad period has been already mentioned. There had also developed several others of them during the Abbasid period. One of them was founded by Šábur b. Ardsheer in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad, in the year 381, and was furnished with a choice library as well as materials for the musical entertainments of the members and the visitors. The value of the library may be judged from the fact that it had hundred copies of the Qura'n written by the Banu Muqla, and 10400 volumes on various subjects. Most of these volumes were either autographs of their authors or were such as had been in the possession of famous men. It was a rendezvous for literary men and was visited by notable men like Abu'l-'Ala al. Ma'arri who met several distinguished persons there, and admired it in poetry as well as in prose. A similar academy was founded at a later period, by Sharif al-Radi who met in it his admirers, and provided it with facilities for literary pursuits³². The keepers of the academies were called custodians and not librarians. Their members, according to Nicholson, "enjoyed pretty much the same privileges as belong to the Fellows of an Oxford or Cambridge Collèges."³³

The establishment of so many libraries either independently or as parts of the Madrasas and mosques, in spite of high prices of books, shows the great interest in them, not only of their founders, but also of the general public. As a matter of fact during the middle ages, it was a fashion among the Muslims of high ranks to keep a library with beautifully bound book even if they knew nothing about their contents. This is illustrated by the fact that at an auction of books in Cordova, which was not uncommon during

31. Ibid vol. 19, pp. 329-347.

32. Margoliouth's Introduction to the Letters of Abul-Ala, pp. III-XXIV.

33. *A Literary History of the Arabs* p. 267.

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those days, when al-Haḍramí, a great scholar and passionate lover of books, bade for a rare manuscript in which he was highly interested, another bidder who was a rich man, made a higher offer far beyond the means of al-Haḍramí and secured the book, Al-Haḍramí then tried to discuss with the purchaser the subject-matter of the book. The purchaser told him that he was completely ignorant of its content and subject matter, but he purchased it because its size and binding would help him in filling a gap in his book-shelf.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that book-trade flourished greatly in the Islamic dominions during the middle ages. In Baghdad there were one hundred book-shops during the third century of Hijri era³⁴, Cordova also served as a good market for books. The same must have been the case with many other important Muslim towns also. Some of the book-sellers made a large fortune out of their trade. And some scholars also, like yáqút, worked as agents for procuring books (Dallālu Kutub).

Many of the libraries mentioned above, however, were public libraries. Several of the private and personal libraries also, as we have seen, were open to scholars and students, in general, who were provided with all the facilities to use them. Some of them lent books to scholars without taking any security for them. Yáqút says that he borrowed two hundred books from the libraries at Marw without depositing any security for them.

Almost every important town in Islamic dominion had one or more public libraries, during the middle ages when the whole of Europe did not possess a single public library. The oldest European public library is the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris which was developed during the 16th century out of the royal library of Louis the XI who had founded it after his return from the East where he was highly impressed by its libraries. The library of the British Museum was established during the 17th century and that of Berlin and Vienna assumed public character probably after the library of the British Museum.

34. Islamic Culture Vol, III, p. 214.

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The organisation and the system of administration of these libraries must have been influenced by those of the medieval libraries of the Islamic countries, just as the system of the working of the modern British hospital has been very largely influenced by that of the medieval Islamic hospitals.

But it is strange that no reference is made in any of the books on libraries, in general, to any of the medieval Islamic libraries. The earliest treatment of the subject by a European writer is found in the thesis submitted by an Italian girl student, Olga Pinto, in Italian language which was translated into English by F. Krenkow and was published in the *Islamic Culture* (pp-210-243) in 1929.

It is the duty of the young Muslim scholars to make known to the modern world, the achievement of their fore-fathers.



Democracy and Islam

by
Prof. Jamal Khwaja

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim world is passing through a deep spiritual crisis. The classical interpretation of basic Islamic concepts and values has more or less ceased to command the authentic assent of numerous intelligent and informed Muslim believers, and there is a sort of intellectual and spiritual vacuum in the Islamic world. Different ideas and ideologies are competing to fill in the vacuum in the Muslim world which comprises approximately one-fifth of the human family. Muslim countries have recently won political independence from western domination, but continue to be dependent on others, technologically or economically. They resist the idea of remaining camp followers and imitators of the western or Communist establishments. There is an inner demand for re-interpreting basic Islamic concepts, values and institutions to make them viable in the modern age. But an intellectually and spiritually satisfying Islamic vision has not yet crystallised for the vast majority. Expression such as 'Islamic democracy', 'Islamic socialism', 'Islamic Economics', 'Quranic constitution', 'Sovereignty of Allah' are tenuous and are often, rather always, used in a manner, both simplistic and misleading.

The word 'democracy' has become a prestigious word (like 'truth', 'justice', or 'beauty'), and quite diverse political systems claim to be democratic. Many Muslims believe that Islam is the best form of democracy.

The purpose of these lectures is (a) to make an accurate analysis of the concept of democracy, (b) critically to assess democracy, and its alternatives, (c) to ascertain how far, or in what sense, Islamic political thought and practice stand for democracy, and finally, (d) briefly to review the acceptability and prospects of democracy in the Islamic world today.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

The Essence of Democracy : The word 'democracy' is derived from the Greek words 'demos' (people) and 'kratia' (rule), and its literal meaning is 'rule by the people at large'. To rule means exercising supreme power in deciding and managing public affairs, maintenance of law and order, security of the realm, fixation of the powers, functions and remuneration of different occupational classes within a heirarchical power structure over-arching plural associations within society as a whole, and finally, the legitimate authority to punish including the sentence of death to offenders, real or alleged, of any law, regulation or executive order. This supreme power is termed 'sovereignty', and the person or persons possessing it the 'sovereign'.

The smooth functioning of society, obviously, requires law and order, which in turn, requires an effective power structure. Otherwise, the group-identity and unity of the society would disintegrate, and sub-groups would emerge, which may further disintegrate for a similar reason, leading more or less to a state of anarchy.

Historically, sovereignty almost always has been exercised over territories of various sizes by single individuals (kings or tribal chiefs), whether or not they had some advisory council of elders or dignitaries. However, every sovereign has always been subject to some form of constraint. The sovereign has always had to contend against those who, while fully accepting his authority as supreme have yet sought to demarcate its proper sphere, not on grounds of rivalry or jealousy, but purely on principle. They are the holy men and the wise and learned men who have ever demanded that the ruler be not merely strong but also good. They have further held that the criterion of good and evil is not the sweet will of the sovereign but some principles, either Divinely revealed to the holy, or discovered by the wise. In other words, while the sovereign wields the power of the sword, the latter wield the power of the

spirit. This tension between the two dimensions of power ever irks, and at times, even threatens the sovereign. Indeed, some sovereigns have even aspired to combine the two dimensions of power, but in vain.

The sovereign faces quite a different type of challenge from his rivals, internal and external, who wish to displace him as the sovereign. The constant apprehension of rebellion from some dissatisfied and powerful rival makes the sovereign responsive to the demands of both prudence and morality. This principle also applies when the people become the sovereign in a democratic state, and the government is called upon to resolve peacefully the tensions between different groups and interests.

The Historical Background of Democracy : The first known societies whose sovereign was not an individual but the people, as such, were the Greek city states in the pre-Christian era. But these city states comprised two categories of people (a) the free men or respectable citizens enjoying equal authority as decision makers in all public affairs, and (b) slaves or inferior citizens without any 'say' or authority in public matters. Since Aristotle accepted the *status quo* and did not think it was right and responsible that all members of the city state should enjoy equal rights, irrespective of their 'status', he used the word 'democracy' in the perjorative sense of 'rule by the mob'. Equating 'people's power' with mob rule Aristotle preferred a restricted elitist approach to democracy, in the absolute sense. The Romans later on also retained the distinction between the 'patricians' and the 'plebians', as, indeed, all world religions have rejected the idea of people's power, as such, irrespective of religion, sect, caste, class, or sex.

Christianity, for instance, held that power belonged to the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, and to the king, as the shadow of God. Likewise, Islam gave no share in the right and power of governance to the common man who was bound to obey God and the Prophet, or his successors. In Hinduism, the Brahman law-givers and

Kshatria warriors alone wielded supreme power, while all others were expected merely to perform duties appropriate to their caste.

Earlier still the pagan or tribal ethos had placed supreme authority in the chief who, as the strongest among the strong, could coerce others into submission. However, it was the general belief that his strength and prowess were the gift of the gods who could withdraw their grace if ever the chief did anything to displease the gods. This honest faith restrained the chief from violating the group ethos or abusing his authority. It also implied the concept of magic as a power quite different from normal physical power. And it was the witch-doctor who wielded this 'spirit power'.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam believe there is a Divine hand in history, though humans enjoy a limited freedom in the performance of their allotted roles in the great drama of history being shaped by Divine providence. The chief characters in this drama were, obviously, kings, nobles and priests, while the masses were mere witnesses rather than participants in matters of state. Their participation was confined to simple joys of family life, labour for livelihood, service to their superiors and the worship of God. Obedience to God, for the common man, implied loyalty to the king, the shadow of God. Rebellion against the king who had not broken any Divine law amounted to blasphemy. The common man could not even dream that he had any legitimate share whatsoever in sovereignty.

The modern period of western history begins in the 15th century with the Renaissance—an elitist cultural renewal of the spirit of classical Greek Humanism. It was soon followed in the 16th century by the Reformation—a religious challenge to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church and the subordination of individual conscience to a supposedly infallible Pope, as the Vicar of Christ. Though both these movements had some traces of democracy in their thought and value structures they were not informed by the spirit and temper of social and political egalitarianism and people's power—the essential features of modern democracy. Martin

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Luther's approach, though anti-authoritarian in relation to the Pope was definitely authoritarian in relation to the king.

The 17th century, however, saw the first stirring of the republican spirit in Cromwell's England, even the beheading of the king in the name of people's power. The steady progress of natural science and independent philosophical enquiry in western Europe culminated in the 18th century Enlightenment—the developed and mature version of the Renaissance. The integration of accurate analytical reason and the scientific method led to the scientific revolution and the secular revolution in the second half of the 18th century. Far reaching social and economic changes, brought about by technological innovations in methods of production, combined to bring the capitalist, the merchant, the entrepreneur, the professional man, the factory worker and the secular intellectual on the centre stage of public activity, thereby relatively side-lining the landed aristocracy, the army and the church. In other words, new power relationships emerged in the British society. The process was weak and slow, to begin with, but gathered ever-increasing momentum in the 19th century. The culmination of this process took place in the early 20th century. The Parliament Act of 1911 represents the completion of the process begun in 1832 and signifies the shifting of supreme power from the hitherto dominant sections of British society to the populace in the literal sense.

The idea of democracy is a living and still growing concept. The earliest elitist direct democracy of the Greek city states, long ago, evolved into the representative (but still elitist) democracy of the Roman Senate. The Magna Charta of 1215 and Bill of Rights of 1689 were notable landmarks in bringing democracy in England nearer the common man in late medieval and early modern times. The American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 are significant stages in the growth of democracy. The remarkable social and political reforms in 19th century England, under the inspiration of Bentham's Utilitarianism, and liberalism,

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paved the way for adult franchise and subsequently for the equality of the sexes. The impact of Marx later contributed to the emergence of yet another dimension in the evolving concept of democracy—the state ownership and control of industry. One single word which best sums up the formative sources and constitutive strands of modern democracy is 'Humanism'.

Humanism implies unconditional respect for the individual and his spiritual autonomy, independent rational search for truth, tolerance of plural viewpoints and of plural results of the human search for truth, goodness and beauty, creation of beauty, active concern for universal well-being, and the courage of optimistic life and affirmation despite the trials, travails and tragedies of the human situation. And democracy is the political expression of humanism.

II

SALIENT FEATURES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

(a) *People's power and government by consent* : People's power and respect for the dignity and freedom of the individual, irrespective of all contingent factors or circumstances, demand that the people be governed with their consent. The freedom of every individual must be subject to the like freedom of every other. This naturally requires the imposition of law and order on the basis of a hierarchical power structure whose apex is responsible and accountable to the people. Democracy is a system of government whereby people rule themselves through either a sovereign Parliament comprising elected representatives of the people, or through an elected President who, as the Chief Executive, enjoys near supreme power. The elected representatives or the President function as the alter-ego of the people, as it were, and govern in accordance with laws framed after due deliberation in the general interest of society.

Parliament or the President need not consult the people on each and every matter. The people, however, continue to be the sovereign, in the ultimate sense, since Parliament or the President enjoy merely delegated supreme authority for the period for which they have been elected. Thereafter supreme authority reverts, or lapses, to the people who are again called upon to give a fresh mandate to whomsoever they may choose. In any case the individual retains his spiritual autonomy. This, incidentally, is also, the case with voluntary submission to any religious authority and its prescribed discipline, provided the individual is not denied the right to abrogate his earlier decision in the exercise of his inalienable freedom.

(b) *Channelisation of the People's will and wishes* : The Parliament decides policies, frames laws, issues directives, while the council of ministers (which is essentially a committee of Parliament headed by the Prime Minister and fully responsible to Parliament) controls and oversees the functioning of the government. The party

system ensures shared views among the members of Parliament and provides a definite thrust and direction to the government. The great powers and prerogatives of the Prime Minister enable him to guide and lead the party. The Presidential system works in a different way, but these differences are immaterial in the present context.

(c) *The Right to Govern & the Right to Dissent* : The cardinal principle of democracy is that the majority should govern, but the minority has the full and unfettered right of dissent. Each side must respect the right of the other. Dissent must be peaceful and not amount to obstruction, directly or indirectly. The majority should not grudge if the minority actively propagates truth, as it sees it, and aspires to win over the sovereign people by the time the next election falls due.

The right of the majority to govern or, in other words, to make numerical superiority the criterion of validity is based on the assumption that the majority of human beings will not go wrong in the majority of cases, and in those cases where they do go wrong, they will soon realise their error and rectify it. The right of the minority to dissent and propagate their dissent is based on the fact that the majority, in fact, has gone wrong in enough cases and the minority opinion proved to be wiser to justify both the assumptions.

The concrete method of counting heads rather than weighing them has been adopted because figures or numbers can be accurately counted, while abstract reasons cannot be objectively and accurately evaluated. The verdict of the majority is accepted provisionally, as if, it were the truth or the voice of wisdom, but the possibility of error is also conceded and full opportunity ensured for the review and re-evaluation of the issues involved.

(d) *Free Enquiry and Freedom of Belief* : Knowledge is essential for man's success. The pursuit and possession of truth—inner and outer—is a pre-condition of satisfying human needs and purposes. Now the truths of science are empirically verifiable, while truths of logic and mathematics are self-evident, or indubitably deducible from self-evident premisses. Consequently,

systematic enquiry in the sphere of science, mathematics and logic leads to universal agreement in the course of time. But religious, ethical and aesthetic truth-claims cannot be proved either empirically or deductively, no matter how strongly and deeply one might accept them as true. Such truth-claims may be called 'cultural' to distinguish them from factual or descriptive truths, on the one hand, and logical or mathematical truths on the other.

All cultural truth-claims, to begin with, are socially conditioned or 'truths of one's milieu'. In the case of really independent and enquiring minds the truths of the milieu may become existential 'truths of one's being'. Even so the certainty of the authentic person remains 'existential', not logical. In other words, no method is available to human beings to reach objective certainty in the sphere of cultural beliefs. Consequently, plural viewpoints and judgements will always remain. Now democracy implies the willing acceptance of cultural pluralism. This pluralism does not amount to scepticism, and does not exclude the possibility, even the desirability, of genuine commitment to values and collective, organised, action for their effective realisation. While the approach of cultural pluralism rejects the idea of infallible truth, the approach is based on the principle that the convergence of the judgements of well-informed and independent persons greatly increases the 'probability-value' of the agreed truth-claims. The assumption, in other words, is that open, free enquiry by different observers having different backgrounds, attitudes and interests, promotes a many-sided analysis and maximises the prospects of a balanced evaluation of competing truth-claims. Free enquiry is meant to be a continuing self-corrective process without terminating at any point of history.

The freedom of belief implies the guarantee of equality of consideration and of opportunity, no matter where the exercise of the freedom may lead the individual, so long as he respects the like freedom of others.

(e) *Freedom of Expression and of Association* : The freedom of belief remains meaningless without the freedom of expression. Likewise, the freedom of expression remains incomplete unless it be

supplemented by the freedom of association and propagation of truth, as one sees it. These three freedoms go together. Plural associations are the inevitable consequence of the operation of different interests and of genuine inner freedom of choice for human agents,

Democracy means fully accommodating each and every organised interest-group in the over-arching unity of the sovereign state. Democracy guarantees the inalienable right of all individuals or groups to be respected and heard by all other individuals and the state, as such, no matter how great the differences may be. It is impossible to improve upon the famous declaration by J.S. Mill, and earlier, by Voltaire in more or less the same words—'I do not agree with a single word of what you have said. But I shall give my life to defend your right to say so'.

(f) *Clash of Interests and their Resolution* : The clash of interests is inevitable in the human situation. Whether or not the Marxian theory of class struggle be the complete truth, the limitations of natural resources and the realities of human psychology do lead to severe conflict between different interests which get organised, sooner or later, to promote their respective interests. The task of governance is essentially their judicious regulation for maximising human welfare. That form of government is the best which produces maximum human welfare with the minimum conflict and violence. It is not practically possible completely to eliminate violence. But democratic governance is the best possible hope for approximating to the ideal situation. This is so because the democratic permission of free dissent prevents the piling up of destructive passions and their explosion in the form of terrorism or civil strife. The accepted right of the majority to govern and the equally accepted right of dissent cut at the roots of violence. Public ventilation of criticism and a free press act as safety valves for reducing the pressure of discontent, though the abuse of these modalities often leads to quite contrary results. In general, the good sense of peace-loving citizens results in the virtue of constructive compromise, but, at times, to the vice of appeasement as well.

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(g) *Consequence of the Exercise of Power* : The continuing exercise of power is the source of tremendous satisfaction and the keenest pleasure, but at the same time brings about physical, mental and emotional wear and tear and a corroding effect upon the moral fibre of the wielder of power. Long years in power result in skill and confidence, but also a reduced receptivity to new perspectives and possibilities of action. However, very few rulers voluntarily abdicate power, since the lust for power is, perhaps, the most insatiable among human passions. The clinging to power generally leads to attitudes and policies, not best calculated to promote general welfare, but rather the short-term interests of the ruler himself. Now democracy is the only system of government which makes the public the final judge to decide whether to extend the term of the government or terminate its services. It often happens that despite being unhappy with their rulers the people prefer continuity to change because they are afraid that the alternatives are likely to be even worse.

(h) *Independence of the Judiciary* : Democracy, as the rule of self-framed law, is opposed to rule by fiat or externally imposed regulations. But the application of laws to concrete situation requires considerable legal reflection and juristic interpretation, specially, when new situations and problems arise in society. The judiciary performs this function independently. If, however, the interpretations placed by the independent judiciary upon the law not be acceptable to the sovereign Parliament, it has the power to change the law. Thus the supremacy or independence of the judiciary and the sovereignty of the people can coexist.

(i) *Distinction between Essence and Form of Democracy* : The essence of democracy is governance by consent and accountability (periodically established) of the rulers to the ruled. Now this essence or nuclear core may be exemplified in different forms or systems of democratic functioning, such as the composition and powers of the chief Executive (President/Prime Minister), the nature and size of the constituencies, the nature and value of the votes cast, the prescribed term of the elected office, the right of recall or

the modes of citizen vigilance, state/federal legislatures etc. A particular form or system of democracy may be preferred because of practical advantages in a given situation. A different or changed situation may demand modifications for improving the working of the system. A system must be judged as democratic so long as people can really change their supreme managers through free and fair elections, no matter what the system may be. To say this is not to deny the importance of finding out which system best suits the needs and conditions of one's own people.

The question may be asked whether the essence of democracy survives in a situation (which has existed at times in India) where a party comes to power and forms the government on the basis of a numerical majority in the legislature, but does not win the majority of the total votes polled in the country as a whole. The same question may be raised when the largest single legislature party forms a coalition Government. Such situations are obviously not conducive to stability and effective rule. Nevertheless, the spirit of democracy is not negated since the principle of majority rule continues to operate in the legislature, as such, despite its erosion at a different level. If, however, the people do feel strongly on this issue, suitable modifications could be made in the electoral system. Indeed, there is considerable scope for improvement at several points of the political process of different democratic systems of the world.

It appears there cannot be any one model of ideal democracy to suit all. Each society will have to think out its own version. But this exercise should not be speculative or confined to one's own society or times. Indeed the entire range of human experience must be consulted without any racial, religious or political prejudices or ideological pressure to conform to any golden past or any infallible authority.

III

EVALUATION OF DEMOCRACY

Critics of democracy are very vocal indeed. But they hardly seem to realise that the protagonists of democracy are well aware of these defects. In fact, the critical evaluation of democracy by competent western thinkers is far more penetrating than its facile criticism by the detractors of democracy. But these highly qualified thinkers hold that the alternatives to democracy are even worse, and it is on this ground they prefer democracy. Whatever be the truth of the matter the complexities of the human situation are such that in many cases our choice does not lie between good and evil, but between the greater and the lesser evil.

We shall now state and examine the objections against democracy. The main objections are: (1) Democracy leads to appeasement of voters and corrupt practices. (2) Elections involve enormous expenditure. Those who get elected are forced to compensate for their heavy investment by resorting to unfair means. (3) Democracy leads to extremely slow decision-making and divided responsibility. (4) Democracy results in mediocrity and inefficient administration. (5) Democracy means governance by the unwise majority rather than by the creative and talented few. I shall now comment on each objection in the above order:

(1) To promote the interests of the society as a whole is the very purpose and function of a democratic government. Should it fail to do so the voters would be perfectly justified in voting it out of power. The evil of appeasement sets in only when the government fails to do what is right and reasonable because of the opposition of powerful vested interests who stand to lose or suffer if the right course be adopted. But appeasement is certainly not an inseparable feature of democracy. There are numerous examples of great statesmen who remain responsive to the genuine needs and interests of every group, without fear or favour, but scrupulously avoid appeasing anyone. Likewise, constructive compromise without sacrificing basic principles is a virtue and not a vice.

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As regards rewarding of party workers or helpers or shielding them in cases of wrong doings or irregularities etc., public opinion can and should be channelised for preventing such abuses and evils and other malpractices, say patently false promises at election time, material inducements, harrassment of opponents and so on. But to give up democracy merely because it is liable to such misuses would not be the voice of wisdom. The baby should be washed, not thrown away with the bath.

(2) Elections do involve enormous expenditure, and both individual candidates and political parties are forced to seek funds from industrialists and others, which practice leads to consequences, too well-known to be spelt out. Yet, to abandon the theory and practice of democracy on this score, instead of devising ways and means of removing or reducing the evil consequences of huge election expenditure would amount to falling from the frying pan into the fire. Several democratic countries have already taken steps to reduce the costs of democracy. The state funding of political parties and provision of increased facilities to voters and candidates at elections have already commenced and are steps in the right direction. In any case, the expenditure on the elective process should be viewed in the light of the total consequences of abandoning democracy with the resultant evils of authoritarian forms of government.

(3) This criticism will not bear scrutiny. Slow decision-making and divided responsibility are not integral features of democracy, but merely accompaniments due to the operation of checks and balances and committee deliberations. These features have both advantages and disadvantages. In any case, the negative features can be removed through suitable functional innovations and techniques. As for divided responsibility, the concept of constructive responsibility of the minister concerned is increasingly becoming an established convention. Likewise, the progressive increase in the powers of the Prime Minister in several democracies brings about a correlated enhancement in his sense of responsibility and accountability to the country as a whole.

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(4) & (5) These objections are, perhaps, the most popular but the least weighty. The criticism that democracy makes the foibles of the majority and the idols of the market place rather than the wisdom of the philosophers and the talents of the elite shape the destiny of the people (or as Iqbal's couplet says, democracy counts instead of weighing heads) is a highly misleading over-simplification of the matter.

Firstly, there is no agreement among the philosophers and the other wise men who may think that they are born to rule the masses. Secondly, while counting of heads is a clear and understandable procedure, the weighing of heads is 'sophistry and illusion' for the purpose of reaching an agreed body of conclusions in matters, political, economic or administrative.

Despite the well known disqualifications of the masses, they do have a store of wisdom and commonsense which redeem all their negative qualities. Moreover, democracy is the only system which brings out different perceptions and prescriptions into full awareness. The airing of diverse views creates better understanding of the diverse positions thereby promoting the maximum possible reconciliation between them. A really constructive adjustment holds for some time until fresh tensions arise due to the essential fluidity of the human situation. New interests, new avenues of acquiring wealth or power, new rivalries, new power relations, new methods of production, new needs and aspirations, all conspire to create fresh points of social friction and conflict. The previous compromises and democratic solutions demand a fresh look in the light of an ever developing situation. Thus goes on the human story.

In short, democracy, far from being the government of fools pushing the people towards folly or disaster, contains the promise of overcoming the fads and illusions of any one individual or group. The angularities of each get corrected by those of the other in the melting pot of collective decision-making. History shows that the assemblies of the ignorant masses have done less harm

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to humanity than those great men whose greatness lay in their egos rather than in their vision. This happened because they stood isolated and alienated from the common man, the housewife, the farmer and the worker. The wisdom of the common man is rooted in his experience of sufferings and deprivations, and its value is far greater than the 'sophistry and illusion' of the unverified and unverifiable theories of 'learned fools'.

Alternatives to Democracy : If, for argument's sake, we reject democracy, what alternatives remain ? It would be futile considering such abstract or utopian alternatives as 'Islamic democracy', 'partyless democracy', 'Ram Raj', or Post-Socialist Communism. What appears to be an excellent system on paper may function badly, in practice, because of the complexity of human affairs and the unintended consequences of human choices. An ounce of experience of how western democracy has actually worked has more educative value than tons of arguments in favour of any abstract system. Thus, the only alternatives worth considering are military dictatorship and Soviet Socialism, i.e. Communism in current parlance. What has been termed 'Euro-Communism' has recently emerged in some parts of Europe under Russian hegemony. To the extent that plural parties function, and free and fair elections are held in these countries, the system should be held to be democratic rather than otherwise. The alternatives are, therefore, confined to communism and military dictatorship.

For the present we may profitably ignore variations in different Models of Communist governments and focus our attention on their common feature—the single party system and the absence of free and unfettered expression of opinion under plural auspices.

Party debate and freedom of discussion is an integral part of the Soviet system. But the ban on plural parties makes the intra-party freedom of expression too weak and limited to prevent the attitudes and the politics of secrecy, conspiracy and violence in Communist society. While plural parties and the electoral power of the masses in a democratic state tends to breed corruption and

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appeasement in society, the single party system tends to breed the evils of conspiratorial dissent in the psyche of the politician as well as the citizen. And I, for one, hold that corruption is a lesser evil than conspiracy born from authoritarianism.

Long experience shows and confirms that authoritarianism (no matter how benign to begin with) inevitably degenerates into tyranny. In the final analysis, our choice is not between benign authoritarianism and corrupt democracy, but the evils generally associated with the two. Now while a corrupt democratically formed government can be democratically changed and reformed, a corrupt or tyrannical authoritarian establishment cannot be de-established without recourse to methods fraught with the evils of conspiracy and violence. In short, the demon in the ballot is less evil than the demon in the bullet.

IV

SPIRITUAL AUTONOMY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Can the foregoing analysis of the concept of democracy be reconciled with the concept of the supreme authority of an infallible Quran? Is there not a basic contradiction between the idea of inner freedom, as visualised by democracy, and the idea of total surrender to the 'Book and the example of the Prophet', believed to be, not merely the recipient of Divine revelation, but its most authoritative and natural interpreter? This crucial question merits detailed consideration.

Prima facie, there is a clash between the autonomy of man and the sovereignty of God. But in reality there is no clash, provided we make a distinction between the proper sphere or jurisdiction of autonomous enquiry and the proper sphere or jurisdiction of faith. In other words, if we make a distinction between objective beliefs concerning empirical and logical matters, and existential convictions concerning transcendental matters, we could well combine autonomy, in the sphere of objective beliefs, with surrender to the Scripture, in the sphere of faith in the Unseen-transcendental matters, say revelation, life after death, the final reckoning etc. Questions of fact or of logical implication belong to the sphere of objective belief, and must be dealt with according to the canons of the scientific method or of logic, and not on the basis of any scriptural authority or faith. Truth-claims concerning facts—natural, social, or historical—can be conclusively settled, in principle, on the basis of the scientific method of observation, experiment and formulation and testing of hypotheses. But truth-claims dealing with transcendental matters cannot be conclusively settled on the basis of observation or reasoning. It is only in respect of such matters that the Muslim believer must be required to accept the supreme authority of the Quran. The spheres of objective enquiry and of existential faith should not be confused. If this confusion be avoided, no contradiction remains between spiritual autonomy and the sovereignty of God or faith in the infallibility of the Quran.

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It is significant that the Quran does not refer to objective matters (factual or logical) apart, of course, from some biographical matters concerning the Prophet of Islam and earlier messengers etc. and some basic natural phenomena—the succession of the seasons, and the night and the day, the cycle of birth, growth and death, and so on. However, such references are not meant to provide factual information or details, but rather to evoke proper attitudes or impart wisdom and moral or spiritual guidance. The tendency to read into the verses of the Quran some theory or other of Physics, Biology or Geography etc. is an hermeneutic error.

It is also significant that the Prophet himself never claimed that he had any super-natural access to knowledge concerning objective matters, just as he did not claim any super-natural powers to perform miracles in addition to his gift of prophecy. Here again, the tendency to attribute miraculous powers to the Prophet persists despite numerous Quranic verses declaring that he could not perform miracles and had no knowledge of the Unseen, though the Quran does give him the most exalted status among created beings.

There could hardly be any room for doubt that several opinions and beliefs (apart from the contents of the Quran) were derived from his milieu, as in the case of all human beings. Such beliefs cannot be deemed to be sacrosanct. This was precisely the stand of the second Khalifa both in the Prophet's lifetime and also afterwards when he became the head of the Islamic commonwealth.

The crucial question which we must now answer is whether social, economic, political, administrative matters belong to the category of objective beliefs or of transcendental convictions. The truth is that they belong neither to the one nor the other, but rather, to the category of cultural beliefs which are based partly on factual premisses and partly on value judgments. Now obedience to the clear moral imperatives of the Quran, no less than faith in its transcendental content is binding upon the believer. A clash is, therefore, theoretically possible between the conclusions of an independent or autonomous individual and some Quranic value

judgment or imperative. However, it should not be difficult to resolve any actual conflict between spiritual autonomy and authority of the Quran, if we keep in mind the fact that the Prophet's interpretation of the Quran was always informed by a sturdy commonsense and flexibility instead of being rigid and literal. In fact it was because of his flexible and non-literal approach in the application of Quranic directives or injunctions to the actual situations as they arose in the course of events, that led the early theologians to make the distinction between two types of revelation — verbal revelation *wahi-e-jali* embodied in the corpus of the Quran, and silent non-verbal revelation *wahi-e-khafi* on the basis of which the Prophet took important decisions and made pronouncements as authoritative as the Quran as such. The above distinction was clearly meant to explain the Prophet's freedom of interpretation with respect to the Quran. The theologians, however, did not realise that the above distinction (which is not found in the Quran) would place the believers in a predicament. If they follow the Quran rigidly in the literal sense they would not be following the Prophet's approach ; if they follow his flexible approach in the light of changed conditions modifying some of the Prophet's decisions, he would cease to be the perfect exemplar for all times.

The right and proper Islamic approach is to reject the basic idea of static perfection as such. Not only factual knowledge but human ideals and values grow, and the movement of growth must be helped, not hindered, by the true believer. For instance, would it have been right and proper to oppose the abolition of the institution of slavery on the ground that the Quran does not abolish it? Likewise, would it be proper to oppose the movement for the complete equality of the sexes on the ground that the Quran does not sanction it?

The classical concept of *ijtihad* does provide for continuous growth of Islamic concepts, values and institutions. But the concept itself needs revision to make it relevant and fruitful in the modern age. The classical concept of 'competent authority' in the field of *ijtihad* must be revised to include the people as a whole.

Moreover, the classical concept does not question the proper scope and jurisdiction of religion, but uncritically accepts the traditional Islamic view of the scope of *shariat* as coextensive with life. This 'totalist' approach to religion can not claim universal validity though this approach may work in more or less exclusively Muslim societies or states.

The 'totalist' approach to Islam does not take into account the fact that Muslims are scattered all over the world and that a fairly large percentage live in mixed societies and are members of sovereign states. The concept and approach of Islamic 'totalism' raises grave social psychological and political difficulties and leads to a sense of political separatism on the part of Muslims. They tend to get alienated from the mainstream to their own detriment and also to that of the state and society as a whole. A sense of continuing conflict between the different religious groups composing the state is generated because the spiritual or transcendental concerns of religion get mixed up with politics as the pursuit of power. In short, the programme of reconstructing or modernising the *shariat*, without revising the classical concept of the function of religion in a world composed of sovereign states having multi-religious populations is unsatisfactory.

In the final analysis, individuals and sub-groups must have a deep sense of belonging, not merely to their religious group or to their nation alone, but to the human family transcending all barriers. Creative individuals must reach out for the best in the human family as a whole. The search for ceaseless progress cannot be left to the religious specialists alone, but must involve the people as a whole. Their felt difficulties and groping solutions in respect of religious problems must be fully debated at representative religious assemblies of the entire community, while their political and economic problems must be sorted out and resolved at the level of a sovereign Parliament which accepts the ideal of a Parliament of man.

SELF-PERCEPTION OF MUSLIMS REGARDING DEMOCRACY

It is quite common to hear among Muslim quarters that Islam is democracy, at its best. This line of thinking needs analysis.

Islam, to begin with, was a set of convictions about transcendental matters. During the entire Meccan period (lasting 13 years) of the Prophet's mission, there were no problems of government before the Prophet. These problems or issues arose in Medina with the rapid accretion of political and economic power to the small but expanding Muslim community. Obviously, the Prophet was not a leader democratically elected by his followers who looked upon the Prophet as chosen and inspired by God. Though the Prophet consulted his followers occasionally and some (specially Umar) gave candid advice on matters, administrative and military, this could hardly be said to be a democratic form of government.

The situation after the passing away of the Prophet shows clearly, that though the Khalifa (literally 'successor') was subject to the authority of the Book and the example of the Prophet (*Kitab Wa'l Sunnat*) he was not accountable to the community, and there was no definite procedure to review his actions or decisions. The Khalifa exercised power on the basis of his Islamic piety and his capacity to convince the people that his policies and orders were in line with the Word of God and the, till then, orally reported doings and sayings of the Prophet. This situation prevailed, to a preeminent degree, during the terms of the first two Khalifas, and, to a lesser degree, during the tenure of the third Khalifa. But the term of the fourth Khalifa was marked by acrimonious controversies and civil war. The tragedy of the *Kerbala*, 48 years after the death of the Prophet, was the culmination of the civil strife and struggle for power set in motion by the Umayyad clan of the Quraish tribe to which the Prophet had belonged.

The crucial points relevant to our central theme are that the Khalifa as the chief Executive, was not accountable or responsible to the community of believers ; there was no definite or fixed term

of his high office, there was no clearly laid down procedure for electing or selecting him in the first instance, and for removing him, subsequently, there was no standard or authoritative interpretation of the Book binding upon the Khalifa apart, of course, from oral reports circulating among the believers about the doings and sayings of the Prophet. In short, there was neither any concept of responsibility to the people (in addition to the Khalifa's moral or inner sense of responsibility to God and His Prophet), nor any procedure for unambiguously determining whether the Khalifa's actions were in consonance with the Book and the example (apart from his own assessment or that of others), nor any procedure for the peaceful transfer of authority from one Khalifa to his successor. Apart from voluntary abdication, he could be removed only through assassination or successful armed rebellion. It is significant that the last three of the four pious Khalifas were all victims of political assassination.

It is true that the Islamic political doctrine, in the earliest phase of its history, was opposed to hereditary monarchy and stood for a theological form of republicanism which later on degenerated into monarchy. Even so, the Khalifa, as a monarch, was duty-bound to uphold the Islamic canon law *shariat*. Moreover, his legitimacy or *de jure* authority was conditional upon his upholding the *shariat* as the law of the realm. But the theory did not provide any modalities for his 'election' or the peaceful transfer of power from one Khalifa to another. This was true not only in the beginning, in the case of the first four pious Khalifas, each of whom became President of the Islamic republic in a different way, but remained true for all times to come. The *shariat* did stipulate the removal of the Khalifa in case he failed to uphold and maintain the *shariat*. But in case the Khalifa was powerful enough to establish his effective authority and make his writ run in the realm, there was no legally or even morally approved modality for challenging his authority apart, of course, from rebellion. And this method was both dangerous and controversial.

The *shariat* also stipulates consultation as a desirable way of administration or decision-making. But the composition and

powers of the consultative body were never spelt out, and in any case, their advice was never held to be binding upon the chief executive.

The Quran contains no guidance and gives no clear rules concerning the crucial issue of succession to the Prophet in respect of his political or administrative functions. The Prophet also left no instructions in this regard. The developments, which took place later, are too well known to be recounted, though it must be stated that there is no agreement upon the exact details. Islamic political theory, as it developed in the course of time, became sharply divided into the *Sunni* and the *Shia* schools of thought. While the *Sunni* view stipulated that the Khalifa must be from among the males of the Quraish tribe, the *Shia* view restricted the eligibility of this high office to the house of the Prophet himself. Thus the concept of equality of status, in the full democratic sense, was at no point of time a feature of the republican temper or constitution of Islam even in the earliest golden period. However, Islam did stand for complete social equality among the believers, in every walk of life — the mosque, the dining table, the battle field and so on. Thus, while Islam stood for egalitarianism and also republicanism, it cannot be said that it stood for democracy, in the full sense of the term.

There are some other serious limitations in the Islamic political and social concepts. For instance, neither the Quran nor the *shariat* ever abolished slavery, as an institution, so that the concept of complete equality of status and of opportunity never became a living reality. Although Islam gave much more legal rights and a much higher status to women, as compared to the norms of the time, this did not amount to complete equality of the sexes. Again, while Islam stood for a level of tolerance and equitable treatment to non-Muslims, far in advance of the then prevailing Christian and Jewish norms, the tolerance did not amount to complete equality of all citizens. Thus, (a) the notion of complete equality of the rights, duties and opportunities of the individual, independently of caste, colour, creed and sex, and (b) the notion of accountability and responsibility of the ruler to

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the people and a clear modality for the peaceful transfer of *de jure* authority of the head of state, are not present in Islamic political thought and practice.

The Islamic concepts of the fraternity of believers, their social equality, tolerance and justice towards followers of other religions, near-equality of women with men, permission of divorce, permission of inter-religious marriage within certain limits and egalitarian laws of inheritance, certainly represent a creative advance on the then conditions of the human family³¹. A legitimate pride in this fact is natural and also justifiable. But it should not be allowed to stand in the way of an honest and balanced evaluation of its imperfections or limitations. It is undeniable that the human family has gently outgrown the Islamic level of excellence in all fields of life.

In the sphere of democracy the west has made tremendous advances in building infra-structures and procedures which promote democratic values and human welfare — the separation of the executive and the judiciary, the secrecy of the ballot, the party system, the collective responsibility of the cabinet, the freedom of the press, the system of recall, proportional representation, the permanence of the services, and so on. Avowedly, every institutional mechanism or system has good points as well as bad. The world itself is imperfect and imperfectable, though, obviously, human efforts must go on to improve matters. In doing so we must be guided by our own and also the experience of the human family, as a whole. Institutions which have evolved over a long period of time, and which definitely fills a vital human need, should not be summarily rejected, merely because of their attendant evils, or abuses, unless and until we can provide effective alternative ways of satisfying the genuine needs in question. Otherwise, the reforms would be self-defeating, no matter whether they be made in the name of Islamic democracy, socialism or what not. Social space has its own logic which cannot be ignored. Success in practice is the only test of the value of proposed reforms. No romantic notions or nostalgia for a golden past can be a substitute

for the historical and sociological approach to problems of democracy.

Obstacles to Democracy In the Islamic Tradition: Some obstacles³² stand in the way of the Muslims' acceptance of democracy in the modern sense. The first obstacle is caused by the widespread apologetic approach to the Tradition. This approach prevents a candid assessment of the Tradition in terms of both its achievements and limitations. Even highly educated Muslims see only the bright side of Islam and ignore the dark spots on the moon.

The second obstacle is the fear of the social consequences of dissent from the majority position. This fear prevents an open dialogue between authentic believers having different views within the parameters of Islam. Keeping one's innermost views and attitudes to oneself is supposed to be both prudence and courtesy to those who differ from oneself. This applies not only to different sects within Islam but also to one's own group. One may occasionally open out before very intimate friends, but certainly not express his views in writing. This makes the orthogenetic growth of the tradition either impossible or extremely slow, as can be seen in the case of the religious reform movement initiated by Sir Syed. Even after a lapse of a century his ideas are supposed to be dangerous heresies which should be politely ignored rather than seriously discussed even at Aligarh itself.

Perhaps, even more serious than the fear of dissent is what the philosophical psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm, terms the 'fear of freedom'. The traditional Muslim develops a fear of independent thinking and suppresses his genuine attitudes and feelings or his intellectual difficulties, as if their mere registration, at the conscious level, would amount to blasphemy or sin. Any spontaneous disagreement from the generally received position or doctrine is interpreted as a sign of spiritual perversity which needs to be cured at the earliest by spiritual means. This approach saps the moral courage, intellectual vitality and spiritual creativity of the entire community. Muslims possessing high technical and professional

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qualifications and abundant common sense, seem to shudder at the idea of expressing an independent opinion or even attempting to form one on socio-ethical or religious issues. Seemingly a case of humility, it is really a case of the fear of freedom and fear of enquiry. This approach leads to a compartmentalised rather than an integrated outlook and personality. This strategy of living and thinking can never lead to authentic being without which religious faith is nothing more than a conceptual corpse the believer carries along, lest he be accused of disloyalty to his tradition.

Another obstacle to the growth of democratic attitudes is the lack of suitable popular literature on Islamic liberalism, humanism and the social sciences. Islamic literature continues to be almost solely produced by either traditional Muslim writers or by the protagonists of Islamic resurgence. The latter group disagrees with the traditional or conservative school of Islam as well as the liberal approach of Sir Syed, Abul Kalam Azad, *et al.*

Yet another obstacle in the way of quick and wide acceptance of Islamic liberalism is the intellectual isolation of the *Ulama* and their almost total neglect of comparative religion, history, social sciences etc as well as the valuable work of western scholars on Islam and other religions. It is not realised that contemporary western scholarship, at its best, is no longer subject to the prejudices, fads and foibles of Christian missionaries, apologists or imperialists. of the previous century.

VI

WHITHER ISLAM ?

Let us now briefly survey some selected Muslim countries to find out the acceptability and prospects of democracy in the Islamic world.

The Muslim countries of Asia and Africa at last, have broken loose the shackles of colonial rule and are looking forward to ending their industrial backwardness and cultural stagnation. The Muslim world is vibrant with new life and vigour and fervent aspirations of a new Islamic resurgence. Because of geo-political and economic factors, oil wealth, super-power conflicts, the growing population of Asia and Africa and a new sense of awareness of their grand cultural heritage (which awareness is considerably indebted to the scholarly labours of western researchers), the emerging limitations and imbalances of western culture and society, the demand of the relatively deprived section of the human family for the equitable sharing of scarce natural resources and the communications revolution which has reduced the globe to a district, the Muslim countries, stretching from Morocco to Indonesia, are tremendously important in world affairs.

Muslim intellectuals and leaders are, however, totally perplexed on the issue of democracy. In the absence of a democratic culture, national debate on basic issues and the politics of consensus is, generally, ruled out. There are no well established conventions or laws guaranteeing fundamental rights including the right to interpret the basic concepts and values of their own cherished religious tradition. Authoritarian institutions or reformers of one type or the other seek to impose their own schemes of life and styles of Islamic piety. They seek to solve issues of the utmost importance to millions of Muslims on the basis of their own individual or 'syndicated' wisdom. No matter how sincere or benevolent the persons concerned might be, but alas ! the chronicles of history over-flow with stories of the corrupting influence of power, without any checks and balances, and the sobering influence of free discussion.

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In what follows I shall confine myself to a few selected Muslim countries and assess the prospect of democracy without attempting to give any detailed factual information. Excellent books and monographs on Area Studies are available, and they are indispensable for the serious student of human affairs.

To start from our neighbour, Pakistan, Muslims there are split on the issue of democracy. One school of thought stands for the restoration of democracy in the western sense, while a substantial section disapproves of the party system and free elections of the western type on the ground that corruption is its in-built feature. While Ayub Khan had earlier experimented with controlled democracy, Ziaul Haq stands for Islamic democracy which should be partyless. One can hardly avoid being reminded of the approach of Jai Prakash Narain.

The party system is certainly being misused. But is there any effective substitute for the crucial function it performs in the complex political process? Indeed, a partyless candidate would not be able to muster organizational and financial support. Moreover, atomic partyless individual members of a legislature would find it practically impossible to steer the country in an agreed direction. Agreement on basic policies and their modalities of implementation is a prerequisite of successful administration. And this requires organised publicity and debate which is what parties do, apart from setting up candidates for election. Thus, the concept of partyless democracy appears to be a futile exercise in utopian or abstract thinking. It is immaterial whether this exercise is the result of disenchantment with the sordid compulsions of politics or of the passion for Islamising democracy.

Iran : The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979 was, evidently, a massive upsurge against the brutal negation of fundamental human rights and the rule of law. But the revolution has substituted one form of authoritarianism by another. The abolition of monarchy does not amount to the establishment of democracy. The concept of the supremacy of the juri-consults (*Vilayat-e-Faqih*) in all matters and the belief that

they alone have the ability and exclusive right to deciphering the infallible Quran, as interpreted by the infallible *Imam* concerning all matters, be they worldly or religious, negates the concept of democracy. Democracy is essentially the accountability of the ruler to the ruled, as a collectivity, irrespective of the status of the constituent membership. This is not the case in Iran where the accountability of the ruler or the chief executive is restricted to the jurists who mediate between man and God in all matters without any distinction between the worldly and the spiritual.

Historically, the Iranian revolution is a reversal, firstly, of the trend of the progressive horizontal expansion of power, and, secondly, also the reversal of the trend towards the primacy of the secular over the religious in the age-old struggle for supremacy between the church and the state. In more general terms, the Iranian revolution reverses the modern trend to separate religion and politics, and is, thus, opposed to the spirit of the age. The protagonists of the revolution believe (unjustifiably) that the separation of politics and religion means either the rejection of religion, or the rejection of all morality in the sphere of politics. In other words the Islamic revolutionaries hold that secular politics demands totally amoral politics, while their Islamic concept of the unity of religion and politics demands value-based politics. This belief is an unwarranted over-simplification of the issue, apart from being an unwarranted assumption.

In the final analysis, the Iranian revolution is of much too short a duration to enable us to generalise with any degree of assurance.

Afghanistan : The Communist intervention in Afghanistan is the product of the intense super-power conflict or cold war in the region. Caught between the ever-growing tentacles of Western Capitalism and Soviet Communism, Afghanistan just did not have the political, economic and military strength to function as an independent non-aligned country, (in the manner of India) after the overthrow of the Zahir Shah constitutional monarchy in 1973. The regional political fall-out of the Islamic revolution in neighbouring Iran had created such great uncertainty and instability that intervention by one super power or the other had become a geo-political

necessity in terms of 'real politik'. Many informed observers hold that it was a question of 'who first', and that the US was just caught napping by the USSR, probably because of the immense advantage of the latter on account of its physical contiguity with Afghanistan.

The significant feature of the civil war is that both the establishment and the rebels claim to be on the side of true Islam. And both are justified in their claims. The Communist leaders certainly do not wish to jeopardise the country's independence or exterminate Islam, but merely want to modernise the nation and bring it into line with other industrialised and developed countries of the world. Their conception of Islam is very different from the traditional Islam prevailing in land-locked and pre-industrial Afghanistan. This cultural distance or polarity is the consequence of the failure of the westernised ruling class, over the past half a century, to make a proper distinction between westernisation and modernisation, and to strive, at the grass-roots level, for the democratic transformation of a stagnant culture and economy. As a result, no scientific knowledge base and no middle class emerged which could provide a broad supporting framework of ideas and values. Indeed, this crucial deficiency is a common feature, in varying degrees, of the entire Islamic world.

Turkey: The secular democratic constitution of Turkey was, literally, thrust upon a grateful nation by its saviour and adored leader, Mustafa Kamal. The career of democracy has not been smooth in Turkey which has seen several periods of military rule or martial law. Turkey is the only Muslim country having a totally secular constitution, even though the Turkish people are second to none in their devotion to Islam as their cherished religion. The movement of Islamic resurgence, represented by the National Salvation Party, stands for undoing the secular revolution ushered in by Ataturk, reestablishing Islam as the state religion, restoring the unity of religion and politics, and the supremacy of the Islamic canon law (*shariat*). But despite massive efforts by Islamic revivalist organisations, the majority of the Turkish people continue to adhere to the path shown by the Father of Modern

Turkey, though not to the undeniable fads and foibles and excesses of their beloved leader and guide. The basic philosophy of secularism, the separation of politics and religion, appears to have taken firm roots in the Turkish psyche, while the excesses of 'Kamalism' have been corrected or removed. The appeal of the anti-secular Islamic approach is, in general, confined to some rural and small town sections and the relatively lower middle income or under-privileged urban sections which feel side-lined by their better educated and more affluent brethren. The secular establishment is quite stable, and as more and more people get more and more opportunities of vertical mobility, as a result of better educational facilities and industrial development, their attitudes become increasingly secularised. This applies to both the Islamic reformists (who speak the language of modernising or adjusting the *shariat* to suit present needs) and also to the Islamic traditionalists or pietists.

Indonesia : Indonesia (which has the largest Muslim population in the world) has passed through great convolutions in the course of the last fifty years. Sukarno, the father figure of modern independent Indonesia, stood for secular nationalism and Islamic liberalism of sorts. The western-educated generation, to which Sukarno belonged, had accepted the modern concept of the separation of religion and politics. However, within this broad frame of reference, a wide spectrum prevailed and Sukarno had leftist sympathies. Communism, as an organised movement, was, however, almost completely wiped out in 1965 during the civil war leaving Suharto in total command. The New Order which he initiated is a military oligarchy committed to functional secularism and a free-market type of economy much to the advantage of the urban elite and the military establishment. The relatively socially and educationally backward sections, specially in the small towns, lack a sense of participation and equal opportunities in the industrial and economic growth of society. It is this sector, smarting under a sense of being in the margin, which provides a receptive audience to the movement of Islamic resurgence, (represented by the Masjumi Party) that has been under a legal ban for the past several years.

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The state wields such an enormous power of patronage over the religious infra-structure, endowments, trusts and seminaries, that Islamic protest gets little breathing space for gathering momentum. The state patronizes the conservative pietistic interpretation of Islam, represented by the well-established *Nahdatul Ulama*, which suits the establishment. This combination serves to check the more rapid progress of militant Islamists.

Indonesian Islam has, historically, been liberal and culturally permissive. Many pre-Islamic customs and folk-lore are still a living part of the collective life of the Indonesian Muslims. The Islamisation programme of the Islamic resurgence movement cuts at the roots of the idea that religion should not be mixed up with politics or culture. But it seems Indonesia and Malaysia would retain their present style of cultural pluralism and functional secularism.

Bangla Desh : The emergence of Bangla Desh as a sovereign state in 1971 represented the retreat of Islamic communitarianism in the face of the rising tide of Muslim linguistic nationalism wedded to a functional secularism. The chequered career of democracy in Bangla Desh notwithstanding, democracy and the accountability of the government to the people are more of a living reality in Bangla Desh than in Pakistan, as such. There could hardly be any doubt that this is partly due to the linguistic and cultural unity of the people in the midst of religious diversity. This pattern of unity and diversity, in the same breath, is more conducive to the appeal of secular democracy as compared to religious communitarianism or fundamentalism.

The problem of over-population and under-development is so very acute in Bangla Desh that no easy solutions should be expected. Charismatic leaders do help to expedite the pace of change, but they emerge rather rarely on the human scene. The history and situation of Bangla Desh, however, pre-dispose it to a liberal and relatively secular ideology. The impact of Arab oil-based wealth and of the Islamic revolution in Iran tend to reinforce the voice of Islamic resurgence. This is the voice that Islam is a total code

of conduct, and that the *shariat* is all embracing, though it stands in need of modernisation to serve contemporary needs. The earlier thrust of the movement of Bangla Deshi nationalism was in the direction of separating religion and politics and establishing a functional, if not a formal, secular state. Pressures of different kinds, both internal and external, have, however, constrained Bangla Deshi leadership to adopt a much more Islamic posture. But the cultural heritage of the composite population and the physical and linguistic contiguity with Indian Bengal is likely to exert a far greater pull in the direction of Islamic liberalism and a functional, if not a formal, secularism on democratic lines, without any erosion of the Muslim identity of Bangla Desh. The image of Lalan Faquir, the renowned mystic and poet of united Bengal of the 19th century, may well become the guiding star of Bangla Deshi composite culture and humanism.

India: Though not a part of the Islamic world, more Muslims live in this country than any other country in the world with the sole exception of Indonesia. The population of Muslims who are Indian citizens exceeds the combined population of the entire Arab and Iranian Muslims. India is a unique example of a multi-religious democratic state where democracy, as a way of life, is struggling to prevail over communalism, casteism and regionalism. The idea of secular democracy is an integral part of the Indian constitution. This presupposes the separation of religion and politics and looks upon religion as a matter of personal choice, that should not be imported into political processes.

The above concept of religion clashes with the view of the protagonists of Islamic resurgence (including many Muslim quarters in India) that Islam does not admit of any separation of the religious and the worldly, and that the *shariat* covers every aspect of a true Muslim. These clashing perspectives on religion constitute the predicament of the Muslims living in the modern age, no matter where they live. The Indian Muslims face the additional predicament of being a 'perpetual minority' despite being in such immense numbers, in the absolute sense. In other words, they

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suffer from a sense of socio-political marginalisation, and readily succumb to the tendency to withdraw from mainstream concerns. The unfortunate communal riots bring about a still greater polarisation of separate identities demanding separate political organisations. Thus cooperation between liberal and secular minded Muslims and Hindus gives place to confrontation between the militant sections of both the communities, thereby greatly slowing down the pace of the growth of secular democracy and genuine humanism in the plural Indian society. However, the linguistic, ethnic, caste, religious, and regional plurality, inherent in the Indian situation, is so great that there is, indeed, no viable alternative to secular democracy, in the long run, no matter how tortuous and time-consuming this journey may prove to be. It is also crucially important to realise in what a large measure the tension and conflict between the different segments of the Indian population is, basically, the struggle for a larger share in the growing national wealth and for socio-political advancement in an open democratic society where every man can become the President, as is the case in the New World.

VII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Islamic resurgence, provided it be on right lines, should be most welcome, not only to Muslims, but to all genuine humanists who look upon humanity as one large family. When, however, the protagonists of Islamic resurgence take to positions which directly or indirectly, erode the basic values of humanism, spiritual autonomy, free enquiry, equality of the sexes, human rights, tolerance, equality of opportunity etc., Islamic resurgence becomes objectionable not only to non-Muslims but liberal Muslims as well.

Unfortunately, the champions of Islamic resurgence, instead of engaging themselves in an impartial and constructive criticism of the human situation and a balanced evaluation of western thought and institutions, betake themselves to a negative debunking of modernity. This approach may well give them a sense of superiority to the 'decadent west'. But it definitely leads to clouded vision and blurred perceptions of the actual conditions prevailing in western society. Instead of acquiring an 'insider's insight' into the strength and weakness, the real achievements and limitations of western modernity, the hostile critics get only distorted pictures, half-truths, over-simplifications, and the like. In other words, they commit the fallacy of 'outsider's, negative bias' —precisely the fallacy which they attribute to the western students of Islam.

The movement of Islamic resurgence, at its best, is not nostalgic about the golden past of Islam, but stands for progress and development. It is this aspect which makes the movement the target of attack or suspicion by the more traditional and pietically oriented Muslims. The forward-looking emphasis of the Islamic reformists is welcome. But, on a deeper analysis, their language of progress and their pleas for reconstructing and modernising Islamic thought and institutions turns out to be rather a storm in a tea cup—something insipid and illusory. This happens because they virtually reject the method of free enquiry and the time-tested methodology of the natural and the social sciences, in favour of a

newfangled 'Islamic methodology' which is never spelt out, but is merely dangled before a charmed Islamic audiences as the panacea for soiving all the ills which beset humanity. They fail to explain how can there be Islamic Physics/Geology/Astronomy/Zoology, or for that matter, Islamic Anthropology/Geography/Agriculture etc. in contradistinction from these subjects as they are understood by the world scientific or academic community. The one and only way of the pursuit of truth is the method of free enquiry in a spirit of humility and the readiness to surrender before truth, as ascertained by methods appropriate for the subject matter of the enquiry. The justificatory interpretation of infallible texts, in the absence of appropriate methods of verification, can never lead to universally valid conclusions. The talk of Islamic science or knowledge, or the Islamisation of western science and knowledge, fails to distinguish between reason and rationalisation, or between validation and justification.

The movement of Islamic resurgence has been greatly strengthened by the flow of unprecedented wealth in the Islamic world and the newly-won pride and self-confidence consequent upon its emancipation from western military and political domination. Self-assertion (with the help of western technology) has gained precedence over the disinterested search for truth with the help of western techniques of objective enquiry. The Islamic world is slow to realise that the power of technology is, ultimately, based upon the wisdom of the scientific method. Technology will begin to stagnate the moment the scientific method is eroded or discarded. The hunger for imported technology or the hunger for consuming the fruits of science but neglecting to nourish its roots, i.e. the scientific method of free enquiry, will not promote human welfare in the long run. The method of free enquiry and democracy are, in the final analysis, two sides of the same coin.

The immense sums being spent on Islamic Science/Education etc. by way of instituting scholarships or fellowships and establishing centres of study and research will go to reinforce the postulates and methodology of the protagonists of Islamic resurgence to the exclusion of the method of free enquiry. Great confusion

results from repeating the truism that religion is not merely the acts of praying, fasting and doing the *Hajj*, etc., but a complete way of life and then proceeding to the corollary that, the *shariat* must have an all-embracing jurisdiction, including politics. Now, while the basic thesis is a foundational truth, the corollary is terribly misleading. It is, indeed, very true that individual piety is not enough in the absence of a just social order—a surrounding political, economic, and cultural space in which the individual lives and functions. Consequently, if religion aims at true human welfare, it must prescribe not merely individual piety and goodness through spiritual discipline, but also ensure the proper ordering of society as a whole. The mischief, however, begins when the thesis of the social role or relevance of Islam is made into an argument for Islamic separatism in every sphere of life—politics, economics and even knowledge, as such.

The protagonists of Islamic resurgence argue that the modern approach of limiting the function of religion to mere spiritual ontogenesis, to the exclusion of political participation, completely saps the power and effectiveness of religion which is, necessarily, reduced to empty and innocuous rituals relating to birth, death, marriage, prayer etc. The fact is, precisely, the other way round. Religion loses its power and depth, not through the proper delimitation of its functions, but through an indiscriminate expansion of its jurisdiction or authority to every sphere of life. Indeed this expansion may well be called the 'tyranny of religion'. When this happens the existential depth and inwardness of the true religious attitude gives way to a horizontal thinness of outward compliance of rules and regulations, 'does and don'ts' at every point of life. Spirituality and authenticity, the life breath of religion, are strangled by the weeds of regimentation.

The protagonists of Islamic resurgence create the false impression that religious liberals, who wish to keep religion and politics apart, ignore the importance of the struggle for establishing a just social order. But the thesis of the separation of religion and politics signifies a balanced delimitation of the proper spheres of

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both to avoid encroachment by one upon a field which rightly belongs to the other. The thesis of the separation of religion and politics should also not be misconstrued to mean that morality should have nothing to do with politics, as an amoral pursuit of power.

Politics like sex, is an indispensable feature of human existence. And politics which is rooted in the struggle for supremacy unavoidably leads to conflict. It is primarily the love of and search for supremacy rather than love of and search for truth or God, or of any particular language or culture, which lead to conflict within a society and between sovereign states. Ideologies, function as instruments of attack and defence in the struggle for power. However, ideas and values also battle against each other.

The concept of ideology, in the above sense, antedates the work of Marx. But it was he who brought the above-mentioned role of ideology into sharp focus. Today the above insight has been incorporated into the basic methodology of science, be it Marxist or not.

The above thesis, however, does not mean that sincerity of faith and honesty of purpose are non-existent in our world and that the talk of religion, values and ideals is pure hypocrisy or, at best, self-deception. Ideals and interests both exist and cooperate with each other, in an extremely complex human situation which we can never understand with the help of any simple formula. While those who find the doors of opportunity closed, do develop negative feelings of envy and hate against those enjoying power and wealth, genuine impersonal moral indignation at the imperfections and evils of the human situation also operates and moves the world. Revolutionary fervour directed to rebuilding the world, nearer to our heart's desires and dreams, may also be rooted in a deep commitment to moral and spiritual values. Genuine moral indignation and self-interest or the interest of the group coalesce, in varying proportions, in different individuals,

and even in the same person at different points of time. The perception of social reality or the world view of individuals often changes *pari passu* the sense of effective participation and fulfilment or of marginalisation and deprivation in the struggle of existence.

It seems to me that sooner or later all developing societies (irrespective of their dominant ideology) would register the vital truth that the stupendous and highly complex problems of rapid all-round growth call for an open sociological diagnosis and therapy rather than ideology-bound text-book solutions. In short, the compulsions of development favour (in the long run) the reliance on sociology rather than ideology. This is what has happened in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. These countries have outgrown 'religionism' and religion-based political processes, even though their constitutions are not formally secular in the way Turkey has a purely secular constitution. Thus the programme of undoing the legacy of *Nasserism* in Egypt and of the *Baathist* movement (initiated by the Christian intellectual and reformer, Michael Aflaq) in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon is essentially utopian politics. In this context, the continuing liberalisation process in post-Mao China and the refreshingly new politico-economic stance of Gorbachov regarding the possibility of plural political parties and economic incentives in the USSR are of the greatest significance for the entire world. This shows how the compulsions of the developmental process and the logic of sociology score over purely ideological purism and reasoning. If, in the eighties, it is Deng and Gorbachov who had to do so when he wisely gave a New Deal to his people.

It appears that the Arab oil-wealth explosion and, subsequently, the Islamic Revolution of Iran have jointly imparted a momentum to Islamic resurgence (in its present form) which the movement will not be able to maintain in the decades ahead. The ideological euphoria of Iran will, most probably, wither away in the wake of a revolution that failed. The oil-based Arab euphoria has already given way to economic worries in the wake of the oil recession. The Muslim mind will then be awakened from its dogmatic slumbers, on the one hand, and romantic-revolutionary

dreams, on the other. Sociological objectivity and realistic aspirations would displace 'ideological mirages' and illusory ambitions. In short, sociology would prevail over ideology, and Islamic humanism and liberalism over pan-Islamist and fundamentalist thinking. Islamic fundamentalism would then cease to have the attraction it, presently, has for the younger generation, specially those who have received a technical education without a sufficient background of pure science, and the liberal arts. This shift of perspective would, however, not be a quick or easy process. Concepts, categories and values evolve like organic species and cannot be created by reformers, philosophers or UNESCO agencies. Western Europe took almost two centuries to complete the process of the scientific and secular revolutions beginning in mid-18th century. However, with the blessings of such tools and instruments of social change, as the television and, now, the computer, the journey of the Muslim mind towards Islamic liberalism and democratic humanism, hopefully, may be shortened.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. p.4. The Pharoos of Egypt, Alexander the Great, the pagan Roman emperors and the emperors of Japan are some instances. Victory in combat or war has generally been regarded as a sign of Divine favour, though not a certain index. The forces of evil symbolised by the Devil are deemed to be in perpetual conflict with the all good and powerful God whose wisdom is inscrutable. Evil sometimes triumphs over good, but these reverses are transient and are meant to test the patience of the faithful. In some cases such reverses are a Divine punishment for the human lapses of the faithful.
- 2 p.7. King Charles I was executed in 1659, and Cromwell, later on, became the Protector of the Commonwealth. The restoration of Charles II took place in 1660. His brother, James II, was overthrown in the Glorious Revolution of 1688—a turning point in British and world history.
3. p.7. Parliamentary and electoral reforms were introduced very gradually in Britain. The Reform Act of 1832 first gave the right of vote to the urban middle class males. The second Reform Act of 1867 extended the franchise to the lower middle class males in both urban and rural sectors, and also practically the entire urban labour Class. The third Reform Act of 1884 further extended the franchise to agricultural labour, thus establishing adult male franchise in Britain. The Act of 1911 only ensured the supremacy of the House of Commons over the House of Lords. Women got the right of vote partially in 1918 fully in 1928.

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4. p.7. The Magna Carta is the first and fundamental charter of the rule of law prepared by the subjects of a monarch in world history. The provisions of the charter aimed at controlling the arbitrary powers of the monarch—religious, executive and judicial, and giving to all subjects a sense of freedom and security within the bounds of law.
5. p.7. Jeremy Bentham (d.1832) was a distinguished English thinker, reformer and statesman who is regarded as the father of the ethical and political philosophy termed 'Utilitarianism'. John Stuart Mill (d.1873) made important contributions to this movement of thought and reform. Utilitarianism aimed at emancipating the human mind from the grip of fixed ideas of right and wrong rooted in blind faith or intuition. These two thinkers made the observed consequences of human acts the final test of right and wrong in ethics, politics and religion.
6. p.8. Karl Marx (d. 1883) also stressed consequences of ideas as the real criterion of their validity or acceptability. Marx also championed people's power, but he thought that it would never accrue to the people in the real sense without violent revolution against the establishment. He further thought that people's welfare was not possible without state ownership and control of the entire means of production. The last two claims are far from being evident.
7. p.13. History abounds in instance after instance of this crucial truth. Thus the institutionalization of authoritarianism is fatal. No matter how good and sincere a person might be, to begin with, the exercise of power over a long period will have a corrupting influence. Lord Acton's famous dictum 'Power corrupts, and 'absolute

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power corrupts absolutely' deserves the wide acclaim it has come to enjoy

8. p.14. These and some other shortcomings do not invalidate the basic thesis of democracy. Efforts are under way to remove or, at least, minimise these defects. Thus, multiple rounds, of voting could be used to determine which candidate eventually gets an absolute majority. The additional expenses involved in such procedures would be a small price for the immense gains in terms of public welfare.
9. p.15. This is the normal situation in politics. Very rarely does our choice lie between absolute good and evil.
10. p.16. Careful deliberation will show that the election costs are trivial in relation to the price society pays for violent transfers of power and the bloody struggles for supremacy at different levels of human society.
11. p.16. Innovations in the structure and procedures of democracy have begun and are actually producing good results. Eternal vigilance is the price of virtue.
12. p.18. The protagonists of 'Islamic democracy', 'partyless democracy' etc. all commit the fallacy of 'abstract utopianism'. This *a priori* approach and romantic desire to discover a system of 'perfect democracy' will never help.
13. p.21. See the following two Quranic verses out of several others in the same vein. "Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor I have knowledge of the unseen, and I say not unto you: Lo ! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the

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blindman and the seen equal ? Will ye not then take thought"?
(*Al-An'am, 6 : 50*)

"Say: For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which Allah willeth. Had I knowledge of the unseen, I should have abundance of wealth and adversity would not touch me. I am but a warner, and a bearer of good tidings unto folk who believe", (*Al-A'raf, 7:188*).

14. p.22. There was another need for this distinction. It is a fact that the directives or injunctions of the Quran are, so general or non-specific (with a few notable exceptions) that they possibly could not have been implemented without giving the directives concerned a definite and concrete sense. This was naturally and understandably done by the Prophet himself. The question was bound to arise whether the interpretations placed by the Prophet upon the revealed verses were also 'revealed' in some way to the Prophet, or were they the products of the thinking and discretion of the Prophet. The concept of '*wahi-e- khafi*' was meant to underscore that the said interpretations were the result of silent or non-verbal revelation in contradistinction from the open or verbal revelation constituting the Arabic text of the Quran. This way of viewing enhances the status of the interpretations made by the Prophet and renders his directions unquestionable by the faithful.

The terms '*wahi-e-matlu*' and '*wahi-e-ghair matlu*' correspond with '*wahi-e-jali*' and '*wahi-e-khafi*' respectively.

15. p.22. I respectfully submit that only if Muslims today presumed to modify or improve upon the purely spiritual or liturgical components of the Prophet's practices would the question of lowering the status of the Prophet arise. In other words, only the Islamic

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devotional system and the symbolic rites and practices of Islam, as taught by the Prophet, could rightly claim to be sacrosanct and immutable.

16. p.23. This is precisely the theoretical inadequacy and tragedy of the Jamat-e-Islami and similar contemporary movements of Islamic resurgence in different parts of the Islamic world.
17. p.23. *Prima facie* there is a clash between the sovereignty of man and the sovereignty of God. If, however, man be looked upon as touched by divinity in the depths of his being the contradiction is overcome when human autonomy does not spring from licence but acquires firm roots in the depths of prayerful human response. When a democratic society becomes a commonwealth of persons aspiring to righteousness albeit haltingly and imperfectly. In the final analysis, the concept of God, as a purely transcendental creator, ought to give way to God, as the ultimate source and ground of man's quest for value. From this point of view the autonomy of the individual is, potentially, surrender to the God within man.
18. p. 25. Each of the four pious *khalifas* was chosen in a different manner. Abu Bakr was elevated by a consensus of sorts, Omar nominated by his predecessor, 'Usman chosen by a panel appointed by Omar and 'Ali was the choice of a faction which was initially dominant but which was soon militarily challenged by dissidents.
19. p.26. The rights of women in Islam are not *at par* with those of men in respect of the marriage contract, inheritance, evidence, slaves etc.
20. p.26. The Islamic notion that the authority of the *Khalifa* is subject to his following the Book and the example of the Prophet (*Kitab*

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wa Sunnat) should not be confused with the democratic notion of accountability or responsibility of the elected ruler to the people who elect him.

21. p.28. See my critical introduction to an anthology of the religious writings of Sir Syed, entitled *Sir Syed's Islamic Vision* (in Urdu), New Aligarh Movement, Aligarh, 1988.
22. p.28. Unfortunately, there is a tremendous dearth of well- integrated Muslim scientists and intellectuals. It is quite common to hear of a Professor who teaches the theory of evolution in the lecture room but repudiates it immediately after stepping out from the class on the ground that the said theory is un-Islamic. Highly educated persons, when confronted with reasoning or evidence which go against their fixed beliefs, prefer to divide life into separate compartments each sealed from the other. Alternatively, they become inauthentic beings who profess beliefs without inwardly accepting them and without being bothered by an inner schism in the depths of their being.
23. p.29. see the writings of Gibb, Arberry, Montgomery watt, *et al.*
24. p.31. Two of the most noteworthy works are : (i) Mansfield, P. (Ed), *The Middle East*, Oxford, 1973. (ii) Piscatori, J. P. (Ed.), *Islam in the Political Process*, Cambridge, 1984.
25. p.31. These lines were written before the accidental death of President Ziaul Haq in August, 1988.
26. p.31. 'Islamic democracy' is so far, only a pious ideal or aspiration rather than something real or concrete. consequently, it is very difficult to be aware of its defects, while those of the western models are obvious to all honest students.

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27. p.33. It is worth recalling that a similar situation had arisen in the late twenties when king Amanullah was forced to abdicate his throne because of stiff resistance by the conservative *ulema*. It would hardly be fair to say that Amanullah wished to destroy Islam.
28. p.36. These lines were written before Islam became the state religion of Bangladesh in 1988. The general thrust of my observations, however, remains true.
29. p.36. See my 'Quest for Islam', Delhi, 1977 and also 'Authenticity and Islamic Liberalism', Delhi, 1987.
30. p.39. See my lecture : "The Concept of the Islamic Economic System."
31. p.41. This has been brought out in great detail by Sir Isaiah Berlin in his excellent work "Vico and Herder : Two studies in the History of Ideas", London, 1976. See my review article in the Aligarh Journal of English Studies, 1976, Vol.I, No.2, Editor A.A. Ansari.
32. p.42. This process has already started at the world level leading to remarkably objective studies in western academic circles. Self evaluation has also started in the communist world.



Tolerance and Islam

by
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INTRODUCTION :

Analysing the concept of tolerance is the job of the philosopher, while describing the rule of tolerance in the history of Islam is the task of the historian. The historical question itself comprises two distinct issues, (a) what are the ideals or teachings concerning tolerance in the scriptures and the writings of theologians, jurists and saints, and (b) how far have these ideals and teachings been practised at different points of time? To confuse the above two issues, (as is not uncommon even in highly educated quarters), leads to futile controversy.

In the following pages I wish to (a) give a philosophical analysis of the concept of tolerance, as understood in the modern sense of the term, (b) give a historical review of the idea and practice of tolerance in history, (c) give a critical analysis of tolerance, as understood in classical Islamic thought derived from the Quran, and finally (d) describe how tolerance was actually practised by Muslims in the Islamic world with special reference to medieval India.

THE CONCEPT OF TOLERANCE :

The original use of the word 'tolerance' referred to tolerance of metals, of gold and silver coins, of bridges to bear stress, and of the capacity of a person to bear pain or suffering, physical and mental, i. e., the capacity for endurance. These uses of the word were gradually extended, perhaps, in the 17th and 18th centuries, to the use which concerns us here. A standard English dictionary defines tolerance as 'the disposition to tolerate or allow the existence of beliefs, practices or habits differing from one's own, now often freedom from bigotry, sympathetic understanding of others' beliefs etc., without acceptance of them...'

The diverse uses or meanings of any word shows the futility of picking upon 'the' meaning or essence of a concept. Instead, we must make a contextual analysis of the different uses of a word or expression. This analysis may well be

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supplemented by a conceptual analysis of the core use of the word in a particular context. This core use should then be distinguished from cognate or related concepts to avoid confusion.

Contextual analysis means translating the analysandum into expressions which are simpler, clearer and conform to natural or ordinary usage rather than to the specialised usage or language of philosophers or scientists.

Let us now attempt a contextual analysis of the statement, 'Ahmad is a tolerant person'. Most of us would agree on the following contextual analyses which are illustrative rather than exhaustive :

- (a) Ahmad tries to understand the other's point of view with sympathy.
- (b) Ahmad does not believe that those who differ from him are dishonest, ill-motivated or perverse, unless there be clear evidence for this.
- (c) Ahmad realises that beliefs, attitudes or approaches other than his own could possibly be right or justifiable.
- (d) Ahmad realises that value judgments can never be proved conclusively, so that disagreement among different persons is unavoidable.
- (e) Ahmad does not allow his differences with others to cloud his judgment concerning their good points, or to make him hostile to them.
- (f) Ahmad actually befriends or is ever willing to befriend those who honestly differ from him but are decent persons.
- (g) Ahmad believes that the inherent dignity of a human being should be respected irrespective of caste, colour, creed or sex.

It may be added that tolerance has several dimensions and degrees. Thus a person may be tolerant in one sense, or with regard to a particular dimension, but not with regard to others. Again, he may be tolerant up to a particular degree but not beyond that. To give two striking examples, the British

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philosopher, John Locke, who was the father of the movement of religious tolerance in 17th century England, was not prepared to tolerate atheists. Madan Mohan Malviya, a great Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, and colleague of Gandhiji, could not tolerate non-Brahmans at his dining table.

In view of the above fact that tolerance has both different dimensions and degrees, no individual or society should be judged to be tolerant or intolerant on an either-or basis. The application of a simple two dimensional either-or logic would mislead us and would fail to capture the complexity of different situations. The proper course, therefore, is to identify the different elements and degrees of tolerance or intolerance and to grade individuals or societies accordingly.

Let us now distinguish the concept of tolerance from some related or cognate concepts with which it is liable to be confused.

A person who is tolerant in religious matters need not be indifferent to religion, or be a sceptic or atheist. Indeed tolerance is perfectly compatible with the most passionate and profound religious faith and commitment to moral values. Even, if a tolerant person himself be indifferent to religion or a sceptic, he would respect those who are genuinely religious. If a person be both tolerant and courageous, he would say after Voltaire and Mill— 'I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I shall give my life to defend your right to say so'.

A tolerant person need not accept a secular approach to politics, even though a secular approach to politics helps promote religious tolerance. Tolerance may co-exist with religious fundamentalism, provided the latter is of a form which does not involve any discrimination against others on grounds of faith. Since, however, the fundamentalist versions of all religions have some in-built elements of inter-group or inter-group discrimination (in some form or other) the practice of complete tolerance does require a secular approach to politics. However, secularism, as such, is neutral with regard to theism or atheism. Commitment to secularism does not imply any corollary of theism, agnosticism

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or atheism, but merely the principled separation of religion and politics. This must, however, not be misconstrued as the separation of morality from politics.

A tolerant person need not be apathetic to persuading others to the acceptance of his own views or values. Apathy is the true index of unconcern rather than of tolerance. However, the concern of a tolerant person for the welfare of others is tempered by humility and the passion for authentic sharing of 'the rhythm of the spirit' instead of a conceited desire to dominate others and impose one's own ideas or values, conceived as the absolute truth.

A tolerant person need not remain a silent spectator in the face of conflicting truth-claims. Tolerance is not the fear of giving offence, just as it is not the fear of commitment to a particular viewpoint. Tolerance does not conflict at all with spontaneous self-expression and active communication or dialogue, provided mutual goodwill and respect be present. Dialogue helps to promote greater harmony even though it may also bring unbridged differences into sharper focus.

A tolerant person need not appease those who disagree with him. Tolerance is an intrinsic value like love of truth or devotion to duty, while appeasement is a strategy for 'buying' agreement or peace on an ad hoc basis. A tolerant person may be extremely firm and unbending in doing his duty or in resisting evil. Tolerance may result in self-sacrifice of a martyr, while appeasement seeks the easy way out.

The birth of tolerance, however, does not signify the death of genuine faith in one's own cherished tradition. Tolerance merely signifies the willing acceptance of the view that other beliefs or convictions may also ennoble and inspire goodness and beauty in the depths of the human soul, even as one feels ennobled by one's own tradition. This approach is quite different from merely tolerating dissenting views which are deemed to be essentially evil or, at least, devoid of any real value. In other words, tolerance, at its best, is not reluctant acceptance of error, beyond our power of correction, but rather

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profound humility in the face of the inscrutable mystery of reality, and of genuine respect for different perspectives and views.

SOCIAL ROOTS OF TOLERANCE :

The individual, as a child, is obviously, culturally conditioned in respect of language, morals, religious convictions, artistic as well as sensory taste, gestures and so on. Thus, he speaks not language, in general, but a particular language; he follows not religion and morality, in general, but a particular religion and moral code. Now the crucial feature of the conditioning process is that the individual is, on principle, screened from exposure to other languages, morals, religious convictions and art forms, as if, they were aberration to be concealed from the tender and innocent mind of the child. In other words, the inbuilt cultural plurality of the human situation is prevented from making its natural impact upon the individual. To a considerable extent this is a pedagogic necessity since too many cultural stimuli would, obviously, confuse and destabilise the growth of the child. But the way in which the child is more or less indoctrinated by his parents and teachers almost inevitably leads to the fallacy of cultural reification the identification of symbols with what is symbolised. Thus, the child, as well as the adult, begins to equate particular language forms with the structure of the world itself, particular moral codes with absolute morality itself, particular perspectives of reality with reality itself. In other words, the individual is made to feel, as if, his cultural world alone accurately mirrors or reflects reality, while all other cultural worlds are, more or less, miserable caricatures. Thus what is, really, a model of reality is reified as the reality as such.

The simple truth (which is difficult to learn because of our cultural conditioning) is that while reality is one, its symbols are many; that the same experience or response can be expressed in a variety of forms or ways. The crucial reason why a particular conceptual model or form appeals to me has a lot to do with my own cultural conditioning, even if this may

not be the only factor. The realisation that one's cherished beliefs and convictions would have been very different, had one been born in a family professing a different faith, shows up the essentially contingent character or complexion of one's beliefs system. This realisation ought to fill one with humility as well as empathy for other traditions.

What social factors promote or retard the prospects of tolerance? It seems heterogeneity within a large autonomous group, with regard to race, language, culture or religion, plays the dual role of generating tension and conflict within the group, and at the same time, facilitating the eventual growth of tolerance. The greater the area of inner differentiation within a large and complex society, the greater the chance of conflict, as also the greater the need of mutual understanding and accomodation to prevent the disintegration of the society into smaller warring sub-groups. If the internal unity of the society, as a whole, be a crucial survival value for most members composing the large group, the will to preserve its unity will generate tolerance and mutual accomodation of diverse points of view. Since, however, the needs and interests of individuals and of sub-groups often clash with each other, and also with the society, as a whole, they may adopt strategies calculated to promote their own limited interests at the cost of the long term interest of the society as a whole.

The appeal of tolerance is relatively greater for those individuals and sections which enjoy high status or power and possess material means enough for sustaining their dominance. A few highly evolved and sensitive souls may, however, reach the level of pure morality transcending individual or group interests.

INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF TOLERANCE :

The accaptance or awareness of the following truths promotes tolerance :

- (a) awareness of plural truth-claims,
- (b) existential perplexity,
- (c) spiritual autonomy,

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- (d) awareness of the distinction between objective certainty and existential certainty,
- (e) awareness of man's essential historicity,
- (f) capacity for empathy,
- (g) unconditional respect for the individual on humanistic grounds.

Awareness of plural truth-claims and of man's historicity and a measure of existential perplexity are the essential conditions of tolerance. Empathy and respect for the individual who may hold different views from one's own lead to an intensification of one's existential perplexity and also of genuine humility, particularly, in the face of irresolvable differences between oneself and those whom one respects or loves. Differences in sensory taste do not lead up to inner perplexity, but irresolvable differences over moral or religious issues do lead to spiritual anxiety or perplexity.

Awareness of the plastic power of the milieu and of the essential non-demonstrability of religious convictions should convince the honest truth-seeker that religious truth-claims can never be settled by logical arguments or scientific investigation. Consequently, tolerance of diverse views is the only proper response to the essential mystery of the universe,

THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF TOLERANCE IN ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL PERIODS :

The idea of religious tolerance was understood and practised in China, India, Greece and Rome in the ancient period. The religious and philosophical approach of the ancients was that there were many roads to salvation and the individual should be free to take any road he likes.

The Emperor Asoka (d. app. B, C 235) stood for tolerance, not merely in the sense of tolerating religious dissent, but in the higher sense of respecting plural convictions or faiths other than his own. The classical Hindu concept of '*isht devata*' (choice of deity) also reflected the same basic approach. Unfortunately, the concept of tolerance in the Sanatana Dharma of

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India was vitiated by the presence of intolerance in the shape of caste taboos of the worst type in human history. There was no concept of the dignity and equality of the individual, irrespective of caste, in the theory and practice of the ancient Indian tradition.

The freedom of thought and tolerance prevailing in ancient Greece and Rome was free from caste discrimination, though there were rigid class distinctions and a strongly entrenched system of slavery. The populace were ever attracted to myth and ritual, connected with religious beliefs, while philosophers to abstract reasoning. Neither the conflict between myth and reason nor the wide variety of myths and philosophical theories led to any rancour or intolerance of dissent, in the pre-Christian era. It appears that the rise of Semitic Monotheism and the denunciation of idol worship in Palestine (then under Roman occupation) created a new psychology or attitude, both among the monotheists themselves and the pagans or the worshippers of tribal deities. The Jewish prophets had prophesied the destruction of Roman glory and political supremacy because the rulers and the people did not worship the one true Lord of the whole universe. The Jewish prophets held that all those who did not worship the one Lord and who did not live up to the one right way of life, as revealed by the Lord, were wicked people and deserved to be punished by the all powerful God of Abraham and Moses. Obviously, this approach or attitude was not at all to the liking of imperial Rome. However, the Jews were treated as too insignificant a minority to be taken seriously by the mighty Romans.

The emergence of Christianity in the same region of Palestine also did not pose any serious threat to the Romans, to begin with. The emperor Domitian (d. 96), however, thought that the other-worldly concern and the repudiation of Roman gods was a potential danger to Roman solidarity; but he was not intolerant to the Christians. Emperor Trajan (d. 117) was the first to ban the propagation of the new religion, totally opposed to the Roman creed. The Christians were also subjected to mild suppression which, however, became intensified

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under the reigns of Decius (d.251) and Valerian (d. 260). Numerous Christians became martyrs, though, according to modern historical research, the tales of savage persecution of the martyrs are myths. At last, better sense came to prevail, and Emperor Constantine (d. 337) inaugurated the era of religious toleration vide the Edicts of Milan of 311 and 313. Soon afterwards (approx. 321) Constantine himself embraced Christianity which became the state religion of the now Holy Roman Empire. This was indeed a turning point in world history.

The Christian subjects of the Roman Empire had been eulogising the virtues of tolerance for the past 200 years. But no sooner did Christianity become the official religion of the empire, the Christians started to eulogise the necessity of saving the souls of non-Christians, even by force, if necessary. The belief in exclusive salvation and the view that heretics and apostates merit death in order to be spared the everlasting punishment in hell, soon became a part of the Christian dogma. Even the great Christian father, St. Augustine, (d. 430) interpreted the saying of Jesus 'Compel them to come in', as reported in the gospel, as a permission for the use of force for the noble purpose of saving the soul of heathens or heretics.

The emperor Julian the Apostate (d. 363) stopped the persecution of heretics and pagans at the hands of the Christians who now ran the Roman empire. But it was a still-born move. Emperor Theodosius I (d. 395) resumed the policy of persecuting pagans and heretics. This state of affairs continued until the end of the 6th century.

A new era dawned in world history with the advent of Prophet Muhammad's mission in the early 7th century. Islam, though a continuation of the Semitic tradition of Monotheism, rejected the dogma of exclusive salvation (so far as the teachings of the Quran are taken into account) and welcomed Jews, Christians and all others into its rapidly expanding territories.

The political expansion of the Arab-Islamic state in the regions adjoining Arabia proper certainly took place at the

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point of the sword as, indeed, political expansions do in history. But Islam, as a religious faith, was certainly not forced down upon the throats of Jews, Christians and others concerned at the point of the sword. The latter view is a totally false and perverse interpretation of facts. The truth is that the political hegemony of Islam, on the basis of an almost unceasing chain of military victories against the then super powers, had created the social psychological space for the eventual peaceful conversion of the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic commonwealth due to a combination of social, psychological, cultural, and political factors.

Islam ushered in a plural society based upon tolerance, though the tolerance was not perfect and fell short of the modern concept of tolerance. Inter-religious co-existence and tolerance prevailed for four centuries in the territories of Islam until they were attacked by the Christian crusaders at the fag end of the 11th century. These crusades continued, with interruptions, for almost the next three centuries. Impartial western scholars of repute have pointed out that, the defenders of the Cross unleashed a reign of terror, not only against the Muslims and Jews, but also the local Christians of the areas 'liberated' by the crusaders and ruled by them for approx. 80 years. Eventually the crusaders were thrown back by the legendary heroism and inspiring leadership of Sultan Salahuddin (Saladin the Great) in the early 13th century. Immediately afterwards, or almost at the same time, the Islamic world had to face the terrible fury of the Mongol hordes leading to the almost total destruction of Baghdad in 1258. Though Iran recovered after approx. 200 years, under the great Safavids, who ushered in the golden age of Persian culture and Islamic humanism, the Arabs could not recover. In fact, they regressed into a state of utter political, economic and cultural decline, lasting until the beginning of the present century.

Turning to the story of Christian militancy in the struggle for political power, Pope Innocent III, at the end of the 12th century, embarked upon the policy of penalising Christian kings adjudged to be heterodox. The most tragic victims of this policy were the Count of Toulouse and the Albigeios community in

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France. Pope Innocent III set the precedent that the Pope had the right to coerce a Christian ruler in matters, both temporal and religious, on the principle of the supremacy of the spiritual over temporal power. Shortly afterwards Pope Gregory IX initiated the idea of the Inquisition, which idea was put into practice by Pope Innocent IV in 1252. Going far beyond the punishment of heretics, the objective of the Inquisition was to pry into the inmost depths of the human soul to punish the minutest doubt or deviation from the dogmas of the Church.

The work of the Inquisition was supervised directly by the Pope over the head of the Bishops who had no say in the secret workings of a super investigative net-work throughout the Western Christendom. The most ruthless agency of this Papal tyranny was the Spanish Inquisition which concerned itself not merely with Christian heretics but also with the persecution of Spanish Muslims.

In 1556 Philip II decreed that Muslims should abandon at once their language, worship, institutions and manner of life. The final order of expulsion was given by Philip III in 1609, and more than three million Muslims were executed or banished from Spain.

Not less tragic than the persecution of heretics was the persecution of women dubbed as witches in medieval Christendom. As late as 1484 Pope Innocent VIII said in a Bull that plague and storms were the work of witches.

THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF TOLERANCE IN THE MODERN AGE :

The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in the mid-15th century and the final collapse of the Eastern wing of the Roman Empire (Byzantium) is another turning point in world history. Christian scholars who were exclusive custodians of the Greek classics in the original, migrated to the Italian mainland which was the seat of the Pope and an integral part of western Europe. Till that time Western Church fathers, scholastic thinkers and writers were not acquainted

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with the full range of Greek thought and culture, their attention being focussed on translated versions of some selected writings of Aristotle and others derived from Arabic sources. The western mind now, for the first time, came in contact with the Greek classics in the original. This triggered the great cultural revolution known as the Renaissance.

The independent states of southern Italy became the cradle of the new movement which, in the course of time, radiated to the whole of Europe and transformed the intellectual, cultural, religious, political and economic climate of the entire western world. The Renaissance was soon followed by movements of religious reform in several Christian communities by Wycliffe (d. 1384), Hus (d. 1415) and Martin Luther (d. 1546). Luther's Reformation proved to be the most effective and durable, but Luther was far from being a consistent champion of freedom of conscience. Having succeeded in repudiating papal authority, in the name of liberty of conscience, Luther tried to impose his own conscience on others with the help of force. He declared Anabaptist Christians as heretics who should be put to the sword. Likewise, Calvin (d. 1564) of Switzerland, the other outstanding Protestant reformer of the age, substituted his own brand of religious and political authoritarianism in place of the Pope. Calvin stood for the organic unity of the church and the state and of spiritual and worldly power in the manner of Islamic fundamentalism today. He is generally accused of the execution of the great Spanish religious liberal, Servetus, in 1553.

The real protagonists of Christian liberalism and religious tolerance were the Italian pioneers of the Unitarian version of Christianity—Sozzini (known as Socinus in English speaking countries), Castellio and others in the second half of the 16th century. These honest and brave souls were hunted out of Rome and fled to Switzerland, Transylvania and Poland to escape the wrath of Calvin. Eventually, they took refuge in Germany, Holland, England, and finally, in the New England state of the America. The Unitarians rejected the dogma of

Trinity, but held Jesus to be the perfect man and the exemplar for all times. Though Sozzini did not affirm the separation of church and state, he stood for complete tolerance of all views within and without the Church.

It was natural for the Catholic church to fight back the different reforms and liberal Christian movements from Luther to Sozzini. Pope Paul III severely punished free enquiry in religion and science. The most tragic episode was the burning of the great scientist and thinker, Bruno of Italy, in 1600. The massacre of French Protestants had earlier taken place on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. At least 7000 innocents lost their lives in cold blood. The conscience of France was shocked, and, to make amends, the Edict of Nantes, 1598, ensured bare tolerance to the Protestant minority of France for almost the next hundred years. However, in 1676 persecution of Protestant recommenced and this continued until the French Revolution of 1789.

Voltaire's contribution to freedom of conscience and tolerance is well known. Though far from demanding the separation of the church and the state, he championed free enquiry and complete tolerance, though not complete equality of all citizens in the modern sense. His great contemporary Rousseau (d. 1778) had no place for atheists in public office. The French Revolution despite retaining Catholic Christianity as the 'dominant religion' of the Republic, gave the right of public office to all French citizens with the exception of Jews. Absolute or unqualified equality of status of all French citizens was established, in theory and practice, only in 1795 when the modern principle of 'separation' between the church and the state was substituted in the French Constitution in place of the earlier principle of 'jurisdiction'. According to the constitution of 1795 'Theophilanthropy', i. e., Divine Love of Man was the new official philosophy or secular religion of the state. This 'Love of Man' was claimed to be 'the religion of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius and Cicero', a religion which cut across all religions in the conventional sense. Ironically, Napoleon who claimed to be an atheist and humanist entered into a pact with the Pope in 1801 (the Concordat) and re-established the

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principle of jurisdiction, thereby restoring the authority of the Pope over the French constitution. Napoleon thought that 'using the Pope as an instrument he could control the consciences of men and more easily carry out his plans of empire'. The Concordat lasted till 1905 when the principle of 'separation' (first applied in 1795) was restored in France.

The story of the birth of religious tolerance in Germany is far more consistent than the French experience, until the advent of Hitler's ideology implying racial as well as religious intolerance of the worst kind in human history. Germany, however, had to go into a incredibly prolonged and tragic baptism of fire and blood in the form of the Thirty Year's war which was occasioned and fed by religious intolerance. The famous Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the infamous war, stipulated religious tolerance and equality of status to Catholics and Lutherans though not to the Jews and others. Frederick, the Great, after his accession in 1740, extended full tolerance to all, including the Jews, though the principle of 'jurisdiction' was retained and Lutheran Christianity remained the religion of the State. The great emperor, who befriended Voltaire and who had a cosmopolitan outlook, even toyed with the idea of inviting Muslim settlers in his dominion and extending them equal rights. Frederick held that 'every one should be allowed to get to heaven in his own way.' The outstanding German thinkers, poets and scholars who ushered in the German Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries—Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Hegel, Dilthey *et al* were all great champions of religious tolerance.

Coming to England, the turning point in the history of religious tolerance in the country is the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when Queen Anne and Prince Williams were raised to the English throne after the long period of instability, strife and uncertainty which followed the beheading of King Charles I in 1649. The horrors of the Thirty Year's war brought home to Englishmen, no less than to Germans and others, the utter futility of intolerance, thereby generating a sort of moral revulsion against bigotry. It is significant that the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648, and exactly forty years afterwards, the new

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English sovereign proclaimed the principle of tolerance in his realm. The British Parliament passed the Act of Toleration in 1689. The philosopher, John Locke of Oxford, published in the same year his first Letter Concerning Toleration, Locke had great influence over the thinking of the period. The great philosopher was in favour of the principle of separation between church and state, but this separation, in the strict formal sense, never came about in his own country, even though it came to be implemented in the New World, as we shall shortly see. Interestingly, rather paradoxically, Locke did not extend the principle of tolerance to atheists.

Earlier the great English poet, Milton, had strongly championed the liberty of conscience. Milton declared in 1644, 'Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all other liberties'.

The Act of Toleration of 1689, however, did not bring about complete tolerance in the modern sense of the term. It was only the first beginning of a long process of social and legal changes that eventually culminated in the establishment of full and unqualified tolerance and equality of status in the modern sense. Legal discrimination against the Jews and the Unitarian Christians continued. It is significant that the great physicist and philosopher of Cambridge, Newton (d. 1727) who was drawn to Unitarianism dared not air his views and conduct, in the open, his scholarly researches into Christianity. These disabilities were not removed until mid-19th century. Disraeli could not have become Prime Minister of England, had he been born a quarter of a century earlier.

I now turn to America which has given the greatest importance to complete religious tolerance and where the principle of separation between church and state was first applied in the history of mankind. This was done in the city state of Providence on the eastern coast of the USA. The city was founded by Roger Williams in the 17th century with a view to securing complete equality and dignity to all its citizens, irrespective of their religion. The Roman Catholic colony of Maryland,

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established in 1649, also ensured complete toleration, though the state had retained the traditional principle of 'jurisdiction', i.e., the jurisdiction of Christianity over the state.

The first large modern state, founded on the principle of separation of church and state, is the United States of America. The principle of separation was applied here even earlier than in the case of the French Republic after the Revolution. The secular constitution of the USA was, however, not the work of atheists, agnostics or materialists, but of committed Christians who sincerely and passionately had veered round to the belief that religion was essentially a personal matter which should be kept separate from the affairs of state and public issues, and the state, as a public corporation, should have no official religion. This philosophy of the nascent American Republic was the fruit of the sad and the bitter experience of the wars of religion, fanaticism and intolerance prevailing in the countries of the old world. The founding fathers of the American constitution held that the principle of jurisdiction enabled and encouraged one particular religion or sect to use the power and machinery of the state for promoting its own cause at the expense of the non-official sects or denominations. The constitution, therefore, declared the state to be neutral and equi-distant from all religions, and every citizen, irrespective of his religion or lack of religion, was guaranteed equal status, as an American citizen. The constituent states of the Federal Union were, however, granted the right to follow the principle of separation or of jurisdiction with respect to their internal matters. The principled separation of the state and the church by the founding fathers of the American constitution reflected the religious maturity of enlightened and sincere Christians who had certainly not repudiated spiritual or moral values, or even institutional religion, provided it did not over-step its proper sphere.

Mankind, however, is still far from the practice of tolerance, at its best, whether it be USA, Europe or other countries of the world. Tolerance, in the sphere of marriage between Catholics and Protestants, still does not come naturally or readily in the western world, and many sincere Christians are compelled

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to resort to a civil marriage. The Jews still have their problems of emotional distance or prejudice. In America the Catholics would not readily give full marks to the overwhelming Protestant majority on the issue of who should occupy the White House and other such issues. However, the movements of Unification Theology and Inter-religious dialogues, Human Rights and so on are all contributing to the desired goals.

The communications revolution of the late 20th century bears the promise of ushering in a multi-cultural global society. Almost every nation or linguistic and religious group, hitherto steeped into an ethno-centric outlook, has been exposed to multi-cultural stimuli and to the knowledge explosion. The tribals of a remote village in India mingle with the folk dancers from USSR, or listen to the music at St. Peter's; a Puritanical *mulla* of a mosque in the interior of Pakistan or Afghanistan watches the temple-dancers of India or Indonesia, and so on. The sheer force of technology has shattered the cultural insularity of the past. Great diversity and disparity certainly characterise the human situation, and there is, as yet, no common language, no common religion, political authority or economic system. Yet, the awareness of cultural plurality is steadily steering the human family in the direction of permissiveness and tolerance in all cultural matters including religious belief or faith. The phenomena of religious fundamentalism, violence and terrorism do raise fears of an impending catastrophe round the corner. However, in my thinking, though the fundamentalists or terrorists may win the battles, here and there, the humanists are going to win the war.

Secular Humanism, when not equated with atheism, does not destroy genuine religious feeling and spirituality, it merely rejects that form of religion which seeks to regulate the total behaviour of the believer and which, furthermore, divides humanity into 'we-they camps' with respect to every sphere of human activity. Religious tolerance, when not equated with indifference, is not the axe which destroys the tree of faith, but rather the fruit which grows upon it.

THE ISLAMIC DOCTRINE OF TOLERANCE :

The concept of tolerance in Islam is derived from the Quran and the practice of the Prophet. The core ideas set forth in the 'Book and the example' (of the Prophet) were developed by the great Islamic jurists and theologians who shaped the Islamic tradition between the 8th and the 10th centuries. The scattered Quranic verses revealed intermittently, over a period of 23 years, were collected and compiled, within a few years after the passing away of the Prophet, by Caliph Abu Bakr (according to one version), and by Caliph Osman (according to another version), if not by the Prophet himself. The reported sayings and doings of the Prophet were, however, put into writing, sorted and classified a little less than 200 years after the Prophet's passing away. Meanwhile, the four great jurists of Sunni Islam, and Imam Ja'far, (representing the Shi'ite school of law) had already produced full-fledged systems of Islamic piety and polity (*shari'at*) covering every aspect of life on the basis of their own reflective understanding of the Quran and the example of the Prophet and his pious companions. The different schools of law founded by Abu Hanifa (d. 767), Malik (d. 795), Shafi'i (d. 820), Hanbal (d. 855), and Ja'far Sadiq (d. 765) crystallised after the *Umayyid* Caliphate had been displaced by the Abbasid wing of the Prophet's family. The *Umayyid* Caliphs who were more self-reliant or independent in their judgment on public matters had adopted a more or less eclectic and pragmatic approach to Islamic polity, under the influence of Iranian and Roman ideas, which were adopted to promote the social dominance and economic interests of the Arab ruling class. During this period Islamic piety was focussed, more on the five pillars of the religion, rather than on the social aspect of the *shari'at*.

The flowering of thought and culture that took place in the middle Abbasid period, on the basis of the spade work earlier done under the *Umayyid* Caliphate, led to the full growth of the *shari'at* whose authority became almost indistinguishable from the 'Book' as such. The interpretations of the 'Word of God' came to be super-imposed upon the Quranic text,

as such, in such a subtle and unobtrusive manner that the distinction between the text and its interpretation virtually disappeared. This led, in the course of time, to a situation where the inevitable imperfections of fallible individuals and the limitations of the spirit of the age in which they lived came to be projected on the 'Word of God' or the 'Book' as such. The fall of the titular Abbasid Caliphate (1258) at the hands of the Mongol hordes put the last nail in the coffin of the Islamic creativity of the earlier days. The tradition lost, for centuries to come, its inner dynamism and creativity in an ever-changing human situation.

It is, therefore, imperative to make a clear distinction between the Quranic texts, as such, dealing with tolerance (or any other concept or belief for that matter) and the traditional understanding or interpretation thereof. According to the orthodox view, the traditional understanding is based upon the precepts and practice of the Prophet, the pious Caliphs and authoritative jurists. We must, however, realise that, firstly, all natural languages (including Quranic Arabic) are inevitably open to diverse interpretations, specially in the case of metaphysical, metaphorical, evaluative and directive uses of language. Secondly, whenever we act on the basis of a general statement or command, diverse interpretations of the 'real' meaning become unavoidable. In other words, the principle of plural interpretations is an in-built feature of the Quran no less than of other scriptures or of language in general. While the traditional interpretation of the Quranic texts is certainly worthy of respect by Muslims belonging to the tradition concerned, no individual, school or system can rightly claim absoluteness or finality in an ever changing human situation. The inevitable growth or movement of thought will inevitably and rightly suggest fresh interpretations of the scripture of Islam as of other religions.

Coming to the subject of tolerance, the Quran abounds in verses which suggest, rather prescribe, tolerance of a high order. It is quite another matter that the traditional interpretation of the texts concerned is not in full harmony with the modern

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concept of tolerance, at its best. But this fact should not depress the Muslim believer or surprise the historian of ideas.

The Quran also contains several injunctions which *Prima-facie*, negate the spirit of humanistic love and tolerance. But contextual enquiry and textual scrutiny of the relevant verses, scattered in different parts of the Quran, show, beyond any doubt, that these injunctions were temporary regulations during the state of war or belligerency rather than basic maxims of conduct. A comparative study of the Quranic texts, in the light of the situational context of the revelation, confirms the view that humanistic love and tolerance are the fundamental directive principles of the Quran, while mistrust of non-Muslims, social exclusiveness and harshness towards non-believers were merely temporary rules or security measures during the state of belligerency.

I shall now cite some Quranic texts which suggest and prescribe tolerance, inter-religious harmony, the essential oneness of all religions and the continuity of the Divine message to the human family as a whole, the equal importance of good deeds (together with faith) as the basis of salvation, a permissive approach to the diversity of religious faiths, and lastly, but not less importantly, verses which affirm that moral goodness cuts across groupings made on the basis of religion.

Says the Quran :

There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. (Al-Baqarah, 2:256)

Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion.

(al-Kafirun, 109:6)

Say (O Muhammad) : We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was vouchsafed unto Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered. (al-i-'Imran, 3:84)

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Say (O Muslims) : We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered. (al-Baqarah, 2:136)

Lo : those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers, and seek to make distinction between Allah and his messengers, and say : We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to choose a way in between : Such are disbelievers in truth; and for disbelievers We prepare a shameful doom.

But those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them, unto them, Allah will give their wages; and Allah was ever Forgiving, Merciful (an-Nisa, 4 : 150-152)

The Messenger believeth in that which hath been revealed unto Him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. Each one believeth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers—we make no distinction between any of His messengers—and they say : we hear, and we obey. (Grant us) Thy forgiveness, our Lord ! Unto thee is the Journeying.

(al-Baqarah, 2 : 285)

Verily We sent messengers before thee, among them those of whom we have told thee, and some of whom We have not told thee; and it was not given to any messenger that he should bring a portent save by Allah's leave, but when Allah's commandment cometh, (the cause) is judged aright, and the followers of vanity will then be lost. (al-Mumin, 40 : 78)

Lo : those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans — whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doth right — surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. (al-Baqarah, 2:62)

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Lo : those who believe and those who are Jews, and Sabaeans, and Christians — whosoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day, doth right — there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. (al-Ma'ioa, 5 : 69)

And unto thee have We revealed the Scripture with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it and a watcher over it. So judge between them by that which Allah hath revealed and follow not their desires away from the truth which hath come unto thee. For each We have appointed a divine law and a traced-out way. Had Allah willed, He could have made you one community. But that He may try you by that which He hath given you (He hath made you as ye are). So vie one with another in good works. Unto Allah ye will all return, and He will then inform you of that wherein ye differ. (al-Ma'idah. 5 : 48)

Had Allah willed, they had not been idolatrous. we have not set thee as a keeper over them, nor art thou responsible for them.

Revile, not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do.

(al-An'am, 6 : 107, 108)

And if thy Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together. Wouldst thou (Muhammad) compel men until they are believers ?

It is not for any soul to believe save by the permission of Allah. He hath set uncleanness upon those who have no sense. (Jonah, 10 : 99,100)

Say : O mankind : Now hath the Truth from your Lord come unto you. So whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever erreth erreth only against it. And I am not a warder over you. (Jonah, 10 : 103)

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Lo : this your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship me.

And they have broken their religion (into fragments) among them, (yet) all are returning unto Us.

Then whoso doth good works and is a believer, there will be no rejection of his effort. Lo ! we record (it) for him.

(al-Anbiya, 21 : 94)

Say : Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if ye turn away, then (it is) for him (to do) only that wherewith he hath been charged, and for you (to do) only that wherewith ye have been charged. If ye obey him, ye will go aright. But the messenger hath no other charge than to convey (the message) plainly. (an-Nur, 24 : 54)

Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer, Thou art not at all a warder over them. (al-Ghashiyah, 88 : 21, 22)

And they say : None entereth Paradise unless he be a Jew or Christian. These are their own desires. Say : Bring your proof (of what ye state) if ye are truthful. Nay, but whosoever surrendereth his purpose to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Lord : and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve. (al-Baqarah, 2 : 111, 112)

And the Jews say the Christians follow nothing (true), and the Christians say the Jews follow nothing (true); yet both are readers of the Scripture. Even thus speak those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differ. (al-Baqarah, 2 : 113)

The Jews and Christians say : We are sons of Allah and loved ones. Say : why then doth He chastise you for your sins ? Nay, ye are but mortals of his creating. He forgiveth whom He will, and chastiseth whom He will. Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and unto Him is the journeying. (al-Maidah 5 : 18)

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And for every nation have we appointed a ritual, that they may mention the name of Allah over the beast or cattle that He hath given them for food; and your God is one God, therefore surrender unto Him. And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to the humble. (al-Hajj 22 : 34)

Unto each nation have we given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not dispute with thee of the matter, but summon thou unto thy Lord. Lo ! thou indeed followest right guidance. (al-Hajj 22 : 67)

Say : O people of the Scripture ! Ye have naught (of guidance) till ye observe the Torath and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto you from your Lord. That which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) from thy Lord is certain to increase the contumacy and disbelief of many of them. But grieve not for the disbelieving folk. (al-Maidah, 5 : 68)

Let the People of the Gospel judge by that which Allah hath revealed therein. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed, such are evil-livers. (al-Ma'idah, 5 : 47)

Naught is said unto thee (Muhammad) save what was said unto the messengers before thee. Lo : thy Lord is owner of forgiveness, and owner (also) of dire punishment.

(Ha-M m, 41 : 43)

Whoso bringeth a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof, while whose bringeth an ill deed will be awarded but the like thereof, and they will not be wronged.

(al-An'am, 6 : 161)

And Lo ! of the People of the Scripture there are some who believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed unto them, humbling themselves before Allah. They purchase not a trifling gain at the price of the revelations of Allah. Verily their reward is with their Lord, and lo Allah is swift to take account. (al-i-'Imran, 3 : 199)

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When they listen to that which hath been revealed unto the messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears, because of their recognition of the Truth. They say : Our Lord, we believe. Inscribe us as among the witnesses. (al-Ma'da, 5 : 83)

Those unto whom we gave the Scripture before it, they believe in it.

And when it is recited unto them, they say : we believe it. Lo ! it is the Truth from our Lord. Lo ! even before it we were of those who surrender (unto Him). (al-Qasas, 28 : 52-53)

Here are those Quranic verses which, prima facie, contradict the spirit of humanism, but which do not really negate tolerance (as explained earlier) when their historical context is understood :

Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Who so doeth that hath no connection with Allah, unless (it be) that ye but guard yourselves against them, taking (as it were) security. Allah biddeth you beware (only) of Himself. Unto Allah is the journeying.

(al-i-'Imran, 3 : 28)

O ye who believe ! Take not for intimates other than your own folk, who would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of) their mouths, but that which their breasts hide is greater. We have made, plain for you the revelations if ye will understand.

(al-i-'Imran, 3 : 118)

Those who choose disbelievers for their friends instead of believers, do they look for power at their hands ? Lo ! all power appertaineth to Allah. (an-Nisa, 4 : 139)

They long that ye should disbelieve even as they disbelieve, that ye may be upon a level (with them). So choose not friends from them till they forsake their homes in the way of Allah; if they turn back (to enmity) then take them and kill them wherever ye find them, and choose no friend nor helper among them. (an-Nisa, 4 : 89)

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O ye who believe ! Choose not disbelievers for (your) friends in place of believers. Would ye give Allah a clear warrant against you ? (an-Nisa, 4 : 144)

O ye who believe ! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them. Lo ! Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk. (al-Maidah, 5 : 51)

O ye who believe ! choose not for friends such of those who received the Scripture before you, and of the disbelievers, as make a jest and sport of your religion. But keep your duty to Allah if ye are true believers. (al-Maidah, 5:57)

O ye who believe ! choose not your fathers nor your brethren for friends if they take pleasure in disbelief rather than faith. Whoso of you taketh them for friends, such are wrong-doers. (al-Bara'at, 9:23)

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo ! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (al-Bara'at, 9:5)

It may be that Allah will ordain love between you and those of them with whom ye are at enmity. Allah is Mighty, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Allah forbiddeth you not those who warred not against you on account of religion and drove you not out from your homes, that ye should show them kindness and deal justly with them. Lo ! Allah loveth the just dealers.

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Allah forbiddeth you only those who warred against you on account of religion and have driven you out from your homes and helped to drive you out, that ye make friends with them (All) such are wrong-doers. (al-Mumtahanah, 60:7-9)

O ye who believe ! The idolaters only are unclean. So let them not come near the Inviolable Place of Worship after this their year. If ye fear poverty (from the loss of their merchandise), Allah shall preserve you of His bounty if He will. Lo ! Allah is knower, Wise. (al-Bara'at. 9:28)

He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance, and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse. (al-Taubah, 9:33)

And whoso seeketh as religion other than the Surrender (to Allah), it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter. (Al-i-Imran, 3:85)

A person who has an open mind and who reads the above two sets of Quranic verses, in their proper context, would, most probably, say that the Quran preaches tolerance in the modern sense of the term. However, the traditional Islamic interpretation, is different. According to the traditional interpretation, the clear and categorical Quranic text 'there is no compulsion in religion', and several other verses mentioned above, imply merely the prohibition of conversion by force. But this prohibition does not rule out the death penalty for apostasy, according to the *Shariat*. In other words, while use of force for conversion to Islam is prohibited, use of force is not deemed to be unjust and arbitrary for preventing a Muslim from going over to another faith. Thus, Islamic jurists of all schools declare that once a person accepts Islam, he forfeits the freedom to repudiate his allegiance to Islam. Should he do so, he attracts the death penalty. But there appears to be absolutely no warrant for this extreme view in the relevant verses of the Quran. The Quranic verses are as follows :

Lo ! those who believe, then disbelieve and then (again) believe, then disbelieve, and then increase in disbelief, Allah

will never pardon them, nor will He guide them unto a way.
(an-Nisa, 4: 137)

O ye who believe ! whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him, humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is a All-Embracing, All-Knowing. (al-Maidah. 5:54)

The above verses certainly do not lend themselves to the traditional Islamic sanction of death to the apostate.

APOSTASY :

Apostasy became a major issue after the death of the Prophet when some Arab chieftains who had earlier accepted the Prophet's call to Islam decided to repudiate Islam or the authority of the successor to the Prophet. It seems that two logically distinct issues, namely, repudiation of the Islamic creed proclaimed by the Prophet, and repudiation of the political authority or supremacy of the successor, to the Prophet were intertwined in the historical developments after the passing away of the Prophet. In other words, the ideas of apostasy and of rebellion were compresent in the response of the Arab chiefs concerned. The Islamic establishment deemed rebellion to be punishable by death without going into a depth analysis of the total situation. Had this been done at that early stage, the founding fathers of the Islamic jurisprudence may well have arrived at a distinction (valid and essential for the modern mind) between the repudiation of a religious commitment and the repudiation of political supremacy. Perhaps, it was extremely difficult for the persons concerned to make this distinction between apostasy and rebellion. In any case, the two were (most probably) mixed motivationally and functionally. And the law provided a common penalty for two human responses which, in the ultimate analysis, are qualitatively quite different from each other.

THE STATUS OF DHIMMIS :

The Islamic doctrine of tolerance prohibited force as an instrument of conversion. The doctrine held that once a

territory became part of 'the land of Islam' (*dar ul Islam*) those inhabitants who were not willing to embrace Islam, though willing to give up fighting (open as well as concealed) were entitled to full protection of life and property and to freedom of belief and of practice of their religion, and the carrying on of their normal means of livelihood, provided they paid '*jizya*', a special discriminatory tax on an annual per capita basis. Women, children, the aged and the infirm were exempted.

The concept of the '*jizya*' was patterned after the ancient practice in Iran and fully harmonised with the spirit of the times. The logic of '*jizya*' was that it was a substitute tax in lieu of '*zakat*' which was obligatory upon Muslims alone. Moreover, defence of the state against external attack was also obligatory upon the Muslims but optional for the '*dhimmis*'. *Dhimmis* who opted for military or defence purposes got exemption from the '*jizya*', just like the Muslim citizens. It is significant that without the '*jizya*' the economic liability of the Muslims would have exceeded that of the '*dhimmis*'. In fact the '*jizya*' kept both categories on par, in economic terms. Moreover, the Islamic establishment actually protected the '*dhimmis*' against the land hunger of the Muslims themselves. In short, in actual practice, the '*jizya*' was not a penal tax but merely a more or less functional substitute tax for a class of people, the non-Muslim citizens, who, by definition, could not attract all the rights and obligations associated with Islam, but wished to live in the land of Islam.

The '*dhimmis*' were not subject to any humiliating disabilities, either in theory, or in practice, mentioned in the so called 'Compact of 'Omar'. This document is attributed to the great Caliph 'Omar'. Modern research (thanks to the labours of reputed Western scholars, no less than Muslims themselves) has exploded the myth of the so called compact. 'Omar II (d. 702), the Ummayyad Caliph, who came on the scene more than half a century after the pious Caliph 'Omar, did put some restrictions upon the '*dhimmis*'. and, subsequently, some jurists did adopt a discriminatory approach against non-Muslims. But even 'Omar II did not issue any Compact at all, and he should not be held respingly for some subsiful juristic excesses. These

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doctrines are much later developments and have no place in the Quran or in the practice of the Prophet and the pious Caliphs.

DAR-UL-ISLAM & DAR-UL-HARB (LANDS OF ISLAM & LANDS OF WAR) :

The Islamic doctrine of tolerance presupposes the division of the world into the land of Islam and of non-Islam, and the desirability or duty of the entire world becoming the land of Islam, under the Fatherhood of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, and finally the duty of the Muslims to work for the consummation of the above ideal. The traditional Islamic doctrine affirms a state of continuing conflict between Islam and non-Islam. However, there is room, on a temporary basis, for a transitory truce, no-war pacts, or treaties of mutual aid. The sanctity of contracts and promises is greatly stressed by Islam as is the duty to be just and fair to all human beings, irrespective of their religion. Islamic jurists were the first to frame a code of conduct for Muslim participants in war and also for Muslims living in the land of non-Islam

RESPECT FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP :

The Islamic doctrine of tolerance categorically prohibits desecrating any place of worship, or forcibly using it for Islamic worship. However, the Prophet did remove the idols from the *Ka'ba* at Mecca on the ground that the *Ka'ba* was, originally, a mosque built by Abraham. The Prophet viewed the 'cleansing' of the *Ka'ba* from idols as the restoration of a monotheistic place of worship to its original status. This is a solitary instance of a house of worship having been 'cleansed' in the life of the Prophet or the pious Caliphs. Syria was conquered during the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Iraq, Iran and Egypt during the caliphate of 'Omar, and Khurasan during that of 'Usman. No expansion took place during the caliphate of 'Ali. The combined period of the pious Caliphate amounts to approximately 30 years, and during this entire period no place of worship was desecrated, nor any icon destroyed or any encouragement given to iconoclasm.

PERMISSIBILITY OF INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE :

A unique feature of the Islamic doctrine of tolerance is that Islam permits inter-religious marriage, when no other

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religion does so. The Islamic tradition permits marriage between Muslim men and non-Muslim women belonging to the 'people of the book' (*ahl-e kitab*). Muslim women are, however, not permitted to marry non-Muslim men. The 'people of the book' meant, in practice, only the Jews and the Christians, to begin with. Later on the Zoroastrians were also included, but not other religious groups.

ISLAMIC TOLERANCE IN PRACTICE :

The Islamic doctrine of tolerance found the fullest expression in the practice of the Prophet and the pious Caliphs. The Ummayyad and Abbasid Caliphs also practised tolerance in the vast regions which gradually became a part of the Islamic Commonwealth. The term 'practice' should, however, be taken to mean 'usual behaviour' rather than 'invariable behaviour'.

The Prophet had brought about the political unification of the Arab tribes shortly before his death. This great achievement represented the combined victory of Arab nationalism over centrifugal tribalism, as also of Islam as the revised version of ancient Judaism and Christianity. The hitherto camel-drivers, petty traders and free-booters of the desert, emerged from the back-waters of history, on the world-stage of history. The almost unbroken chain of military victories against the then super-powers inevitably fostered a new self-image of the Arab emerging elite. In this self-image were inextricably mixed Arab nationalism and faith in Islam, as the final world religion—the completion of God's favours and blessings on mankind. Gushing springs of self-assertion and valour, born from the fusion of Arab pride and Islamic commitment, burst forth from the arid deserts of Arabia, taking the world by storm, as it were. The incredible momentum of the Arab-Islamic revolution of the 7th. century has, historically speaking, not yet been surpassed in the annals of world history. Arab expansion was the result of neither pure racial imperialism, nor of pure Islamic missionary zeal, but rather an inextricable combination of both. If we look upon the Arab expansion as nothing but territorial aggrandisement, or as nothing but a spiritual or missionary

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movement, we would, in either case, be reductively simplifying a complex historical phenomenon.

The expansion of Arab power was the result of successful aggression against neighbouring states. In this sense, therefore, the Arabs were not tolerant. But once the power of the Caliph was established, on the basis of victory in battle or through voluntary submission, in the face of superior military might, the Arab Muslims immediately put the Islamic doctrine of tolerance into practice. The people in the conquered territory were invited to accept Islam and become partners, enjoying equal rights, in the task of world-Islamisation. Failing this, they could live and carry on their normal activities as '*dhimmis*', protected non-Muslims living in an Islamic state. Though the '*dhimmis*' had a lower status, it was certainly not a lowly status or a mere euphemism for slavery. In any case, there was no recourse to forced conversion of the conquered people. It is, precisely, in the treatment meted out to the '*dhimmis*' that Islamic tolerance came into full play. It may be held that Islamic tolerance falls short of the modern idea of tolerance implying complete equality of status, irrespective of religion, yet, both in theory and practice, the Arab conquerors committed to Islam were ahead of the times in regard to humane rules of war, treatment of prisoners and of subjugated people who were unwilling to embrace Islam. Historians of repute, including eminent non-Muslim scholars, testify to the above.

The '*dhimmis*' had an honourable place in every sphere of life. Short of becoming the head of state, they rose to positions of eminence in the service of the state, business, industry, commerce, banking, medicine and the pursuit of learning. In the course of time, the majority of '*dhimmis*' got converted to Islam. But this was certainly not the result of force but of social psychological, political and ideological factors. The great achievement of the early Muslims and Islamic creativity in almost every field of human endeavour genuinely moved millions of Christians, Jews and others to embrace the new faith, as had happened earlier in the case of Christianity and Buddhism.

The process of formal conversion to Islam was a long

drawn out affair extending to almost two centuries in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt and other places. The Zoroastrians of Iran who migrated to India (and who came to be known as 'Parsis') on the alleged ground of persecution were only a tiny fragment of the Iranian population, the majority of which stayed behind, gradually taking to Islam. In a slow and prolonged process of cultural inter-action between the ancient and rich culture of the Iranians, and the Quranic and semitic concepts represented by the Arabs, several elements of Iranian thought and culture became an integral part of the growing Islamic tradition. The same process was repeated later on in India, and subsequently, in Malaysia and Indonesia, with respect to their pre-Islamic Sanskrit cultures.

The Prophet himself had set the tradition of tolerance and of inter-religious dialogue from the very beginning. On being forced to migrate to Medina, the Prophet's agreement with the local residents stipulated mutual friendship and aid for all citizens, irrespective of their religion. Political expediency and breach of solemn promises by the Jews impaired the inter-religious solidarity, friendship and harmony visualised by the Prophet. Indeed, the burden of the Prophet's Islamic message lay in continuity of the great Semitic tradition of the Jews as well as the Christians. The friendly relations between the Prophet and the Emperor of Ethiopia are well known.

Caliph Umar refused to pray inside the Christian Church at Jerusalem (despite requests by the Christians) lest this provide an excuse, later on, for its conversion into a mosque. Umar also had the sagacity and the moral courage to prohibit the Arab conquerors of Egypt from displacing the local farmers from their fertile lands in the Nile valley.

Coming to the Ummayyad period we come across numerous instances of harmonious relations and friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The wife of Caliph Muawiyah (d. 680) was a Christian, as also his secretary of finance. Al-Qasri, governor of Iraq, under Caliph Hisham (d. 743) built a church at Kufa to please his mother who was a Christian. Hisham also appointed Zoroastrians to public office. The

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Abbasid Caliphs appointed Christians as Viziers (Prime Ministers), Ibn Sa'id Yaqut being the most famous. The Caliph Muttaqi (d.944) had a Christian Vizier. Caliph Mutazid (d.902) appointed a Christian as the head of the war office, and a Jew, Muhammad bin Ubaidullah, as the Vizier. The Fatmide Caliph, Aziz (d.996) appointed a Jew, Yaqub bin Killis, as the Vizier. Eventually, Yaqub became a Muslim. Aziz later appointed Isa bin Nestorius, a Christian, as a Vizier. The head of the Babylonian Jews in Baghdad was greatly venerated by the Muslims who viewed him as the direct descendant of David.

Abdur Rahman I (d. 788) of Muslim Spain continued the liberal tradition of the Damascus Caliphate. Hakam I (d.822), was opposed to the mixing of religion with politics, and stood for restricting the *shariat* to purely religious matters, Abdur Rahman II (d.852) showed the utmost tolerance to Christians who wielded great power in society. Abdur Rahman III (d.961), the greatest of all the Caliphs of Muslim Spain and one of the greatest rulers of the world, continued the liberal tradition at Cordova. Spain produced a galaxy of poets, thinkers, scientists, historians, artists, architects, manufacturers who came from among the Jews and the Christians, no less than Muslims, and made a permanent contribution to the sum total of human civilisation and culture. The Ottomon Caliphs of Turkey also practised the same liberal tradition, throughout their very extensive multi-racial and multi-religious empire. The Jews and Christians (both Catholics and protestants) were given the highest posts in the realm and even dominated the industrial and commercial life of the state. Even the personal body guard of the Caliphs called the Jannisaries were Christians.

Coming to the dark side of the picture, several Caliphs (no matter what their other qualities and good points) deviated, in varying degrees, from the Islamic doctrine of tolerance, and discriminated against non-Muslims and some even persecuted doctrinal dissent within the fold of Islam itself. The most striking case of persecution of doctrinal dissent within Islam is Mamun's prolonged presecution of the great jurist, Imam Ibn Hanbal, concerning the theological doctrine of

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the eternity of the Quran. Mamun, reputed for his great contribution to culture and learning, sought to impose his own *Mutazalite* view upon the *Asharite* theology of the great jurist. Ironically, Muqtadir reversed the position and persecuted the *Muatazalites*, expelling them from public office. Self-appointed censors invaded homes and burnt objectionable literature. Under Mustanjid, the writings of Ibn Sina were burnt in 1150. In 1192 Abdus Salam, the noted scholar of Baghdad, was accused of atheism and his library was burnt. The persecution of the great mystic, Mansur Hallaj (d. 922) is well known.

Notwithstanding the above, the Muslims in history have shown far greater tolerance than the Christians or Jews in the same period. All impartial historians, including reputed non-Muslim scholars concede the atrocious behaviour of the Christian crusaders towards the Muslims and Jews in the territories the crusaders had temporarily conquered from the Arabs and which remained under Christian rule for an interregnum of approx. 80 years. The defenders of the Cross unleashed a reign of terror and incredible brutality, not only against the non-Christians of Palestine, but against the local fellow Christians themselves who were far happier under Islamic rule than under the Cross.

THE PRACTICE OF TOLERANCE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

Let us now review the practice of tolerance in medieval India. We should avoid drawing hasty and sweeping conclusions from selective views and attitudes and take the totality of facts into account. We would be guilty of 'simplism' if we were to give undue significance to the views of a section of the *ulama* who bemoaned the friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and the power and position of Hindu nobles and top administrators, on the ground that the *shariat* (as interpreted by them) prohibited friendly intercourse between Muslims and the polytheists. Some theologians were not even averse to the permissibility of coercion for saving the souls of heathens, even as a doctor may forcibly administer a bitter medicine for the patient's own good. The expression of such ideas in the writings of some Muslim divines has led some historians and

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scholars to wrong conclusions regarding the actual state of affairs in medieval India. These scholars tend to ignore the fact that the Sufi approach to the problem of tolerance was quite different.

Sufis, in general, are known for their ethics of tolerance and universal love and the doctrine of the essential unity of all religions and the oneness of the human family, notwithstanding diversity of symbols and forms. Some of the Sufi utterances, really, cut so deeply into the traditional fabric of religious belief as to invite the charge of misunderstanding or blasphemy. Though the great Sufis did attract people to Islam through their elevated moral and spiritual status, their emphasis was upon inner purification of the soul rather than upon conversion to Islam. It is highly significant that Muslim sovereigns were attracted more to the Sufis than to the theologians.

The point at issue has a great relevance to our own times. It is well known that several Hindu quarters are openly hostile to the non-Hindu segment of the Indian people. Now the spoken and written words emanating from such quarters should not make the impartial observer of the Indian scene today infer that the government of the day actually practice what the Hindu communalists desire or recommend. The declared wishes or inner attitudes of a particular section of the people should not be equated with the actual policy and practice of the government of the day. Unfortunately, this is, precisely, what some scholars, politicians and religious leaders do when they bemoan the plight of Hindu society under Muslim rule in the medieval period.

No matter what some custodians of the *shariat* may have thought, the Muslim rulers of medieval India refused to mix religion and politics and followed a policy which may aptly be called 'functional secularism'. Like rulers, in general, Muslim rulers were more interested in saving their own thrones rather than in saving the souls of others. When things do not go their way, rulers often turn to spiritual help or support from religious sources and symbols. But then this is merely a recipe in times of adversity, not the staple food, for rulers.

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As prudent statesmen, the sultans and emperors adopted a policy of non-discrimination against their Hindu subjects who constituted the overwhelming majority. This fact rather than sheer force or the supposed degradation of the Hindus helped sustain Muslim rule in medieval India for successive centuries. The overwhelming majority of the Hindus did not look upon Muslim sovereigns as foreign tyrants, or the Muslim nobility and the military as agents of exploitation of the tyrant concerned. The king or the ruler, no matter what his race or religion, was given all love and loyalty, so long as he was victorious in the battlefield. The Hindu populace, no matter what it might have thought at the time of the very first confrontation with the Turk or the Pathan invaders, soon came to look upon the Muslims as a warrior caste, one among the several castes forming the rich mosaic of Indian society. There is no doubt that when the Muslims settled down in the land of their conquest, they became in their own eyes no less than in that of the Hindus, an integral part of the already much mixed population. True, intermarriage between the Muslims and the Hindus was an unthinkable proposition. But so was intercaste marriage within the Hindu fold as such. The significant point is that the vast majority of the Indian Muslims were ethnically of Hindu stock. The weaker and socially handicapped segments of an extremely hierarchial Hindu society, bedevilled by caste taboos, had found new hopes of vertical mobility under the umbrella of Islamic social egalitarianism. In addition, Islam being the creed of the ruling class, it offered extra avenues of political power.

The sovereigns (with just one or two exceptions) treated Hindus and Muslims with paternalistic impartiality. The Hindu populace enjoyed full freedom of belief and of conscience, and were free to carry on their individual and social life just as they chose. There was absolutely no state interference in matters religious, cultural, and social. Agriculture, industry, the bulk of the trade and administration (at the lower and intermediate levels) remained in the hands of the Hindus who, however, also had access to assignments at the highest level. But at this level their proportion was considerably less because of intense

composition from the Muslim side. The upper class families of Turkish, Pathan, Turanian and Iranian descent looked upon themselves and were also looked upon by the rulers as the natural claimants or incumbents for higher positions of prestige and power, and even the Muslims of pure Indian origin had to struggle against stiff competition from nobles originating from the Islamic heartland, as it were.

The Hindu princes and chieftains who accepted the suzerainty of the central power were accorded high honour, retained their thrones and exercised vast powers, military and civil, in their own extensive territories under the feudal system. There was a common civil law of the land, apart from personal laws which were not interfered with. The law of the land was heavily influenced by the *shariat*, but the sovereigns claimed and exercised discretionary powers in all worldly matters. The sovereigns, firmly and consistently repudiated the claim of the Islamic jurists that the jurisdiction of the *shariat* was all embracing.

The sultans and emperors, with the sole exception of Akbar, did not presume to reinterpret Islam, but merely followed the policy of 'functional secularism'. This, in effect, amounted to a pragmatic separation between the jurisdiction of the state and of religion without formally raising technical religious or doctrinal issues, such as the status of India as 'dar ul Islam', or the de jure authority of the *khalifa* over India, and so on.

Many theologians and jurists disapproved of the above mentioned pragmatic approach of the sultans who, however, persisted in their de facto functional secular approach. The rulers got moral support from sufi saints who were, in general, inclined to religious liberalism and humanism and were also more in touch with the populace, Muslim as well as Hindu. Indeed, there was a measure of tension (which persists till today) between the humanism of the sufi and the legalism of the jurist or the theologian. The best Urdu and Persian poets in India and elsewhere express this tension and exalt the spiritual ecstasy of the sufi while decrying the empty legalism of the *mulla*.

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The policy of 'functional secularism' reached its full fruition and was sought to be transformed into a basic political principle, as it were, in the time of Akbar. Going beyond mere practical prudence, Akbar sought to bring about complete equality of status and of opportunity between his subjects, and also emotionally integrate Hindus, Muslims and others into one larger Indian family. Akbar's abolition of the 'Jizya' in 1564 (eight years after his accession to the throne) was the most significant reform or innovation, both psychologically and doctrinally, to bring about the desired emotional integration. However, from the purely fiscal or economic angle, the abolition of this discriminatory tax on non-Muslims did not amount to much. 'Jizya' was in lieu of the obligatory wealth-tax (*zakat*) which was a religious duty imposed on all Muslims having surplus wealth at the end of the year. Now whatever the theory of 'jizya' may have been, in practice, it was an exclusive tax on the non-Muslims, while the '*zakat*' was an exclusive tax on the Muslims, and the latter tax could far exceed the quantum of 'Jizya' paid by non-Muslims. Moreover, several categories of non-Muslims were exempt from the said tax. The discrimination involved was thus more formal rather than economic. Nevertheless, the discriminative nomenclature must have bred psychological distance between the two categories of tax assesses. And Akbar's administrative intuition and political insight led him to bring all his subjects on par, legally, administratively and fiscally. Unfortunately, Akbar's well-intentioned and far-reaching vision was misinterpreted by many of his Muslim contemporaries as a repudiation of Islamic *shariat*, or as a sinister move to impose a new religion in place of Islam. The coining of the term 'Din-e-Ilahi' and the over-enthusiasm of some of the Emperor's courtiers (for reasons more politically selfish than spiritual) conspired to give a semblance of truth to the above mentioned misinterpretation of Akbar's religious liberalism as the downright repudiation of Islam or as sheer political opportunism. This misinterpretation still persists, especially among those who glorify the achievements of Aurangzeb, and hold that he saved Islam from being totally destroyed by the follies of Akbar and Dara Shukoh. Numerous non-Muslims, on the other hand, condemn Aurangzeb for his supposedly religious fanaticism and

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persecution of Hindus and Sikhs. Incontrovertible historical evidence is increasingly piling up with the passage of years, thanks to objective and rigorous methods of research by Indian and western scholars. to expose the fallacy of the above extreme views.

It is clear that Akbar's chosen self-identity was Islamic and he was also regarded by his subjects (both Muslim and non-Muslim) as a Muslim ruler, It is also clear that Aurangzeb continued to enjoy the unquestioned loyalty and active support of a sizeable section of the Rajputs till the very end of his long reign. Aurangzeb's declared policy and practice were to employ efficient and honest persons, irrespective of religion or caste. The percentage of non-Muslims among high ranking mansabdars, no less than among lower or middle rank revenue officers, was higher in the time of Aurangzeb as compared to Akbar. Aurangzeb's Deccan and Marhatta policies were not dictated by religious, but rather by economic and political considerations, even as his fight against his father and brothers was not an exercise in Islamic piety but rather a vigorous search for power. His brothers also sought power, but they lost, while Aurangzeb won. This is not to say that differences in outlook did not exist. But they were not the crucial factor in the motivation of the contenders for power of their respective supporters from among the classes and the masses. If Dara was poetic and speculative Aurangzeb was puritanical and legalistic; if Dara came under the spell of the Upanisads, Aurangzeb remained in the grip of the *shariat*; if Dara stood for the essential unity of all religions and the universality of salvation, on the basis of good deeds, Aurangzeb stood for Islamic ethnocentricity. But the point is that religious bigotry was not the crucial factor in the motivation of Aurangzeb who was far from being an evil tyrant and temple-destroyer. His failure lay in the field of political insight and religious vision, rather than in religious persecution or hatred of non-Muslims. The reimposition of the 'Jizya', discriminatory tax structure for excise and customs duty, discouragement of music and other art forms and continuing wars of expansion were misconceived and harmful policies, not acts of hostility against

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non-Muslims. While Aurangzeb did demolish a few temples, he endowed many more in different parts of the country. The plain truth is that both actions were motivated by political and administrative rather than religious considerations. The same remarks apply to the Emperor's dealings with the Sikhs and the Marhattas. It is significant that Aurangzeb did not hesitate to demolish a mosque at Golkunda for the same reasons.

The history of the several independent regional Muslim kingdoms in the medieval period, prior to their incorporation into the Mughal empire, also points to the tolerant character of the Sultans and of the functionally secular motivation of their policies and conduct of public affairs. Zaynul Abidin (d.1470) of Kashmir, the most illustrious ruler of the region, was admired and loved by all Kashmiris, irrespective of their religion. He was the patron of Sanskrit no less than of Persian, of the Sant no less than of the Sufi. Husayn Shah (d. 1519) of Bengal played a similar role in the eastern region. His example was later on followed by the great Sher Shah (d. 1545) whose enlightened religious liberalism and administrative reforms are still remembered by all Indians, Hindus and Muslims alike.

In the southern region, the Bahmani Sultan, Tajuddin Feroze (d. 1472) gave preference to Dakhnis in state employment, irrespective of religion. His conflict with the neighbouring Hindu Raja of Vijaynagar was purely political. Mahmud Gawan (d. 1481), the illustrious Prime Minister of the Bahmani Kingdom followed the same policy. The Sultans of Golkunda and Bijapur and the rajas of Vijaynagar entered into pacts or fought among themselves in their own respective political interests, as they saw them, quite irrespective of their religious affiliations. Ibrahim Qutb Shah (d. 1580) of Golkunda greatly patronised Telegu culture, endowed Hindu temples and even discontinued the 'jizya'. Vijaynagar thought it fit, in its own political interests, to play one Muslim kingdom against, the other. This game went on until Vijaynagar's eventual defeat in 1565. During this protracted period of shifting alliances, the Muslim ruler of Bijapur sought the help of the Raja of Vijaynagar against the Muslim kingdom of Ahmadnagar. In short, political, rather than religious considerations, were the leitmotif of the actors concerned.

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Coming to later times, exactly the same remarks apply to the shifting alliances and endemic warfare between the decadent Mughals, rising Marhattas, Rajputs, Pathans, Jats, Sikhs, Rohillas and others, all of whom got sucked into the vortex of the power struggle following the sudden collapse of the great Mughal empire soon after the death of Aurangzeb.

In the southern region, Tipu Sultan (d. 1799) emerged as the hero, alike of Muslims and Hindus, of Mysore (present Karnataka). The Nizam of Hyderabad emerged as the ruler over a mixed population whose loyalty never wavered till the very end of the British period. However, the Muslim rulers of Mysore and Hyderabad ever remained on opposite sides in the drama of the Indian struggle against British supremacy.

Coming to our own times, the semi-independent princely states, Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Jaipur, Patiala, Kapurthala, etc., all ruled by Hindu or Sikh rulers, gave liberal patronage to Muslims of ability and integrity who rose to highest positions of power and trust in the state.

In conclusion, a few comments on the proper interpretation of medieval Indian history would be in order. As is well known, Mahmud Ghaznavi (d. 1030) attacked India several times in the 10th century, Muhammed Ghorî invaded and conquered North India in the 12th century, Babar in the 16th century, and Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali again invaded the country in the 18th century, and all these attackers or conquerors were Muslim. But it would be a totally perverse view to hold that the above historical processes were instances of Islamic aggression against Hinduism. All the above events flowed, essentially, from the struggle for ascendancy by rising and expanding groups at the expense of older and defensive groups, more or less on the decline, in terms of general human creativity and vigour. This has been the perennial rhythm of world history. In the ancient period, the creative and expanding groups were the Aryans, the Iranians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese, while in the medieval period the role of the creative

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expanding group was played by the Arabs, Turks, Mongols. In the modern era the role was taken over by the Europeans.

It is also worth mentioning that the social paradigm of 'Muslim aggressor' and 'Hindu victim' (even if it were to be accepted, to begin with) breaks down after the first few episodes, since the aggressors and their victims no longer belonged to different religious groups. To give only a few examples of how the struggle for power and wealth cut across religious or racial distinctions, Babar fought against the combined forces of Ibrahim Lodi and Rana Sanga, Humayun struggled against Sher Shah, and both these contenders for supremacy had allies or supporters from both Hindus and Muslims. The power of the great Mughals flowed from a firm alliance between them and the Rajputs. The victims of Mughal imperialism or expansion were Muslim kingdoms no less than Hindu. The Hindu rulers of south India continually fought against each other even as the Rajas in the northern region before the advent of the Muslims. The entire artillery of Sivaji was manned by Muslims. The victims of Sivaji's lootings of the prosperous port of Surat were Hindus no less than Muslims, even as were the victims of the invasions by Nadir Shah and Abdali.

According to the Hindu Dharmshastras, every king or ruler was duty-bound to enlarge his dominions and fighting was the highest duty of the warrior caste. Territorial expansion was not evil so long as the ruler could win in battle and rule justly over his subjects in accordance with the Shastras. The Rajas fought, won or lost, but the Praja," unmindful of the race or religion of the contenders for power, pursued their own peaceful vocations of life the 'purusharthas'. This social ethic was also applied to the Muslim rulers when they came on the scene. The Hindu populace, in general, did not grudge Muslim rule, provided the ruler did not interfere in his Dharma. The legitimacy of the ruler was not determined by or dependent upon his religion or race, but flowed from his victory in battle or the struggle for power. Such has been the basic social and political ethic of Bharat from times immemorial. Communalism, in the modern Indian sense of the term, was unknown earlier and emerged during British rule.

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During the entire medieval period, social gradation cut across the distinction between Hindu and Muslim. Poor Muslims were in the employment of rich or affluent Hindus, and vice versa. Muslim rulers and feudal lords ruled over and commanded the genuine loyalty and admiration of their subjects, Muslim and Hindu alike, and vice versa. Muslim rulers had enemies or rivals among the Hindus, and vice versa. Friends and foes did not belong to any religion or caste, nor did creditors and debtors. There were business and industrial partnerships between Hindus and Muslims who took the same risks and shared the same gains or losses. The common man, be he a Hindu or Muslim, had the same grievances against the Patwari, the Kotwal, the Sahukar, the 'Qazi', the aristocrat, the burglar, the artisan, the prostitute, who could be either Hindu or Muslim. And so on.

The best commentary on the tolerance and functional secularism of medieval India is provided by the growth of a common or composite culture reflected in the regional languages, architecture, painting, music, dress, entertainments, amusements, proverbs, folklore and folk-religions of India.

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Notes and References :

1. p. 5 The word 'fundamentalism' is a misnomer since its literal sense suggests something totally different from the sense 'fundamentalism' is being used in these days. Understood literally 'fundamentalism' should mean emphasising the fundamentals of a religion to the exclusion of all secondary or tertiary details. But in actual usage 'fundamentalism' means that the writ of religion runs in each and every sphere of life, every detail of which falls under the discipline of an organised religion. I have termed this basic approach to religion as 'religious totalism', and the opposite of this approach as 'religious liberalism'. The liberal approach to religion demarcates the proper function of religion and lays emphasis upon the fundamental concepts and values of a religion rather than upon cultural, social, economic, political matters which are best left to man's collective wisdom expressed through the democratic process.
2. p. 5 See p. 21 & 24, below.
3. p. 5 This is precisely what is done by Maududi and other critics of secularism. They first distort the real operative meaning of separating religion from politics and then disapprove of 'politics sans religion' as the naked pursuit of power.
4. p. 6 This is the approach of savants and sages such as Tolstoy, Max Muller, Schweitzer, Romain Rolland and also of Ashok, Akbar, the great emperor and Sufis of the east and last, but not least, of Gandhiji.
5. p. 8. This simple truth is missed by numerous persons of different religious faiths. In his autobiographical novel, OF HUMAN BONDAGE, Somerset Maugham refers to how the first realization of this truth freed him from the evil or spiritual conceit and contempt for creeds other than his own.
6. p.9. Existential perplexity is the condition of inner doubt concerning spiritual or moral issues which cannot be settled objectively by observation, experiment or reasoning. In other words, the individual is constrained either to remain in perpetual doubt or to believe on the basis of faith. Existential certainty flows from authentic faith, while objective certainty is the product of systematic perception and inquiry. Not only religious or metaphysical but even ethical and aesthetic truth-claims cannot be established by objective methods of knowing. Empathy is the ability to place oneself in the life-situation of others and to see things from their perspective and in a different light, as it were. Empathy implies the ability to suspend one's own beliefs or views, to become provisionally, as it were, a partisan of or participant in a different world for the purpose of understanding it as an insider rather than as an observer from outside.
7. p. 10. The principle of tolerance is well exemplified in the maxim of the

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Roman Emperor Tiberius : 'If the gods are insulted, let them see to it themselves, See Bury's Classic JB, A History of Freedom of Thought, London, 1957.

8. p. 10. The following extract from the famous Rock Edicts of Ashoka is truly remarkable : 'Whoever honours his own sect and disparages another man's, does his own sect the greatest possible harm.....' See de Bury, WT (Ed.) Sources of Indian Tradition, Oxford University Press, 1958.
9. p. 10. Some Indian writers have put forward the view that the working of the Hindu caste system in remote antiquity, was on functional lines, and that it was not absolutely rigid, but permitted vertical mobility. There is no solid evidence for this interpretation, though there might have been a few exceptions to the rigorous application of caste rules and regulations. Apologetic approaches, wherever they may operate, tend to distort or blur the contours of reality.
10. p. 10. The early followers of Jesus were humble folk belonging to the weaker sections of the Jewish population of the region.
11. p. 11. The first reported case of death penalty for heresy is that of Priscillian in 4th Century Spain, in the reign of Emperor Valens. See Bury, op cit.
12. p. 11. The traditional versions of each of the Semitic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam promised salvation exclusively to their own respective followers. This is, however, not the strict Quranic approach which is very liberal and tolerant indeed. Incredible as it is, Christian Theology had come to accept the view that the execution of pagans, heretics and apostates at the hands of their Christian tormentors was in the best interests of the victims who would thereby be saved from the much greater tortures of hell.
13. p. 11 See the relevant Quranic texts below pp. 29-39.
14. p. 12 See below, Islamic Tolerance in Practice.
15. p. 13 In the popular perception the crusades were a bloody confrontation between Christianity and Islam. From a mature sociological and historical approach, however, political and economic factors were silently operative in producing this confrontation which was far from being a pure and simple religious issue. Indeed, religion provided only a romantic or sentimental colouring to issues essentially concerned with the struggle for wealth and power.
16. p. 12 The beginning of the Arab Resurgence dates back to Mohammad Ali's Egyptian nationalism of the mid 19th century. This was rather an ambivalent position without any consistent and comprehensive Islamic vision. Shortly afterwards the Bathist Movement of Arab nationalism and

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Islamic modernism arose in Iraq and Syria under the stimulus provided by Liberal Christians who were as much the sons of the soil as the Arab Muslims themselves. The name of Mickael Aflak is only the first of several distinguished Arab Christians or Christian Arabs.

17. p. 13 The tragic story of the Spanish Muslims has been told by reliable historians, Muslim as well as others. See the well known works by Amir Ali, A short History of the Saracens, London, 1955; Hitti, PK, History of the Arabs, London, 1957.
18. p. 13 See Bury, op. cit.
19. p. 15 In the hundred year period between 1676 and 1689 the French liberal thinker, Bayle, questioned the validity of St. Augustine's interpretation of the remark attributed to Jesus. 'Compel them to come in'. There is a strong similarity between the liberal approaches of Bayle and John Gocke of Oxford. The work of Bayle was carried forward to its consummation by Rousseau, Voltaire et al.
20. p. 16 The principle of 'Jurisdiction' meant that the jurisdiction of the established religion applies to secular matters no less than to purely spiritual. The principle of 'separation' meant that the affairs of state be kept separate from religion as such, and that the state should function as an autonomous corporation rather than as an agency subordinate to any particular religion. Separation, however, does not mean rejection of either religion or of morality.
21. p. 16 This totally absurd war crippled the economy of entire western Europe. One of the most devastating wars in the annals of human history, it ever led to cases of cannibalism for the sake of sheer survival.
22. p. 17 Legal disabilities against Unitarians were completely removed in the forties, and against the jews in the fifties of the 19th century. Signing of the 39 Articles of the official Anglican Church ceased to be a pre-condition of a fellowship at the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge as late as 1871.
23. p. 18 It is both ironic and amusing that Protestants settled in large numbers in Maryland and, on becoming the majority, discontinued the tolerance established by the Catholics. The policy of tolerance was, however, re-established after 1660. See Bury, op. cit.
24. p. 18 It is worth pointing out that the founders of the first secular state in the world were not atheist or materialists, but deeply committed Christians who, however, from the long experience of European religious intolerance and fanaticism have learnt the wisdom of separating religion from politics. The Muslim mind is still struggling with this issue. This principle was incorporated into the letter and spirit of the Indian constitution, thanks to

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the vision of the leaders of the Indian Renaissance starting in the late 18th century Bengal, and coming to full maturity in the life and work of Gandhiji, Tagore, Nehru et al. It is true, tolerance may also flourish in a state where the principle of jurisdiction holds, for instance, Britain whose monarch continues to be the head of the established Anglican Church. Yet, the American model remains supreme for the rest of the world.

25. p. 20 The Islamic tradition itself is not unanimous regarding the exact agency and point of time at which the Quranic corpus came into existence. The variant traditions, however, with the exception of some extreme Shia views, do not touch upon the authenticity of the revealed text. See my work, 'Authenticity and Islamic Liberalism', Delhi, 1987.
26. p. 21 This fact should not surprise the historian of ideas or create any religious misgivings in the heart of the Muslim believer, provided he looks at matters candidly and consistently.
27. p. 22 The Prophet and his companions had to abandon their heart and homes in Mecca to escape humiliation, ostracism and torture at the hands of their opponents bent upon exterminating the new religion. Even at Medina the refugees were not allowed to live in peace. The Meccans repeatedly invaded Medina, continually engaged the Muslim in ambushes, raids for booty and acts of terrorism and the situation did call for harsh defensive measures, even pre-emptive action by the Muslims who had gradually become the dominant political power in the region.
28. p. 29 See the scholarly and objective exposition (based on original Arabic sources) of this theme in Majid Khadduri's excellent study, 'War and Peace in the Law of Islam', Oxford, 1955.
29. p. 30 Immediately after the passing away of the Prophet, in 632, two or three Arabs declared themselves to be prophets in their own right and challenged the legitimacy of the political authority of Abu Bakr, the successor (Khalifa) to the Prophet. Abu Bakr not only quickly subdued these false claimants, but also incorporated Syria into the Islamic commonwealth in the short space of less than three years.
30. p. 31 See Amir Ali, *op. cit.*
31. p. 31 According to the (spurious) covenant of Omar', the Dhimmis had to wear a distinctive dress, cut their forelocks, were debarred from using a saddle when riding horses, living in houses taller than those of Muslims, wearing of silken clothes, praying or ringing church bells loudly, and testifying against Muslims. Moreover, they had no legal share in war spoils though they could get an allowance as participants fighting on the side of the Muslims. If a Muslim killed a non-Muslim', the penalty was restricted to fine only. These and similar restrictions or disabilities of the Dhimmis

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were unknown in the earliest normative period of the Islamic commonwealth. Even when they came to be espoused in some Muslim juristic quarters they were not acted upon due to various reasons. See, Majid Khadduri, *op. cit.* Also see Tritton, AS, 'The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim subjects', London, 1930, and Fischel, 'WJ, Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam', London, 1937.

32. p. 31 For details see Majid Khadduri, *op. cit.*

33. p. 33 The Zoroastrians were added in the category 'people of the Book' soon after the Arab conquest of Iran during the time of Omar in 642. The Hindus of Sind in India were also included in this category at the instance of Mohammad bin Qasim who conquered the region at the behest of the Ummayyad Khaliifa, at Damascus in 712. This liberal approach was, however, reversed after Qasim's recall from Sind and his disgrace at the Khalifa's court.

34. p. 33 Muslims are pre-disposed to see the aspect of missionary zeal alone, while non-Muslim observers that of mere territorial expansionism. Balanced observers and historians such as Gibb, Hitti, Watt et al. do strike the correct note.

35. p. 34 The evidence of Non-Muslims was not admissible against Muslims. Non-Muslims faced some disadvantages in business and trade. Non-Muslims were also debarred from the precincts of the holy places at Mecca and Medina. Non-Muslims could not build places of worship without prior sanction of the state. Non-Muslim-men could not marry Muslim women, but Muslim-men could marry Jewish or Christian women. See note on No. 31 above.

36. p. 34 Religions of Indian origin are even more tolerant than Islam in the matter of doctrinal differences. Unfortunately, this feature has been vitiated by the evils of the caste system.

37. p. 34 See the works of Amir Ali, Hitti *op. cit.* and Bernard Lewis.

38. p. 34 The expansion of Christianity in Europe in the middle ages and the earlier expansion of Buddhism in Central and East Asia were, primarily, the result of cultural and not military conquests. This was repeated when the Turkish and Mongol hordes who had utterly destroyed the political power of Islam in West Asia themselves fell captive to the force of the Islam during the 13th and 14th centuries.

39. p. 35 Cross-cultural fusion is an universal social phenomenon. Even the Islam of the Prophet's time, as a way of life, was Arab Islam. The Islamic ethos, as it emerged in the early normative period of the pious Khalifas and even later, retained much of the pre-Islamic Arab mores. Sociology reveals the continuance of the original 'cultural group' of a society which converts

to a religion from outside. Thus, while Islam, as an abstract creed, enshrined in the 'kalimah' is common to Arabia, Iran, India, Indonesia etc., the concrete ways of life in these areas differ quite considerably from each other.

40. p. 35 The compact of Medina entered into by the Prophet with the residents of the host city is a document of great significance. It is worth recalling for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent that an outstanding Indian scholar, jurist and public figure, Husain Ahmad Madani (d. 1957) held that the compact was evidence that nationality was not exclusively determined by a common religion. Following the example of the compact of Madina, Madani favoured retaining the political unity of India. Iqbal thought otherwise, and rather crudely criticised the nationalist approach of the reputed scholar and congress leader, who was in the company of Abul Kalam Azad, Abdul Majeed Khwaja, Zakir Husain et al.
41. p. 35 A group of early Muslim converts had found friendly asylum at the court of the Emperor much before the migration to Medina.
42. p. 35 Many Arabs wanted to settle down in the fertile lands belonging to the defeated Egyptians. Omar did not permit this, even though Ali reasoned that there should be no objection in view of the fact that the Muslims had earlier displaced the Jewish owners of the fertile farms and lands at Khyber in Arabia. See Shibli's monumental *Life of Omar, the Great*, Lahore, 1962.
43. p. 36 The instances of tolerance cited have been taken from standard historical works by reliable historians, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, who have laboured hard to go to the original Arabic sources closest to the periods concerned. Amir Ali, *op. cit.* p. 112-115; 321-322. Hitti, P.K., *op. cit.* p. 234, 355.
44. p. 36 The dark side of the picture will be found in the same works : Amir Ali, p. 288-89 : 301, 412. Hitti, p. 353, 359, 360.
45. p. 37 The debate whether the Quran, as the Word of God, is eternal or created in time (just like the rest of God's creation) is one of the most crucial issues in the history of Islamic thought. Under the influence of Greek thought the Mutazilite theologians held that the 'Word' came later in time, since holding otherwise would compromise the essential unity of God's Being. The Ash'arite theologians held that the Mutazilite view compromised the status and supreme worth of the 'Word of God'. The Asharite view was that the eternity of the Quran was quite compatible with the unity of Divine Being in which the attributes of mercy, knowledge, power, speech etc. were eternally present.
46. p. 37 The fear of Philosophy gripped Sunni theologians and jurists. Intellectuals stated using the greatest caution in expressing their authentic

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views. The classical Muslim world hardly appreciated the profound genius of men like Al-Beruni, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun et al. The Shia sect developed the doctrine of doctrinal dissimulation (taqiya) to escape discrimination or persecution on the charge of heresy. Hallaj's declaration 'I am the Reality, 'Truth'. (Anal, Haq) was interpreted as a denunciation or repudiation of orthodox Islam. Most probably, the real reason for the execution of the mystic was political. This, however, needs fuller investigation.

47. p. 38 In general, Muslim theologians held that the shari'at stipulated the right and obligation of the ulema to overview and regulate the affairs of state and the acts of the Sovereign. The Sufis, on the other hand, were content with pure spirituality and a rather low profile in the affairs of the state. The Sufis were absorbed in devotional music and meditation and their task of giving solace and comfort to the weaker sections of society instead of walking, with the airs of authority, in the corridors of power. There were, however, several exceptions to this general rule. Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (d. 1624) and Shah Waliullah (d. 1763) are notable instances.
48. p. 38 'Functional secularism' means that secularism in practice went hand in hand with theoretical Islamic rule, even as the secular government in Britain has gone hand in hand with an established Church of England.
49. p. 40 See Rizvi, SAA, The Wonder that was India, volume-2, London, 1937. Moreland, A short History of India, London, 1944.
50. p. 40 This holds good from the earliest times and applies to Muslim sovereigns all over the world, though there are a few notable exceptions.
51. p. 40 It had become a tradition that Muslim sovereigns in different parts of the Islamic world sought legitimacy for their rule by proclaiming, suo-moto, their formal allegiance to the Khalifa. The authority of the Khalifa was a mere fiction. Indeed, the unity of the Islamic commonwealth had been lost as far back as 750 when the Abbasides had succeeded in displacing the Umayyad Khalifas from Damascus and the founding, by a scion of the Umayyad family, a rival seat of power in Spain. The declaration of allegiance was purely ceremonial. Akbar discontinued this formality. See Rizvi, SAA op. cit.
52. p. 40 Beautiful examples abound in the poetry of Attar (d. 1229), Rumi (d. 1273), S'adi (d. 1291), Hafiz (d. 1389) Jami (d. 1492), Urfi (d. 1591), Kabir (d. 1518), Mir (d. 1810), Ghalib (d. 1869).
53. p. 41 Jizya was a graduated tax in three slabs of 12, 24 and 48 dinars per annum. The establishment did not, in general, severely penalise the failure to pay the tax because of financial stringency. See Majid Khadduri, op. cit.
54. p. 41 The tendency is pretty strong even now among Muslims to declare

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any difference of opinion or plural interpretations of Islamic doctrine as reprehensible and tantamount to rejecting Islam. Sir Syed, in the last century, and Maulana Azad, in our own times, among several others, were the targets of this intolerance of plural views.

55. p. 41 Valuable results are following due to attention now being given by impartial historians to such documents as deeds of charitable grants by Aurangzeb to several Hindu temples, official lists of Governors, top military commanders, feudal lords, writers etc. and last, but not least, authentic letters or memoranda.
56. p. 42 See the pioneering study by Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1966.
57. p. 43 See Pande, BN, *Islam & Indian Culture*, Patna, 1987. In the early medieval period Muslims did destroy some temples and also used their debris for constructing mosques. These actions represented medieval modes of asserting the military might of the victor, though such practices had no Islamic sanction. These acts were, however, not cases of persecution or of forced conversion. While we rightly disapprove of these acts, on the basis of our contemporary norms and ideals, this should not make us condemn the medieval period as one of darkness, decay and wholesale tyranny.
58. p. 43. The details concerning the regional Muslim kingdoms have been taken from Rizvi, *op. cit.*
59. p. 45 Mahmud Ghaznavi's fighting force comprised Hindu mercenaries also. Moreover, Mahmud had Hindu chiefs as allies in the perennial wars for territorial expansion 'the declared aim and duty (dharma) of the Chatriya caste, according to the Dharmshastras. It is significant that when the triumphant Mahmud sent rich presents to a noted scholar-jurist of Ghazna, Qazi Abul Hasan Ba'lami, the learned divine returned the presents on the ground that Mahmud had not behaved in conformity with Islamic tenets. See. the Urdu book, Nizami K.A., *Religious leanings of the Sultans of Delhi*, 1958.
60. p. 45 Shivaji attacked and looted the prosperous port city of Surat first in 1664, and again in 1670. Nadir Shah attacked and looted north India in 1739, and Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1756.
61. p. 45 Murty, K.S. *The Indian Spirit*, 1965.
62. O, 45 This is not a simplistic indictment of British imperial policy in India. Communalism was also a natural concomitant of the social, economic and political consequences of the process of industrialization and modernization of a given society. The largest single factor which precipitated communalism, in the modern sense, was the introduction of

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representative secular democracy. The enfranchisement of the common man meant that every man was a potential ruler, of sorts, no matter what his caste or religion, provided he wins in the game of the ballot. This almost inevitably created an almost irresistible attraction towards all sorts of vote catching devices appealing to members of one's own religion, caste, region, or language, for winning the battle of the ballot, which was the passport for occupying the seats of power and wealth.

63. p. 46 See Tarachand's classic, *The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1963.

**The Concept of
the Islamic Economic System**

by
Prof. Jamal Khwaja

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Resurgence movement has led to a call for Islamizing society and polity in several Muslim states. The declared rationale for this call is the view set forth by several Islamic intellectuals, theologians and statesmen that Islam is not merely a system of individual devotion and piety calculated to bring about spiritual salvation in life hereafter, but rather a complete way of life, a blue print of the good life in its totality including politics and economics. The concrete contours and details of this map, so they say, ought to be adjusted with the concurrence of competent *ulema* in view of the ever changing human situation. Nevertheless the total map must be firmly based upon the Quran and the example of the Prophet.

The advocates of Islamic Resurgence hold that the Muslim liberals of the last and mid-twentieth centuries merely blindly imitated Christian liberalism which viewed religion merely as a personal relationship between man and God without regulating human political and economic concerns. The advocates of Islamization hold that Liberalism, Socialism and Communism have all failed to cure man in the modern age and that the only hope for mankind lies in a return to the Islamic or Quranic system of economics and politics¹.

In the sphere of economics, the main thrust of the Islamic Resurgence movement is the literal implementation of the Quranic prohibition of usury/interest which is seen to be the root evil. It is claimed that *zakat* (the Islamic wealth tax) and the Quranic law of inheritance would suffice in an interest-free society to cure all economic problems. *Zakat*, as a 2½% tax on net wealth at the end of the financial year, was made a statutory tax about five years ago in Pakistan and is being regularly collected by the state directly from banks in the case of all *Sunni* Muslims who are the dominant majority in Pakistan. Payment of bank interest on deposits and

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charging of interest on bank loans for industrial commercial purposes have been totally banned since early 1985, though the ban does not yet apply to foreign transactions. A new scheme of Islamic profit/loss sharing by bank depositors has recently been started for promoting investment and economic growth without the lever of interest. It is expected that these innovations would not adversely affect the rate of growth or health of the economy. On the other hand, the abolition of interest is expected to promote social justice and general welfare and to remove several social or moral evils inseparable from various non-Islamic politics.

Whatever be the truth of the above claims, the fact is that no attempt has been made, to my knowledge, to present a historical and systematic theoretical analysis of interest or an integrated theory of general economics to show how a totally interest-free world economy would or could work in an admittedly imperfect and imperfectible world.

In what follows I shall first analyse the basic concept of an Islamic economic system, as an integral part of the Islamic faith. I shall then examine the basic thesis that the abolition of interest is the root remedy for man's socio-economic ills.

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I begin with the Quran.

Quranic verses dealing with fiscal or economic matters are, with literally two or three exceptions, in the nature of moral exhortations to do the right or the customary and not specific injunctions implying or even pointing to any 'economic system'. Thus, for instance, Quranic verses repeatedly enjoin believers to spend in the way of God, to help the needy, the traveller and the orphan, to avoid extravagance, pomp, avarice and the hoarding of wealth, to be just in weighing and measuring, to fulfil promises and contracts, to avoid bribery and cheating, to be lenient to the debtor, to give honest testimony even when it goes against one's kin, and so on.

The only verses which state not merely ethical norms but rather economic rules or regulations. are the verses

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dealing with *zakat* (tax on surplus wealth) and *riba* (usury/interest).

The verses are as follows :

“Establish worship, pay the poor-due, and bow your heads with those who bow (in worship).” 2 : 43.

“Those who swallow usury cannot rise up save as he ariseth whom the devil hath/prostrated by (his) touch. That is because they say : Trade is just like usury ; whereas Allah permitteth trading and forbiddeth usury. He unto whom an admonition from his Lord cometh and (he) refraineth (in obedience thereto), he shall keep (the profits of) that which is past and his affair (henceforth) is with Allah. As for him who returneth (to usury)—such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein”. 2 : 275.

“O ye who believe ! Devour not usury, doubling and quadrupling (the sum lent). Observe your duty to Allah, that ye may be successful.” 3 : 130.

“And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people’s wealth by false pretences : We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom.” 4 : 161.

“That which ye give in usury in order that it may increase on (other) people’s property hath no increase with Allah ; but that which ye give in charity, seeking Allah’s countenance, hath increase manifold.” 30 : 39.

(The above translation is from Pickthall’s famous, ‘The Meaning of the Glorious Koran’.)

The Quran nowhere gives any further details, as it does in the case of some other matters—inheritance, divorce, remarriage, evidence and even the proper procedure of oaths.

It may be thought that since the Quran prohibits usury/interest and implicit obedience to the Quran—the infallible word of God—is obligatory on the believer, there is no option for him except totally to abjure interest. This line of thinking ignores the methodological principle that prior to drawing any conclusion with

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regard to 'interest', the exact meaning of the Arabic term *riba* used in the Quran should be determined, instead of mechanically or blindly equating it with the English word 'interest'. At times words of a living language undergo great changes in their functional meaning and practical significance due to various factors.

Full investigation into the socio-economic conditions of the then Arab society and the present conditions, plus reasoned interpretation of the Quranic text (rather than simplistic literal obedience to the Quran or the Prophet) is thus the correct approach, not only for the economic historian or secular social scientists, but also for the committed Muslim drawing inspiration from the Quran and the example of the Prophet.

The advocates of literal obedience to the Quran also ignore (rather much too readily) the historical fact that the Prophet and the pious Caliphs always resorted to juristic reflection or interpretation of the Quranic text. This naturally led to the admission of qualifications, subtle distinctions in the understanding of the operative or directive meaning of the plain literal texts. For instance, the seemingly categorical Quranic injunction that the hands of the thief be cut off was never applied unconditionally on pain of disobeying the word of God.²

The making of relevant distinctions and qualifications is also called for in the context of *riba*. The Arabic word *riba*, literally means increase or growth of any thing or entity—physical, biological or spiritual. The Quran also refers to *riba* with respect to spiritual merit (*Sawab*) or punishment. In the economic sphere *riba* means the excess expected and demanded by the lender: from the borrower over and above the principal amount lent. The value of say, Rs. 10,000 as a lump sum at any one point of time, is arithmetically identical with the same amount spread over several years. Yet a consolidated sum has power to purchase an animal, land or tools which, in turn, augment the wealth of the user, while the same sum spread over a

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long period of time lacks this purchasing power. *Riba* or usury has thus, understandably, been a universal practice in recorded history. At the same time it has been disapproved since, in general, the excess demanded by the lender tended to be much too high for the borrower's capacity to pay without great hardship. The demand of compound interest made the situation much worse. Moreover, there was a contractual penalty for failure to return the sum namely bonded labour by the borrower for as long as three to seven years. The concept and practice of usury in the ancient and middle ages was thus closely tied up with the institution of bonded labour—a form of temporary slavery. This aspect of usury was morally most repugnant in the case of distress loans.

The Jewish moral sensibility and group solidarity led them strongly to disapprove of usury among themselves, though charging usury from non-Jews was permissible.

Both Christianity and Islam apply the prohibition to all human beings. This is an advance upon the Jewish ethos. But both Christian and Islamic jurists traditionally ignore the crucial distinction between usury, in the above mentioned sense, and interest in the modern sense of the term.

If we take the expression 'Islamic economic system' to mean a normative system which, as an essential part of the Islamic faith, is permanently binding upon all good Muslims, no such system is found in the Quran or the *Sunnat*. Nor can any such system possibly be deduced (logically) or inferred (analytically or analogically) from the Quran and the *Sunnat*. The actual claim by a person, that a particular system is the Islamic norm, is nothing more than the expression of his opinion—possibly very learned and worthy of consideration. To put it in other words, all such claims are essentially recommendations made by some person that his proposed system be accepted as the Islamic norm in the light of what he believes the ultimate Authority would have approved of at the present moment of time. It should be evident that different recommendations reflecting different preferences and views would be made.

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What is being called 'the Islamic economic/agrarian system' was a slow growth which took place in only a marginal sense in the lifetime of the Prophet, who acquired full and effective control of the peninsula only a year before his death. The real contours of the system took shape under Caliph Umar, and the evolution continued for centuries.

The nascent Islamic economic system freely borrowed (quite understandably) from the economic culture of pre-Islamic space-time. Thus, *jizya*, (the tax on protected non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state) was a medieval Iranian practice going back to the Jews in antiquity.

Sovereign Muslim rulers (Sultans) in Central Asia, India and elsewhere felt still more free to adjust and adapt the flexible economic and political culture of early and late early Islam to suit local and ever changing conditions. As and when the orthodox *ulema* tried to arrest this practice, tension and conflict developed between the king and the priest or the state and the church. With a few exceptions, the Indian Muslim kings (even much before the radical and liberal Akbar) asserted the supremacy of the state in worldly matters and consistently refused to treat the opinions and advice of the *ulema* in such matters as binding upon the state.

The so-called Islamic economic/agrarian system cannot, therefore, be given the same sanctity and binding power as the Islamic precept system relating to prayers, fasting etc. or laws relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance found in the Quran.

Islamic system of piety and liturgy, falls in a unique category, since its contours and details were structured by the Prophet himself on the basis of abstract Quranic injunctions.

Islamic Economics

Does the expression 'Islamic Economics' have any significance apart from economic history or economic geography of the Muslim world, or the contribution of Muslim social scientists to Economics? It might be thought that 'Islamic Economics' is also a theoretical social science whose subject matter is the best method of material wealth within the parameters. In this sense the scope of 'Islamic Economics' would go beyond the mere description of what is the case to the task of prescribing economic policy on the basis of conceptual analysis. According to this theoretical approach, the socio-economic environment or polity of a truly Muslim state must reflect and promote the basic Islamic conception of the good life in all its multifarious aspects. However, as soon as we try to spell out the concrete socio-economic features demanded by 'Islamic Economics', we find ourselves faced with conflicting possibilities of choice. And we are thrown back upon common sense, economic theory and actual experience in order to clinch various issues.

This difficulty arises because Islamic values—equality, fraternity, generosity, charity, sympathy, justice, compassion and so on—are all abstract concepts. The moment we try to realize them in the framework of laws and a concrete polity, a plurality of socio-economic blue-prints become candidates for the title 'Islamic' on the ground of best serving the values of Islam. The same difficulty (to a lesser degree) arises in connection with the two or three specific Quranic economic injunctions mentioned previously also in the case of the expression 'Islamic economic system'.

Thus, we find that 'Islamic Economics' in the sense of prescriptive economic theory lands Muslims into controversies which, by their very nature, cannot be solved on the basis of the Quran or the *Sunnat* alone without recourse to pure economic thinking and socio-ethical reflection. In the final analysis, therefore, the term 'Islamic Economics' tends to mislead us into seeking and projecting 'Islamic truths' of economics, or saying that Islam demands the true

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Muslim to accept this or that economic system as pre-condition of professing 'true' Islam. However, 'Islamic economics' in the purely descriptive sense (both historical and geographical) remains valid. Due to semantic confusions several Islamic social scientists, writers and statesmen now find themselves disputing not only with 'secular' economists but among themselves about the identity of the true Islamic system of economics.⁴ Paradoxically, the Islamic system which was assumed to be Divinely imposed and an infallible standard for judging man-made system of thought, itself becomes a matter of unending debate. One, therefore, cannot help concluding that the directive thrust of the Quran lies in spiritual beliefs and moral exhortation rather than in the sphere of economic legislation. Anyone who claims that the Quran prescribes any particular economic philosophy or system is as off the mark as one who claims that the Quran supports or affirms any particular theory of Astronomy, Physics or Biology. No system could possibly claim a Quranic mandate such as possessed by the laws of inheritance, divorce, prohibited degrees of marriage etc. which are specifically contained in the Quran. No positive economic system of Islam could be anything more than a rough logical construction based upon two or three economic injunctions viewed as axioms by the believer.

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There can be, I submit, no Islamic truths of economics any more than there could be Islamic laws of Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, or Medicine.⁵ Economics must be treated as an empirical social science governed by the standard scientific method appropriate to its nature, scope and limits. As a science all theories, conceptual models, mathematical projections and predictions of mass behaviour, and socio-economic implications of fiscal policies will have to be empirically tested for their validity or truth. All pre-conceived notions, assumptions, untested hypotheses, will hamper the economist's task of analysing the motives, structure and implications of general economic behaviour.

The above task implies a neutral phenomenological analysis of economic concepts, practices and systems (just as a natural scientist analyses natural phenomena) rather than the justification of any pre-rational conviction concerning any particular economic

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concept or practice including usury/interest. I submit even a committed Muslim economist *qua* social scientist, should do the same instead of assuming that interest is the root economic evil.

If I, as a Muslim, am inwardly convinced that interest must be evil, since the Quran prohibits it, and I do not suspend this belief while rationally examining the issue, as a student of ethics or economics my judgement would not be impartial but rather 'weighted' against interest. Even when I consciously aim to find out the truth rather than to defend any particular view, my perception of the function and utility of interest would be coloured by my antecedent beliefs. Likewise, if I have been conditioned by my milieu to hold all religion or pre-modern ideas as infantile myths and superstitions, I may miss out some crucially relevant consideration or aspect of the problems. Suspension of belief is indispensable for a detached and balanced approach. To the extent I fail I shall become selective—noting and emphasising some features and missing or ignoring others, thereby confirming my initial slant.⁶ However, if I could empty or neutralize my ideological affiliations and predilections or 'ideological vested interests' as it were (as far as humanly possible), I would maximize the clarity of my vision for grasping the complex contours of the territory under investigation.

I am not claiming or suggesting that the social scientist ought to or possibly can do away with assumptions about human nature or with moral values. I am also not suggesting that the committed Muslim should lightly treat the Quranic prohibition against usury. The methodology, I am suggesting, is that while analysing and appraising economic concepts and practices, the social scientist must suspend or put in 'brackets' (in Husserl's sense of 'epoche') all one's preconceived notions and endeavour to discover and describe observable events with their correlations and also one's own authentic value judgments.⁷ If he does not follow this approach, he most probably, would be advancing bad reasons for justifying what he takes to be the one and only one right interpretation of Scripture. When this happens, all theoretical argumentation with all the imposing methodological tools of social science—figures, charts, graphs, questionnaires etc.—would have gone waste. This danger is common to all utopian or ideological rationalizations.⁸

Suspension of belief for the duration of the enquiry does not logically imply the rejection of the antecedent belief which might, possibly, even get confirmed as a result of the enquiry. If so, no problem of the conflict between faith and reason would arise. If, however, the verdict of the post-epoche reflection conflicts with one's faith, the individual remains free to make a well considered choice. If the person chooses the verdict of faith after the epoche he would not be inclined to 'rationalize' (in the perjorative sense) his choice. He would tend to justify his choice on the ground that this choice gives him a 'total satisfaction' which he values more highly than mere 'rational satisfaction'. And this would be a very valid stand to take, provided, of course, his sense of 'total satisfaction' is not tainted with or a disguised form of fear of some power, worldly, spiritual or Divine. There is nothing intrinsically objectionable in opting for faith rather than reason after passing through the discipline of the epoche. Likewise, there is nothing wrong if the person chooses the verdict of his free enquiry after passing through a struggle between the pull of faith and the pull of a total conviction of which 'rational satisfaction' is one of the components. And there can be no objection to this position also, provided the final choice of the individual is the fruit of his freedom rather than of fear, greed, or some situational constraint that frustrates self-discovery.

The fear of loss of traditional faith should not stand in the way of the person's quest for authentic being—his inner journey to reach 'the truth of his being' rather than 'the truth of his milieu'. Even if the believer loses his traditional faith or rather its traditional interpretation, this is not necessarily to lose his valuational roots or his spiritual identity, unless, of course, his free enquiry bring about a total repudiation and rejection of his initial thought and value systems. Should such a total repudiation occur, a person who is really honest to himself would have passed through a profound inner struggle. And this experience would have forged all the more passionately the pure gold of human authenticity in the crucible of spiritual unrest and suffering.

In the final analysis, authenticity or authentic being, irrespective of its contents, is the highest possible mode of human existence, or

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the highest grade of human ontic excellence. And this authenticity is attainable in theory, both by the autonomous philosopher or seeker of truth, and by the man of faith in the condition of 'blessedness' in the classical spiritual sense. In practice, however, authentic being appears to be more difficult of attainment at the religious level, when the religion concerned tends to impinge upon human autonomy at numerous points and so frequently as to create tremours of 'ontological dissonance'—hidden and unspoken tensions between the believer's inner depths and the directives of his infallible external Authority. However, in theory, as distinct from practice, the autonomous philosopher can not claim any superiority of status over the religious person who freely and authentically submits to an external Authority, provided their degree of authenticity be the same. This measurement is however almost impossible.

The outcome of the above analysis is that the method of epoche is pre-eminently desirable, both philosophically and religiously. Even if one loses one's traditional religious beliefs, this does not mean erosion of religion in the higher sense and of spirituality as such. It is all to the good if the individual becomes aware of his hidden assumptions and his heightened self knowledge or awareness of his existential depths which prompts him to choose one way or the other, thereby making him a fully integrated and mature human being out of a 'mass-man' or undifferentiated member of some human herd of class, no matter what it may be.

The Concept of an Interest-free Economy

An interest-free society is, in theory, as possible as a society free from crime, divorce, fear or hatred. Yet, interest has continued to flourish in the human family despite its being banned by several religions. Is this state of affairs merely or primarily just another instance of the tension or the distance between the ideal and the real, or is it an instance of a contradiction at some other level? In other words, is there some specific socio-economic need which is effectively served by interest in defiance of its official or formal prohibition?⁹ If so, how will that need be served if an Islamic

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Society abolishes interest ? Again, how or in what precise way is an interest-free society more desirable than an interest-based society ? The answer to these important questions should not be given by way of justifying the Quran or the *Sunnat* but must be based on honest and searching reflection in the light of reliable factual investigation.

The liberal Muslim intellectuals and statesmen of the previous century, among whom S. Khuda Bakhsh occupies an honoured place, did, indeed, attempt this important task. They made a distinction between (a) usury and interest and (b) different types of loans—distress loans, consumption loans and development loans for various purposes. They came to the conclusion that accepting bank interest on deposits and commercial interest were quite permissible.⁶ However, charging interest on distress loans or even on consumption loans was un-Islamic.

Accepting bank interest on deposits is very different from charging interest on loans advanced to others. The depositor places his savings at the disposal of the bank which invests them either in the form of loans or purchase of shares in sound industrial concerns etc. The interest given by the bank is, in reality, a slice of the profits which accrue to them on their investments.

Interest-bearing deposits in banks or companies thus promote investment of idle money for the dual purpose of increasing the owner's wealth without diverting him from his actual vocation as also promoting general material prosperity through increased production and employment of the work force.

The Muslim liberals were correct in their basic approach, but their historical and analytical discussion of the nature and function of interest was too inadequate to convince traditional conservative opinion on such matters. They were unable to provide a rationale satisfactory to both reason and Islamic faith. Perhaps this explains how and why the economic content of the contemporary movement of Islamic Resurgence has gained considerable vogue in several Muslim countries. To this theme we now turn.

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To my mind, most Islamic economists start the exercise of Islamizing the economic system in Pakistan and elsewhere on the basis of three unchecked assumptions which are very far from being self-evident to a dispassionate analyst. The assumptions are : (a) there is no difference between usury and interest so that the Quranic prohibition of usury implies the prohibition of interest ; (b) the unearned income or gain from a 'sleeping partnership' is morally right, while unearned gain in the form of interest is morally wrong because of risk being present in the first case and absent in the second ; and (c) the abolition of interest would not adversely affect economic activity and growth in general but rather purge it of social evils. Let us now examine the above assumptions in some detail.

(a) Usury, in the ancient and medieval periods, was a charge upon all types of loans including distress loans contracted even by the poorest and weakest sections of society. Avaricious money lenders did not even reduce usury rates in case of distress loans to say nothing of waiving the interest out of sympathy or compassion. In this regard there is no difference between usury and interest, in the modern sense. Yet, it would be quite fallacious to equate the two for the following reason. The rate of usury was fixed on the model of biological reproduction or agricultural growth which follow geometrical proportions, while interest, in the modern sense, is calculated on the basis of arithmetical proportion. The difference between the two models of growth is so enormous that to equate usury with interest becomes like equating the domestic cat with the tiger. The model of biological growth was suggested (quite naturally and understandably) by the average rate of growth in the case of domesticated animals and also of familiar agricultural crops. Their general growth rate comes to approximately 400% per annum, while modern interest rates are deliberately kept, relatively speaking, very low. The reason for this almost startling discrepancy between the rates of usury and of modern interest is that the ancients did not adequately grasp the role of planning and skill of the trader without which the capital borrowed by him would not have grown at all. In other words, the owner of wealth tended to over, value his own role at the expense of the merchant or industrialist, and this scale of valuation was reflected in the high

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rates of usury modelled on the rate of biological reproduction or growth. The biological model was quite understandable in an age when theoretical economics, social science and militant class consciousness were non-existent and the rising merchant or trader had to borrow money in what may be termed as a "usurer's market". The general rate of usury for traders and manufacturers was thus pushed up and no exception was made in the case of distress or consumption loans, whose purpose was obviously quite other than increasing his wealth. This state of affairs led to avarice on the part of the already rich and to the exploitation of the poor or the needy whose lot became even worse when they had to undergo bonded labour as a penalty.

Interest in the modern sense is computed as a function of the generally viable rate of profit in a given society. This approach has pushed down interest rates in the modern age though in some situations the state may try to push the bank rate upwards in order to put a brake upon reckless borrowing or wasteful and ill-conceived investments. Furthermore, the law prohibits penal bonded labour if the debtor genuinely be unable to discharge his commitments. Interest in the modern sense is thus quite different from usury. The assumption of their structural and functional identity breaks down in the light of historical and analytical scrutiny.

The modern practice of 'insurance' and the debate among Islamic economists whether insurance involves gambling (which is prohibited) is very relevant for correctly interpreting the Quranic prohibition of *riba*.

Insurance which was not known in early times finds no mention in Islamic jurisprudence, while gambling and games of chance are prohibited. Now since insurance definitely involves the operation of chance, the principle of analogical reasoning *qiyas* led most jurists to conclude that Islam also prohibits insurance. It is only some Muslim social scientists or modern-minded jusists who think on different lines. Let us see what method of interpretation do they adopt when they permit insurance even though it does involve the operation of chance. In the final analysis they make (rightly) a distinction between the function of gambling and the function of

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insurance, holding that while the function of gambling (namely momentary thrill, excitement or natural gain without giving anything in return to society) is undesirable, the function of insurance (namely protection against unhappy contingencies) is pre-eminently desirable. Now why should not this method of interpretation also be applied to the different types of loans and the issue of interest? Is it not the case that while the charging of interest on a distress loan involves exploiting human misery, this is certainly not true in the case of loan for development of industry or commerce. Again, is not ancient and medieval usury involving penal bonded labour in case of the failure of the debtor to honour his commitment very different, in the functional sense, from interest used as a tool for stimulating the economy and protecting the legitimate interests of the investor, the entrepreneur and society in general?

Analytical discrimination and juristic reflection have, indeed always been practised by Muslim jurists no less than the Prophet and the pious Caliphs. The classical distinction between developed and virgin land, and permitting farming or share-cropping in the case of the former but prohibiting it in the case of the latter is a good example. The same remarks apply to the penalty for theft and many other matters. The point is why should not the same approach be followed in the case of the issue of interest.

(b) We now come to the second assumption—unearned profit which is risk-bearing is equitable, but unearned interest which is devoid of risk is inequitable.

Is there really any moral distinction between the risk-bearing nature of profit and the risk-free nature of interest over and above the purely economic difference that while profit is contingent and flexible interest is pre-determined and fixed?

Now it may be thought that interest being an absolute claim of the investor or lender, irrespective of the economic health of the productive enterprise, might cause unmerited hardship to the producer if and when things go badly with his enterprise for no fault of his own. This unmerited suffering is not associated in the case of profit-loss sharing. On this score it might be contended

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that interest involves a moral evil, while profit/loss sharing does not. There is an element of truth in this contention. But this moral factor becomes relevant only when the producer is close to or actually reaches the state of economic break-down or the rate of interest be so exorbitantly high as to make the profit almost nominal. Otherwise the presence or absence of risk, or the fixity of interest and flexibility of profit/loss makes no ethical difference. In general, claiming a share in unearned variable profits on the basis of supplying capital to a partner is as moral or immoral as claiming interest, as a small but fixed charge, irrespective of profit/loss together with foregoing any share in profit/loss.

Another aspect of the matter deserves as much consideration as the avoidance of undue hardship to the producer when facing rough economic weather—producing the legitimate interests of the lender or sleeping partner. It appears that interest (viewed as a fixed charge paid by the producer) tends to motivate him to keep costs down and earn enough to be able to pay the cost of borrowing the capital, while cost-free capital tends to make the economic cushion much too soft for the entrepreneur and to slow down the rate of growth of the economy. Moreover, keeping the rate of interest on the lower side, implies that the creditor pays a definite price for eliminating the factor of risk and being content with a considerably reduced share in the net profit that would have accrued to him in as a sleeping partner. Choosing a lower share for the sake of security and the elimination of risk does not involve any moral wrong. It is exercising caution and demanding a measure of a security on the strength of the lender's financial contribution to the productive venture. This justified caution might become immoral avarice leading to exploitation of a fellow human being in distress. Only in extreme cases and in such situations the law of liquidation and solvency attempts to do justice to the creditor and debtor alike taking into account all the relevant aspects of a complex matter. If justice requires not merely the protection of the interests of the producer or trader but nominating the economic growth and balance of a complex modern society, the general rule rather than extreme cases ought to be taken into account for making laws or regulations. In the light of this principle no inequity is involved in

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the concept of a fixed charge upon productive capital independent of the profit/loss incurred by the producer.

(c) Let us now examine the assumption that the abolition of interest would not bring down productive investment and the growth of the economy in general since profit/loss sharing by individual sleeping partners or by banks would do the same job presently being done by the mechanism of interest.

The above assumption is not really warranted by our present state of knowledge and experience. Confirmation of this abstract economic analysis requires empirical verification which is a far cry at present. But whatever may be the final verdict of experience, careful non-ideological analysis does not warrant the optimism of Islamic economists in this regard. The reason is as follows: A sleeping partnership involves full liability without power or the security for the sleeping partner who parts with his capital merely on the basis of active hope in the honest dealings by the managing partner. This, indeed, is the Islamic ideal (as also the ideal of other human religions and human decency in general), but the distance between the ideal and the real is notorious. In case the partner be tempted for some reason or other to cheat or indulge in some sharp practice at the expense of the sleeping partner (such instances being too common in the human family to be ignored by the mature and balanced law-giver) the sleeping partner will ever remain at the mercy of the partner. It is precisely at this point that the economic function of interest appears in a sharp focus. No other economic mechanism appears to serve the same purpose as effectively as does interest.

The possibilities of the active partner misusing the funds of a sleeping partnership would be reduced if Islamic banks exercise proper vigilance both before and after investment. In any case human nature, being what it is, the degree of security of investment, per force would depend upon the accuracy of the producer's balance sheet. Moreover, auditing work would multiply enormously creating scope for concealment and corruption.

International trade, which is unavoidable in view of the interdependence of the human family as a whole, would pose a further

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problem, since all transactions would involve interest. Since economic isolationism is practically not possible, interest bearing transactions per force would have to be continued thereby creating anomalies and complications at different levels.

Thus there does not appear to be any justification for permitting unearned profit but prohibiting interest¹. Consequently, scheme of profit/loss participation by Islamic banks in place of interest-bearing loans to the entrepreneurs is rather a change in nomenclature—substituting the theologically acceptable term 'profit' in place of the theologically repugnant term 'interest' without any really meaningful change in the sphere of industrial or commercial transactions. However, the scheme of advancing interest-free distress loans or consumption loans for specified purposes *qarz-e-hasana* is a meaningful and welcome reform in the sphere of banking.

Modern economists have defined interest in various ways putting forward several theories of interest. These theories are, at bottom, attempts to assimilate or reduce interest to some other concept as profit, rent, price, cost, increment, reward and so on. As a student of philosophy it appears to me, that no theory which is purely reductive could ever provide a complete analysis of the nature and function of interest in every possible context. It seems that, in the context of industry, interest approximates a factor of the cost of production; in the context of consumption loans, interest approximates price or rent of the borrowed money; in the context of state bonds, interest approximates reward for waiting; in the context of distress loans, interest approximates extortion. No single conception of the 'essence' of interest would thus suffice in all cases. Likewise, no ethical or economic appraisal of interest, in a blanket manner, would be valid. To arrive at a proper evaluation one must take into account the context and the exact function of interest in the type of situation under review. The concept of 'increment' which interest logically implies is, ethically, an indeterminate concept. We shall now briefly review some of the different conceptions of interest without attempting any reductive definition.

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One conception of interest is that it is the price a borrower is required to pay for satisfying a need he is unable to satisfy from out of his own available money. The excess payment he makes to the lender, over and above the principal amount, is the price of the borrowed money. Another conception is that the excess is the rent for the use of money belonging to the lender. Yet a third conception is that interest is the claim of the lender to be compensated for depriving himself of the actual or possible enjoyment of his own wealth which he places at the borrower's disposal.

In the context of trade and industry, interest is a relatively small fixed charge upon the theoretically larger profit of enterprise. It may be viewed as guaranteed unearned profit whose justification is that the supplier or capital—one of the necessary conditions of enterprise—is entitled to a small but assured return, independent of profit/loss, in return for placing his wealth at the disposal of the producer who is left free to direct the enterprise and who aspires to a relatively much larger return by way of profits.

The other factors of production (apart from capital) are land, technical skill or know-how, management, labour, and last but not least, entrepreneurial leadership and organizational capacity. Now each factor of production is severally and jointly essential for the success of the enterprise and each has a rightful claim for just consideration. But entrepreneurial leadership and the supply of capital do occupy a unique position or status in the sense that they jointly create the productive space or soil for the inception and future growth of the enterprise. Without such space or a base having been antecedently provided by the capitalist and the captain of industry, the social organism, comprising management and labour, would not have come into being at all. It is, therefore, understandable that the capitalist and the industrialist as founders and directors of the enterprise claim a higher status and appropriate the profits of the enterprise, while the management and labour receive fixed salaries for specified jobs. As between the capitalist and the industrialist, if the former supplies money-capital, the entrepreneur supplies the creative idea, dynamism and organizational initiative—the ideational/volitional capital. The two

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together create the base for the subsequent productive role of labour and management. Once the organism is born and the infant plant becomes an adult organism, the role of the management and the workers also acquire a key role in raising the productivity and quality of the enterprise. But at the initial stages the capitalist and the entrepreneur play the crucial role of conceiving and producing a new social organism as such.

If all the different factors of production were to be supplied by one individual, he could rightly claim to appropriate the entire profit. This is not possible when large investments are made. The need for capital is fulfilled through various mechanisms or modalities : the accumulation of share capital, borrowing on interest from an individual or a bank or the state or some corporation, or by entering into a partnership with a person who can spare his idle money but not his time and energy. Now is there really any conceptual/or ethical difference between the above modalities or situations ?

Are not all the above situations characterized by a common feature—a claim for monetary return on the strength of the monetary contribution towards turning a mere idea or paper project into a productive concern ? And how can this claim judged to be morally repugnant in some cases but right in others ?

It is true that the projects of the sleeping partner are risk-bearing, while the interest (fixed charge of the bank/capitalist) is risk-free. But how does this economic difference amount to any moral difference between 'strictly' unearned profit and interest, rendering the profit of a sleeping partner moral and the fixed charge of the bank/capitalist immoral ? It may be said that the concept of a fixed charge bears an inherent or inbuilt moral evil since the absolute claim of the bank/capitalist to interest, —irrespective of the economic health of the venture and even when the venture is heading toward failure—implies or results in callous avarice on the part of the lender and inequitable exploitation of the borrower. But then this extreme situation is not the normal pattern of the economic process. Moreover equity demands the protection of the legitimate interest not of the borrower alone but of the lender as well.

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In short, the morality of interest cannot be settled through an immediate and simple value judgment as in the case of such evils as murder, rape, falsely incriminating an innocent person and the like. The abhorrence with which many Muslims look upon interest (which they judge as the root socio-economic evil) is probably the result of extending their understandable moral repulsion against usury (interest on distress loans) to all types of loans and to all contexts in which interest is charged. But a balanced evaluation of the issue of interest requires committed Muslim, no less than others, to discriminate between usury and interest in the different contexts and functions of interest instead of passing a blanket judgment.

Modern industrial/commercial interest, in the final analysis, is a considerable thin slice carved out of the calculated or expected profit, and its function is to ensure a stable and risk-free but low return to the lender who prefers the stability of return to the possibility of higher profits associated with a partnership. The concept of interest implies mutual concessions and accommodation between the lender and the producer. Far from being an instrument for exploiting the industrialist or the worker, it serves to maintain the balance and smooth running of the industrial/commercial machinery. It is a guaranteed thin slice out of anticipated profits on a bigger scale, and there seems to be nothing morally wrong in the concept of a guaranteed return on a loan or investment provided the guarantee gives a reasonable 'cushion' for the borrower in cases of failure, partial or total.

Interest, it will be seen, adds up to the total cost of productions and thus certainly adds to the price of goods and the rigours of the producer. But then interest protects the legitimate interests of the lender and promotes a proper climate for industrial lending and the circulation of money. Again, while adding to the cost of production, interest promotes a ceaseless concern for reducing production costs in a highly competitive market economy.

We should thus keep in mind the advantages as well as disadvantages of interest as of any other social practice or law in order to arrive at a balanced perspective.

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It appears that Islamic economists who point out the moral, economic and social harm flowing from interest just never mention any of its positive advantages or functions. Or is it the case that there is no positive side at all to interest? This is certainly not the case. Indeed, most economists are of the view that interest performs an irreplaceable socio-economic function and that all efforts to eliminate interest from Society are futile.

It is significant that socialist thinkers and reformers as Robert Owen (d. 1858) of Britain, Rodbertus (d. 1875) of Germany, had condemned interest and advocated its abolition. Marx and Lenin did not hold interest to be the arch evil. Though the Soviet Union had excluded interest, as a cost factor, in the early period just after the Russian Revolution, this practice has been given up. Thus, even Socialist planners who reject the Capitalist system, nevertheless, include interest for computing the total cost of production and for fixing the consumer price despite the state being the sole producer and distributor without any internal competition or market economy.

It appears to me, as a layman, that the failure to eliminate interest at the micro-level in England, France and Germany, and the more recent failure to exclude interest at the macro-level in Soviet Russia as cost factor of production is a significant pointer to the probable necessity of interest, at least, at macro-levels. This, conclusion, however, does not adversely affect the possibility as also desirability of abolishing interest or rather usury in the case of distress loans and also in the case of some specified consumption loans for educational or cultural purposes.

Interest is an economic tool performing several functions only some of which could be taken up by the scheme of profit and loss sharing. Social scientists, almost without exception have concluded after prolonged enquiry that there is no effective substitute for interest just as an overwhelming majority of well informed and independent social philosophers and enlightened statesmen have arrived at the conclusion that despite the evils of democracy no better substitute is available. It is another matter that enlightened despotism may work wonders in the short run.

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Epiloque

Socio-economic evils do not spring from the vicious root of interest but rather from a combination of economic deprivation, negative or destructive human drives and an unplanned society which is unable to develop the human potential for intelligence, honesty, self-discipline, fraternity and love. These values are upheld by Islam but they are not the monopoly of Islam or any other particular religion or culture.

All basic moral and spiritual values operate in an ever changing human situation, and must, therefore, continually be reinterpreted or revised. A perennial aspiration for the better, continuous research, and social and state action should bring about ceaseless growth in our cherished values. Here vociferous slogans for Islamization are no substitute for their genuine growth. The contemporary climate of Islamic politics tends to dissipate the rational and empirical approach to complex problems, ignoring social evils far more serious than the evils flowing from the violation of some well known features of the Muslim canon, law or *shariat*.

Islamic intellectuals and leaders of political opinion must realize the plain truth that the economic directives of the Quran or the economic system of the golden age of the pious *Khalifas* will not suffice in the modern age.² There is no alternative but to follow where the argument of Economics, as a social science, leads us. This implies conceptual analysis, the construction of different models of economic correlations and sequences and formulation of tentative hypotheses or theoretical choices to be finally accepted or rejected in the light of empirical verification. 'Islamic Economics' in the pure theoretical sense is not a valid concept. The concept of an 'Islamic economic system', in the normative sense, is nothing but sophistry and illusion. However, it is a proper and vitally significant question to ask: Are the Islamic economic axioms valid, and can they serve as the fixed coordinates of a developed economic system for the modern age? Well, the axioms are valid, provided they be interpreted flexible in the light of 'economic rationality' and they can yield a system (which could be termed 'Islamic', if it so pleases Muslims) suitable for modern industrial society. Let me explain this crucial point.

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The Islamic economic axioms or fixed coordinates of the economic system are only two : (a) the prohibition of usury and (b) the wealth tax (*zakat*). Now the prohibition of usury has a universal validity, provided the prohibition be interpreted as a total ban on exploiting of human distress for material gain, and not as an indiscriminate and absolute restriction on using interest as an economic tool for mass or micro purposes.

The injunction of *zakat*, again, has a universal validity, if the injunction be interpreted as a recognition of the inalienable duty and responsibility of the state towards the betterment of the weaker sections of society rather than as a fixed and all-sufficient obligatory charity at 2½% of the surplus wealth. In other words, an open interpretation of the Quranic economic axioms in the light of a dynamic approach to Islamic ideal of social justice, might conceivably lead to results which are essentially similar to the results of 'economic rationality' whose aim is not merely maximum economic gain for any particular individual group or even for society as a whole, but which aims at the integral welfare of Society.

Islamic economists appear to assume that economics, as a pure social science, possibly cannot have any concern for values other than maximal growth of material wealth. On this assumption Islamic economists understandably try to supplement this lop-sided objective/or concern of pure economic theory with the concern for human welfare as interpreted in Islam. But, as matters stand at present, all contemporary social thought links the idea of 'economic rationality' with the ideal of integral human welfare. Thus their objective is never mere wealth but welfare including material prosperity as one of its ingredients or dimensions. Economists, in their capacity as pure social scientists, may well engage themselves in spelling out the implications or demands of economic rationality (in the restricted sense) under perfect economic conditions. But such conceptual projections and exercises are motivated by scientific curiosity as in the case of logic, mathematics or pure science and do not claim to displace the imperative of social welfare as interpreted by the collective conscience of humanity. If so, hardly any need is left for juxtaposing Islamic Economics *vis-a-vis* the general economics of welfare.

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It may be thought that the values of Islam are so uniquely distinctive that no extra-Islamic search for integral human welfare could ever satisfy the aspirations and ideals of a true Muslim economist. Consequently, he might say, the concept of Islamic economics, as theoretical discipline, is unavoidable for the believer. This approach does not appear to be convincing. Let us examine why.

The basic spiritual and moral values of all universal religions as also secular thought and value systems are essentially similar even when they differ in their theological beliefs, legal systems, practices, customs regulating dress, food, marriage and funeral rites etc. Such differences, however, do not negate their basic agreements which suffice for peaceful coexistence and a sense of harmony. In fact whenever a genuine meeting of minds and hearts takes place between diverse groups, there occurs a process of mutual interaction and learning. Does not this go to show the potential unity of basic values underlying the plural metaphysical beliefs, myths, symbols, rites and rituals of the human family.

The fact of the matter is that liberal humanists, Utopians scientific socialists and Gandhian reformers, no less than Islamic economists, stand for the same values in the long run (despite, obviously, differing on details and on the best means for reaching the values concerned). To suppose that the Marxists or the liberals are oblivious to higher values and that filling the belly is their only aim and objective is to distort the true picture. Thinkers, reformers, teachers, poets and artists of the human family as a whole, have the same dreams and aspirations. However, it is not they, but rather the wielders of power—political and economic—who run the societal machine and pilot the ship of state with scant concern for the dreams and aspirations of noble hearts and enlightened minds yearning to be heard by the powers that be. But alas! the dreams remain mainly embedded in sacred hearts, though they do cause a flutter in society and make the ship of state slightly change course when the weather becomes too rough to be completely ignored. Even the radical change sometimes brought about by socio-cultural revolutions or break-throughs of history has barely touched the depths of social reality, with a few notable exceptions. Meanwhile

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the corridors of power, different standard-bearers of more or less similar values, trample upon those dreams (with pangs of conscience, perhaps, in the beginning, and with, none as power blunts their conscience) in a mad race to reach or to retain their quintessence or their values-power.

It is the above fatal flaw of man, rather than flaws in the different thought and value systems, which is the source of the shattering of man's dreams. We register, even magnify and censure, the lapses of others in their pursuit of power; the lapses of our own are hardly noticed, or when noticed hardly bother our conscience. But the tragedy goes deeper. Even the common man finds it almost impossible to withstand the seemingly irresistible economic pressures and situational constraints that push him in a direction different from the moral and spiritual values he professes with a fair degree of subjective honesty and sincerity. The few exceptions to this rather tragic situation only go to prove the rule

In the final analysis, therefore, the fault lies in the human clay rather than exclusively in any particular system. And, while we can modify or even replace systems, we cannot alter the human clay much as we may educate or 'condition' the human brain and heart. Wisdom lies in continually improving the system in the light of actual experience rather than of priori formulae (religious or secular) and striving to purify the clay without expecting miracles of success and without losing the heart to march along, despite falls and failures, on the endless road to Utopia.

The contemporary movement of Islamic Resurgence is an attempt to overcome the inertia and stagnation of the Islamic world for the past several centuries as was also the aim of the liberal reformers of the last century.

The basic approach of contemporary Islamic Resurgence may be called 'religious totalism' to distinguish it from the 'religious liberalism' of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century.

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'Religious totalism', affirms that life is an organic unity of the spiritual and worldly concerns of man and religion must regulate this totality.¹⁹ 'Religious liberalism', on the other hand, affirms that the essential concern of religion is with the transcendental or spiritual dimension of human life.

While the Islamic vision of the liberal Muslim reformers and statesmen was blurred and dim on several counts, it had one outstanding merit which is conspicuous by its absence in the contemporary Islamic movement. And that merit was the realization (a) that the essential nature and function of religion in an ever changing human situation was inspirational rather than legalistic, and (b) that there was a distinction between the Islamic core, as a transcendental creed and value system, and Islam as a cultural *gestalt* moving in social space-time. The contemporary movement, on the other hand, merely seeks to 'adjust' the *shariat* to meet contemporary needs more effectively. But the contemporary movement ignores a critical and historical analysis of the function of religion in human society. Consequently, the contemporary movement accepts, as a self evident truth, the medieval theory of religion as a total conduct of life, and concludes that the liberal Christian tradition in Western Europe and America from eighteenth century onwards is nothing but a corrupt and degenerate phase of Christianity. Such a view implies that Muslims must stick with all their might to the medieval theory of religion as a total code of conduct, if they wish Islam to be spared the catastrophe which overtook Western Christianity in the late eighteenth century. In other words, the contemporary movement seeks to undo the considerable work that was done by the liberal Muslim intellectuals of the previous century, instead of taking up the torch of Islamic liberalism and going forward with its unfinished task. Instead of working for bringing about field-integration between the different dimensions of man's growing experience and insight, the votaries of Islamization address themselves to the task (in itself desirable but totally insufficient) of orthogenetic modification in the *shariat* as a total code of conduct. But the way out of the malaise of the Muslim, is nothing less than an insightful redefinition of the nature and function of religion including Islam as such.

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In more concrete terms, the solution is to confine the function of religion to the realm of transcendental mystery, and, 'faith in the unseen' with which the believer relates himself through symbolic language which grips well-informed, autonomous minds. These individuals, however, remain free to work out, through the democratic process, rules and regulations of the good life in the light of the Islamic creed and value system. The liberation of the Muslim mind from the hold of the unquestioned assumption in regard to the essential function of religion is the condition of the worldly as well as spiritual advancement of Muslims living in mixed secular societies but to Muslims as a whole.

Far from debilitating or destroying Islam, such a liberation would cure an almost all-pervading self-alienation and revitalize the Muslim peoples, spiritually and intellectually. There is no other way to overcome the chasm between Islam, as an ideal, and the condition of Muslims in history—a chasm frequently lamented upon but rarely conceptually understood.

The separation of religion and politics does not mean the separation of morality and politics. While the former disjunction is pre-eminently desirable, the latter has been the recurring tragedy of man's story from the very beginning. The de-linking of morality and politics produces power-hungry politicians while their union constructive statesmen.

In retrospect, the liberal approach of the nineteenth century Muslim reformers and statesmen which was in harmony with the broad evolutionary direction of world history towards separating religion and politics. But the chief limitation of the Islamic liberals was that they could not, create a conceptual framework to ensure an orthogenetic evolution of Islamic concepts and values. The Muslim liberal mind was not yet ready to undertake a task of such gigantic magnitude,—a task which has continued presenting a challenge to the religious creativity of Western man ever since the Reformation five centuries ago.

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Islamic liberalism implies (and the implication is crucially important) that Islam must be conceived in plural terms. No particular model of Islam should claim or be given a privileged status of being the norm or standard for judging other Muslims who may profess a different model out of inner conviction or whose life-situation may not permit any particular model because of external constraints. An absolutist approach to inter-religious as well as intra-religious dissent leads to intolerance. This evil is easily detected and rightly condemned. But the absolutist approach leads to an evil too subtle for easy detection—gradation within the community of believers. All self-appointed judges who grade the Islamic faith of others fall victims to spiritual pride, whether the judges belong to the dominant majority or to the minority and peripheral sects. I, therefore, respectfully submit that no self avowed Islamic approach (classical or recent) be declared as a heresy or as un-Islamic in a world moving towards freedom of enquiry and of conscience within and without religion.

Though the 20th century is drawing to a close, I do not find any mature intellectual and spiritual movement in the Islamic world apart from the quest for political and economic power. However, I feel optimistic about good results in the next century from the honest creative efforts of truth-seeking Muslims (specially in democratic and secular India) provided, of course, they combine clear thinking and moral courage to speak out the truth as one sees it.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Perhaps this is partly why the contemporary talk of Islamizing the economic system in Muslim countries attracts many educated Muslims in their endeavour to prepare a complete blue-print of the true Islamic way of life. The Muslim liberals of the late 19th century, Sir Syed, Chiragh Ali, Amir Ali, Muhammad Abduh et al. on the other hand, had not only ignored the widespread practice of Muslims borrowing money, on interest, from money lenders (both Muslim and non-Muslim) but made a theoretical distinction between exploitative usury and commercial interest. The liberals held that the Quranic prohibition referred to usury, in the ancient and medieval sense, and not to interest for commercial purposes. The government of Ottoman Turkey had even legally provided for the maximum rate of interest.
2. Though the Quranic command to cut off the hands of the thief is categorical, the traditional Islamic canon law admits of several well known exceptions. Thus, the penalty stands routinely waived when the thief and his victim are close blood relations, or when the amount stolen is below a prescribed minimum, or in the case of catables, musical instruments and so on. Yet another example of a flexible interpretation of the Quranic prohibition of intoxicants is the permissibility (according to Abu Hanifa, who commands the largest following among the Muslims) of date-wine of a particular type *nabeez*.
3. Usury on distress-loans has been universally disapproved and morally condemned because it implies turning the suffering of a fellow human into an opportunity for material profit. In ancient Babylonia, Hammurabi (app. 2000 B.C) sought to regulate the rate of usury. A new king often declared the cancellation of all debts at the time of his coronation.

Judaism prohibited usury in the strongest possible terms making no distinction between distress-loans and loans for any other purpose, but permitted Jews to charge usury from non-Jews. The Christian canon law made the prohibition universal. In the middle ages Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), the greatest medieval Christian theologian, made a distinction between distress and commercial loans, but the canon law was not altered. In practice, however, the prohibition was conspicuous by its violation due to economic compulsions.

The religious leaders of the mercantile Italian city-states of the early modern era, Florence, Venice and others (which were the pioneers of modern international commerce and banking) were the first to question the ethical and religious validity of the absolute Christian prohibition of interest without distinguishing it from usury when commercial practice had already sharply deviated from canon law. It was, however, John Calvin (d. 1564), the great Swiss Protestant reformer, no less influential than his more internationally famous German contemporary, Martin

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Luther, (d. 1546) who forcefully pleaded that while usury was morally repugnant, interest on commercial and developmental loans served social needs.

The above approach found ready acceptance in Britain—the first industrialised country in the modern sense and also the country where the seminal work, the *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, by the philosopher, Adam Smith (d. 1790), gave birth to Economics as a social science. Significant contributions by Jeremy Bentham (d. 1832), J. S. Mill (d. 1873), Ricardo (d. 1823) Malthus (d. 1834) and others followed to enrich Economics as a pure social science.

The growth of theoretical Economics and the practical constraints of rapid industrialisation fostered a new outlook on social and religious problems. The legal prohibition against usury was repealed. Soon afterwards, the statutory ceiling on the rate of interest, and the legal penalty for violating the maximum limit, was removed in the early 19th century in Britain and elsewhere under the influence of the philosophy of *laissez faire* liberalism.

The middle of the 19th century, however, saw a reaction against the doctrine of absolutely free and uncontrolled market economy. Several sensitive minds began to think that the much-lauded free market economy had bred numerous social and economic evils—uncontrolled urbanization, poor-house poverty, crime, rootlessness, anonymity, alienation, dehumanization of labour, unemployment, all flourishing in the midst of and despite mass production and affluence. The ideas of cooperative production, state regulation, and finally, of socialism came to the fore in order to remove the grave imbalances created by the free interplay of market forces. There was a spate of social welfare legislation and economic regulations in western countries to protect the weaker sections. Institutional arrangements were made for the supply of cheap credit to the needy and for protecting insolvents. Thus, while the religious prohibition against usury was done away with, its basic objective—the protection of the interests of the weak was sought to be promoted by means of democratic and socialist ideals. Liberal Christian thought contributed to this development but conservative, rather static, quarters within the Church were reduced to the position of preplexed and helpless spectators of the new emerging values.

To complete the picture, a few remarks may be made concerning the ancient Indian approach to usury. The *Dharmashastras* also strongly disapprove of usury on distress-loans. Indeed, one *Dharmashastra* declares that usury, *kuseed*, in the case of a distress-loan, is a greater evil than even the murder of a Brahman, *Brahmhatya*. However, commercial interest is permitted. Different law-givers prescribe different rates of interest bearing in mind different relevant factors and also safeguarding the legitimate interests of the creditor and the debtor and also of the society in general. However, it must be pointed out that there was caste discrimination while fixing the varying rates of interest (the rate being lowest for the Brahman borrower). Moreover, the general rate of interest was much higher than the rate of modern times. The lowest imaginable rate for Brahmans being 15% per annum. Buddhism follows the Hindu practice but without any caste bias.

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4. Islamic economists differ among themselves with regard to issues such as nationalization of land and of the means of production. While some, like Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, and others, are inclined towards Islamic Socialism, others like Maududi, Baqir Al-Sadr, are inclined towards a different position. Generally speaking, however, Islamic economists proclaim the necessity for adopting an independent Islamic economic order which, however, has yet to be evolved and tested. See Nijatullah Siddiqi: *Survey of Muslim Economic Thinking*, Islamic Foundation, Leicester (UK), 1980, pp. 46-53.
5. To accept or reject, in the name of the Quran, the theories of Darwin, Copernicus and others involves the fallacy of projective interpretation. 'Field-integration' on the other hand, is based upon the principle of creative fidelity and inner consistency in the continual re-understanding of Scripture, and does not commit any fallacy of projection in the pejorative sense. Re-understanding of Scripture is indispensable for grasping the directive significance of the revealed text in an ever changing human situation

All understanding or interpretation of any language, culture or religion takes place in an antecedent framework of concepts, values, interests, attitudes of the individual. Differences in the above lead to different perceptions and formulations of theory. The first and foremost task of philosophy is to make one aware of the basic sources of such disagreement rather than the defensive justification of any particular perception or formulation. A mature and balanced philosopher is not precluded from making a final choice of theory or formulation, but he must not cherish the delusion of its demonstrable truth, to the exclusion of all other theories or conceptual formulations.

6. Many Muslim social scientists are today engaged in an ideological attack upon the evils of interest-based economy (just as others are engaged in an ideological demolition of some other economic doctrine) rather than a neutral analysis of the several aspects and ramifications of the issue of interest. To give an instance, Nijatullah Siddiqi claims to have written his learned paper entitled, *Rationale of Islamic Banking*, published by the International Centre for Research in Islamic Economics, Jeddah, 1981, as a social scientist rather than as an apologist for Islam. Yet, the learned author does not concede any element of value, whatsoever, to interest as an economic tool.
7. Edmund Husserl (d. 1938), German philosopher, and one of the founders of Phenomenological Existentialism, first elaborated this concept. No knowledge is possible without first suspending one's antecedent beliefs and adopting the inner posture of 'epistemic openness, without evading or explaining away any possible or actual conflict between antecedent belief and the findings of honest and accurate analysis
8. All doctrinaire approaches lead to this fallacy. Perhaps, no other doctrinaire over-simplification has caused as much harm, on a global scale, as the early Communist over-simplification of the issue of population planning and the charge that the slogan of over-population was a false Capitalist alarm. I respectfully submit, it is

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all too easy to substitute selective statistics and defensive rationalization for non-ideological factual analysis, in the name of Islamic research.

9. This is the problem posed by the glaring divorce between theory and practice, in this matter, in Muslim countries throughout history. Even more significant is the resort to 'juristic deception' *heela* in Muslim Theology enabling the believer to bypass the prohibition of usury. Two of the most common forms of 'juristic deception' are as follows: (a) the lender and the borrower agree on a deadline (pretty early) for returning the sum borrowed and also stipulate a fine or penalty to be paid by the debtor in case he fails to observe the deadline; (b) the borrower sells some article to the lender at a nominal price and subsequently buys it back from the lender at a substantially higher price, thereby enabling the lender to earn a 'profit' without involving usury.

It is noteworthy that Jews and Christians have engaged in precisely similar practices, down the ages, for the same reason.

10. The conservative view was that even if acceptance of interest on bank deposits differed from charging usury on loans, the banks, in their turn, did charge interest/usury on the sums lent out to others. Thus, the 'profit' they passed on to the depositor was eventually 'tainted money' rather than profit, in the proper sense, from trade or industry.
11. If the presence of risk be the real criterion for justification of unearned profit by a sleeping partner, while the absence of risk for the non-justification of interest, the concept of profit distribution by Islamic banks to depositors might become questionable since hardly any risk is involved in such transactions.
12. The prohibition of interest, the institution of *zakat*, the Islamic law of inheritance, severally or jointly, would not suffice, by themselves, to solve our complex problems. The prohibition of interest will not do when acute distress, urgent need of capital, or national defence, etc. make borrowing on interest unavoidable. *Zakat* will not do when savings are almost zero and the consumption and development needs of the society large. The law of inheritance will not do when all there is to inherit be poverty and disease.

Moral exhortations whether in the name of religion or of a secular ideology will also not do if situational factors and constraints have been ignored in the framing of the ideal or in legislation. Thus, even the nationalisation of the means of production will not do when productivity fails to catch up with social needs. No economic system or philosophy will succeed if it entertains a romantic illusion concerning human nature.

3. Religious totalism, in its extreme forms, includes even such matters as language, food, dress, games, entertainments, social customs and etiquette in the purview of religion. Thus, the true Muslim is expected to conform to the Islamic ideal or norm in all the above matters.

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The above approach obliterates the distinction between the basic creed and the social cultural mores of the environment in which Islam was born and developed. It is not realized by the advocates of religious totalism what a large portion of what they hold to be the 'Islamic way of life' is a legacy of the pre-Islamic Arab milieu. Now, if pre-Islamic Arab mores (not specifically repudiated by the Quran or the Prophet) could survive, why should not the same be done in the case of other ethnic groups and cultures? In any case, the traditional culture, national character and historical situation of different recipient groups inevitably colour and shape the cultural or religious system acquired from others. All cultural systems—language, art, morality, religion—are subject to modifications in the process of diffusion. Cultural variations due to time and space are unavoidable. Equally unavoidable are protests against such modifications and innovations and the calls for a return to a golden past exemplified in a sacred personality or personalities. Such being the dialectic of history, ideological tension and conflict are inseparable from the human situation. Now religious totalism greatly intensifies this conflict and leads to fragmentation of the human family on the basis of religion. Religion, so interpreted, becomes a divisive force. Religious liberalism, on the other hand, by readily accepting cultural pluralism and ceaseless growth, encourages the brotherhood of man, ever in the making, rather than of the brotherhood of the strict followers of a sharply defined creed. According to religious liberalism, all truth-seekers and sincere believers are brothers in faith speaking different 'languages of the spirit.' All must be accorded equal respect and dignity, irrespective of the spiritual language they may happen to speak by virtue of the time and place of their birth.

14. If, for instance, being a blue-blood Muslim implies (in addition to the five pillars of faith) bearing an Islamic name which is equated with a name belonging to the Arabic or Persian language, wearing a particular dress, living in accordance with a particular life-style pertaining to eating, entertainments, segregation of women, accepting a definite economic system, and so on, those individuals or societies which do not satisfy the above requirements would stand automatically downgraded on the scale of 'true' Islam. Unfortunately, this line of thinking persists among numerous Muslims.

Islam & the Modern Challenges

by

Prof. S. VAHIDUDDIN

P R E F A C E

The Muslim world is in a state of turmoil. Though the Oil boom has made some of the Islamic countries richest in the world, they have yet to realise that this phenomenal affluence cannot be a lasting asset. Needless to say that wealth always brings in its wake serious risks. It creates complacency and, in countries where there is a feudal set-up, it fosters the tendency to suppress with all their might any attempt, however well motivated, to change the status quo. And it is also assumed that economic prosperity is sufficient unto itself and the temptation is strong to look down upon the fellow-believers who are wallowing in abject misery in other countries. Theological stagnation is perpetuated and there is no effort worth the name to re-think what their forefathers had thought in a given situation of history. Any deviation from the familiar pattern of Islamic living is denounced as innovation, and, instead of promoting ecumenic tendency only the school of thought to which one is committed is given theological credence and all differences are looked upon with suspicion. Hence when my friend Dr. Abid Raza Bedar invited me to deliver Khuda Bakhsh Memorial Lectures, I took this opportunity to speak to myself what I have been thinking all the time. Whatever I have written on Islam I consider more as a confession than an objective and adequate estimate of Islamic thought and experience. I have always felt that Islamic thought cannot be reduced into a monolithic structure but allows different options and alternatives in interpretation not only on a metaphysical level but also in relation to social problems and challenges. I hope all that I have written will be taken for what it is worth, and

if it provokes others to give a better perspective I will remain satisfied.

I am thankful to Dr. Abid Raza Bedar, Director Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, without whose initiative I could not have undertaken the responsibility of giving these Lectures. I really do not know how far I have been able to justify his choice for the honour that has been conferred on me. I am also thankful to Mr. S. Riaz Ali Perwaz of the Institute of History of Medicine and Medical Research for his effective help in the preparation of the manuscript

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The religious situation in its global perspective presents a very confused picture. It is obvious in one respect that man's commitment to religion has slackened in the last few decades and a process of secularisation has set in. The reasons are many. One of the most obvious is the mechanisation of life with the advancement in science and technology. The tremendous advancement in technology and the new social conditions created by it have shifted man's attention from the perennial problems of human existence and made him more conscious of his earth-rootedness. Even philosophy of the West, which in spite of its secular and rational stance was nourished in religious pathos, has become alienated from its tradition and the link with theological issues has been snapped in the recent past. There was a time when philosophers who did not recognise theological assumptions and even undertook to subject the traditional proofs of the existence of God always retained interest in metaphysical questions. It is even said of Hegel by his critics that he was above all a theologian and remained always a theologian. Kant's aim was not to demolish metaphysics as such but to demarcate the bounds of discursive reason and rational knowledge. However, in the recent past even when philosophers take their sustenance from the religious tradition and speak a language which is reminiscent of Christian experience, they remain earth-bound with a vengeance. This is specially true of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Again in the realm of practice great changes have occurred in consciousness of values. Life has been commercialised at all levels. Success has become a new idol which man worships. And the brutal exploitation of developing nations by the Western powers has evoked a sharp reaction among the masses in the developing countries and, as a result, strong leftist ideologies have found a favourable soil for their propagation. Naturally the leftist perspective has always taken a rejectionist stand in relation to religion. Religion has been understood to be an opiate to the masses which is used as a means for exploitation by the rich as against the poor. This again means that dissatisfaction with religion has primarily developed in the economic context and, as the Church often associated itself with the Establishment, with remarkable exceptions of course, the ire of the revolutionaries turns with a fury against religion itself. Apart from these factors it is also to be noted that if religion is not sustained

from time to time by men of deep religious concern who can inform religion with life, religion soon becomes petrified and its value lies only in its social dimension which brings members of a community together and gives them a sense of identity. Our young men and women are subject to influences which are hostile and when our sources of inspiration are foreign we learn our own culture and tradition through the eyes of strangers; and what we learn from our own sources seems insipid and lifeless as against the breezes which blow from outside. In these conditions the younger generation, disillusioned with its own past, grows either actively hostile or at the most indifferent. This is really the situation in which we as Muslims stand today.

It is clear that the Muslim mind cannot be expected to respond to the challenges of the modern world in a uniform way. The present day world, especially in developing countries, is extremely politicised and existential questions are eclipsed by political considerations. When we think of the future of Islam and of Muslims we think it in terms of power politics and in terms of political future as a dominant factor in the power game. There is no doubt that politics and religion are linked in Islam and the concept of a Muslim state as a world state has dominated the imagination of Muslims. But it should not also be forgotten that power has never enjoyed the first priority and the state is never considered an end in itself.

It is encouraging to note that some of our eminent Muslim scholars have rightly questioned the exclusive emphasis which is given in some quarters to the Divine sovereignty at the expense of His other attributes. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi's critical assessment of Maulana Maudoodi's understanding of Islam may serve as an interesting example. "That the relation of God and man finds its most characteristic expression in the relationship of the sovereign to His subjects, or of command and obedience, does not give justice to the man-God relationship".¹ It is, as Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi points out, much more. "However natural a corollary it might be of one's commitment to Islam, it is only a part and for that a limited one, of God's relationship with man, not the whole of it. It is much more subtle, more comprehensive, deeper and delicate".¹

1. The understanding and Interpretation of *Din* in our Times, Lucknow, 1978, p. 54

Hence what is more important is the commitment to the creed and still more significant is the personal realisation. The state can look only to the externals, to discipline and regulation of life. It has no means by which it can judge what passes within the consciousness of man. It cannot intrude into individual privacy. While this emphasis on the state and the political dimension of life and the regulation of social conduct by religious norms cannot be ignored, Islam reaches beyond its external manifestation and its attention is not confined to this world but extends to the world which it envisages as transcending the limitation of time and space as we know them. Hence it often happens that the political quest for power becomes dominant and, if circumstances favour, it can become aggressive and militant. But the modern man in affluent societies, where economic growth and social comforts have reached their maximum limit, still seems dissatisfied and seeks his satisfaction often in exotic experiences and as a consequence he develops strong reaction against his own past. Psychiatrists tell us that the modern man, which means for them the man of the West, has lost his zest for life, because the institution which made his life meaningful has lost for him any relevance, and the institution was religion. Dr. Frankl's observations deserve careful attention :

“Man's primary concern is to find and fulfil meaning and purpose in life. Today, however, ever more patients relate the feeling of a profound meaninglessness or, as one could call it in contradiction to Maslow's peak experience—an ‘abyss-experience’. In logotherapy, this inner void is referred to as the ‘existential vacuum’. In cases in which it results in a neurosis, this is termed in logotherapy a ‘noogenic’ neurosis in contradiction to the psychogenic neurosis which is the neurosis in the conventional sense of the word.”¹ With the loss of religious commitment man has lost his moorings, and the existentialist therapy tries to restore meaning to him, and once he sees meaning in life he finds his full recovery. This means that Islam has a relevance in more than one dimension and any one dimensional approach to religion brings in its wake a betrayal of its original thrust.

The Muslim revivalist movements try to develop a one-dimensional consciousness. Often the mystic heritage is ignored. What is emphasised is the economic and the political dimension. No doubt the Islamic approach to economic problems deserves our attention and in

1. E. Frankl Universitas: Logotherapy and Existential Analysis, English edition, 1967, pp. 77-78.

the political sphere also the pattern of the state as it emerged in the early days of Islam calls for careful study. But historical conditions change and what we know of city life today is different from what we learn of city in ancient times. The world population has increased enormously and democracy as understood by the Greeks has been completely transformed in modern conditions. Hence it is not advisable to overstress Islamic socialism because all these movements have different connotations at different times. Now Muslims who visualise a glorious future for their community mostly see it in terms of power and dream of a world when all Muslims should be united for a common cause. The world as we know it however shows a great cleavage between what is and what ought to be; between what is desirable and what is realisable. Unless we are realistic enough to know the limitations under which we labour in the conditions of history, we are apt to lose our balance and fritter our energies for ends which are not realisable in the given conditions.

Islam cannot be considered in isolation from the crisis of religious consciousness as a whole. Islam is not a regional or national manifestation but a world phenomenon and every ripple which disturbs man in the world cannot leave Islam unaffected. Whatever affects the developed nations which are subject to Christian influence affects no less violently the Muslim minds. In the recent past, man's commitment to religion has been challenged from varied sources. First it was the theory of evolution which challenged the theory of creation as it is understood under the influence of the Hebrew tradition. Earlier it was the displacement of the Ptolemic view of the universe, with man as its centre, by the Copernican revolution which made man a puny member of a vast universe. And no less disturbing was the influence which emanated from certain theories in psychology and psychopathology; and, under the influence of Freud; religion was considered nothing but an illusion born of repressed wishes. And further the situation was complicated by the so called Higher Criticism which tried to examine the Biblical data through historical evolution. Thus religion was subjected to a multipronged assault; and there came in addition the challenge from the Marxist interpretation of history which does not recognise any other determinants of history save the economical. But, inspite of the tremendous prestige of science and scientific methodology, the religious situation was not completely shaken. Religion survived all these assaults. Though its impact on the youth and its influence in terms of numbers might have decreased, it is still a force to be reckoned with. Side by side with developments which

favoured the anti-religious stand and reduced religion to an alternative which could easily be dispensed with and which was not respectable enough to gain adherence in the scientifically-minded world, there were other developments which shook the complacency of the scientifically-oriented thought. It was first of all in physics that the old vision of a mechanistically-determined universe lost ground, and a rigid determinism was shattered in favour of a statistical view of causality, and the concept of matter lost its classically-conceived substantiality. It is worthwhile to refer to the statement of an eminent scientist who himself took an active part in the reassessment of the basic concepts in physics. Werner Heisenberg observes: "Our attitude toward concepts like mind or the human soul or life or God will be different from that of the nineteenth century, because these concepts belong to the natural language and have therefore immediate connection with reality. It is true that we will also realize that these concepts are not well defined in the scientific sense and that their application may lead to various contradictions. For the time being we may have to take the concepts, unanalysed as they are; but still we know they touch reality. It may be useful in this connection to remember that even in the most precise part of science, in mathematics, we cannot avoid using concepts that involve contradictions. For instance, it is well known that the concept of infinity leads to contradictions that have been analysed, but it would be practically impossible to construct the main parts of mathematics without this concept"¹ This raises grave doubts about the ability of the scientist even to provide a picture of the universe which would satisfy religious consciousness. But these developments at least favoured a view of the universe which was till now necessarily supposed to be incompatible with the scientific spirit. Nonetheless, to see and discover what religion is, one has still to go to religions and to religious persons in whom religion finds expression. Now when we come to Islam as a religious manifestation we have first to take into account the unfortunate fact that Muslim theology has not risen to the occasion and Muslim thought still moves in patterns which have been marked out for it at a time when Islamic theology crystallised itself in response to challenges which took shape from the impact of Greek thought. The crisis to which Muslim thought is subject today must be understood at different levels. The issues of *al-Kalam* as they were debated within the confines of the *Mu'tazilah* and *Ashu'irah* perspectives need to be reformulated and given expression in a different language. Whenever

1. Werner Heisenberg: *Physics and Philosophy*, London, 1958, p. 172.

thought is active, be it at the level of philosophy, theology or mysticism, it creates a new language in consonance with the new developments of thought. But if theological thought has come to a standstill and speaks in the old formulae or through borrowed patterns of alien origin, it might easily lead in consequence to misunderstanding.

It is also to be noted that even philosophical tradition does not remain stagnant and the concept of philosophy has changed in history. When Muslim theologians speak in denunciation of philosophy even today they have only the idea of philosophy against which al-Ghazzali took cudgels. But philosophy, as we understand today, is not a commitment to any pre-established position but an open enquiry into the nature of being, of knowledge and of religion. The positions are not marked out from the beginning. But the old preconceptions about philosophy still persist and the variety and diversity of philosophical perspectives are completely overlooked. The relation between philosophy and theology has always been a subject of debate, though their relation cannot be equated with the relation between reason and faith.

With regard to the relation between theology and philosophy Immanuel Kant made a very pertinent observation. Kant was of course thinking of Christian theology but his observations are equally valid for Muslim theology. He observed that the view according to which philosophy is the handmaid of theology can be accepted provided we know whether she is the handmaid who goes before the Queen with the torch in hand showing the light or whether she is the one who goes behind holding the aprons. Philosophical thought has therefore a very important role to play in the clarification of concepts and in the formulation of problems though, of course, it can never serve as a substitute for faith.

Hence it is necessary to respond to the intellectual situation as it is and not to offer combat to forces which are long dead. Modern philosophical and theological perspectives owe much to the Greek heritage but they do not depend on it and corresponding to the changes in the scientific knowledge shifts in the philosophical posture also take place. We still cling to old preconceptions and react to philosophy in the same way in which al-Ghazzali and his followers reacted. We do not require any new *Tahafut* now but to examine carefully whatever comes in the name of philosophy. Philosophy is not a body of knowledge which is fixed once for all.

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Though it deals with perennial issues, its answers show constant shift and its response varies from school to school and from philosopher to philosopher. Muslim thought is not exhausted in what our forefathers thought, be they philosophers or theologians, and the stigma which has been attached to the philosophical tradition through historical conditions should be removed. It is necessary for the rejuvenation of thought to reassess the situation and understand what the problems are. In every period of man's intellectual history philosophical and theological thought developed its own language, and the terms used in the earlier context changed their meaning; and the problems which once had assumed great importance and provoked violent controversies have lost much of their relevance. Muslim thought cannot afford to ignore the problems which have developed in sister religions and cannot formulate its answers in its own terms unless it takes into consideration the answers given by the theologians of the affiliated traditions. Christian theologians like St. Thomas did take into account the contributions of Avicenna and Averroes though their response was different and may have been even negative. But we have to evolve our response in consonance with our own tradition. The theological issues, as that of the nature of God, the nature of soul, the problem of immortality, and the problem of freedom, when they are tackled in the light of reason, can show much common ground and credal differences do not affect their solutions in as decisive a way as one might assume in the beginning. It is of course natural that our response would evolve an eminently Islamic accent and it would lead to a formulation of the problems which fit in the old scheme of thought. On this plane theologians can seek clarification from philosophical reflection. Whether it is theology or philosophy, the solution is the product of the finite human mind; and with whatever pretence the theologian might claim divine guidance still he can falter in interpretation and cannot hope to afford a world view which cannot be disputed theologically from within the confines of his own framework. The history of theological thought in Islam bears this out completely. And though one school of the Kalām is considered orthodox and the other does not enjoy this respectability, there is no reason to think that any one side has full justification and the opposite view has no basis. Unfortunately history can be abused and the old feuds may be considered decided one way or the other by taking into account considerations which have nothing to do with intellectual integrity.

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Now the great problem which besets Islamic consciousness is its equivocal response to modern challenge. Religion as such is confronted with negative forces and Islam is no exception. But the negative forces, if closely examined, may not be completely negative or destructive. However our response to these forces is generally no less negative. No trouble is taken to detect their true significance. One has to know primarily the main thrust of these forces, whether they have developed on some misunderstanding of the religious position or whether they are hostile to a specific religious position or whether they are uncompromisingly anti-religious, no matter what the level of religious position might be. This is specially true about eschatological problems, the nature of heaven and hell, the account of creation, the question of the final reckoning of man before God. Now the whole problem lies in knowing whether these accounts are to be taken in their rigid literary understanding or whether they make use of the human language to convey realities which cannot be expressed except through an idiom with which we are familiar. Semantic clarification will avert much misunderstanding. Now, here, there are two attitudes which are generally prevalent. In recent Christian theology the problem of demythologisation² has been much discussed. In our own context this approach may be discerned in the views of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and, in a more philosophical cloak, in the Lectures of Mchd. Iqbal. But the whole problem lies to distinguish two different attitudes. On the one hand we can say that the so-called myths and legends of religion refer to secular and worldly realities; on the other hand we may affirm that these myths do not refer to worldly realities at all but to transcendental realities which are given expressions in terms with which we are familiar and which represent the scientific and intellectual level of the period in which the Quranic revelation took place. Hence the picturesque and graphic description of Heaven and Hell, of the temptation of Satan, of the primordial covenant (*Mithaq*) between man and God do refer to realities but of such nature that we cannot have any intellectual grasp except to devise their significance according to our own level of understanding. On the other hand Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Iqbal no less completely ignore their transcendental character and de-mythologise them in a way which if carried out consistently would strip revelation of all its content. Commenting on the Fall of man in the Quranic narrative, Iqbal writes: "I am, therefore, inclined to think that the '*Jannat*' in the Quranic

narration is the conception of a primitive state in which man is practically unrelated to his environment and consequently does not feel the sting of human wants, the birth of which alone marks the beginning of human culture.¹ No de-mythologisation can be allowed to strip religion of its mystery and of its transcendental reference. The historical critique which has been so much in vogue has its own limitations. This is very much clear in the Christian context. Any hope to present the figure of Christ in a much more satisfactory way through history and in a way which would replace the Christ of faith has failed. We can of course learn much from history which is supported by archaeology, and empirical sciences can throw much light on the persons and the incidents which figure in the scriptures. But history as recorded in the scriptures has a totally different function. It is not meant as an end in itself but is used to serve another purpose: to awaken man's consciousness of the divine involvement in history, to show man in different situations both in his submission to the Will of God, his *Islam*, and more often than not in his betrayal of the divine purpose, his *Kufr*, and has a consequence in his being subjected to penalties which follow from his betrayal. No doubt great credit must be given to historical research in its attempts to unravel many problems. But, as it often happens, historical research cannot take us beyond vague probabilities and the results are constantly questioned by new findings. It is, therefore, quite understandable why Muslims have not responded enthusiastically to the so-called Higher Criticism. It is also clear why any departure in the Quran from the anecdotes and stories which are common to the Bible and the Quran does not allow any negative assessment. If it is a departure, it is not a departure from any events which we know to have happened for certain, but only from the text which can not itself claim to be an authentic historical record. Ibrahim, Ishaq or Ismail as they appear in the Quran must be taken in the Quranic context without any attempt to reduce them into Biblical figures. The figures in the Quran appear in a meaningful context: they have a Quranic relevance and they should be understood with reference to the traditions which are prevalent in a given religion. There is no question of history in either case. A classical example is the birth of Adam as the first man and his Fall due to temptation. The way the Bible relates this story and the way the Quran takes it into account shows many interesting differences

¹ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Delhi, 1974, pp.84-85

and they may give expression to two different perspectives and approaches. We can not opt for the one as against the other on historical grounds. In neither case it is history. History does not begin with Adam but only with his children and Adam as a metahistorical figure has nothing to fear from evolutionary or other scientific or pseudo-scientific theories. His is a metahistorical figure and only through faith can we understand what he is. The whole trouble begins when we try to apply human criteria based on our empirical experience to situations which completely transcend this experience. Hence even in situations which involve history we must understand what this history is. It does not claim to be a record given by the contemporary witnesses but only records which are transmitted through revelation. We can dispute these records only when we have other records which carry the warrant of unimpeachable testimony. It has taken quite a long time for man to understand that scientific allusions in religious scriptures have nothing in common with our own scientific knowledge, and if they seem at any moment to be justified by new scientific knowledge this can not be taken as an instance through which the religious truths can be verified. The astronomical picture of the universe has changed, the biological picture of man is constantly subject to change, while what religion presents has an existential relevance which cannot be affected by the shifting situations of scientific knowledge. If Islam speaks of creation or if it speaks of the Fall of Adam and his temptation by Satan or the Covenant which has been made in pre-eternity, they are just symbols to mark God's dealings with man in a language which is itself a challenge to human understanding. Its sense must vary according to one's own level of insight. There is no question of rejecting them outright as having lost their relevance with the development of scientific knowledge; they stand unaffected in the religious perspective. They are not intended to give us information but only to awaken religious consciousness to mysteries which defy rational clarification. Their seeming ambiguity is itself a significant part of the religious situation.

Now, we have to deal with different levels of understanding corresponding to different levels of reality. On the one hand there is reference to the metahistorical situations which on the face of them clearly speak of their non-historical origin. We can count among them the 'incidents' to which we referred, like that of man's covenant of pre-eternity. On the lower level there are events of seemingly

historical nature involving names transmitted through religious tradition as that of Abraham and the sacrifice of his son, the founding of *Ka'ba* and various incidents in which prophets of yore are involved. They are of course not metahistorical in the sense in which the former examples certainly are. But they are not historical in the sense in which history which unrolls before our eyes is. The ambiguity and doubts about them are not born by lack of evidence, by conflicting accounts relating to them, but by lack of understanding for the purpose they are meant to serve. They are not used to serve a historical purpose but a metahistorical, however clearly embedded in human history they may appear to be. Consequently any charge of deviation from history has no sense; it is the tradition which must count, and, in the Islamic context, it is the Muslim tradition which must be given the last say.

But the situation becomes different so far as empirical sciences are concerned, and so far as they treat empirical data. No one will question the occasional references to natural events on the basis of their non-conformity with the knowledge which is gained through the empirical data. Current pre-scientific ideas are used to serve a purpose other than the scientific: whether the Heavens are seven or whether the account of the creation of the world has any scientific legitimacy, is not the question; they have relevance only in a symbolic frame of reference. In questions of scientific knowledge, tradition can not decide and the 'facts' that they refer to in the Qurabic context have no empirical significance but transcendental indication. "The days" referred to have no place in our temporal scheme but allude to a different order of time. Hence religious hermeneutics should reassess the semantic equipment of a given time. If God is referred to as placing His hands on the believers in the historical pact which was concluded, what is intended is conveyed through a language which on the face of it does not require any literary interpretation. When in ordinary commerce we do not accept such expressions in the literal sense, there is no need to question any interpretation as deviation from literary usage. Metaphorical expressions are part and parcel of all languages. But apart from metaphorical expressions we meet with symbols which demand no conceptual interpretation but assume sensitivity to religious language in its symbolical function. This is the case, for example, with the Book in which man's deeds are recorded or with the Prescribed Tablet or with the Balance in which the deeds are weighed and the good deeds

are discriminated from the bad deeds, or the 'Kursi' or 'Arsh' which is the throne of God. All these references indicate a symbolical connotation which can only be understood in their trans-empirical reference and any attempt to translate them in the secular terms distorts the original intention. Again there are graphic descriptions of Heaven and Hell and Judgement which also require an interpretation in conformity with one's own level of understanding. They do not refer to facts as given in our finite experience but to totally different conditions where the requirements of this world do not obtain. To say this is not to deny the world beyond, but only to say that it cannot be translated in finite terms, in terms of time and space as known to us. Hence the only way through which they may be made accessible to us is through analogy. The Christian schoolmen, specially St. Thomas, rightly emphasised the role of analogy in our understanding of God and His attributes, as God's being is not what we understand of being in our experience. This is the main thrust of his concept of *analogia entis*. Muslim theologians in their discussion of attributes have also hinted at the difficulties which follow if we ascribe to God attributes and if we do not ascribe to Him any attribute; and they also took great pains to distinguish between what they call *tashbih* and *tanzih*, between imputing to God any human attributes analogically and denying all human attributes unconditionally. This is indeed a problem which troubles all theistic thinking.

Whether we resort to metaphorical or symbolical interpretation or whether we introduce analogy to explain the transcendental data, and try to suppress the temptation to impute to God and the transcendental world attributes which are borrowed from our own experience univocally, these explanations have their limits and they cannot convey any information or knowledge which is not empirically accessible to us. Our categories of thought are applicable only to possible experience and lose their validity beyond. If the literarist's explanation fails, it does not mean that the facts and superfacts, which they refer to, have lost their meaning. Religion has rightly made use of different means to convey its meaning and, of them, art has been the most effective. Poetry, Music and painting and every expression of art do not simply entertain us; they enable us to transcend the senses through the senses. Hence it is not only through our consciousness of the categorical obligation in the moral situation that we confront the super-sensible. Music, above all, can rouse in us this super-sensible

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awareness, and when music and poetry conjoin, they become effective even more. No wonder that in Sufi circles music and poetry played a major role and there is great truth in Schopenhauer's assigning to music above all the function of delivering man from the anguish of desires and of the will to live. This means that apart from morality there are also other avenues through which the unconditional can be hinted at, though certainly in moral consciousness it comes to conceptual clarity. In our Islamic experience the recitation of the Quran subserves a role which is akin to artistic experience, albeit by its very nature it has not that ambiguity which always haunts art where the transition from the sensible to the super-sensible may not find unambiguous response. A poem of Hafiz, for instance, can be interpreted in both ways and controversies continue to persist whether a piece of poetry should be interpreted only allegorically or mystically; whereas in the Quran even the most mundane references have a religious orientation.

Now it is for the Muslims not to make their interpretations so rigid as to exclude all possibilities and to allow only one explanation as legitimate. It may be noted that in Islam there is no orthodoxy and apart from the basic tenets which are considered by all as part and parcel of Islamic consciousness, there is no authoritative formulation of the creed, *Aqidah*, through Councils as happened with the Christian Church. The statements included in the creeds¹ have more or less a personal note and as such attributed to Muslim divines like Abu Hanifa and Nasafi. They can not claim finality.

The theses embodied in the creeds which have been influential in Sunni Islam as that of *Fiqh Akbar* in its different versions and the *Wasiyyat* Abu Hanifa do not so much breathe the spirit of Islam as reflect the intellectual milieu of the time and the sectarian conflicts. These creeds not only cover theses of theological relevance as for example the definition of faith, the uncreatedness of the Word of God or predestination but also make much of questions which cannot be considered by any stretch of imagination to be constituent of the Islamic consciousness. They are as much concerned with the relative precedence of the companions of the Prophet as with the possibility of the vision of God in the Hereafter. All levels of thoughts, from the metaphysical to the ritualistic, are jumbled together. It is to be observed that the metaphysically-loaded parts of the creed do not leave any room for flexibility.

1. A.J. Wensinck : The Muslim Creed, 1965.

In the history of Muslim theological thought, however, such intriguing problems like freedom of will, predestination, the attributes of God, different positions have evoked different responses. Whilst the *Asha'irah* position has been considered 'orthodox' the *Mu'tazilah* position has been held suspect. Even the *Asha'irah* position has not found favour with the so called ultra-orthodox Hanbalites who find any deviation from the literalist interpretation condemnable and prefer to impute to God all corporeal attributes as they are, but without asking how, amodally. In fact it is necessary now not to be misled by history and not to think that Islamic thought has been closed once for all, but to rethink and reformulate; the old disputes and the controversies which have no relevance today need to be shelved in the interest of the genuine philosophical and theological awareness.

What are then the main philosophical issues which all theistically-oriented religions as Islam have to deal with. The main thrust of the Quranic revelation is centered on the presence of God, His unity and attributes. It is for the theology of the future to consider the problem of God in the context of the recent debates. It must not be forgotten that for authentic religious consciousness God is not a problem at all, and when it becomes a part of a creed it is almost blasphemous to talk of God as a problem. The Quranic revelation of course tries to awaken the consciousness of God through certain lines of thought which appear as arguments. But they are not arguments in any sense of traditional logic. Suffice it to say here that though God can not be considered a problem for faith, it is to be considered a problem when doubts assail the believer. It is only in one's confrontation with the non-believer or the sceptic that the problem arises and the *Kalam* has to take it into account. Again, the revelation speaks a language which smacks of anthropomorphism and it is to be made clear how far analogical statements can be made about God. Thus the old controversy about the relation between God's essence and His attributes is to be reconsidered, as well as the old problem of the nature of creation, the place of suffering and evil, in short the problem of theodicy. The other problem that haunts mankind is the problem of posthumous existence. Here again different options are open and for each option verses of the Quran and the traditions may be forwarded. Assuming that there is a life beyond, what kind of a life it could be. The Quranic descriptions might be deemed by some to be very sensuous and as such not compatible with the world which is supposed to transcend the senses completely. Here

again there are different options open and only one option is excluded and this is to say that the world beyond cannot be held to be a replica of this world. The theological reconstruction should aim at semantic clarification. But apart from this there are metaphysical problems in the strict sense which defy rational penetration and in consequence do not allow any solution about which consensus can be attained. The problem which calls for deeper study in the Islamic context relates to the freedom of man. Traditionally the freedom of will is presented in a way which is tantamount to denying it and the advocates of different conflicting views resort to the Quranic verses in their support. The problem of the freedom of will is closely linked with that of predestination, and there are, no doubt, Quranic verses which seem to support the predestination of man. But, again, there are verses which speak clearly for the freedom of man. The whole concept of reckoning is based on human responsibility and accountability and man's ability to do good and evil. The Quran of course is not a philosophical treatise but a revealed scripture which can only be understood if we are sensitive enough to take into account the dialectical structure of its perspective. The thesis and anti-thesis are not resolved but are allowed to remain open for man to reflect upon and to acknowledge that freedom and determinism are part and parcel of human reality. That I am not all in all, that my intentions and their fulfilment are not bound together with necessity but that a gulf lies between the idea and its fulfilment, is to be recognised. The Quran insists, on the one hand, that man is pledged to his actions, that God does not allow any oppression against him, and that He is all just and the best of all judges (*Khair al-Hakimin*). On the other hand it seems as if man is completely in the hands of God. He leads astray whomso He wills and leads to truth whomso He wills. This means that man has different dimensions and God's dealings with man can be understood in two ways: in a rational way when we insist on man's freedom, and in an irrational way when we recognise man's complete dependence on God's will.

Rudolf Otto, with his acute observations on the idea of predestination, has indeed cleared some misunderstandings.¹ He has justly pointed out that this idea of predestination is primarily based on religious intuition and has its roots in one's awareness of being a

1. Rudolf Otto: *The Idea of the Holy*, Engl. Trans. New York, 1958, p 90.

'creature'. In other words, it is man's creatureliness which finds expression through this idea. And interestingly enough he has made relevant references to Islam in this context. Naturally he speaks as a Christian theologian, but the point is that he goes to the core of the problem. Otto's references to St. Paul are relevant enough to make us understand that the idea of predestination which is imputed to Islam is not an exclusively Islamic prerogative but is a constituent of religious consciousness as such. St. Paul says of God that "he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth". (Paul, Romans, 9, 18). And again referring to those who question God's will he says: "Nay but, O man; who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why did't thou make me thus?" (Paul, Romans, 9, 20). This is the reason why the *Mu'tazilah* went one way and their opponents went another. The *Mu'tazilah*, who have been called rationalists in Islam, insisted on the unity and justice of God and they were called men of unity and justice. For them any punishment which one does not deserve by his action is unjust, and God being just does not inflict on man an unjust punishment. In other words He cannot act unjustly. The *Asha'iah*, on the other hand, thought that this would amount to an interference in God's power and they maintained that God has power to reward the wicked and to punish the just. But the question is to distinguish between what He does hypothetically and what He does factually. Hence what is needed is not to offer solution but to maintain balance in conflicting positions and to allow both the thesis and the anti-thesis some justification and not to exclude the one at the expense of the other. These questions are really challenges to human thought and we know that they have not fared better when the perspective completely changed and when the approach to these problems lost all contact with religion and completely rational solutions were attempted. A man like Kant considers freedom an Idea of the practical reason and does not ascribe to it more than a regulative significance.

The Quranic moments can be considered at different levels, though unfortunately the level which is at the lowest is given often questionable priority. No wonder then in the Western account of Islam the legislative aspect invites most attention. In other words the *Shari'ah* both in its civil and penal aspects seems to characterise Islam exhaustively. Needless to say that the juristic dimension is not the exclusive concern of the Quran. What it is most concerned with is

orientation towards God, the awakening in man of God's consciousness and in considering God as the one without whose guidance man cannot prosper. We cannot fare well in this world unless we fare well with God. God is man's constant frame of reference. Between two poles of Muslim religiosity, the legislative and the God-oriented behaviour, the life of a Muslim must develop. Now in seemingly exterior commands about his own scheduled worship and about his dealings with others, a deep inward religiosity is involved. For example, the prayer five times a day might appear a mechanical routine not only to outsiders but also to Muslims who have been alienated from their source. The same prayer indeed can be performed as a stereotyped routine without any relation to its content and meaning and it can be performed as a deep religious experience when the performer feels himself standing before God in His presence. On being asked what righteousness (*Ihsan*) is, the Prophet is said to have declared: "Serving Allah as if He were before thy eyes: For if thou seest Him not, He seeth thee".¹ Every word and every verse which he recite, he feels them in their depth. Not only the scheduled prayer but even the different ways in which God is named can provoke deep religious experience in some, while to others they cannot be more than sounds signifying nothing. Hence the name of God is more often than not repeated 'in vain'. The words 'Allah-o Akbar', God is greater, when they rang through the mouths of those who really believed in them, shook the world to its foundation; and the same words when they are repeated in a different context create nothing but mischief. This means that the seeming externality of the Quranic attitudes depends on those through whom the Quranic message and mission are proclaimed. The Quranic attitude leaves no doubt in this regard. If the change in the direction of the prayer is announced, it is clearly declared that what matters is piety and it does not matter much which way you turn; and with no less force it is declared that "whithersoever you turn there is the visage of God". The same holds good for animal sacrifice. Though animal sacrifice has a place in Islamic ritualism, it is clearly declared that what reaches God is not the blood and the flesh but the piety of the believer. This means that so called external practices receive their value from the experiential and existential content. The same consideration is applied to other practices like that of fasting. They do not aim at discipline in a proper sense

¹ A.J. Wensinck : The Muslim Creed, p. 23

but they work at a different level. Man is tuned to the world unseen while remaining himself in the world given to him. The whole spirit of the Quran and Islam is to infuse the air of other-worldliness in man's worldly involvement. The congregational *Surah* hints at it in a very subtle way. The believer is asked not to get distracted by the noise and din of the world, but to gather himself for prayer, on completing which he can go his own way seeking the bounty of Allah. Thus Islam swings in a constant movement between this world and that. When the worldly goods are considered gratuitous favours, they assume an other-worldly dimension. Both, the scheduled prayer and the frequent remembrance of God, have their function to serve. The scheduled prayers are meant to ward man from neglect whereas the remembrance of God is meant to sustain his contact with God without interruption. No doubt in one sense God is with us, whether we think of Him or not, but in another sense His being with us assume a deeper meaning when we are aware of it. Man's consciousness of His presence transforms his life and as the Quran says, from Allah we are and unto Allah we move back. The Quranic world perspective is highly significant. The Quran does not enjoin a way of life which few can follow but envisages different grades in which our response to God can be understood. Corresponding to this graded response the station of man is also marked in the life hereafter. If there are persons who remember God in the watches of the night, who seek His forgiveness in the early morning, whose hearts quake at the mention of the word of God, there are still others who could only faintly approximate to the high station. Hence in the life hereafter three categories are mentioned, the one to the left who have fulfilled their mission in life, the one to the right who have responded to the call of God to the best of their abilities and the outstrippers (*abiqun-al-ubiqun*) who have attained a high station by their excessive zeal in their compliance with God's will. This means that even those who have erred cannot have the same status. The worst of those who have erred and those who are assigned the lowest rank in God's judgement, are the *Munafiqun*, the hypocrites and dissemblers with deceptive appearances.

Now we shall see what the Quranic attitude is towards the world as it is with all evils and goods, the world as it is lived by the human person. In other words, let us look a little closer at the Quranic world consciousness. First we must make a few useful distinctions. One is our understanding of the world as nature; second, our understanding

of the world as a human world inhabited by human persons; third, our understanding of the world as worldliness. As regards the world as nature it is not degraded to a secondary status, explained away as illusion. It is the creation of God and, as creation of God, it is full of mysteries and pointers. In fact, man's attention is directed towards God through the contemplation of Nature and through the marvels that it holds. Even the seemingly insignificant happenings in nature, the sprouting of leaves, rains which infuse life into the soil, the constant transition of seasons, are given attention. Nay, even the aesthetic aspect of nature is no less taken into account. The shepherds returning from the fields bring delight to the eyes. In other words, nature in all its phases is appreciated as God's work. Nature includes also animal life and animals though given seemingly subordinate role, enjoy a place in the divine order. What is more, it is said categorically. "There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings but they are peoples like unto you." (VI, 38)

As regards the world which is considered in the context of social relationship between man and man, in other words, the human world occupies a privileged place, as no doubt it is to the human world that the message is addressed. This means that man in his dealings with other human beings occupies special attention. Men are distinguished between those who respond to the call of God and those who do not. In other words the human kind is distinguished by the fact that all its actions are liable to be questioned and man stands responsible to what he does. God and man stand in a special relationship. Again, there is the problem of the worldliness, the Quranic attitude to worldly values as secular ends. Strictly speaking, there is nothing exclusively secular in the Quranic perspective and everything is related to God directly or indirectly. But we may distinguish for conceptual clarification, the goals which are God-oriented from the goals which are allowed to man for his relaxation. Any occupation with leisure, any distraction which allows man to while away time, any sport or entertainment with which he occupies himself have a place of their own. These activities can be questioned only when they violate any basic principle. In fact it is necessary not to take an all too rigid a view with regard to what we may consider from purely puritanic stand-point as not worthy of occupation. The Quran is explicit on the question whether the world was created for nothing or whether it has a purpose of its own: "We have not created the world in sport, nor in falsehood but in truth". But at the same time we are

told, "what is this world but the play and deception." How are we to understand these seemingly contradictory postures. We have first to take into account the world as the totality of creation. It is not as if to pass away time that God created the world. The world as creation is always oriented towards God. Every particle of the world has a significance of its own, though we may not be aware of its significance. In the second declaration of the world as play and deception it really refers to the human world where we do not know whether what we consider success does not really portend failure, whether the persons whom we regard as friends will not betray us in the long run, whether those who are nearest and dearest to us would not finally let us down, and whether all the gains that we have earned would not finally disappear in smoke. This is the essence of the Quranic approach to the world at different levels. What amounts to total denunciation is with reference to worldliness, our constant occupation with the world to the exclusion of all that does not belong to mundane interest. This means again that the Quranic attitudes have a reference which is relative to a given context, and, the moment we lose contact with the context, we are apt to misunderstand the spirit of the Quran. This means again that the Quranic vision of the world has different frames of reference and the trouble arises when we ascribe to historical contingencies an absolute character and eternalise the temporal.

Islam: Problems & Prospects

by

Prof. S. Vahiduddin

Islam is nothing if not a global manifestation and all attempts to localize Islam or to understand it from a parochial and regional angle are doomed to fail. Consequently every attempt to see Islam from the standpoint of a particular culture and consider the challenges that face Islam in a specified geographical area and in a certain historical milieu is apt to be very misleading. Most of the Western scholars are prone to consider Islam as an Arab phenomenon, and, to the Arabs it might even appear as self-evident to see in Islam the manifestation of Arab genius and to respond to it in terms of its own ethnic conditions. Nor can we ignore the inveterate proclivity of Muslims, be they Arabs, or non-Arabs to consider all that makes for progress already latent in Islam's first manifestation in the primitive conditions of the desert, and to almost identify what is non-Islamic with what is non-Arab. It is equally amazing to see the Muslims of non-Arab areas essaying hard to find in their current problems a recapitulation of their early history of Islam on the Arab soil and to ignore the problems which have a new dimension. No one can deny the Arab origin of Islam, and, the neglect of the historical conditioning of religion is apt to confuse what is universally relevant with what is historically conditioned. There is another danger to which a study of religions might become an easy prey. The idea of historical conditioning might seem to involve the elimination and exclusion of universality and to transform the religion whose message transcends national and ethnic barrier into a marvel of national genius. The prophet of Islam might then appear as a national hero who forged unity in the warring Arab tribes and who, even according to one resourceful writer, used religious myths to a minimum for fostering economic and social goals. On the other hand a fundamentalist approach has gained ground and it is thought that the first expression of Islam is its exhaustive expression and its first politico-social manifestation is the final one and its later manifestation in history can be judged by the patterns which were already set and new patterns can claim legitimacy only so far as they approximate to their primitive manifestation. But all these one-sided and exclusive views can hardly be expected to do justice to the rich and inexhaustible phenomenon which we call Islam and whose foundation was laid by that charismatic genius Muhammad bin

Abdullah, a solitary orphan in the wilderness of Arabia, an Arab who broke through the narrow confines of his Arab origin and who taught his community to look beyond their ethnic loyalties and family allegiance. His call forced them to look to supra-national and supra-ethnic goals and to transcend their Arab affiliation. They made to realise that its Arab accent was only a historical necessity and nothing more. When occidental scholars write about the Prophet of Islam they forget that Muhammed is not only a historical figure but an experience which is always kept alive in the beliefs of the believers. As experience, he never ceases to work and influence the beliefs which again become the part of the living tradition. The so called facts which History gives are often too fragmentary to serve as faithful records of what happened. They are transmitted in the language and the imagination of the transmitters and interpreted today by worldly-orientated minds. They make sense only when they are looked with reference to the historical figure as he is experienced to day and who has assumed a meta-historical significance in the changing situations of the Muslim experience of history. Islam may be considered a living history, a present which is quickened with the past. Islam is both a fact, a haunting presence, and at the same time a requirement, a challenge. The origins of Islam speak glibly of challenges that Islam has to face but Islam itself appeared as a challenge which the world had to face. That the Word of God should be ruled effectively in life, that history should not move erratically but should be controlled and guided by Islamic norms and values is the conviction which permeates the Islamic outlook. Islam stands for wholeness, for a life which drifts not in stereotyped patterns but which moves creatively. It is wrong to think of creativity and traditionalism as excluding one another. Islam's history shows that when traditionalism and creativity exclude and mutually negate, the Islamic accent is lost. Islam is not uniformity. It is not indifferent to historical requirements and negligent of empirical demands. Islamic history shows that at all moments Islam was confronted with two significant challenges. One is the threat which comes of the view that the Islamic pattern through which Islamic spirit can be expressed is fixed once for all and any other pattern is the betrayal of Islam. The other is the inability to distinguish between what matters and what does not matter. The peripheral issues assume the form of dogmatic exclusiveness; and, when the Islamic and non-Islamic values are discriminated on this basis Islam loses its creativity. This is a danger

which always lurks and which has found deep resonance in history. That the national and local profile of a culture should not be submerged in the so-called universalism; that every local nuance should be respected and every national expression should be allowed its own freedom so long as it does not deviate from the basic principles, is the conviction which should be held tenaciously. But Islam, with its claim to Divine revelation, with its proclamation of its message as of Super-national relevance, cannot remain bound by any passing phase of its history and has to reckon as much with historical conditions as with its essential and basic intentions. If it is true that Islam being a historical phenomenon, its way of life and its structure have to be explained with reference to its historical origin, it is no less true that it has a super-historical mission. It is neither an Arab phenomenon nor a non-Arab outgrowth. It has to find out what is subject to change and growth and what is not. Muslims cannot be bound by traditional interpretation and ways of thought which were meaningful in a certain period of history but have lost their relevance today. Western scholars often tend to explain Islam as a desert manifestation which suddenly sprouted in a far off corner of the world and soon lost its momentum. Muslims have become more and more chained to the past and over-awed by tradition; they refuse to see that there can be alternatives and different possibilities. All questions, economical and social, have a historical conditioning and require solutions in consonance with the shifting situations of history. We should not adopt any extreme course and think of solutions in terms of either-or. We should not blindly follow what passes as modern, or stick to tradition where it is not compatible with the changed situations. We should be equally averse to reject anything modern simply because it has no precedent in the past. We should not forget that our knowledge of the past is historically conditioned and transmitted in an indirect way to us. The understanding of Islam by our ancestors had no obligatory character; and, as long as we remain loyal to its metaphysical moorings and remain faithful to the religious spirit we need not feel guilty of any betrayal. There is no reason why we should stick to the solutions which were proffered to us by scholars whose memory of course we must dearly cherish but whose judgement we need not accept.

All that Islam is and can be is not exhausted in one stretch of time. It is misunderstanding to think of the Quranic declaration that God has perfected Islam to mean that all concrete situations of life

have already been envisaged and all their solutions have been determined before hand. The idea of perfection is to be understood in a more dynamic sense; it means perfection as the power of adaptability and the capacity to respond to all changing situations and historical challenges by the Qur'anic directives and principles. It does not refer to particulars as particulars are unpredictable. It does not mean that we have no space left for us to accommodate ourselves in the flux of history. Religion is a historical phenomenon, however meta-historical its roots and dynamism may be. History is change and process. This is not to deny that history has a meta-historical dimension and might in the last resort be determined by the inscrutable forces beyond the human ken. Whilst the metaphysical dimension stands by itself and whilst it will be fatal to religion to reduce it to its historical determinants and consider them as decisive, we have to admit that even our understanding of this meta-historical aspect and the peculiar symbols and parables through which it finds expression requires both the psychological and historical conditions of a given epoch and people. Even the metaphysical and meta-historical dimension of a religion without which religion *per se* cannot be conceived, demands historical infra-structure. If we cannot grant to any crucial interpretation, however deeply rooted in the sacred tradition any finality, how much more pressing will be the need of re-interpretation for what is eminently historical. No one doubts the value of tradition and it has to be respected at all costs. But in any reconstruction of Islamic thought it cannot be taken in its customary presentation without any reference to the situations which evoked it. The nature of the case is such that from the very earliest times traditions have been variously interpreted and the leading schools have diverged from one another even on issues which to those who stand outside the fold might appear to be of no material significance. It may be the principles on the basis of which these divergences have taken place might be concerned with concerns of crucial importance. The major schism in Islam has also been due to the divergences of interpretations and to their acceptance and non-acceptance of different traditions and to their appeal to different criteria of judgement. As we know from the theological debates that rocked Islam and which divided the theologians, the place of the sinner who has committed a grave sin figured prominently.¹ While the Kharijite

1. See Izutsu's work : The concept of Belief in Islamic Theology, New York 1980

held that he was not a Muslim, others maintained that he occupies a position between the faithful and the infidel. There was no unanimity among different schools of *Kalam* and each wing of the conflicting schools could seek support from tradition. But more serious were the differences in their understanding of the attributes of God which had a bodily reference. If God sits on the throne and if a movement in space is attributed to God what should we make of it? While the Hanbalites and the Zahirites held to the letter of the Quran, other schools had to take recourse to interpretation in such a way as to eliminate the idea of bodily involvement. But even the literalists were forced to take a position which reduced the difference between them and their rivals. The literalists did not attribute to God a body like ours but only that the Quranic utterances should be taken as they are without asking how. They are unintelligible in human terms and they are to be taken amodally. In other words our discourse about God takes us to a totally different dimension and our words have a reference which defies human intelligibility. Seen deeper this means that whether they involve bodily references of psychological attribution, their meaning can not be sought in human terms or in terms of human intelligibility. If God is wroth His wrath has only an analogical character. It does not involve any disturbance in the Divine consciousness; and when it is said that He is pleased, it does not mean any transition in God's consciousness from one state to another.

With other great Semitic religions like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is a religion with deep historical consciousness. First of all it places itself in the continuity of prophetic revelation, though the message is considered the last and the final one it does not really break the continuity. The Islamic revelation is embedded in history. Unfortunately in the average consciousness of a Muslim it is only the last word of God which he generally considers in isolation from the rest. The Quran refers to the prophets of old with great respect and considers the message of the last prophet as affiliated to the Abrahamic *Din*. The prophets of the old are held before the prophet of Islam as models and the Quran warns against any discrimination between them, though it is conceded that the prophets may have grades and ranks and they may have a hierarchy of their own. But apart from this they all belong to a fraternity and any rejection of one amounts to the rejection of Islam as much. No one can miss the historical orientation of the Quranic revelation.

We are now becoming more and more aware of man's historicity, thanks to the investigations of Dilthey, Heidegger, Jaspers and others. This means that man is a historical animal in a way in which other animals are not. He is conscious of his historicity. He is projected towards the future and the future moulds his present in a much more significant way than past does. Naturally in a purely religious context the future has also a meta-historical and a meta-temporal dimension. That we call here and now is considered in the context of a future which begins with the end of the space-time continuum and leads to reflections which are eschatological. We are not indeed tempted to offer any speculations which go beyond the existential situations in which we are placed. The analysis of our existence will however remain very inadequate if we do not take into account the undisputed fact of the influence of the eschatological ideas on the believer's behaviour. Whether we accept future as future or whether what we call future has no meaning except in terms of the past makes great difference to us. The Quranic vision of man in his historicity, its description of religion in terms of history, requires ideas which transcend history. Following Kant we may as well call these ideas limiting concepts (Grenz Begriffe). In as much as the believer is in the world he is expected neither to be absorbed in the world nor to negate it. The world is the platform for action and as a platform of action it has ethical significance and as creation it is metaphysically-rooted. The signs of God are mirrored and reflected in the world and the world cannot be treated with contempt but with respect. In the *Surah* which is entitled "Luqman" the legendary seer counsels his son to walk on earth warily and bear himself with modesty. This means the world itself both as a historical phenomenon and as nature manifesting itself on the level of plant and animal life is a repository of mysteries. Every particle is a pointer, every event is meaningful. And man who occupies a privileged position in the universe must remember that this privilege he cannot claim by right but only by his own behaviour and conduct which must be supported by God's grace. The world as it is, can tempt man to forget himself, to forget his vocation and mission and even to rebel against God. What is this revolt? This is nothing but alienation from his Source as a result of which he tries to "unmake" what God has made, to create disorder where God has established order, in short, to do all that which runs counter to the immanent teleology of the universe. It is, in other words, what the Quran calls '*fitna*' (mischief) which is sinister in consequences, which tries to bring about

estrangement between men. It is quite in keeping with this spirit that Quran calls the killing of an individual as the killing of the whole mankind, and the saving of one individual life from death as the saving of the whole of mankind. This shows clearly that the Quranic interest lies in what it calls helping God, which means to act in the spirit in which the creator created the world and brought order in what He created. Small wonder if whatever re-establishes harmony and order, be it the reconciliation of sworn enemies and the appearance of love between them, is taken as witness to the power and wisdom of God. Says the Quran, "If thou hast expended all that is in the earth, thou couldst not have attuned their hearts. Verily Allah is All-Might, All-Wisdom (Quran, 8:63).

One of the problems which faces Islam today is how to dissociate itself from historical misconceptions. In the heyday of Islamic thought there was a bitter controversy going on between *Mutakallimin* on the one side and the "Philosophers" on the other. But it must not be forgotten that when al-Ghazzali raised the voice of protest in the name of orthodoxy against the philosophers he had to do with certain schools of philosophy as they developed under the impact of Greek thought. It is to the credit of Islamic theology that it did not deign to "baptise" Aristotle but stood very critical in relation to it. Greek thought has many features and is a many-sided phenomenon. There are in Plato, for example, wonderful insights which later found acceptance in the mystic circles. And it is the great merit of Aristotle that he formulated for the first time the problem of God. And Plato's ideas on immortality have a lasting significance. It is also to be noted that the Greek thought against which the Muslim theologians were fighting was not the pure Greek tradition but heavily-tinged with Neo-Platonism. The Greeks did not give any attention to the problem of human freedom and it is only through Christian influences that freedom which necessarily involves responsibility became crucial in ethical discussion. Hence the peripatetic philosophers like al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd do not communicate an unadulterated Greek tradition but a Neo-Platonic version. This Muslim Aristotelianism had features which naturally provoked great uneasiness in Muslim theology. Of these questions which troubled theological minds most was that of God's knowledge. Another issue which is also related to the first two basic questions was the problem of individual immortality. But unfortunately the changed climate of

philosophical thought has not been taken into account in present-day Muslim polemics and apologetics. Philosophy, as now understood, has no pre-established position to which all philosophers must subscribe. Philosophy is an open enquiry and its conclusions are not conclusive. They are subject to corrections. Philosophy in its historical development is sustained by an imminent dialectic. However convinced the philosophers may be about the conclusions to which they had been led, there is no assurance that their conclusions will not be challenged any more. Philosophy is now split into schools and trends and philosophers are free to adopt any position to which their own thinking might lead. Hence today no philosopher would necessarily subscribe to the doctrine that God's knowledge is confined to the particulars or that the world had no beginning in time and that there is no personal immortality and that there is no resurrection. These questions lie outside the purview of philosophical enquiry as, to speak with Kant, they lie outside the sphere of possible experience. There is however no need to consider all metaphysical statements as nonsensical in as much as they are not verifiable or even falsifiable. It is for the theologians to develop their own ideas in consonance with their own level of understanding and try to see how far clarity can be brought out in questions which are not strictly subject to philosophical scrutiny but which nevertheless have a deep relevance for religious consciousness. What is primarily required is the necessity to leave room for more than one interpretation and answers which may seem apparently divergent from the classical answers need not involve a radical conflict with the accepted solutions and responses. This is especially true in questions like the freedom of will and predestination. There have been traditions which do not permit discussions on the nature of God and on free will. We cannot give any readymade solution to questions which will always disturb philosophical intellect and stir theological disputes and which continue to crop up anew whenever religious consciousness is agitated. But a new theology which is alert to the stand of the current discussion will not fail to take into account what has been said in recent thought and these recent approaches will stimulate religious thought to take a new look on questions of faith, Islam has one advantage in this respect. All its credal formulations are not official statements but only the declarations of recognised theologians. Hence they can not claim warrant in such a way that other alternative is excluded.

The challenges to which Islam has to respond include some which are common to all religions and there are some to which Islam is

specifically exposed. The problem of a personal God, the God whom we address as 'Thou' and who proclaims Himself as 'I' is the concern of all theistically - oriented religious perspectives. It is the common feature of Semitic religiosity, Judaic, Christian and Islamic, to affirm a being who in the modern terminology is called the person. The concept of person, though of Greek origin, assumed a specifically religious dimension outside the Greek thought. Hence it is better if we do not speak so much of a person as a self who is conceived in analogy to the human self and attributed with the characteristics which are human, though in relation to God these qualities and attributes assume absolute significance. If God is called powerful or merciful or loving. He is considered as all-loving, all-merciful and stripped of finitude. Hence it is open to the charge of anthropomorphism. In other words all attempts to conceive God have been considered the projection of human self in the image of God. This is the whole thrust of the critique which is initiated by Feuerbach and followed in principle by Marx. It is not so much man who is created in the image of God as God who is created in the image of man. Hence the charge of anthropomorphism is directed not only against the Islamic perspective as such but against all theistically-oriented perspectives. However religions which have not developed any of the personalistic conceptions of God may not be subject to this charge; but, as religions, they no doubt entertain the idea of the supersensible and envisage the possibility of salvation in transcending the limitations of time and change. Indeed the whole idea of salvation may be called into question. Our attention is confined at present to the Islamic theistic perspective and hence we have to see whether this can be understood in a way which will not subject it to any tenable criticism. First of all there is the question of revelation, the transmission of God's message through an angelic medium. Again there is the question of the Law which the prophet as a legislator brings. Now the question may be pertinently asked whether '*Din*', which may be constituted of certain beliefs, such as the belief in the reckoning of men's deeds, has the same status with the Law which the prophet promulgates. These beliefs need not be construed as propositions to which the believer gives his assent. They become religiously relevant only when man's attitude to life is moulded through them. They are the part of his *Iman* or faith. *Din* is then constituted of beliefs and Faith. It is understood in the Islamic perspective that the prophet of Islam was not unique in being the prophet for the first time and that the few prophets mentioned in the Quran are exceeded far by the prophets who are not mentioned, and the prophets (*rasul*)

who bring Law (*sharia*) are distinguished from the prophets (*nabi*) who do not bring Law (*sharia*) and serve only as divine teachers. It is further assumed that the law changes from prophet to prophet, though the beliefs do not change. Here it is not my purpose to go into the question of the changeability or the adjustability of the Islamic law, a question which may be left to the jurists to decide. One cannot help feeling nevertheless that the status of *din* as constituted of beliefs which are quickened with faith (*iman*) is different from the status of the law which is subservient to *din*. Independent of the law there grows a tradition which in course of time may become an essential part of religion, and specific features of the religious life of Muslims may show independent development. Islam in different countries under the impact of different social conditions may yield to customs evoking vehement protests from one group and finding acceptance by another. To the puritanically minded, it may seem a grave innovation, even bordering on *shirk* in some cases to see the Muslim life showing non-Islamic influences. But unless these customs and usages blatantly betray Islam, it will be highly unrealistic to insist upon Muslim mode of life and social appearance to be completely modelled on the patterns of life which were peculiar to the companions of the Prophet. Today justifiably enough we are much worried to maintain our identities as Muslims. But it must not be forgotten that Muslims in different conditions have also what may be called a subordinate identity which distinguishes the Muslims of one country from another; and by the very fact that Muslims speak different languages, have different patterns of thought and different historical precedents, they developed an identity of their own of which Islam may be a dominant factor but which cannot be considered an exclusive determinant. At one time the resurgence of national consciousness was so great that Islam as much as it was identified with its Arab expression was put to a great test. In nations with highly developed national consciousness a resentment grew against their exploitation, be it linguistically, economically or politically, in the name of Islam. The history of Islamic people even today offers instructive examples of how the neglect of national and ethnic factors and the resentment born of it leads people to political alienation. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the negative factors which affect Islam and the factors which affect all religious attitudes. First among the factors which affect religion negatively is the non-verifiability of its beliefs. It is difficult for one who is nurtured in the purely scientific tradition to commit himself to a belief which cannot be sustained by

methods with which the man of science is familiar. To him what is not relevant to his world loses all significance. Any such belief which seeks to justify itself on a non-rational basis does not mean anything to him. A totally different attitude towards religion, no less negative, seeks to eliminate religion on the ground that it is the means of exploitation; and in history religion has been used to lull to sleep the expropriated masses. And hence it is not an innocuous pastime which can be allowed to go its own way but a most destructive weapon which should be fought against. The difficulty with both of these attitudes is the one that ignores its own limitations and tries to judge beliefs which are not liable to be subjected by their own nature to any scientific screening. Theologians who try to vindicate their stand by recourse to the recent revolution in physics can only derive a negative benefit. They cannot serve to vindicate any theological position for the simple reason that theological positions themselves vary from religion to religion; and any justification of a position which is specific to some religions as, for example, any preconceived idea of the after-life, cannot seek any decisive confirmation from scientific theories. Theologians have therefore to work in two different ways. First of all they have to see that their conclusions are really the basic and integral part of their religious system and that what is basic is only a broad idea which leaves many possibilities. The accretions which accumulate latter can claim only a historical and psychological relevance.

The view which tries to combat religion for its nefarious influence on the welfare of the masses makes it clear that, when religions are identified with what their spokesmen as a part of the Establishment have said about it in any given period of time, no other conclusion is possible. Islam has always advocated the equality of man before God, has not considered this world and its goods as vanities which should be shunned at all costs, and has not looked down upon human values in any way. The world given to us is the creation of a merciful God. Man is free to enjoy its fruits within the prescribed limits, and the difference of the sexes, nations and languages is considered the signs of God through which we can become aware of Him. Man is asked to think and reflect and to do good in this life so that he may flourish in this life as well as enjoy a status in the life to come. The goods (*hasanat*) of this world are appreciated with only one reservation and that is they should not be considered as ends in themselves and should not be allowed to possess the human mind in such a way that what is transitory and passing becomes the ultimate end and man becomes negligent of the eternal. On the one

hand we are told "What is this life on this world except a deception", and on the other we are informed that "God has not created this world in sport and in falsehood but in truth". This means that this world is far from being an illusion, is a platform for human action, an opportunity for man to show his worth as man. We are told, is pledged to his action. This takes man to a totally different perspective of life. It does neither allow a quietist posture which builds indifference towards the world and its obligations, nor such an exclusive concern for this world that all that serves not the worldly interest is considered of no account. This is how the way of life which Quran cultivates is built and promoted. The Quran leaves open different options. It depends on the different stations of man in this life, on his vocation and interest to find which side must dominate. Needless to say that though every man's life will have one dominant accent, it cannot but allow different and sometimes conflicting demands to prevail in accordance with one's own station in life.

Needless to say Islam with its origin in revelation is like any other revealed religion, a religion of varied accents and nuances. It is interesting to note that when these accents are magnified or over-emphasised, they assume a form which is called heretical or heterodox. But ironically enough even the orthodoxy, if by that is meant simply the majority opinion in a given community, is formed by an exclusive emphasis on certain accents and the neglect of other accents. If, for example, the forgiveness of God is taken to its extreme form, it may also develop a kind of antinomian tendencies, when any grave offence and violations of religious injunctions do not count much and God's forgiveness and mercy shelter all deviations from morality. This is how a movement, which was once a force to be reckoned with, can be explained. On the other hand if God's power as a strict judge is emphasised as was done with the Kharijites, the concept of a sinner who commits a grave sin is identified with that of the infidel who is subject to all the consequences to which the infidel is exposed. The "orthodox" standpoint, though it attempts to take a middle position has not maintained its balance in many tricky situations which beset the history of Islam. Many a Sufi like Mansur al-Hallaj was put to death and in the name of faith many deviations which may not appear to us grave were severely condemned. This means that a Muslim who lives in a pluralistic world and who is exposed to the challenges from all quarters cannot adopt a rigid dogmatic posture in an absolute sense and support ancient credal formulations with all kinds of sophistry. Nor can we

combat whatever appears modernistic. Modernism as such is a neutral concept and all that is modern need not be anathema to the Muslim consciousness. If one pushes the attitudes which are supposed to stand for pristine Islam to the extreme, one will find it impossible to communicate with the outside world. And the severance of a dialogue with people of one's own Age cannot but lead to disastrous consequences. Let it be noted that what is called modernism is also a historical phenomenon, and in times to come, the so called modernism of today might lose its distinctive features and will be considered an outmoded way of life; and it may also happen that modes of life which are outmoded today might be revived. Indeed we are supposed to have entered a post-modern era. There is no need for a Muslim to be allergic to social modes. He may freely identify first the values which he considers Islamic, and articulate them in consonance with the local and historical context. This is tantamount to saying that a religion which claims universal validity can preserve its universality only by delocalising its earliest expression. We are therefore to pursue in all seriousness a re-examination not only of our theoretical foundation but also of our in-built attitudes and perspectives. De-mythologisation has its own limits; and symbolical interpretations need not be pushed so far as to strip religion of its substance. But we must consider delocalisation of the original religious pattern as a necessity which cannot be dispensed with.

Islamic consciousness must be open to new perspectives which emerge now and again in the course of human thought, and it is far from necessary to react violently against anything which might appear at first sight incompatible with our traditional understanding of Islam. It means that the knowledge gained through philosophical reflection and scientific inquiry should not be allowed to go waste. "Our duty", as Muhammad Iqbal rightly points out, "is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it". (Lectures, Preface). Man's mind brings new insights and these insights might help greatly in understanding the metaphysical issues with which religion is concerned. Philosophy and science can never be substitutes for faith but can serve a most useful purpose in throwing some light on the existential issues with which religious consciousness is concerned. Philosophy and Science have their own limitation and they cannot pretend to come with readymade solutions. When a question arises about the creation of the world or its beginning in

time, or the creation of time itself, philosophical enquiry cannot go beyond considering them as Ideas which do not constitute knowledge but which can have only a regulative significance. This was indeed the position of Kant. Nor can religion pretend to give us the idea of creation or of the beginning and the end of the world as objects of knowledge but only as concerns of faith which can be understood at different levels. That the world is created out of nothing by God's creative command, by the fiat of his will, or the world was created in six days, albeit the measure with which days of God are measured is quite different, are not facts subject to rational inquiry. They are in fact not intended to offer us cosmology in the philosophical and scientific sense but only to take us to the borders of intelligibility so as to make us aware of the limits under which we can think at all. This does not mean that the idea of creation is meaningless or that the cosmological elements have no content but only that they are given in a language which must be interpreted in such a way that these ideas are not secularised and forget all reference to the transcendent but only to serve as pointers to the transcendent. Again, when we move down from the metaphysical level to the level of everyday life and consider religion in its legislative function, we come to a totally different level of understanding. There is no question of symbols and signs, pictorial representation or symbolic interpretation. when we deal with the matter-of-fact world of everyday life. Laws are enacted and social norms of behaviour and conduct towards one another are regulated through religious prescriptions. Here again it is necessary to distinguish between its moral value content and its purely legal aspect. The moral content has a permanent feature whereas legislative infra-structure must not fail to adapt itself to circumstances which were not foreseen. Hence it is necessary to distinguish the legal aspects from the moral aspects. But it must not be forgotten that the Islamic laws have come into being under certain contingent conditions. To consider them in isolation from these historical conditions is arbitrary. The geographical and historical compulsions cannot be overlooked and it is their inability to appreciate situational compulsions that leads even perceptive critics to raise disturbing questions. Prof, Werblowsky's remarks in his valuable book *Beyond Tradition and Modernity* deserve to be pondered upon.

“Will Islam as a religion be able to proclaim the *Shahada* in a modern and most modern age, testifying against both western notions

of secularism and western theological acrobatics? Alas, the spectacle of contemporary Islam is not merely one of stagnation but actually of regression when compared to the creativity, vitality and capacity of positive absorption and transformation which Islam exhibited in its golden age. Contemporary Islam seems to lapse more and more into fundamentalist orthodoxy, a phenomenon not unknown also in other religions but with the crucial difference that at the other end of its spectrum Islam lacks all genuinely modernizing dynamism. The essentially unmodern, but at least in its intentions modernizing 'modernism' of earlier modernists, seems to have spent itself before reaching the point of take-off into real modernity. Much apparent self-assertion of Islam is the product not of a genuinely religious awareness but of anti-Western affects and, not infrequently, of lip-service to Islam by those who are far removed from religion but for whom Muslim identification is a convenient idiom for Arabism or for Third World Militancy in general". Further he continues: "And at the other end of the scale, Islam inevitably becomes the object of a complex and involuted anti-Islamism. The challenge of modernity is mighty and the resources of Islam may be exhausted. Or are these resources still untapped and awaiting release? Between resurgent literalist Fundamentalism, anti-Western affects, nationalism and secularism, Islam will either disintegrate or turn into *Jinsiyah*, unless it can reassert itself as a *din-Allah* for a modern age". (pp. 81-82).

Will Islam rise to the occasion and belie the worst fears of the sceptic? Will it be able to spring a surprise and demonstrate to the world that it has not expended its energies and exhausted its potentialities but has the power to give expression to its ethos in novel forms.

The possibility of understanding Islam requires that it should be understood at different levels, which in fact means that in the understanding of the Quran the difference of levels and, in consequence, variations in our approaches should not be neglected. The way we should look upon the statements about God is bound to be different from our approach in our understanding the destiny of man, his vocation in this world and his future in the next. Second is the ideational complex which emerges in relation to legal and moral aspects. The purely moral foundation must be distinguished from legal prescriptions. The kind of life that man is asked to lead depends on his moral stand in his relation to fellow beings. The kind of behaviour one is expected to cultivate in trials and tribulations, the response that is required of

him to the divine order in time, the call to be steadfast in times of troubles and disillusionment constitute a world of their own, apart from legal prescriptions and sanctions. The Islamic pattern of the criminal and the civil law in our considerations should be completely isolated from our metaphysical and theological understanding of the Islamic vision of this world and of the Hereafter. Naturally our consideration of the historical assessment of the figures who have been mentioned in the Quran calls for a separate approach. It is clear that legal injunctions do not demand any allegorical explanation. They stand as they are. But the question arises whether they are meant as fixed orders or commandments which should find their application regardless of the geographical and historical context for all times to come. Do they not allow any restriction in their application and do they not represent at least partially a continuation of the attitudes and modes of behaviour which are found in the Old Testament as well as in pre-Islamic Arab usage? It cannot be doubted that though moral values have a permanent content, their expressions reflecting the sensitivities of every epoch vary from period to period of history. Unfortunately we do not care to distinguish between different levels of reality; and the moment some statement is supposed to be vouchsafed by revelation, we think it is settled once for all and there is nothing to be thought about. The moment revelation is related to the world of action and history, it cannot but accommodate itself to the situation of the given time. The whole question boils down to applicability. Not that the revelation is invalidated, but its applicability demands adjustment and reshifting of emphasis in different ways. Islamic thought cannot be considered rigid and stereotyped but, what Mohd. Iqbal called, the principle of movement in Islam must be kept preserved. Islam cannot be called a structure which is given to us readymade but a complex of tendencies and guiding principles whose development cannot be considered closed and penned down in all its details once for all. It is for the Muslims to re-think what has already been thought and to re-examine what has already been examined. To consider every thing settled once for all and leave everything to revelation which is given once for all is to fall a prey to that fallacy which Kant called the fallacy of the 'idle reason'; in other words, reason should stir itself and not allow itself to sleep when it is the time to think.

This means Islam is also a process and a movement. Like every thing in this world, it is not a structure which resists any shift in

its accent and emphasis. We should in this context pay special attention to the individual and collective dimension of Islam. Whether we consider ourselves a part of the historically-determined organization which we identify as Islam or whether we recognise Islam as God's address to an individual as an individual in his singularity, both aspects find a place in the Quranic perspective. Let us first take the collective aspect which is specially evident in its rituals and rites. The most striking phenomenon is Hajj or a pilgrimage to Ka'ba as incumbent on every Muslim who can afford. This has always remained a unifying factor which demonstrates in a signal way the brotherhood which cuts across not only ethnic and racial divisions but also divisions created by wealth and power. From the importance given to the community, priority accorded to congregational prayers naturally follows. Again, the economic measures like that of *Zakat* are recommended for the welfare of the community to promote economic justice. The prohibition against intoxicants has also the interest of the collectivity in view. And last but not the least is the idea of a state which rules on the basis of equal opportunities for all, consultations among themselves and preservation of the life and property of its citizens. But this is only one aspect of Islam. There is another aspect without which the collective dimension of the Islamic religion cannot have any significance. We may call it the existential dimension through which my experience as an individual who is born alone and forlorn, given to dread and cares and projected to death, is articulated. Now this individual with his I-am-ness cannot be exhausted in what he does in his collective configuration. Society and the state can judge him only from his outward behaviour and from its impact on his fellowmen and on his own surroundings. His intentions, his thoughts, his motives, good or bad, are completely hidden from us. Psychologically he may not be himself aware of his hidden motives. This is why it is said in the Quran that God only knows what passes in the mind of man. And this hiddenness of his inner life from the outward eye makes him easily misunderstood and misjudged. Now this individual encounter with God is completely taken into account in the Quranic perspective. It is categorically declared that, "no one bears the burden of another" and "one's sins are not transmitted to others". Man in his intimacy is responsible to God in His ultimacy. This is why there are certain forms of our response to the divine which are not covered by ritual prayer, and it may happen that inspite of our compliance with the scheduled prescriptions of Islamic Law, we may be still far from enjoying the divine favour. What man's station with God is can never be

inferred from his outward behaviour; and how his end will be is still more uncertain. This intimate contact of man with God finds expression in personal prayer (*Du'a*) which is different from public worship as well as from the performance of the scheduled form of worship, even though they may be performed alone and in private. Associated with this is the place of *Zikr* (remembrance) in the Islamic Programme of piety. Now it is time that we should look a little closer on the nature of *du'a* as a personal call, which evokes God's response and consider *Zikr*, which is the remembrance of God, without being restricted to any time or place.

There are two questions which have been raised with regard to *du'a*, both in the Islamic and the non-Islamic context. Some writers have given no credit to what they call petitionary prayers. It is assumed first of all that these petitions must remain ineffective; and secondly that it is not compatible with a truly religious perception. The question is not whether these petitions can be answered or not. The fact however remains that whatever our petition may be, we do consider as a matter of faith that all that happens in this world receives its sanction from a transempirical source. It is the belief in the involvement of the unseen in the affairs of the world that entitles these petitionary prayers a place in the religious scheme of things. Secondly, in the Islamic context God asks man to call Him in moments of crises and distress and assures him of His answer. Again, within the context of Islam itself, the question about the possibility of our prayers being answered has been raised. If what is to come is already recorded in the Preserved Tablet, how can then our prayers make any difference? Here it is necessary to distinguish between the providential record of the future and our own address to God. *Du'a* as such is a part of a dialogue though one of the partners of the dialogues, that is the divine partner, is not perceptible at the normal level. The classical example of this dialogical relationship is offered in the case of the prophet Moses as the result of which he is designated *Kalim* (the interlocutor). No wonder, the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber has made dialogue the basis of religious consciousness. Anyhow, apart from dialogue as a mystic experience in which God and man are involved, it has also a profound significance at the level of normal religious sensitivity. I address to God as "thou" and expect to hear from Him a response as a person. I cannot think of Him a person on my own level but a person nevertheless in so far as I cannot translate His relation to me by any category other than that of a person.

Though of course the concept of a person in its linguistic reference is modern, its inner significance has always been assumed in theistically oriented religions. My personal consciousness is disturbed and distracted continuously and my attention shows continuous fluctuation. In cases of split personality we are confronted with the most striking demonstration of this inadequacy; but in God the personal consciousness must remain undisturbed by sleep and slumber, as the Quran says, and is secure from any eclipse of consciousness. An acute German thinker G. Simmel* made an interesting observation that a person or, in his language "Personality" in the human framework realises its full meaning only inadequately and it is only in God as an idea that it can find its fulfilment.

Psychologists have concentrated most on consciousness and on its lower levels which are subsumed under the unconscious. But there may be higher levels of consciousness and it is possible that with the eclipse of normal consciousness some other avenues are made available to us. We do not enter into any speculation at this moment, we are only interested in the dialogical relationship in the context of Quranic consciousness. God addresses man and man turns towards Him. The concept of 'turning towards' (*Ruju'*) plays a crucial role in the Quranic consciousness. It is the condition without which man cannot open himself to divine communication. Man is left alone but he has the capacity to break through his isolation. God's transcendence and His immanence refer to two different ontological levels. Man prays and in every act of prayer he transcends his human limitation. Now what is interesting to note is that man is at the same time the vicegerent of God on earth and also a rebel. But it must be clearly understood that his vicegerency is only potential. It is for man to rise to that status by his own surrender and by assimilating to himself the attributes of God. He may play the part of a rebel or work in consonance with the divine plan when he is honoured with the title of a co-helper. This means that he cannot claim vicegerency as a fact; he has to attain it by his own acts and deeds. The Quran assigns a special place to Nature. Nature is not degraded to a creation which has no significance. Every seemingly insignificant phenomenon of nature is considered a pointer to the divine. The constant transition in Nature is held to be

* G. Simmel : Philosophische Kultur Die Personlichkeit Gottes (p.211)

indicative of divine presence. Even the seemingly inanimate stones are considered susceptible to divine influences. This means that Nature embraces the so-called inanimate layer. It is creation as a whole. Man's creation assumes a different status. The human soul is considered as coming into being when God breathes of His spirit into the human body. This means that the soul has a non-temporal dimension and it explains why the ultra-orthodox Ibn Hanbal considered the soul neither created nor uncreated. In all considerations of religious questions it is necessary not to expect any final clarification. What matters is only to make man alert to an area of sensibility which cannot be fully rationalised.

Muslims have been often tempted to take a very static view of religion, and have failed to recognise that what is the straight path need not necessarily be a strait path where it is not possible to accommodate more than one perspective. Mohammad Iqbal observes: "The teaching of the Quran that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems"; and "Equipped with penetrative thought and fresh experience the world of Islam should courageously proceed to the work of reconstruction before them. This work of reconstruction, however, has a far more serious aspect than mere adjustment in modern conditions of life". (pp. 168-169). But their pre-occupation with issues which are not of capital importance have made Muslims uncompromising not only in inter-religious but also in their inter-Islamic dialogue where different sectarian positions are at issue. It is therefore necessary to find out what the minimum requirement is which entitles one to a place in the Islamic fold. And when the Quran invited the people of the Book not to stick to differences, but to come closer together on the basis of what is common to them, shall we not follow the same spirit of reconciliation and understanding? Now the bare requirement of Islam in its metaphysical dimension is to uphold belief in the Creator who has created what he has created not in vain but with a meaning, and the belief in the mystery of *Ghaib*, the unknown and unknowable. It is the vision of man's life which does not come to a close on this planet but has a future which transcends all earthly futures.

In a pluralistic and multi-religious society one cannot do better

than to ponder on the Quranic vision of human conflicts as given in the verse :

“To every one of you we have appointed a right way and open path. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community but that He may try you in what befalls you. So push forward in good work; unto Allah shall you move back all together and He will let you know of that whereon you are at variance”. V - 48.



**Upstream Downstream
Reconstruction of Islamic Chronology**

by

Dr. Hashim Amir Ali

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From Jāhiliya to Hijrah

A. Introduction ; The Limitations of History

1. History is, essentially, an evaluation of the past in the light of the present; as the light of the present changes, becomes bright or dim, the image of the past too, changes with it.

2. Let me tell you a story that will illustrate to you the underlying theme of these lectures. A famous comedian was visiting his old college when the students happened to be answering their examination papers in history. He picked up a question paper and beamed at the students. "Exactly the same questions as had been put to me twenty years ago !" he exclaimed, "Even now I could get a first class !" "Yes," said the Principal who was taking him around, "but from time to time we expect different answers !"

3. You see what I mean ? History is not written once for all time. A particularly poignant experience illustrating this changeability of history once made even a prosaic like me break out into verse :

کد راگ کسی کا گاتی تھی، کد راگ کسی کا گائیگی
تاریخ بدلتی آئی ہے، تاریخ بدلتی جائیگی

4. Of course such anecdotes, like cartoons, exaggerate the points they want to emphasize. So, if there are students or professors of history amongst you, let me assure them that I am as much aware of the indispensability of history as of its weaknesses.

5. If you have read several versions of the early history of Islam you will appreciate the validity of the above remarks.† If histories had been compiled, say, in the lifetime of the Prophet himself, and were still extant, they would have given us a very different image of that formative period. As it happens, we have only the accounts left to us by Ibn Ishāq, Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa'd, all compilers of the late second century when more than a hundred years had intervened and the Abbasides were consolidating themselves after eli-

Upstream Downstream

minating the Umayyads. Obviously, these accounts present the early history of Islam as the historians under the Abbasides saw it; perhaps, even as they wanted posterity to see it. Must we accept whatever they have said as final and unchangeable? Is there no alternative for us but to see events in *their* particular perspective? Suppose we are confronted with anomalies and contradictions: cannot information garnered subsequently in different branches of knowledge justify us in correcting their perspective of a past which was a past to them also?

6. Such being the limitations of history, that branch of learning cannot always be trusted by itself; support for, and weaknesses in, its propositions must be sought for in allied branches of knowledge: geography, archaeology, climatology, linguistics, semantics, all these can help to evaluate history. The more such sciences develop and are made use of, the more accurate and trustworthy will be our history, more and more clear will the images of the past become.

7. To illustrate still more clearly what I mean, let me here give an actual example of how such historiology, such probing into allied sciences, can add new meaning to age-old impressions which we tend to take as unquestionable truths. Every schoolboy knows that this is the 1977th year of what has come to be known as the 'Christian' calendar. Naturally, he becomes certain that it is the 'Christian' element in this calendar which has taken mankind a step higher in the spiral of civilization, and opened new vistas for man's development; otherwise, why should this calendar be called 'Christian'?

8. It is only historiological analysis which, reviewing the history of western civilization at a later stage, can arrive at the conclusion that, while the message of love and compassion brought by Jesus certainly served as a milestone in the history of the human race, it was a pagan, Julius Caesar, to whom we are indebted for his having introduced the purely solar calendar which gradually emancipated the millions of Europe from the vagaries of the moon-based calendars and provided a scale of time measurement by which human activity could be better synchronized with the seasons of our terrestrial sphere.

9. Jesus, or Christianity, had nothing whatsoever to do with its advent. On the contrary we find that, in spite of this sun calendar, it was the Christian church that had, more than a millennium later, persecuted Copernicus (d. 1543) and Galileo (d. 1642) for their findings on the subordinate place of the earth in relation to that of the sun.

Jahiliya to Hijrah

And, even today, the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church continues to be a priestly maze with its 'Advent', its 'Octaves', its 'Epiphany', its 'Lent', and its 'Pentecost'. At least all dates connected with Easter have yet to be emancipated from the phases of the moon.

10. The purely solar reckoning happened to be carried from Egypt, the land of the ancient Pyramids, to the capital of the pagan Roman Empire only about half a century before the estimated birth of Jesus. This proximity was merely a coincidence. But, when, more than a century later, Christianity found a foothold in Rome, this solar calendar, imported by Julius Caesar (J. C.), was appropriated and became almost an emblem of Jesus Christ (another J. C.). Paradoxically, it was the Christian Pope, Gregory XIII (1572-85) who, on the one hand, made this calendar more accurate and, on the other, transferred its New Year from March to January; it is owing to this that *September* (i. e., the seventh month) became the 'ninth', *October* the 'tenth', *November* the 'eleventh' and *December* the 'twelfth' month!

11. In the light of the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, the scientific value of the purely solar reckoning, the so-called 'Christian' calendar, began to be appreciated and, despite the fumbblings of the Christian church, the change from the moon to the sun, as the sole reckoner of the year, came to be interpreted as the outcome of a change from demonology to Christology. Today, this mix-up of two thousand years ago continues to inflate the ego of every Christian youth; it deflates, however little, the egos of all school children who do not happen to be Christians.

12. Happily for me, this is not a study involving the faith of Christianity, nor the faith of Islam. I have used the above illustration only to emphasize the importance of the solar reckoning of the year in comparison with the moon reckoning which goes back to the earliest and most primitive history of man. Similarly, I have based some of my statements on the Qur'an; but even these are non-controversial. As far as possible I have avoided religious polemics as such; little room therefore will be found for controversy. What I present before you is more akin to the arithmetical 'rule of three', an algebraical analysis, a series of logical syllogisms rather than religious dogmas or their denials.

13. These lectures, in short, constitute an attempt at presenting before an audience of the intelligentsia an analysis of early Islamic history, and some chronological adjustments which are needed in the light of new findings in allied branches of knowledge. Let us hope

that in the course of these three evenings we shall see, as in a detective story, the gradual disentangling of a knot in the thread of time that has confused the academic sleuths for a millennium.

14. With this aim clearly in view we shall begin with a review of the cultural background in which commences the chronology of Islam.

B. The Foundations of Pre-Islamic Culture

15. Every writer mentioning early Islamic history—even non-Muslims—who generally limit their analyses to Muslim sources—paint the period immediately preceding the advent of Islam as inordinately dark. At most, the poetic talents of the pagan Arabs are sometimes given recognition.

16. This somewhat biased treatment of pre-Islamic times veils the cultural background of the *Sirah* itself. It is this gap in history—this sudden change from the unrelieved black to the pure white—that hides for later generations the grey perspective in which the advent of Islam needs to be viewed.

17. The first step in reconstructing Islamic chronology, therefore, is to establish the fact that there were undoubtedly some aspects of pre-Islamic life and institutions of social control which, so to say, minimised friction and oiled the cogwheels of social existence. We are unaware of them because, despite some of them having continued to exist throughout the life-time of the Prophet, they, as we shall see later, went into oblivion immediately after his demise; no vestige of theirs remains even in Muslim memory.

18. The most outstanding, and almost deliberately effaced, feature of pre-Islamic pagan culture was its close synchronization with the seasons. Their new year began with the new moon of *Muharram* and coincided with the new moon of *Tishri* in the old Jewish calendar as well as the new moon of *Kārtik* in India; also, it commenced more or less with the autumnal equinox—22nd September of the Julian calendar.

19. The last month of their year, named *Dhu'l Hajj* commenced with the 'Ten Nights' culminating in the Festive Night so laconically pictured in the opening verses of the Sura *Fajr* (No. 79). Every year, in August that noisy night would follow the performance of the *Hajj al-Akbar* for which thousands assembled in Mecca from far and near. This pagan festival coincided with the *Dasehra* in both time and features; as in India, it was also followed twenty days later by the New

Year commencing with the new moon of *Muharram*.

20. Again, at the time of the vernal equinox—21st March—there gathered the Minor Assemblage, their *Hajj al-Ashghar*,† which was relatively a smaller gathering but coincided more or less with the *Passover* of the Jews, the *Easter* of the Christians, the *Now Roz* of Iran and the *Holi* of India.

21. The second feature of their culture was the intervening of their trade caravans between the two above mentioned religio-commercial assemblages. After the *Hajj al-Akbar* in August, a trade caravan made a tour to the south during winter and returned in time for the *Hajj al-Ashghar* in Spring. After this Minor Assemblage in spring another trade caravan made a tour to the north in summer and returned long before the autumn equinox for the *Hajj al-Akbar*. These two seasonal caravans carried the Quraish, the merchant princes of Mecca, to most of the trade centres lying within reach of the means of travel then available—to Yemen and even Abyssinia in the south, to Jerusalem and Damascus, even Constantinople and, perhaps, Ctesiphon in the north. Both caravans enriched the mother city, Mecca, the locale of the Ancient Sanctuary, the *Bait al-'Atiq*.

22. The Qur'an itself is witness to my above statements. Chronologically a very early Sura, entitled *Quraish*, (No. 106), throws a bouquet, by name, at this leading clan of pre-Islamic pagans by eulogizing this adjustment of their economic life with the seasons of the year, their *rihlat ash shitā' waṣ ṣaif*—caravans of winter and summer, and the *ilaf*—the treaties they had entered into with the tribes of the north and the south for the guarantee of safety of life and commerce during their itinerant journeys. This Sura ends with the words *at'amahum min jū'in wa āmanahum min khawf*, i. e., 'feeds them in hunger and insures them immunity from violence'. In other words, the people of Mecca—the locale of the Sanctuary—did not themselves have to labour for the production of their nourishment; they were fed by the tributary offerings brought to them by the tribes of the region and the tithes† levied on the goods and animals brought there twice a year for sale and barter during the two Pilgrimages of March and August respectively. In addition to this the inviolability of the *Haram* provided them protection of life and property. It was this orbital functioning around a social nucleus, this synchronisation between the seasons of nature and the cycles of commerce, this inter-tribal understanding for peaceful co-existence and symbiosis that had contributed so much to the prestige of the Quraish as the guardians of the *Haram*—the sacred sanctuary of Allah, the Deity Supreme, symbolized in the *Ka'ba*.

23. A third basic means of social control is also confirmed by the Qur'an in Sura *Baqara* (2:225 and 234), and also in Sura *Barā'ah* (9:2). There prevailed the ancient, unwritten but generally observed, tribal taboo against violence during one month of spring and three months of autumn—the periods of equable climate most conducive to economic activity and social intermingling. In a region of intensely hot days of summer, and biting cold nights of winter, there was relatively little mobility during the heights of both these seasons of extreme heat and extreme cold together covering six months. The imposition of non-violence in four out of the remaining six months of mobility served as an effective control over the impulsive and impetuous nature of the desert Arabs—the *A'rāb* of the Sura *Barā'ah* (9 : 33 and 48). Among these nomadic peoples raids against peaceful habitations were not infrequent, ('Sura '*Ādiyāt*' No. 100), and armed retaliation was, in ordinary times, a tribal duty. But, even if a man were to be faced with his own father's murderer, he did not dare to unsheath his sword if this encounter happened to be during the four Sacred Months (the *ashhur ul ḥurum*). This one-third of every year, two-thirds of the period of mobility, covered the one month of *Rajab* in spring and the three consecutive months of *Dhu'l Qa'd*, *Dhu'l Ḥajj* and *Muḥarram* in the autumn.

24. Their fourth cultural pattern contributing to a stable life-cycle was the intercalation of a thirteenth month, called *Nasī*, for the purpose of keeping their moon-calendar abreast with the solar cycle which governs all human, animal and vegetable life on earth. This adjusting process, everywhere and at all times, was too intricate a phenomenon for the majority of the people of any community to understand. During pre-Islamic and early Islamic times only the hereditary heads of the *Qalammas* family, based in Mecca, were adepts in this reckoning. Every second or third year, as dictated by the relative movements of the seasons—that is when the 1st of *Muḥarram*, their New Year, was about to fall more than a month before the corresponding season, the representative of the *Qalammas* family announced, at the end of the August Ḥajj, that the beginning of the next *Muḥarram* would be delayed by the intercalation of a moon-month—designated as *Nasī*—following the current *Dhu'l Ḥajj*.

25. Strange as it may seem, it is, literally, unknown to historians of Islam that this pagan intercalation of the adjusting thirteenth month of *Nasī* between *Dhu'l Ḥajj* (the last month of their year) and *Muḥarram*† (the first month of their next year), every time preceded a similar intercalation observed by the Jews between their last and first

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months of *Adar* and *Nisan* respectively. It was owing to this almost parallel intercalation in the chronology of the Jews and the Pagans that, even till the demise of the Prophet, there existed the following concurrences :

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------|---|--------|---|----------|
| 1. Muḥarram | = | Tishri | = | Kārtik | = | Sept-Oct |
| 2. Rajab | = | Nisan | = | Vishak | = | Mar-Apr |
| 3. Ramaḍān | = | Sivan | = | Ashad | = | Apr-May |
| 4. Dhu'l Ḥajj | = | Elūl | = | Aswin | = | Aug-Sep |

26. These parallels will show that the intercalation of the thirteenth adjusting month was by no means a calendrical pattern peculiar to the pagan Arabs and the Jews. In fact it was and continues to be a universal practice which the relative movements of the sun and the moon compelled all mankind to adopt throughout the east and the west until the duration of the solar year was established in Egypt by the annual flooding of the Nile.

27. Whether this discovery was carried from Egypt to Iran or whether the Iranians themselves discovered it through some other means, the fact remains that Egypt and Iran were the only regions of the world where a solar year, totally independent of the moon, had presumably been in vogue even before the commencement of what is known as the Christian era, and certainly in the period preceding the advent of Islam. It was only the pagan Arabs and the Jews, lying between these two great realms that had continued to observe the old calendar based on the moon but kept abreast with the solar cycle by means of intercalation. All these four cogwheels of culture dovetailed into each other, and constituted a machinery which ran more or less smoothly in spite of human weaknesses. A people, guided by such relatively advanced institutions of social control, could not have been as barbarous and iniquitous as our historians paint them.

28. There was, however, one fragile link in this cultural chain that bound the Arab tribes into a single people; paradoxically, this was the link that joined the third and the fourth cultural patterns which we have just mentioned : (a) the four sacred months, and (b) the intercalary *Nasi*.

29. The four sacred months, as already mentioned, consisted of

1. *Rajab*, oscillating over March-April;
2. *Dhu'l Qa'd*, July-August;
3. *Dhu'l Ḥajj*, Aug-Sept; the last month of the expiring year; and
4. *Muḥarram*, Sep-Oct; the first month of the new year.

Now, logically, an intercalary *Nasi* should come between two years; therefore, its right place would be between the third and fourth of the sacred months mentioned above. But it is just this logical placement that raised a thorny question: Would this month of *Nasi*, intervening between two sacred months be itself inviolable or otherwise? If it was regarded as inviolable the number of inviolable months would either be raised to five, or, the *Muharram* following that inviolable *Nasi* would be deprived of its inviolability! If it was not inviolable its being open to violence would break the continuity of a sacred period.

30. To deal with such recurring dilemmas, the *Qalammas* was given the choice of declaring the intercalary *Nasi* either to intervene between *Dhu'l Hajj* and *Muharram*, or to follow *Muharram*, that is for the *Nasi* to come *after* the three months of inviolability. This latitude enjoyed by the *Qalammas* provided him with a cultural weapon which he could wield in the favour of one tribe or another according to his own interests.

31. The reference to this latitude entrusted to the *Qalammas* is found in Sura *Bara'ah* (9: 37) in the laconic style of the Qur'an, *yuhillūnahu 'āmma wa yuharrimūnahu 'āmma* :

"One year they announce it
 (the month following *Dhu'l Hajj*)
 as "secular" another year as "sacred"
 in order that they may conform to the
 prescribed number of the holy months;
 they sometimes make profane
 what Allah hath made holy!
 Appear to them as virtuous
 the evil of their ways.
 It is not Allah that doth guide
 these infidels. . .

32. It was this weak and fragile link that over and over again broke asunder and led to uncertainty as to whether pillage of the pilgrims returning from the *Hajj al Akbar* of the month of *Dhu'l Hajj* was permissible or taboo. This ambiguity whether to unsheath, or not dare to unsheath, invariably led to violence and bloodshed. All that was needed to justify this was some real or imaginary infringement of some tribal custom or taboo. In brief, the intercalary *Nasi* was both a blessing which kept the tribes together as well as a curse which often made the hasty and the impetuous to shed each other's blood, almost as if in play.

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33. Apart from this intermittent insurgence, they were essentially the products of their environment. Outside the few towns like Mecca, Medina and Tā'if, they were basically nomads of the desert who moved their tents wherever search for pasture took their herds of sheep. The camel provided them transport, shelter, clothing, milk and even meat when needed. The date-palm shed its relished fruit for them in abundance. Wealth was reckoned in terms of the number of camels or date-palms which a clan possessed. They were, therefore, a carefree people—rugged, hardy and unmindful of tomorrow, hospitable to a fault and free with wine and women when freedom from hunger allowed them. The inflorescence of their culture was poetry.

34. What made change, restraint and circumspection difficult and well-nigh impossible was their idolatry, their worship of innumerable tribal deities, always tending to splinter them into groups and counteracting the institutions made to fuse them into a well-knit human community. Years before his call to prophethood, Muhammad, through his concern for his fellow beings and his lonely meditations, had clearly perceived this weakness among his people—the curse inherent in idolatry.

35. But human groups, or the collective egos that each group inherits from its preceding generations, become crystallized in what are called the religions of different peoples and all such crystallized groups are naturally averse to changing their habits of thought or action. Even today, most of us are apt to meet every need for change and reform with the old retort: "We found our fathers doing this and we shall go the way of our fathers," (*Baqara* 2: 170 and in a dozen other verses). Fourteen hundred years ago, this obstinacy, this allergy to change for their own good, this incapacity to visualise the advantage of change for the better, was immensely more difficult to overcome.

36. Yes, it was for the enlightenment of his people, who remembered no Awakener having come to them before, that Muhammad had come as the Messenger, the Awakener, the Harbinger of glad tidings. As a background to his advent, it must also be remembered that, in spite of all the tribal moves and taboos mentioned earlier, tribal Arabia was governed by no central Authority. In those relatively primitive days and in a region where people were scattered far and wide there was no written code, no police, no militia, no judiciary, no legislature, not even petty kings to command obedience. The *Ka'ba* alone was their emblem of authority.† There were only elders of independent tribes who derived their prestige according to their respective

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proximity to this central Citadel, the holy sanctuary around which thousands gathered each spring and each autumn to garner what knowledge and guidance they could get, and acquire, through sale and barter, what necessities they could secure for their subsistence.

37. By and large, new ideas were conveyed only through word of mouth emanating from this central source. And for this to be effective the word of mouth had to be couched in the language of poetry—in words that had tendrils which cling to the mind, passages that had mnemonic values which made them unforgettable. It was this necessity that had developed the linguistic effectiveness of the Arab culture and had endowed social values to excellence in verbal expression.

C. The Prophet Is Ordained

38. It was in this milieu that Muhammad was born in about the year 570 of the Julian Calendar—the year known to the locals as ‘the year of the elephant.’ This was a year in which Mecca had received a deep shock but had been saved from conquest and humiliation through what seemed to be a miracle indeed. Abraha’s hordes had approached Mecca to destroy the Sanctity enfolding the Ka’ba so that a sanctuary of their own might flourish without a rival. Miraculously, their aim had been frustrated and the portentous hordes had suddenly disappeared in the mist of history.

39. As a child, the Prophet-to-be must have heard mention of this miraculous event, and the legends that had grown around it, in awe and with wide open eyes. Did he, at this tender age, resolve to make the Ka’ba impregnable when he grew up ?

40. Perhaps, but what we do know with certainty is that in his youth he had joined, and later, perhaps led, a sort of ‘eagles’ band’ to succour and aid the weak, the needy and the unprotected during the two annual Spring and Autumn pilgrimages to the Holy Sanctuary. History also records how, by mobilizing the representatives of the several tribes who claimed special rights over the holy shrine, he had raised a tribally cherished stone and placed it shoulder high in a wall of the Ka’ba when it was being reconstructed.

41. A thoughtful young man who had already earned the title of *al-Amin*, ‘the Trustworthy,’ one who had had experience in trade both before and after his marriage to Khadija—a widow in prosperous circumstances—he had been chiselled by Divinity for the mantle of pro-

phethood. Given to deep meditation, he had come to see clearly what his people needed—a Leader, an Awakener endowed with vision and foresight, tact and power of effective speech, one who would not be easily ruffled and could suffer calumny and ridicule without being perturbed. But where was such an Awakener to be found ?

42. The long and lonely search for an answer to this ever-present question, his ponderings over the legendary roles of *Ibrāhīm* and *Mūsā* and *‘Īsa* must have induced in him during the hot summer nights, with the holy city spread before him in the moonlight, visions of himself as the person most capable of filling this human void.

43. But, humility, they say, is the first attribute of genius. The moment he emerged from this deep reverie his humility must have re-asserted itself. How could he, a humble dreamer, assume the power of controlling and guiding his people as *Ibrāhīm* was said to have done ? How could he command the powers of speech which *Mūsā* himself had prayed for ? Where was he to find the magic words of Jesus that could transform lumps of inert clay into soaring birds freed from hunger and fear (Sura *Āl-i ‘Imrān*, 3 : 49).

44. This struggle between an impelling urge and an innate humility has come down to us in different forms and versions. Through discriminating imagination alone can one discern what a glorious struggle that must have been. In the language of Sura *Qadr* (No. 97) describing the Night of Glory, we read :

Verily, We had bestowed it
in the Night of Glory
The Night of Glory more gracious
than a thousand moons
When angelic revelations
waft down by the Glory
of their Lord
In every way 'tis full of peace
until the spreading
of the DAWN !

45. That spreading of the Dawn was an answer to all his hesitating questions : The Oneness of the Creator, *that* was the explanation of all discernible phenomena ! It was the realization of this Oneness, accompanied by the resolve to subject all thought and speech and action to this realization, wherein lay the hope and salvation of man ! And lo ! it was he, yes even his humble self, who had been given this glorious vision with such vividness. It was now his duty to convey

this vision, this realization, this enlightenment to all people—to Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Pagans, yes, to all mankind. Thenceforth, all his thoughts, all his efforts and endeavours would be governed by this one realization.

46. Where was he to begin? He rushes to his faithful partner in life Khadīja. She becomes the first Muslim; he was the first man; she became the first woman to submit her ego implicitly to the will of the Almighty, the One and the Only. Later, he is directed to invite the members of the Quraish, his own clan, and those with whom he identifies himself (Sura *An'ām* 6:214). He meets a mixed reaction. Some laugh at him outright. Others observe non-committal silence.

D. Seasonal Placement of the *Bi'thah*

47. This first call to Prophethood which we have just discussed is known as the *Bi'thah* and constitutes the point of take-off in the history of Islam. Let us examine it a little closely.

48. We claim that other religions belong to periods of which we know very little; that the scarcity of factual knowledge in their cases lends itself to legends and mythological hypotheses. We claim that the injunctions of Islam are corroborated both by its conformity to the laws of Nature and the records of history. We take pride in the minute details with which the life and mission of our Prophet is recorded in the *Hadīth* and *Sīrah* literature. In the light of all this, would it be impertinent or irrelevant to ask, What was the season of the year in which Muhammad was blessed with his first revelation, the exact seasonal setting of his investiture, the nature of the night during which he was, so to say, honoured with the mantle of Prophethood?

49. No one was able to enlighten me when, way back in 1944, I put this question in writing to several savants of Islam well-known all over India. None could help me. After two years of intense search I found access to an article in the *Journal Asiatique* of Paris† wherein a footnote to an article by Perceval published more than a hundred years ago, in 1843, offered the following information:

“The mission of Muhammad commenced in the month of Ramadan—23rd December 610 A. D.”

50. Strange conclusion indeed! The month-name *Ramaḍān* signifies a period of intense heat; and yet, this month of intense heat coincided exactly with the Winter Solstice!! Stranger still, a sagaci

man of forty had chosen a cave on a hillside for meditation *during a night of desert winter !!!*

51. Wonder of wonders, despite this glaring incongruity, and for more than a hundred years, from Perceval in 1843, and William Muir in the 1860's right down to Montgomery Watt in 1977, the European savants on Islam have expressed no doubts on the veracity of this finding. Caetani, an Italian, has cast his chronology of all Islamic history in his *Annals*† covering ten volumes on the basis of Perceval's thesis that the pagan Arabs, not aware of the astronomical basis of intercalation followed by their neighbouring Jews, had been stupid enough to go on intercalating a thirteenth month not when needed, but regularly every third year over more than two centuries! No European scholar, at least as far as I have been able to ascertain, has even cast a doubt on this audacious assumption.

52. When renowned scholars of enlightened and science-oriented Europe could have been so credulous, what wonder that Shibli, from Victorian India, should have based his entire *Sirat un-Nabi* blindly on the findings of Perceval?

53. And yet, it must in honesty be admitted that these European students of Islam are not the only ones who have been led astray. It is the early Muslim historians, the Ibn Ishaqs, the Waqidis, the Ibn Hishams of the early Abbaside days, who are also to be blamed for their failure to fathom this sphinx-like mystery permeating Islamic chronology even in those early days.

54. It is obvious that they worked under many limitations. The most crushing and compelling burden on them was primarily the overriding deductive method according to which every statement had to be based on the statement of some predecessor. They were strangers to the inductive method of science in which logical and circumstantial evidence could find at least tentative acceptability. This limitation has hampered Islamic scholarship even upto our own times.

55. A simple explanation is that the *Ramaḍān*, in which the Prophet received his first revelation, had run concurrent with the Jewish month of Sivan.† In 610 J. C. this moon-month had corresponded with the period between Friday, 29th May and Sunday 27th June, when Arab summer was at its height, and resorting to a hillside was the only means of escaping from the suffocating valley in which Mecca lies with hills rising all round it.

56. The nights in Mecca, at least on the surrounding hillsides are cool and pleasant even during the hottest part of the year and it was

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probably during a beauteous night when the heat of the day had been completely overcome that Muhammad experienced the glories of the night of enlightenment.

56. It is on the basis of such diverse evidence and reasonable conjectures that the Chronology of Islam has to be recast. What problems we meet in this recasting will be gradually unfolded as we proceed.

E. The Meccan Period

57. The next twelve years and three months—May 610 to September 622—constitute a saga of incessant striving, opposition, persecutions and frustrations on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the indomitable persistence of the Prophet in fulfilling the mission entrusted to him during the glorious night on a hillside close to the holy city in the valley of Mecca. In all these twelve years he could never forget the realization, the command and the commitment.

NO OTHER LORD IS THERE BUT THE LORD, NO STONE OR TREE, NO ANIMAL OR MAN DESERVES SELF-OBLITERATING REVERENCE AND OBEDIENCE. LORDSHIP IS DUE ONLY TO THE CREATOR AND SUSTAINER OF THE COSMOS AND ALL THAT LIES IN IT.

58. That *īman*—faith—combined with *‘amal*—action—controlled and guided by that faith, this two-sided message the Prophet continued to preach throughout those twelve years in the magic words and passages which the Qur’ān brought to him.

59. Engrossed in their little vested interests the leaders of the Quraish could not perceive that, instead of ruining them economically as they thought it would, the acceptance of this twofold truth would have brought to them all the good which life can bestow on any people at any period of time. They ridiculed him, called him “parrot mad” (Sura *Dukhān* 44 : 14), reviled him, heckled him; their women threw dirt and rubbish over him in the streets. All that they were made to refrain from doing, at least during the four Sacred Months—the *Ashhur ul Hurum*—was to inflict personal injury. It was only during these periods of non-violence that he was able to convey his message year after year and even during the three years of boycott and confinement in the *Shi‘b Abi Talib*.

F. The Seasonal Placement of the Hijrah

60. It was during one of these *Hajj* periods (Aug.-Sept. 621 J. C.) that a few pilgrims from *Yathrib* were attracted to his teaching and

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avowed obedience to his Faith by formally placing their hands beneath his as a token of allegiance. This oath of fealty later came to be known as the *First Pledge of 'Aqaba*. One of the early followers of the Prophet was sent with the pilgrims to Yathrib to guide them further in the principles and practices enjoined by the new Faith. He was to return and report when the party revisited Mecca during the next *Hajj al Akbar*.

61. A whole year intervened. In August 622, the day of the *Hajj*, the 10th of the moon-month of *Dhu'l Hajj*, corresponded with Friday, 23rd August. On the next day, Saturday, 24th August, late in the evening, the Prophet again met the expanded delegation from Yathrib at the same place. Having received a favourable report from his emissary to that city, the *Second Pledge of 'Aqaba* couched in the following terms was given to the Prophet :

“WE WILL RECOGNISE NONE BUT THE ONE AND ONLY ALLAH AS DESERVING OF EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP.

“WE WILL NOT STEAL NOR FORNIFICATE, NOR DO AWAY WITH OUR UNWANTED BABIES, NOR INDULGE IN CALUMNIES.

“WE WILL OBEY THE APOSTLE IN WHATEVER IS REASONABLE AND WE WILL BE FAITHFUL TO HIM IN WEAL AND WOE.”

62. It was decided that, owing to unceasing persecution the small community of Muslims should abandon their homes in Mecca and repair to the city of Yathrib—200 miles to the north. That city was thenceforth to be known as *Madinat un-Nabi*, the Abode of the Apostle.

63. Within two or three days the moon would begin to wane, but advantage could be taken of this lantern of the sky for night travel in the still-warm nights and while the immunity from violence still prevailed over the next five or six weeks. The exodus commenced almost on the following night. During the next two weeks of *Dhu'l Hajj* all but the Prophet and his closest adherents had emigrated from Mecca to Medina. There is no mention of any one of them having been hindered, much less molested.

64. In the last few nights of *Dhu'l Hajj*, perhaps on the New year's eve, the night preceding the 1st of *Muharram* (13th September, 622 J. C.), after having entrusted to 'Ali the little valuables which several poor Meccans had entrusted to the *al-Amin* the Prophet himself departed from Mecca with one of his earliest followers, Abu Bakr, late in the evening. These two finally reached Medina on the 8th of

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Zisri/Muharram corresponding to the 20th of September, 622 J. C. Finding the Jews of Yathrib preparing for the fast of '*Āshūra*, the tenth day of that moon-month, he suggested to all his followers that they too should observe that fast as a gesture of goodwill towards their neighbours. All in all, it was an exodus more carefully planned and more successfully executed than the exodus of the Israelites from the land of the Pharaohs.

65. Several of you, familiar with *Sirah* literature, will find the above chronological details contrary to the traditional accounts. You will be inclined to correct me by reminding me that it was not in *Muharram* but in *Rabi' al Awwal* that the *Hijrah* had taken place. But at this stage of my presentation all I ask you is to please keep this contradiction in mind. Partly tomorrow, and fully in the last of these three lectures you will learn how the overlapping of *Muharram* and *Rabi' al Awwal* can be explained. It is this 'reconciliation,' or 'reconstruction' that constitutes the basis of my thesis.

66. Thank you for your attention. It makes me look forward to our next two meetings.

From Hijrah to Wafāt

A. Recapitulation

1. Yesterday we prefaced our recasting of Islamic chronology by defining the scope of historiology in relation to history. We then took a bird's eye view of pre-Islamic pagan culture and noted four of its cultural patterns synchronizing their year with that of the Jews and the Hindus : (a) the two assemblages of autumn and spring, known as the *Hajj al Akbar* and *Hajj al Asghar*, corresponding with the *Dasehra* and the *Holi* respectively, (b) the seasonal trade caravans to the north in summer and to the south in winter, (c) the four Sacred Months in which violence was taboo, and (d) the adjusting *Nasi* which made the moon-months correspond approximately with the seasons and served as a king-bolt for keeping all the four patterns in place. We emphasized that all these patterns had contributed to a fairly harmonious rhythm of life and had continued to do so throughout the life-time of the Prophet. Then we referred to the weak link in this chain and explained that this *Nasi*, generally a blessing, sometimes became a curse.

2. Next, we showed how the worship of several different tribal deities had led to cleavages, and the pulverizing of Arab tribal society. How the *Bi'thah* of the Prophet, when he had reached the mature age of forty, had made him strive against obstacles and persecution for thirteen long years until, despairing of Meccan society, he had carefully arranged for the safe exodus of his band of followers to Medina where some groups had responded to his message of righteous endeavour. The seasonal placement of these two cardinal events of early Islam—the *Bi'thah* and the *Hijrah*—gave us an idea of the nature of recasting of Islamic chronology that is called for. After this brief recapitulation, let us continue the narrative analysis of the developments in Medina and the entanglements between what we shall call the 'Downstream' and 'Upstream' calendars.

B. Believers and Hypocrites

3. In Medina the small group seeking freedom from persecution and opportunities of righteous endeavour, found itself torn from its native habitat and exposed to a strange environment. The bonds of brotherhood which the Prophet soon established between the residents and the immigrants did much to make the newcomers feel at home. Nonetheless, identification with a new environment takes time and there are always individuals and families who resent any intrusion of outside elements into their barricades, no matter how harmless and friendly these strangers might be.

4. One of such local elements in Medina was the Jewish community that was prominent in the region. The Prophet was most anxious to bring about mutual accommodation and even assimilation between (a) the *muhājirīn* or 'refugees' who had been virtually driven away from their homes just because they had begun to search for Divine guidance, (b) the *Ansār*, the helpers who had given shelter and sustenance to these refugees, and (c) those who not only called themselves the *Yahūd* but also claimed to be, literally, "the Divinely Guided." At first, these "already guided" too had welcomed the Muslims in the hope that their leader, Muhammad, might be the "Prophet," promised in their own traditions. But very soon they were disillusioned. No matter how much the new Prophet was proclaimed to be the "Confirmer" and "Rejuvenator" of Judaism and Christianity, they would not accept him unless he confirmed the Judaism and Christianity not of the erstwhile pristine brand, but the Judaism and Christianity *current in Medina in their own times*.

5. Because the Prophet had gradually risen in tribal stature through his increasing number of followers there were among the pagans, the Jews, and the Christians several individuals who found their own leadership in their respective communities threatened by his teaching. Very soon these petty vested interests came to be known as the *munāfiqīn*, the foes in the garb of friends. In guise, some of them even accepted Islam; but inwardly they strove to cast out Islam from their midst :

When face to face with the believers,
they say, 'Believe we !'

But when in conclave
with their instigators
they say, 'We are with you;
them, we were only fooling...'
(*Baqarah* 2 : 14)

2. Hijrah to Wafāt

6. The small group of genuine Muslims, those who sincerely aimed at submission to the One and Only Allah, had necessarily to be wary of these unreliable double-talkers; they had to stand firm and united, they had to build up invisible fences around their nascent community lest its roots be weakened through subterfuge and it be blown away at the first blast of a tribal hurricane.

7. These local interests were not the only danger. The vested interests in Mecca too had not forgotten that Muhammad's teaching had started to undermine their prestige and power; nor had they forgiven him for taking away some of their clients and slaves to establish a growing community in another city which might in time become a rival to their own. Fain would they conspire with the disgruntled in Medina and even with the other tribes of the region to uproot the very idea of this new-fangled, and exclusively emphasized, Allah as well as His Messenger.

8. The Prophet, on whom the righteous among both the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* depended for security and welfare, had to plan and organise both vigilance and defence. He had occasionally to take police action both internal and external.

9. The slow and steady spread and coverage of Islam during the first six years after the *Hijrah* provides remarkable proof of the Prophet's genius and the guidance he received in answer to his sincere prayers throughout this period.

C. Badr : Its Seasonal Placement

10. The Badr episode, within two years of the *Hijrah* was the first manifestation of this seemingly dormant antagonism both internal and external. Incidentally, the chronological placement of this event, like that of the *Bi'thah*, fifteen years earlier, provides us another opportunity to examine the nature and form of the needed recasting of Islamic chronology. Coincidentally, this Badr episode too occurred in the month of *Ramaḍān* which, as mentioned earlier, oscillated between the May-June period of the Julian year. Here also the Qur'ān is witness to the fact that this skirmish occurred in a particularly hot spell which was as usual, followed by a little rain that reduced the temperature and thereby revived the drooping spirits of animals and men. A reminiscence of this experience is to be found in Sura *Anfāl*, 8 : 11, where it reads :

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“(Remember) how He imbued you with tranquility and confidence in Him. He sent you rain from the skies so that it refreshed you, relieved you from the demon (of desert thirst), unified your hearts and strengthened your resolves...”

This Qur’ānic evidence is further supported by local records. Climatological data recorded in our own times at a mining station not far from Badr shows that even the little rain that the region receives comes in the form of a few showers in the spring season of March-April-May and again in November-December. The latter period is ruled out in this case because during winter the Meccan trade caravan went to the warmer south; the caravan which the Muslims faced at Badr was thus obviously that which was returning with merchandise from the north for disposal in the *Hajj al Akbar* that convened in the August-September season of the solar year. Apparently, the shower of rain mentioned in the Qur’ān was of the late spring month of May 624.

11. And yet, William Muir, Caetani and other European writers—even Shibli Nu‘mani in his *Sirat un-Nabi*—all place this event five months later in December 624. Let us, therefore, try and clarify a little more the relations existing between the Julian and the local calendars.

D. Studies of Julian versus Local Calendars

12. Discrepancies, like those found in the seasonal placement of the *Bi‘ah*, the *Hijrah* and Badr, continue to be found in the historical recording of most events in the Medinan decade. They have confused and confounded many scholars over more than a century since Perceval’s premature annunciation. Several divergent theories have been put forward to reconcile these discrepancies, individually and collectively. But so far none has proved convincing to all concerned.

13. At least two contemporary scholars are still working on the problem. One is M. Hamidullah, my fellow citizen of Hyderabad and now associated jointly with the Sorbonne in France and the University of Istanbul in Turkey. I have been in friendly contact with him ever since I too started on this quest way back in 1944. I still have with me the daily temperature and rainfall records which he kindly maintained at my request and sent me from Hijāz during 1946. More recently he kindly sent me the off-prints of an article† and in a

2. Hijrah to Wafāt

personal letter bearing the postal stamp dated January 26, 1972, (he, of course, dates it 9th Dhulḥijja 1391), he says :

“My opinions have naturally been in course of evolution since I first formulated them in 1935. Then I had thought that the intercalation took place regularly every third year (obviously on the basis of Perceval’s hypothesis). Now in the article on *Nasi* (1968)† I hesitated...in my present stage of research, intercalations were made at the end of 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th years of the Hijrah...”

His main difficulty still seems to be an uncertainty in the precise placement of the *Nasi* months which he admits as having been intercalated during that decade. Curiously enough, I have profited much from his findings in the several contributions he has made in periodicals and other writings; but so far I have never been able to see eye to eye with him, nor he with me !

14. The other seeker is a little-known, amateur scholar of *Hadīth* and *Sirah*, Ishāq un-Nabi ‘Alavī, of another erstwhile Muslim State in India, known as Rampur and now incorporated as a district of the Uttar Pradesh. His findings on the calendrical history of the Medinan decade were presented in the Urdu monthly, *Burhān* of Delhi during the half year May to December 1964. Summarized and translated into English by our friend, Dr. Abid Reza Bedar, they are available in a little volume of 48 pages. I have underscored this booklet more than any book I have ever read. ‘Alavī and I have also corresponded and discussed this problem in Delhi and in Rampur. We have expressed unqualified delight and satisfaction at each other’s long and honest search. I cannot say if he has learnt anything from me, but I am happy to admit that from the details of what he calls the “Meccan Calendar” I have, during my visit to Rampur in 1972, profited by accepting the autumnal equinox as the approximate commencement of the old Arab year. What I have not been able to accept is the final conclusion to which he has arrived. He believes that *two divergent calendars were concurrently prevalent among the Muslims throughout the Medinan decade*—one luni-solar adjusted by the *Nasi*, the other consisting only of twelve lunar months unadjusted to the seasons, and both having the same month-names. The first he believes, was current in Mecca the second in Medina. This theory seems to satisfy him; but, however much I might try, I find it difficult to accept this even as a remote possibility.

15. My own thesis, seemingly little but basically very different from his, is that two calendars do throw their beams of light (or shadows

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if that is more expressive) *on the recorded history of the Medinan decade*: (a) the old Arab calendar carried "downstream" from the past into the future; (b) the unadjusted lunar reckoning retrospectively imposed "upstream" *after the demise of the Prophet*.

16. When and why and how I think this happened will become clear in tomorrow's lecture. Today, I shall content myself by giving the ascertained solar dates of a few outstanding events along with the two lunar dates according to what 'Alavi calls the 'Meccan' and 'Medinan' calendars and which I call, respectively, the 'downstream' and the 'upstream' reckonings.

Interlude

The printed leaflet distributed in today's session (chart on pp. 34-5) will show on the calendrical placement of the more important events of the Medinan decade which we are in the process of examining in this second lecture. Please confirm on it what I now have to say.

Column 1 shows 19 events which, according to column 2, cover exactly 10 solar years. Commencing from 16th July, 622, that being the supposed date on which the Muslim era begins, the decade ends on 15th July, 632 when the adjusting *Nasi* ceased to be intercalated.

Column 3 gives the moon-months of these 19 events according to what 'Alavi calls the "*Meccan*" and I the "*Downstream*" calendar; column 4 shows the dates according to what 'Alavi calls the "*Medinan*" and I the "*Upstream*" reckoning.

In both columns 3 and 4 you will find two thin columns of figures; the first denotes the serial number of the A.H. years to which the event pertains; the second represents the sequence number of the month in the respective year.

Column 5 specifies the event itself and column 6 shows the difference between the sequence numbers of the months shown in columns 3 and 4.

At this stage I'd like you to go down the figures in column 6 and to notice how the figures increase from 2 to 3, 3 to 4 and, finally from 4 to 5. Each such increase, you will see, occurs after every month of *Nasi* that intervenes.

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While going down column 5 I'd like you to notice also the events which it records and particularly item 11 designated as Hudaibiyah which is placed in

March according to the Julian calendar,
Rajab according to the Downstream calendar, and
Dhul Hajj according to the Upstream calendar.

The significance of this increase will be explained later. For the present let us examine the significance of the event known as the *Ṣulh*, or "Peace Treaty" of Hudaibiyah.

E. Hudaibiyah and After

17. The compromise arrived at between the Muslims and the Quraish of Mecca at Hudaibiyah stands out as another distinct milestone in the history of early Islam. The frustrating persecution of the Meccan period, extending over thirteen years, is over; the subsequent five years in Medina, with their disillusionment with the Jews, massive confrontation with the Quraish of Mecca, the self-identification of the Muslim community, all these had led to a group-yearning to visit Mecca, the city of their birth and childhood. The Prophet too began to look towards Mecca, with the aim and the hope of establishing some sort of rapprochement with the Quraish, his antagonized kinsmen and the people from whom he and his little band of seekers after righteousness had been virtually excommunicated.

18. But, above all, he had to be cautious. During eight months each year, Mecca was closed to him. A visit in any but the Four Sacred Months was bound to meet with a violent reaction. The gradually subsiding antagonism would only be reactivated, Mecca-Medina relations would get a set-back. It was obvious that the *Hajj al-Akbar* of August, or the *Hajj al-Aṣghar* of March, in both of which periods violence was taboo, were the only two occasions during which some hope of detente may be expected.

19. Fain would he visit Mecca during the *Hajj al-Akbar* in August the very event of the year after which he had left his city with his band of believers only five years earlier. But the *Major Hajj* would attract too large and massive a gathering. Even if he were allowed to participate in it, such participation might be dangerous. Insignificant, even negligible, frictions might start off a conflagration amidst

the large crowds. Obviously, the March assemblage at the time of the *Hajj al-Aşghar* was a safer and better choice.

20. So, virtually unarmed and only as peaceful pilgrims, he decided to approach Mecca. Presumably, on the appearance of the new moon of the Sacred Month of *Rajab*, the band of Muslims, led by the Prophet himself, embarked from Medina. Most of those who had participated in the Exodus from Mecca were with him. Presumably, those of Medina who had then brought him away from Mecca as their guest were also there.

21. The parleys that had taken place on the outskirts of Mecca, this is not the occasion to relate or to analyse. For our present purpose all that needs to be mentioned is that a compromise was reached. The Quraish of Mecca, declined to suffer what seemed to be a gate-crashing at such short notice; but they could not bluntly refuse; they promised to let the Medinan pilgrims perform the *Minor Hajj* next year if they went back peacefully this time. Being a relatively less important occasion, they would, in March next year, themselves resort to the hillsides of Mecca so that there may be neither close contact nor occasion for friction. Left to themselves, the Medinans too would have the opportunity to perform the rites of the *Minor Hajj* in their own way.

22. Naturally, there was some disappointment among those who, despite long confrontation, expected warmer response from their erstwhile neighbours and relatives. But the caution and foresight of the Prophet softened the apparent rebuff and converted it into what was in reality a victory for the sagacious. The Qur'an itself proclaimed :

Inna fatahnā laka fathan mubīnā

Lo ! We have made thee victor in a glaring victory !

(Sura *Fatah* 48 : 1)

23. The status of Islam and that of the Muslims rose overnight. From being a negligible band of remonstrators ('protestants' if you like to call them) who deserved to be crushed, they became both a religious and a political entity with whom even the Quraish of Mecca had entered into a mutually esteemed treaty. From now on religious confrontation would be replaced by sociological adjustment. The basic and unbending principle of the Oneness of the Creator and, consequently, the Oneness of Mankind, was to be left undisputed. Instead

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of violently denying this principle, the Quraish had come so far as to cease reacting adversely to it. They did not defiantly reject it; in time, this silence would mean acceptance; in time, acceptance would be transformed into conviction. This is apparently how the Prophet's inspired mind generally worked.

24. Immediately, Ḥudaibiyah opened up fresh vistas; he began to entertain hopes of wide acceptance, even increasing and smooth spread of the Divine message to realms beyond Arabia. Invitations were sent to the Heads of neighbouring tribes who had not till then entered into compacts of righteous solidarity. Unassuming 'Envoys' of the unpretentious Prophet were despatched even to the Heads of neighbouring religious Communities and political States inviting them to participate in a vast and glorious venture to establish a universal Faith.

25. For our particular purpose, however, what we need to remind ourselves is that this compromise-cum-victory had been achieved during the One Sacred Month of *Rajab* corresponding, year after year, and more or less closely, with (a) the *Vernal Equinox* of our solar system (b) the *Passover* of the Jews, (c) the *Easter* of the Christians, and (d) the *Now Roz* of Iran.

26. A year later, thanks to the Quraish having honoured their word, and the peaceful performance of the *Ḥajj al-Aṣghar* by the Muslims, the prestige of the *Rajab* gathering was enhanced. The Muslims too, left to perform the rites in their own way, found themselves closer to this Minor assemblage of March than to the Major Ḥajj of August. The latter occasion, as we have seen, was dominated by pagan ceremonies—some of which the Muslims regarded as uncouth and even obscene. On the contrary, this minor Ḥajj—which later came to be known as the '*Umrat al-Qada*, or the postponed pilgrimage, had provided them the hope that the *Ḥajj al-Aṣghar* might itself become the major assemblage of Islam. Perhaps it even occurred to some of them that the August Ḥajj coming in the last month of the Arab year, was often followed by the adjusting month of *Nasi* which so often led to misunderstanding and unnecessary strife: obviously, *Rajab* would also have the advantage of being free of such aftermaths.

F. Submission of Mecca

27. Once again we shall pass over the intervening causes that led to the Medinan expedition to Mecca and the peaceful submission of that

city in June, 630. We have just seen how the Meccan antagonism had been softened in March, 628; how the peaceful performance of the Minor Hajj in March, 629 had inclined the Quraish to accept the moral supremacy of the Prophet and the suitability of the Muslims to serve as the leaders of the Arabs. Perhaps, they even missed the presence of the Muslims in the next *Hajj al-Aşghar* in March, 630. Perhaps, their aggression against a tribe which had been guaranteed protection by the Muslims, was itself a subtle invitation to the Prophet to return and take up the reins of Meccan affairs which had been deteriorating. In any case, their default with regard to the treaty entered into with the Prophet, could not be overlooked; a large expedition started from Medina and reached the holy city in *Ramađan*, May-June of 630. The Quraish submitted unconditionally. The grace and magnanimity of Allah's Messenger to this submission provided a righteous example of clemency unequalled in the history of political combat or the annals of religious confrontation.

28. I cannot help quoting here a passage from *The Life of Mohammed*, compiled from various sources, by my late and revered teacher, Mirza Abul Fazl :

“The once haughty chiefs of the Koreish appeared with abject countenances before the man they had persecuted so virulently only yesterday, for now their lives were in his power.

“Descendants of the Koreish ! how do you think I should act towards you ?” demanded Mohammed. “With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew !” replied they with one voice.

At these words, says the Chronicler, Mohammed burst into tears, and repeated a verse from the Koran recounting how Joseph had forgiven his brothers : “Yes, I will not reproach you this day : Allah will pardon you ! Verily, He is the most Merciful of the Mercifuls.”

(Sura *Yūsuf*, 12 : 92)

29. This submission added temporal supremacy over the Arabs to the moral and spiritual eminence which the Prophet and his followers had already achieved. Islam was now firmly established, thousands flocked to Mecca to pledge their allegiance to him and his righteous creed. But, faithful to the *Anşar* of Medina, who had so loyally befriended him in his hour of Meccan rejection, he returned with them to Medina.

G. New Vistas, New Horizons

30. He was now 60 years old and had to expedite the great reforms that he had dreamed of in his helplessness over the past two decades. With the changed circumstances he realized that the proper organization of the enlarged finances of the community had become imperative for its very existence. The ad hoc voluntary contributions, the *ṣadaqāt* according to individual inclinations and timely persuasions, would not suffice any longer. The levies on the trade in different markets, on the produce of land and livestock, the offerings collected in the *Baitullah*, all these incomes, so far collected by the heads of different tribes and hereditary functionaries, had to be co-ordinated and effectively enforced. There had to be a central treasury, a *Bait ul māl*, under the custody of a trusted authority. Different rates had to be fixed for different types of levy. The ‘*Ushr* or tithe (a tenth) was the age-old rate of levy on the produce of land and livestock; the *-akāt*, presumably, the one-fortieth ($2\frac{1}{2}\%$) of the value of sales, on different articles of trade; the *khums*, i.e. one-fifth (20%) on unearned or fortuitous acquisition, all these had to become obligatory. Some accounts suggest that levies on trade “differed according to whether the merchant was a citizen, a resident-alien or a foreigner, and they paid $2\frac{1}{2}\%$, 5% or 10% respectively.” Very soon, the enforcements of these regulations, under the supervision of the faithful Bilal, began to attract not only money but also sheep and camels, date-fruit and other products of the seasonal harvests. The functions and the functionaries of the *Bait ul māl* expanded and had to be organized with such efficiency as had never been needed before.

31. This prime need of enforcing order and efficiency in the life of the expanding Muslim community necessitated, more than ever before, the need of further tightening up of the annual cycle of tribal life and a still closer synchronization of the economic order with the seasons of the terrestrial year. He had for long realized that Mecca and its two assemblages of August and March (*Dhu’l Ḥajj* and *Rajab*) were the nucleuses of Arab life and culture. He had to build the arch of Islam on these two, or perhaps a beacon on only one of these assemblages, so that the teaching of the Islamic way of life may spread far and wide and still move around a single focal centre of both space and time. The adjusted lunar reckoning of the year had continued to be operative in both Mecca and Medina for more than 600 years *even after* the adoption of the solar reckoning by Julius

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Caesar. In comparison with the solar reckonings of neighbouring Iran and Byzantium even this adjusted lunar reckoning had become well-nigh obsolete. The uncertainty in the appearance of the New Moon over and over again led to disputes about the commencement of the Ten Nights of *Dhu'l Hajj* (Sūra *Fajr* 89 : 1-10). The commencement of the fasts of *Pamaḍān* was another recurrent occasion for uncertainty. Worse still, the choice left to the Qalammas in announcing the intercalation of the *Nasi*—either between the Sacred Months of *Dhu'l Hajj* and *Muḥarram*, or after the end of the Four Sacred Months—tended to cast doubts every two or three years when the *Nasi* had to be intercalated. Would not the abandonment of the moon altogether, and the adoption of the solar reckoning eliminate once for all these multiple problems in the annual cycle of life? Would this not lighten the shoulders of the expanding community of the righteous? Was not this community of the righteous destined to incorporate all mankind?

32. It was these contemplations that apparently revolved in the mind of the Prophet, and the happenings of the remaining two years only confirm the vital decision he arrived at and the actions he both planned and initiated.

33. The *Hajj al-Akbar* that assembled in August 630 came only two months after Mecca accepted Islam; naturally, it brought together both Muslim and pagan pilgrims; naturally, there was much confusion and at least some friction in the performance of the ritual by the pagans and the Muslims. That *Hajj* was later designated as the *Hajj al makhluṭ* or 'the mixed *Hajj*'. The major and minor incidents of this occasion too must have led to much thinking of some alternative possibilities, during the next twelve months.

H. *Hajj* Abu Bakr

34. So, when the next *Hajj al Akbar* came round in August, 631, the Prophet's trusted companion, Abu Bakr, headed the caravan from Medina to make an important announcement in the large and still mixed gathering which was to assemble in Mecca. Soon afterwards the younger and intrepid 'Alī was despatched to buttress his older colleague. The announcement made on this occasion is clearly recorded in the opening verses of Sura 9, *Barā'ah* (vv. 1-9), which is generally accepted as chronologically the last Sūra of the Qur'ān.

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This proclamation guaranteed protection to all pilgrims assembled at that Hajj; it allowed even the pagans to roam about at will and to perform their pagan ceremonies during the current three Sacred Months—provided only that they did not indulge in mischief or create disturbance. On the other hand, this same announcement absolved Allah and His Messenger from providing similar protection during the Assemblages that would follow in the years to come. This virtually closed the doors to all those who would persist in the old and often barbarous and obscene ritual. This, it was hoped, would enable the law-abiding and assimilable pagans to be gradually brought into the fold of the Muslims—the submissively righteous among mankind.

35. This Hajj of 15th August, 631 was followed less than five months later by a tragic event which could not but have affected the human emotions of the aging Prophet. His infant son, Ibrahim, had been born to his Christian wife Maryam, only 18 months earlier. Suddenly, this infant passed away on Monday, 27th January, 632. Astronomical records still confirm the fact that this day had witnessed a conspicuous eclipse of the sun in that region. But from that striking coincidence he refused to draw any supernatural conclusions. This was the end of *Jamādi al-awwal* (downstream). Only the moon month of *Jamādi al ākhir* intervened between that date and the New Moon of *Rajab* the month in which was to be performed the long looked for *Hajj al Islam*. He continued to prepare himself and his righteous band of followers for this minor Hajj that was, perhaps, to be his last. Perhaps, he hoped that it would henceforth become the one and only annual assemblage heralding the New Year.

I. The Farewell Pilgrimage

36. The Prophet was right. This *Hajj* constituted the zenith of the Islamic teaching: it left its indelible stamp on the history of this great Message.

37. It is estimated that more than a hundred thousand people had assembled from among the tribes and regions of Mecca and Medina, places which were 200 miles apart. After completing the rites of the Pilgrimage, the Prophet addressed the multitude from the Hill of *Arafāt*.

“O ye people! Harken to my words, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again...”

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38. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish I had the time, and the occasion permitted me, to recount more of what was said. Even then I could not possibly have conveyed to you the emotional fervour that must have arisen to unimaginable heights. There are many accounts of all the lessons from the Qur'ān, and from his own life and experience of the past twenty years, to which he drew the attention of the gathering; but it was the emotional tone of this assemblage which left an unforgettable impression on the Muslim memory.

39. Some affirm that (except for the intervening parenthetical passage) the *Nasi* verses (Sura *Barā'ah* 9 : 36-7) were revealed in the course of this oration. Others are inclined to believe that several other utterances having the weight of revelations, and incorporated in the Qur'ān as independent passages which do not connect with the preceding and subsequent text, are also passages revealed on this occasion. For example, one such passage is,

“O thou, (My Messenger !) Proclaim (anon) the message which has (now) been sent to thee from thy Lord. IF THOU DOST NOT, THOU WOULDST NOT HAVE THEN FULFILLED THY DUTY ! (Emphasis added) Allah will protect thee from the wrath of men. Verily He guideth not a people who obstruct !”

(Sūra *Mā'ida* 5 : 63)

Another passage which is, perhaps, a corollary to the above is :

“This day have I perfected for you your faith; brimmed you with my blessings; your creed Islam I have decreed !”

(Sūra *Mā'ida*, 5 : 3)

40. In *Hadith* literature, a saying of the Prophet, attributed to this occasion reads as follows :

“Verily, this day Time has made a full cycle and returned to the point at which Allah created the heavens and the earth.”

41. Of course, every Muslim is inclined to, and has the right to, interpret such legacies in the light of his own background of knowledge and experience. One might, however, be permitted to suggest that, in view of the importance of the *Nasi* verses to the past and the future of Islam, both the Qur'ān and the *Hadith* literature need to be combed again for ascertaining whether they can possibly mean something other than what they have been understood to mean. For example, CAN the emphasis on ‘the TWELVE MONTHS prevalent ever since He created the HEAVENS AND THE EARTH’ be taken to refer to the ‘twelve sections of the year’ corresponding to the Twelve signs

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of the Zodiac? Must they be taken to mean only the twelve revolutions of the moon around the earth—a duration which falls eleven days short of the terrestrial year and has very little to do with controlling the earthly life of plants, animals and human beings?†

42. This is at least one question which posterity is likely to ask over and over again. But, all that can be said at this stage of our present analysis is that this Farewell Pilgrimage left so deep an impression on the minds of the Muslims of those days, and the condemnation of the *Nasi*, as a recurrent source of confusion, constituted such a palpable relief to those who had experienced the recurrent dislocation it was wont to cause, that its elimination became a religious mission—at least to those who found themselves entrusted with power and responsibility after the demise of the Prophet.

43. Did they realize that the elimination of the *Nasi* by itself, and without the adoption of the alternative means of recording the terrestrial year correctly, was bound to land them from confusion into chaos?

44. Obviously they did not. But how many of us, placed in the circumstances in which they found themselves, would have done so? Apparently, all that their zeal made incumbent on them was to see that this *Nasi*, condemned by the word of God, was eliminated at any cost, at least as a duty owed to their deceased Mentor's farewell message. Arab loyalty apparently demanded that elimination, made it incumbent on them. How this elimination, and later its effacement was achieved, we shall try to explain in tomorrow's lecture.

45. What we have to emphasize at the end of this second lecture is that, within three months of this Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet suddenly fell ill; before 13 days had passed, the Muslim Ummah was orphaned on the 8th of June 632 of the Julian Calendar.

It must have seemed as if the sun had set for ever. They must have been reminded of the verse in *Sūra Mu'min*, (40 : 34) where, referring to the passing away of *Yūsuf*, the Qur'an says :

“...and then you said, “Allah will never send another Messenger again...”.

PLACEMENT OF EVENTS IN THE MEDINAN DECADE ACCORDING TO
THREE DIFFERENT CALENDARS

| Serial No. | Julian Date of New Moon | D o w n s t r e a m Calendar | U p s t r e a m Calendar | E v e n t s | Diff. in Mon. |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 16 July 622 | Dhu'l Qa'd — 2 11th | Muḥarram 1 1st | Upstream Muḥarram | 2 |
| 2 | 15 Aug. " | Dhu'l Ḥajj — 1 12th | Ṣafar 1 2nd | 2nd Pledge/Exodns | 2 |
| 3 | 13 Sep. " | Muḥarram 1 1st | Rab. I 1 3rd | Entry into Medina | 2 |
| 4 | 4 Aug. 623 | Dhu'l Ḥajj 1 12th | Ṣafar 2 2nd | 'Ali-Fātimah m. | 2 |
| 5 | 15 Feb. 624 | Jam. II 2 6th | Sha'bān 2 8th | Change of Qiblah | 2 |
| 6 | 25 Apr. " | Ramaḍān 2 9th | Dhu'l Qa'd 2 11th | Badr | 2 |
| 7 | 22 Aug. " | NASI | Rab. I 3rd | | |
| 8 | 23 June 625 | Shawwāl 3 10th | Muḥarram 4 1st | Uḥad | 3 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------------|----|------|------------|----|------|---------------------|---|
| 9 | 4 Mar. 627 | Sha'bān | 5 | 8th | Dhu'l Qa'd | 5 | 11th | Khandaq | 3 |
| 10 | 20 Aug. " | NASI | | | Rab. II | | 4th | | |
| 11 | 13 Mar. 628 | Rajab | 6 | 7th | Dhu'l Qa'd | 6 | 11th | Hudaibiyah | 4 |
| 12 | 2 Mar. 629 | Rajab | 6 | 7th | Dhu'l Qa'd | 7 | 11th | 'Umratu'l Qaḍa | 4 |
| 13 | 27 Aug. " | NASI | | | Jam. I | | 7 | 5th | |
| 14 | 2 May 630 | Ramaḍān | 8 | 9th | Ṣafar | 9 | 2nd | Submission of Mecca | 5 |
| 15 | 5 Aug. 631 | Dhu'l Ḥajj | 9 | 12th | Jam. I | 10 | 5th | Ḥajj Abu Bakr | 5 |
| 16 | 31 Dec. 631 | Jam. I | 10 | 5th | Shawwāl | 10 | 10th | Death of Ibrahim | 5 |
| 17 | 18 Feb. 632 | Rajab | 10 | 7th | Dhu'l Ḥajj | 10 | 12th | Ḥajjatu'l Widā' | 5 |
| 18 | 27 May 632 | Shawwāl | 10 | 10th | Rab. I | 11 | 3rd | Wafāt : June 8, 632 | 5 |
| | 15 July 632 | NASI | | | Jam. I | 11 | 5th | Abandoned | |

After The Prophet

A. Recapitulation

1. We ended yesterday's lecture at the demise of the Prophet when "it must have seemed that the sun had set for ever...". The nascent Muslim community found itself in sudden darkness and beset with many difficult problems.

هوا مخالف و شب تار و بعد از وفات خیز گسسته لنگر کشتی و ناخدا خفته است

Let us, at this crucial stage of our narrative, take some fresh bearings to understand in better perspective the place of the *Nasi* in the basically changed situation.

2. Calendrical adjustment is a subject with which few people are ever familiar. Mecca had only the one family of Qalammas that had retained its power and privilege by keeping this knowledge to its own elders. They alone had, from time immemorial, virtually dictated when the adjusting month of *Nasi* needed to be intercalated in order to keep the moon-months abreast with the seasons of the terrestrial year. The rest of the Arabs of town or country had little idea of why the *Nasi* was an indispensable feature of any moon-reckoning, and why it could not be abandoned without alternative calendrical provisions.

3. Eliminating the *Nasi* was deceptively easy : to cope with the consequences of such elimination was far, far more, difficult and complicated a procedure. It had required the determination and the power of a Julius Caesar, backed by the administration of a Roman Empire, to replace the inefficient but age-old moon-reckoning by a solar calendar which served the purpose of time-recording infinitely better.

4. Was it to be expected that, with the diffused, primitive cultural base, such as that which existed in the Hijaz of the seventh century,

3. After the Prophet

the adjusted moon-calendar could be easily replaced by an entirely different and unfamiliar reckoning in which the waxing and the waning of the desert moon had no meaning ?

5. Both commonsense and historical evidence would suggest that such a far reaching change would certainly have been too dislocating, too sudden and too premature. Would the Prophet have plunged into such a venture if he had known that he was so close to the end of his mission ?

6. One is, therefore, bound to conclude that the two announcements embodied in the Qur'an, first, the closing of the August Ḥajj to the incorrigible *a'rāb* (Sūrah *Barā'ah* 9 : 1-10); second, the denigration of the *Nasi* as the source of confusion (ibid 9 : 37), both constituted observations rather than injunctions.

7. It must also be remembered that, even if the first of these two passages had announced the closure of the Sanctuary to those who indulged in obscene practices during the Ḥajj, that announcement had not abolished the August assemblage itself. If the second of these two passages denigrated the *Nasi* as the source of confusion, (and, indirectly condemned the moon calendar in which such adjustment was indispensable) it had not *enjoined* the elimination of the *Nasi* as an isolated move. It had not enjoined even a premature adoption of the solar reckoning before the ground had been prepared for introducing what already prevailed in Iran and in Byzantium. Both passages, it must be inferred, were apparently the initial and indirect observations to provide Qur'anic sanctions to facilitate the replacement of the lunar by the solar calendar if and when the time was ripe for such a great step forward in the race of civilization.

8. Despite the justification of the above statements, one cannot forget that the condemnation of the *Nasi* even as an observation, was itself a bold initiative. If death had not intervened, if the need for intercalation had not so tragically coincided with the ensuing chaos, that Qur'anic sanction **could** have led to the eventual adoption of the changeover from the moon to the sun reckoning.

9. With this brief synopsis let us proceed to the post-Prophet period of the Caliphate.

B. The First Khalīfah

10. The faithful Abu Bakr was one of the earliest to believe in the Divine mission entrusted to the Prophet. He was, as mentioned in

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the Qur'an itself, "the second of the two," (Sūrah *Barā'ah*, 9 : 40), in the historic Mecca-Medina journey, ten years earlier. Within a week of the Prophet's demise he took over charge of the Ummah with but one aim : **to carry out to the last letter what he believed to be the wishes of Allah and His Messenger.** Let us now see how the *Nasi*, denigrated so recently, was dealt with during his brief regime of two and a half years.

11. In the slightly condensed version of William Muir's **The Caliphate**, Weir devotes the eleven opening chapters, altogether covering 80 pages, to Abu Bakr's brief regime as Khalifah. In this narrative of events he gives more than 25 seasonal dates of the Julian calendar as milestones to earmark the chronological sequence of events. But the contents of all these eleven chapters are governed by the following passage which he ends almost apologetically :

"...tradition, upto the Prophet's death clear and copious, now suddenly becomes curt, obscure and disconnected. The scene of confusion that prevailed throughout the land, presents itself to us in meagre, dim and hazy outline. With Islam struggling thus for very life, its followers thought at the moment only of the lance and the sword; and when the struggle was at last over, little remained but the sense of escape from a terrible danger. **No dates are given for the many battles fought throughout the year** (that followed the demise of the Prophet). We can only guess at the sequence of events. . .".

(p. 83; emphasis added)

12. This last admission makes most of the above-mentioned 25 or more seasonal dates into merely reasonable conjectures which cannot be accepted as altogether reliable. Four of them, however, divide the 27 months of this regime into three distinct periods; they cannot be far wrong and do throw much light on the events of this fateful interlude :

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1. 10th June 632 | Abu Bakr takes charge | } } } } } } } } } | Period A | 9 months |
| 2. (26?) Feb. 633 | Not able to attend Hajj | | Period B | 12 " |
| 3. (15?) Feb. 634 | Attends Hajj | | Period C | 6 " |
| 4. 23rd Aug. 634 | Abu Bakr passes away. | | | |

13. The second of the above four dates, earmarking the first post-Prophet Hajj of February 633 is the most significant of all, particularly for our chronological analysis, and provides the following important conclusions : The Prophet, as we have seen, passed

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away in June 632, corresponding to *Shawwal* of the old Downstream calendar. Normally, therefore, the first of the three sacred months, *Dhu'l Qa'd*, should have commenced within a month of the Prophet's demise. Preparations for embarking on the Hajj that would follow should have commenced in Medina in this month of *Dhu'l Qa'd*. The Hajj itself would assemble at Mecca in the subsequent month of *Dhu'l Hajj* i.e. August 632. But the above reference to a six months later date, February 633, as the date of the very first post-Prophet Hajj, is a clear indication of the fact that owing either to the earlier announcement by Abu Bakr at the August 631 Hajj (*Surah Bara'h* 9 : 1-10), or to the confusion that followed the demise of the Prophet in June 632, or to the combination of both these factors,

either (a) No Hajj had assembled in Mecca in August 632,

or (b) No notice of that Hajj had been taken in Medina.

14. On the other hand, if this major Hajj had assembled in August 632, that would have been the third year after the preceding intercalation of the *Nasi*, and the question of whether or not another *Nasi* was to be intercalated immediately after that *Dhu'l Hajj* would have had to be faced squarely. The fact that that Hajj, for one reason or another, had failed to assemble obviously eliminated any chances of the Qalammas to announce the intercalation. Consequently, THE MOON-MONTH THAT FOLLOWED THE DHU'L HAJJ WAS NOT THE INTERCALARY MONTH OF NASI BUT MUHARRAM—THE FIRST MONTH OF THE NEXT YEAR !

15. This omission of the *Nasi*, even in the third year after its preceding occurrence, brought in the NEW-YEAR moon of Muharram on 23rd August, that is, more than a month prior to the Autumn Equinox. This had not happened in Arab memory; or at least not in the memory of the then living generation. Even the Bedouin, scattered in the rocky hills and sandy plains, could not have failed to notice this earlier than usual commencement of the New Year. The cycle of their sheep and camel breeding would have to be expedited, if the *'ushr*, or the tithed animals were to be handed in as one-tenth of the year's produce.

16. But the classes of people for whom this acceleration or advance of the New Year Moon was more disconcerting were the people of the oases who grew wheat and barley and paid their *'ushr* after having harvested their crops. How could they pay these tithes in kind before their crops were harvested ?

17. The plight of the trading communities of the towns, including the *Quraish*, was even worse; their very economic existence depended upon the close synchronization of their trade cycles with the cycles of the seasons. Their trade agreements, the *ilāf*, (*Sūra Quraish*, 106 : 2) would have to be fulfilled a month earlier than anticipated. The protection from violence guaranteed to their caravans could be counted upon only a month later; would not their trade be exposed to ravage in the intervening month? The timing of the Winter Caravan, the *rihlāt ash-shitā'*, became a matter of concern. The *Hajj al Akbar* had not assembled in August 632; presumably, the subsequent pre-winter setting out of the caravan to the south would also have to be cancelled; when goods from the north had not been exchanged in August, what would be available for being transported to the south in the November that would follow?

18. At the beginning of yesterday's lecture it had been shown that the adjusting *Nasi* had served as the king-bolt that had kept together and co-ordinated the functioning of the other four cultural patterns of the pagan Arabs. In spite of the far-reaching reforms in the ideology of the people, in spite of the change over from idolatory to the worship of the One and the Only Allah, this king-bolt had continued to function and to retain the identity of the Arabs as a people even during the Medinan decade of the Prophet's mission. With the removal of this king-bolt, the adjusting and co-ordinating *Nasi*, within two months of the Prophet's demise, the old Arab culture fell apart into pieces. The reaction to religious reform, so adroitly controlled by the Prophet even till the end of his mission, suddenly gave place to accelerating anarchy and chaos. Along with the *Nasi* the other four co-ordinating cogwheels grinded to a halt. When the Second Khalifah took over the leadership of the orphaned Ummah, the Minor and Major Assemblies of Spring and Autumn, the trade caravans of winter and summer, the four sacred months and the trade covenants with the tribes of the north and the south had all become well-nigh obsolete.

19. What we have noted above are only logical conclusions drawn from the significance of the occurrence of the first post-Prophet *Hajj* having become due in the month of February 633. Let us see what Muir/Weir's account, which is so conspicuously silent with regard to any mention of the change over from the adjusted to the unadjusted moon-calendar, has to report between the lines on these developments during the regime of the first successor of the Prophet.

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“The Arabs were on all sides rising in rebellion. Apostasy and disaffection raised their heads. Christians and Jews began to stretch out their necks; and the faithful were as a flock of sheep without a shepherd; their Prophet gone, their numbers few, their foes a multitude...(p. 11)

“The Collectors of tithe (an impost hateful to the Bedouin), the Legates and the Residents of Mohammad throughout the Provinces,—all, in fact, who represented the authority of Islam,—fled or were expelled. The Faithful, wherever found, were massacred, some of the Confessors suffering a cruel death. Mecca and At-Taif wavered at first; but in the end through the strong influence of the Koreish stood firm...‘Amr, returning from Oman, reported that the whole of central Arabia was in open apostasy or ready to break away on the first demand of tithe ... his report filled the citizens of Medina with dismay ... ” (ibid p. 12)

“A deputation offered to hold by Islam and its ritual, if only they were excused the tithe ... But the Caliph indignantly rejected the offer ... ‘If you withhold but a tether of a tithed camel, I will fight you for it’, said the Caliph.” (ibid p. 13)

20. It is reported that some of the Bedouin around Medina actually attacked the town but strong defences had been set up so that they dispersed in discomfiture. This little victory turned the tide and the immediate danger was passed over.

21. But the basis of this revolt the earlier-than-usual arrival of the New Year and the consequent inability of the people to pay tithe, before harvest, went unnoticed, or at least unrecorded.

22. On the very next page we read :

“Soon afterwards, the spirits of the Muslims rose as they saw some chiefs appear bringing in the tithes. The tribes whom they represented were indeed few compared to the apostate hordes, but it was an augury for brighter days ... ” (ibid p. 14)

23. What is not recorded is that this delayed but voluntary submission was perhaps due to the arrival of the proper season and the consequent facility for payment of the seasonal tithes. Instead, what is recorded is as follows :

“It was the simple faith of Abu Bakr which fitted him for the task, and made him carry out the law of his Master to the letter ... ” (ibid p. 14)

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24. In any case it is said to have become obvious to the Caliph that Islam had to be prepared in advance for the recurrence of such situations. So, Abu Bakr organised,

“eleven independent columns, and over each appointed a distinguished leader ... Arabia was parcelled out and each detachment given a quarter to reclaim with marching orders—where to begin and what course to take ... By this great scheme, in course of time, no spot would be left unconquered. ... ” (ibid p. 16)

25. Changed circumstances had apparently effected a metamorphosis of Islam. In contrast to the peaceful occupation of the Arab citadel of Mecca only four years earlier, the Muslim armies were, henceforth, to spread far and wide expanding the glory of a conquering creed to the ends of the earth.

26. But time moves on oblivious of human struggle with an ever-changing situation. Another twelve moon-months passed by and another Hajj is said to have assembled in February (15th ?) 634. Coming only 11 days earlier in the season each year, the moon month was still (the old) *Rajab*. The emergent situation had apparently relaxed somewhat. So the Caliph attended this Hajj in a season which had become appreciably cooler than it had been until the Farewell Pilgrimage of 8th March 632. Thanks to the elimination of the adjusting *Nasi*, it would thus continue to change its climatological nature around the seasons; one year it would expose the bare-headed pilgrims to the intense heat of the desert sun†; during another year their bodies, covered with nothing more than two pieces of unsewn cloths, would shiver in the bitter winds of the desert nights. During still another year a large proportion of the animals, led to Mecca for the great sacrifice, would consist of mothers bearing their unborn young.

27. Abu Bakr passed away on the 23rd of August 634. But it was in this brief interlude of just a little more than two years that an anomalous cultural pattern had infiltrated into the socio-economic life of Islam. It appears that the Prophet of Islam had hoped and planned to advance the calendar of his people from the inefficient but adjusted lunar to the pragmatic and progressive solar reckoning. His sudden demise, the chaos that followed and, apparently, the earnest zeal of his followers to carry out what they thought to be his wishes to the last letter, had retrogressed it from a ‘lunar’ not to a solar but to a ‘pseudo-lunar’ reckoning.

C. The Second Khalifah

28. Weir's revised version of Muir's *The Caliphate*, which we have been following, devotes sixteen chapters, covering 112 pages, to the regime of 'Umar, the Second Khalifah. Whether the dates or the sequence of events during these 10 years and 3 months (August 634 to November 644) were any more reliable than those of Abu Bakr's regime is not mentioned. The only reference of chronological significance is the following brief passage and its footnote :

“To Umar is popularly ascribed ... the regulation of the Arabian year. He introduced for this purpose the Mohammadan Era, commencing with the new moon of the first month (Moharram) of the year in which the Prophet fled from Mecca. Hence the Mohammadan era was named the *Hijra*, sometimes written *Hegira*, or “Era of the Flight” 1 (ibid p. 181)

29. M. Hamidullah, in an article contributed in 1968 to a Pakistani journal,† provides the following corroboration :

“The calendar reform dates from the lifetime of the Prophet, yet the adoption of the *Hijrah*, as the point of the beginning of the Muslim era, dates from the Caliphate of 'Umar, some six years after the death of the Prophet. According to our sources, (Ṭabari, Sakhawi, Ibn al Jawzi, Ibn 'Asākir) it was the governor of Basrah, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ari, who first felt the need of citing the year along with the date and the month in State documents; a certain Yemenite explained the practice in his country; 'Ali suggested the adoption of the *Hijrah* as the starting point; it was 'Uthman whose suggestion prevailed that Muharram should continue to be the first month, and not *Rabi' al awwal* in which the Prophet had reached Medina.”

30. A more recent article in Urdu by one Mowlana Sa'id al A'zamī of Hyderabad repeats the same information still more elaborately :

- (a) “Abu Musa, in a letter to the Second Khalifah, asked why it was that no date was mentioned in the communications received from him.
- (b) “Maimun bin Mehran reports that a payment order was received by the Amir al-Mu'minin on which the date mentioned only the month Sha'ban. He asked, “Which Sha'ban ? the current Sha'ban ? the preceding Sha'ban ? or the coming Sha'ban ?”
- (c) “Muhammad bin Miran reports that a man asked the Khalifah 'Umar to specify dates on his instructions. 'Umar

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asked, 'What do you mean by dates?' The man explained that the Khusros of Iran, on their letters and Farmans inscribed the date, the month and the year in which they were issued. 'Umar said, "This is a good system."

(Daily Navid -e Deccan, 1st Jan. 1977)

31. These quotations I give only as brief illustrations. But references are many to the fact that it was in about the fourth year of the Second Khalifah's regime that some serious attention was paid to the setting in order of the Muslim calendar.

32. But a perusal of many such references like those given above leaves one with a peculiar frustration. They, so to say, beat about the bush, but evade, the crucial questions. For example, we have had to infer from the dates given by William Muir how the *Nasi* was overlooked and ceased to be intercalated during the regime of the First Caliph. But nowhere in this book or elsewhere is it specifically mentioned that it was during this regime that the *Nasi* ceased to be intercalated. Coming to the regime of the Second Caliph, we are often shown that some chronological problems were taken notice of; their solutions had become imperative; they were attended to during his regime. But, when you try to see what these problems really were and what solutions had been adopted, there are just no such details available. All that we are told, over and over again, is that the point of the Hijrah was fixed as the beginning of the Muslim Era. But this was the least complicated of the problems; the old Arab year, from time immemorial, had begun with the new-moon of *Muharram*. To add to this, the Hijrah from Mecca, as we have already shown, had taken place, almost as if it had been timed by the Prophet himself to herald both a new year and a new era commencing with the new moon of that month. It must, therefore, be concluded that fixation of the Muslim calendar, as an achievement of the Second Khalifah involved other adjustments beside the point of time from which the Muslim Era was to commence.

D. The Emerging Thesis

33. The question of questions that confronts us is : What happened to the three months of *Nasi* that had actually intervened during the first ten years of the new *Hijrah* era ? By what calendrical device did they become non-existent ? The cessation of intercalation during the regime of the First Khalifah had **eliminated** the *Nasi* from the

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present and the future; but when, and by what *mantra* was their existence effaced from the past ?

34. This was the question the answer for which had eluded me for thirty years. It had seemed an unanswerable question when fourteen centuries had buried the scanty historical records to depths unreachable. It was only the concentration and mental strain experienced in the course of preparing these very lectures that brought the answer to the surface. I was, and will continue to be, amazed at the answer which suddenly appeared before me.

35. Yesterday I presented to you the chart fixing the important events of the Medinan decade according to the months of the Julian, the 'Downstream' and the 'Upstream' calendars. Column 6 of this chart had revealed a peculiar rise of numbers in the difference between the two above-mentioned lunar reckonings : every time a *Nasi* month had intervened, the difference had increased by 1. For example, the month of the *Hijrah* was *Muharram*, the 1st month of the year according to the Downstream reckoning; *Rabi' al Awwal*, the 3rd month according to the Upstream reckoning; the difference between 3 and 1 was 2. But, after passing one *Nasi*, such difference became 3. After traversing over the next two *Nasi* months such difference rose from 3 to 4 and then from 4 to 5 !

36. And wonder of wonders ! This made *Rajab* the seventh month of the 10th year in the Downstream calendar correspond to the *Dhu'l Hajj* the twelfth month in the Upstream reckoning ! The month of the *Hajj al Akbar* had become superimposed upon the month of the *Hajj al Asghar* !† There lay the answer for which I had been racking my brain for three decades. Someone had managed not only to transform the *Hajj al Asghar* into the *Hajj al Akbar* but also to efface the three *Nasi* months which would, otherwise, obtrude so glaringly in a decade at the end of which the *Nasi* had been denigrated. This legerdemain, I felt, was not possible for any one but a member of the Qalammas clan which we have already discussed in connection with the one weak and fragile link in the cultural chain binding the Arab tribes into a people.

37. What seems to have happened is this : The Second Khalifah, beset with the problem of reconciling (a) the actual existence and (b) the desired non-existence of the *Nasi* in the very first decade of the Muslim era, initiated in his regime and, finding it imperative to restore some order and sequence in the accumulating chaos of months and years, had commandeered the services of a member of the

Qalammas clan to provide a solution. It was apparently a shrewd representative of this calendar-manipulating clan that had solved this dual problem in his own cynical and spiteful style.

38. It must be remembered that the elimination of the *Nasi* in the time of the First Khalifah had already deprived this clan of its prestige, perhaps even of its livelihood. Now one of this clan was being asked by his detractors to remove the consequent anomalies in their time-reckoning and for this purpose to use, so to say, the know-how of his discredited occupation ! If this Qalammas of Arabia had had a sense of humour equal to that of the Brahmin of India, he might have said :

بدین کرامت بتخانہ سرا ای شیم
کہ چون خراب شود خانہ خدا گردد

Anyway, assuming this situation, my personal deciphering of the records, written between the lines, with invisible ink, has suggested that the seemingly attractive formula provided by this virtuoso was somewhat as follows :

39. "The Farewell Pilgrimage, the *Hajjat-ul widā'*, had concurred with the *Hajj al Asghar*, the Minor Pilgrimage of *Rajab*. In view of the supreme importance which this occasion had acquired after the demise of the Prophet, this 'minor' Hajj could legitimately be given the status of the 'major' Hajj by giving to this month of *Rajab* the title of *Dhu'l Hajj*. This will advance the year 5 months by transforming the 7th month into the 12th month of that year. From this titled month of *Dhu'l Hajj* go back upstream on the river of time naming the months retrogressively as if there had been no *Nasi*. This procedure will efface the 3 months of *Nasi* by having given them the names of three ordinary months; the remaining two months *Şafar* and *Muharram* will recede behind the horizon of the *Hijrah* and be lost in the darkness of the pre-Hijrah Meccan period. They will be overlapped by the last two months of *Dhu'l Hajj* and *Dhu'l Qa'd* of the old *Nasi*-adjusted epoch. In time, the addition of these 2 months also will be effaced from Muslim memory even as the 3 months of *Nasi* will have been effaced from the first decade of the newly introduced Muslim Era."

40. This is exactly what seems to have been done†. The 3 months of *Nasi* that had actually occurred in the Medinan decade of the Prophet's life as months of *Nasi* assumed other names in the *Sirah*

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literature; likewise, no one has thought of asking the question which may have been framed as follows :

“If the *Hijrah* had taken place in *Rabī‘al-Awwal*, is there no record whatsoever of any events that occurred in the immediately preceding *Şafar* and *Muḥarram* ? Is there nothing worth mentioning in the very first two months of the Muslim era ?”

The answers to these questions will corroborate my thesis. No events can be attributed to these two months of *Şafar* and *Muḥarram* simply because these two months had no existence; in reality they were the months of *Dhu‘l Qa‘d* and *Dhu‘l Ḥajj*, the latter being the month in which the *Hijrah* had commenced.

41. Years ago, my own intermittent attempts to reconcile what seemed to be irreconcilable had made me suspect that some tinkering at some time in Islam’s history had made the moon calendar take a half turn on its axis making vi into xii and xii into vi.† I even remember telling Dr. Hamidullah while he was still in the Osmania University i. e. before 1947, about this possibility; I even remember his suggesting that something of the kind might have been done under the Fatimid regime in Egypt. Later, I had tried to explain to my friend and colleague, Syed Kazim, what seemed to be a transformation of the *Minor Ḥajj* into a *Major Ḥajj*. But when ? Why ? By whom ? Under what compulsions ? and lastly, what evidence had I ? all these questions I could not answer. Therefore, for long I had failed to make this thesis convincing to others or even to myself. It was this chagrin at seeing the solution behind a thin veil, so to say, and its elusive play of hide and seek that had made me gnash my teeth over and over again during the last three decades !

42. But now all these questions can be answered with arithmetical precision. The basic motive was apparently the effacement of the *Nasi*—the removal of the contradiction between (a) the denigration of the *Nasi* in the Qur’ān, and (b) the factual retention of the *Nasi* during the very first decade of the new Muslim era. The person responsible for this ingenious manipulation could have been no other than a member of the Qalammas clan. The numerous references to calendrical adjustment in the 16th or 17th year of the *Hijrah* era pointed clearly to this period in the regime of the Second Khalifah, ‘Umar, the Conqueror of Syria, Iran and Egypt, who had been long known for his capacity to cut such Gordian knots. The findings of these missing links had made my reasonable conjectures into a formidable

thesis. Of course, this thesis, like all other theses, is open to refutation, but that could be done only by another thesis which is still more formidable and irrefutable. Until such a thesis appears, this one would serve to reconcile many seeming irreconcilables. Naturally, I felt like shouting Eureka !

E. Resulting Dislocations

43. The expectations of the Qalammas were fulfilled. This ingenious manipulation seems to have aroused little notice amidst the great conquests extending to Khurasan in the north-east, to Egypt in the south-west. Naturally, it went entirely **unrecorded**. The succeeding tumultuous regime of the Bani Umayyah buried it deeper still and beyond even the reach of the collective subconscious.

44. When more than a hundred years later, Ibn Ishāq and Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa'd tried to recapture and martial the sequence of events, they found all the twelve months of a lunar reckoning, unbridled by the seasons, ubiquitously appearing here and there without rhyme or reason. Historical records were all in disarray; the formula of the Qalammas, which would have provided a scale of adjustment was nowhere to be found for solving this inherited jig-saw puzzle.

تھک تھک کے ہو، مقام پہ سو چار، ۲ گئے

تیرا بتا نہ پائیں تو ناچار کیا کریں

45. It could not have been otherwise. All the events of the Medinan decade had been subjected, so to say, to a double exposure; subsequent attempts to etch in the correct outlines had further blurred the images almost beyond recognition. In trying to comply with the demand for presenting a clear picture, these historians had no alternative but to make use of their own imaginations :

چون نہ دیدند حقیقت، ۲ افسانہ زدند

46. Perhaps the most conspicuous instance is the imaginative building up of the Hijrah narrative. Just because the manipulation of the Qalammas had shifted this effulgent event of early Islam from the sacred months of *Dhu'l Hajj* and *Muharram* to the ordinary month of *Rabi'al-Awwal* during which violence was *not* taboo, the sagacity and the careful planning of the exodus from Mecca to Medina have been regrettably overlooked. Instead, the Prophet has been

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exposed to the charge of not having availed of the inviolability of the later half of of *Dhu'l Hajj* immediately following the Second Pledge of 'Aqaba. Worst still, aspersions have been cast on his sense of loyalty by the prevailing belief that he had left at night in search of safety while deliberately leaving his cousin and protege to face the wrath of the discomfited and frustrated Quraish during a month in which there was no guarantee of safety !

47. As we tried to show at the end of the first lecture, this exodus of the Muslims had been planned and executed more precisely than the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. But, thanks to the cynical manipulation recommended by the Qalammas, the *Sirah* of the Prophet has been blemished rather than ornamented by the traditions which are still innocently accepted.

48. The tragedy extends even to the blurring of some passages of the Qur'an. For example, if the three months of the *Nasi* had not been effaced from Muslim records, it would have been clear that the month of *Ramaḍān* throughout the life of the Prophet had corresponded with the May-June season of the year. Hence the injunctions on fasting, revealed a decade before the elimination of the *Nasi*, applied to that particular season. Nor was there any sacredness attached to that month. Many of the active adults used to be away from their homes either on trade or on administrative duties. Badr had occurred in *Ramaḍān* : the submission of Mecca also dates in the same month. Is it, therefore, possible that the verse enjoining fasting, (*Baqarah*, 2 : 185) applies only to those who stay at home in that month ?†

49. I am not saying that it does; all that I wish to convey is that it is this double exposure of the Medinan decade that has led to the two alternative interpretations of the word *shahr* in that verse; some comentators take it to mean the 'moon', others the 'month', We laymen are left to decide for ourselves, without having any clear evidence, on which of these to base our decisions.

50. Without further elaboration of this blurring let me quote another layman, Ishaq un Nabi 'Alavi who has had much more access to *Hadith* and *Sirah* literature than I could ever hope to. Mentally battered and bruised in this debris he says :

“... in the chronological analysis of all important events, there are apparent contradictions and variations on such a vast scale that these narratives can hardly be regarded as history. Neither the days tally with the dates, nor the months coincide

with the seasons; one is left with the only conclusion that most probably all the details were either simple fabrications, or pious intellectual exercises on the part of the early preachers of Islam who were too innocent to visualize that their versions might be scientifically examined at some later stage of history.

“On the other hand, there are examples of dates that are obviously authentic and correct; these are not many but sufficient in number to suggest that the early Sirah writers had some basic source material at their disposal; otherwise there would have been contradictions in these also.

“This makes the issue all the more complex.” (p. 2)

51. Lest this honest fellow-seeker be suspected of having indulged in overstatements, I might mention that his verdict is based on no less than 148 references to Ibn Ishaq, Waqidi, Ibn Hisham, Tabari, Albiruni and last of all William Muir whom we too have quoted.†

F. Removal of Doubts

52. But one other duty I must fulfil, even at the risk of repetition, before I conclude : I must anticipate at least some doubts about the credibility of the thesis itself and also answer some questions that the thesis naturally leads to. This I shall now try to do, as briefly as I can.

53. Many of you will naturally want to ask : How is it that a vital chronological manipulation, like the one I assume as a hypothesis, finds no mention in all the copious *Hadith* and *Sirah* literature ? The answer is that the very purpose of the manipulation seems to have been to obliterate the *Nasi*—not only its stem and branches but its roots as well. How then could this effacement itself be incorporated, or allowed to exist, in historical records ?†

54. You will ask : Have you no other than circumstantial evidence to support this disturbing thesis ? Humbly, I admit that I have only negative evidence. Let me summarise the logic and sequence of my thinking which has led me to this hypothesis :

(i) If the adjusting *Nasi* had not been in practice till the Farewell Pilgrimage, how could it have been called “a recurrent cause of confusion” in Surah *Bará’ah* 9:37 which, as I have shown, is generally accepted as being associated with the *Hajjat al Widá’* ?† Is there then any alternative to accepting that the months were seasonal even during the ten years of the Medinan period ?

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(ii) If the *Nasi* existed till then, it must have occurred three times during the preceding 10 years. Where then have these three months disappeared? What other explanation than this thesis clarifies this effacement?

(iii) Coming downstream, one finds the Farewell Pilgrimage to correspond with the *Minor Hajj* of the spring month of *Rajab*, and corresponding closely with the Vernal Equinox. Going upstream from this very current month of *Rabi'ath-thani*, 1397 of the Hijrah era, we find that the vernal equinox of 10 A. H. corresponds with the month of *Dhu'l Hajj*. How else but through this thesis, can one explain this overlapping of the *Major* over the *Minor Hajj*?

(iv) According to all *Sirah* and *Hadith* literature, the *Hijrah* occurred in the month of *Rabi'al-Awwal*, A.H. 1. Is there a single tradition mentioning the immediately preceding months of *Safar* and *Muharram*—the very first two months of the first year with which the Muslim Era commenced? How have these two months become non-existent? How else, but on the basis of this thesis, can one explain this disappearance?

55. When not one, not two, not three, but all these four contradictions are explained away by a single thesis; and when, further, there is no alternative thesis to clear away even one of these four contradictions, what alternative is there to the acceptance of this thesis?

56. I admit that the acceptance of this thesis is a painful experience to every Muslim. It hurts our cultural ego. As a born and avowed member of the Muslim community, my individual ego too cannot but be pained at the exposure of this wide crack in the armour of our age-old traditions. But, if I have been aroused by even one of the glories of the Qur'an, it is its sincerity, its honesty, its presentation of facts without any attempts at dilution or toning down in consideration of human weaknesses. If I am asked to point out the most outstanding features in the character of our Prophet as I see him reflected in the Qur'an, I can point to no other than his straightforwardness, his transparent honesty, his refusal to compromise with regard to truth. Such being the teaching of the Qur'an and such the example set by the man whom we accept as our Prophet, shall we shirk our duty of accepting a logical thesis which we cannot prove to be false? Is it not imperative on us to overcome hesitations prompted by both our individual and our collective egos?

مرا در دست اند د ای کریم زبان سوزد
و کردم در کشم ترسم که مغز استخوان سوزد

G. Reconstruction : Possibilities and Limitations

57. It will now be obvious that much of the *Sirah* has to be chronologically reconstructed in the light of the thesis that has been unearthed by the application of inductive analysis to the scanty records. We now have a scale against which to test and adjust the recorded data. Such an effort will either set the events and their sequence in obvious order, or it will prove the inadequacy, perhaps, the falsity of my thesis and of the scale itself. Unfortunately, even the latter outcome will not help much; we shall still need an alternative formula and scale which will meet the needs better, and which will clear away the discrepancies that abound. Until such a formula and such a scale are discovered we have only two alternatives before us—either to work with this new formula as a tentative hypothesis, or to continue to be smugly satisfied with the old chronological chaos which 'Alavi laments with such poignancy.

58. In any case, such a reconstruction of Islamic chronology cannot be expected from any individual, or group of pedants, committed to the old deductive system of reasoning in which every new idea has to be corroborated by precedent and tradition rather than by experiment and trial and error, supplemented by logical inference. Only persons familiar with the scientific method, those who are as willing to unlearn as to learn, can be expected to make headway in this labyrinth of doubtful information where there is much more to reject and discard than to accept or add. It is this need that throws wide open the doors of Islamic research to the many, instead of limiting this responsibility to the few who claim the monopoly of knowledge in the field of Islamic historiology. No person who claims to be a Muslim and has worked for a high research degree, or has published some papers, no matter in what field, can be absolved from the duty of examining the *Sirah* literature with a view to obtaining for himself, if not for others, a logically clear perspective of the Prophet's life, his aims and his achievements. It is only the siftings by such a multitude of laymen that will give us a clearer picture of the Prophet, the greatest benefactor of Muslims—if not of mankind.

59. Here my task as a researcher ends. I have outlined my thesis and have explained the basis of the contradictions found in *Sirah* literature; I have, in short, shown that it is an expedient solution of a problem raised by the entanglements of history that has led to the roving *Hajj* and the roving *Ramaḍān* over the past nearly fourteen centuries. I have even gone slightly beyond my sphere in suggesting

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how the recasting of the *Sirah* can be hoped for through fresh approaches and new talents. But it would be dishonest for me to say that beyond this point I am not interested in any reform of the Muslim religious calendar in the future.

H. The Future

60. That, however, is a problem for the *Ummah* and the *Ulu'l amr* (*Nisa* 4:82) 'those deserving of command', and the *Ulu'l aydi wa'l abṣār* (*Ṣād* 38:45) 'men of action and foresight', 'the *Ulu'l faḍl waṭ ṭaul* 'men of generosity and means', to deliberate upon.

61. Besides, as I have already said at the beginning of this last lecture, calendrical modification or reform is not a phenomenon to be treated as child's play or pushed through in a hurry. Years of deliberation at the highest intellectual levels of the *Ummah* will be needed to arrive at a *modus operandi* which will not throw Islam from confusion into chaos.

62. Such a problem becomes all the more risky in times such as ours when things move so fast that a single thoughtless deed or word carries its reverberations over the globe in a matter of seconds and when we are not quite sure as to whether mankind itself will survive to witness the opening of the 21st century. We have at this moment little knowledge of what new vistas or what calamities will face mankind during this last quarter of our current century.

63. Restricting ourselves, therefore, to the fate of only the peculiar calendar that we Muslims have inherited, I can see three points of time which are significant :

(a) The transition point of our unadjusted lunar calendar from its 14th to its 15th century. Such points always evoke resolutions for the future and give rise to thinking and emotional fervour. This particular point of time the 1st of *Muharram*, 1401 A. H. will coincide with Sunday, 11th November 1980, a little more than three years from now.

(b) The 22nd of September 1985, when the 1st of *Muharram* 1406 A. H. will fall close to the Autumnal Equinox and re-railment of the Muslim Calendar from the orbit of the moon to the orbit of the sun will be most feasible at that point of time. The duration between points 'a' and 'b' will be only 5 years,

(c) The transition of the Western Era from its 20th to its 21st century. The current year being 1977, another 23 years intervene between now and then.

Upstream Downstream

64. All that I request my audiences, and the readers of the printed versions of my lectures, is to do their best and utmost in these next three years, to initiate discussions, to weigh both pros and cons and to get a verdict on whether my thesis is plausible and acceptable or puerile and unwarranted. This, it seems to me, is a duty of all those who come in contact with this problem, a duty which they owe to Allah, to the Qur'an and to the Prophet; to the Muslim community and the rest of humanity. Let there be a candid controversy throughout the Muslim world over this issue. Let the learned of the East and the West try to tear it to pieces. And if, even at the end of three years, the men of vision in the *Ummah* cannot accept the validity of my thesis, nothing further can or needs to be done. They will have done their duty, even as I have done mine.

65. If, on the other hand, the efforts of my listeners and my readers lead to an affirmative consensus on my thesis, the answer to the question whether anything needs to be done or not for the future will itself come to the surface in the minds of those who are convinced of the validity of my thesis. No forecast can, or need, be indulged in before such a situation arises.

66. The five years between the time-points 'a' and 'b' will then provide ample time for deliberating on what exactly needs to be done and how the change is to be effected at the end of these five years. Time-point 'b' will provide an opportunity which will not recur again for the next 33 years.

67. If, however, this time-point 'b', the Autumnal Equinox of 22nd September 1985, is taken advantage of, the renaissance of Islam, will have commenced only eight years hence !

NOTES

Lecture I

- 1.5. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's Appendix No. XI (pp. 1077-8 in his English translation of the Qur'ān) gives several examples to show the unbelievable chaos in fixing the dates and sequence of events even during the end of the Prophetic mission. It is not the paucity of dates but the abundance of mutually contradicting estimates that leads to this confusion. It is the basic cause of this confusion that these lectures are meant to reveal.
- 1.20. Ishaqun Nabi 'Alavi gives the following references to the *Hajjal Aşghar*, also known as '*Umrah*' which used to assemble at Mecca during the month of *Rajab* : "Ṭabari III, 157 and 174; Baihaqi, *Sunan*, IV, 345." This month of *Rajab* coinciding with the Jewish moon-month of *Nisan*, and covering the vernal equinox, was considered the most sacred among the Four Sacred Months known as the *ashhur ul hurum*. See Burhān, Delhi, November 1964, pp 283-4.
- 1.22. See M. Hamidullah's references to these tithes in his two books : *Introduction to Islam*, 1968, paras 175 b and 349; *Muhammad Rasulillah*, 1974, paras 20, 39 and 263.
- 1.25. Obviously the Jewish and the Arab year was originally identical, both commencing close to the autumnal equinox, the first month being named *Tishri* by the Jews and *Muḥarram* by the Arabs. Exodus XII : 1-6 testifies how, on their return from exile, the Jews were enjoined to transfer their New Year from this first month *Tishri* to their seventh month *Nisan*, that is from the autumnal to the Vernal equinox. With this transfer of the new year from *Tishri* to *Nisan* the intercalary thirteenth month, which had to come at the end of the year also had to be shifted to a place between *Adar*, the last month and *Nisan* the first month of the next year; this intercalary month corresponding with the Arab *Nasi*, was named *Veadar* or the 'extra *Adar*'. This feature of the Jewish calendar is clarified in the Table on pages 540-1 in *Handbuch der judischen Chronologie* by Dr.

- Eduard Mahler, Leipzig, 1916. A photostat copy of this table given to me by Professor Baron of the Jewish Seminary, New York, in 1953, has been invaluable to me in my study of the *Hijrah era*.
- 1.36. The word *Hajj* also implies a time and place for social mingling and settlement of disputes by arbitration or other peaceful means. See Sura 2 : 189 as well as the note on that verse by the present writer given in the Appendix of Mirza Abul Fazl's *Gharib ul Qur'an*, an Urdu dictionary of the Qur'an printed in Hyderabad, India in 1947, pp 432-4.
- 1.49. *Memoire Sur le Calendrier Arab Avant L'Islamism*, an article by Caussin de Perceval in the Journal Asiatique, Paris 1843. For English translation see Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, April 1947, p. 150, footnote.
- 1.51. *Annali Dell' Islam*, compiled by Leone Caetani, Milan 1905. In ten volumes; Vol. I covers the years 1 to 6 A. H. in its 740 pages.
- 1.55. See Note on 1.25 above.

Lecture II

- 2.13. This is an off-print of his article entitled, *The Nasi, the Hijrah Calendar and the Need of Preparing a new Concordance for the 'Ijrah and Gregorian Eras*. In this the auther makes the following important statement :
- “The *Hijrah* calendar is the direct successor of the Makkan luni-solar calendar which practised *nasi* (intercalation). Axel Moberg's researches on *Nasi* in German (*an-Nasi*, Lund. 1931) date from 1931, and of course new sources have have since become available. *Except the last three months, the Prophet passed his entire life under the old order* (emphasis added). It is therefore indispensible that relations between the two calenders should be investigated anew when new material has come to light or new avenues are opened for one reason or another.”
- (Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Vol. XVI Pt. I, Jan. 1968 pp 2-3)

Lecture III

- 3.26. "In 1953 the annual pilgrimage . . . came in mid-summer. Ahmad Kamal in the Saturday Evening Post wrote that the heat ranged between 116 and 127 degrees and on one day the mercury climbed to 142 causing the death of 4,411 pilgrims on that day alone. And all this tragic loss of life was due to the non-seasonal moon calendar!" (Journal of Calendar Reform, New York, Jan. 1954 p. 79)
- 3.29. See para 11 in M. Hamidullah's article mentioned in note 2.13 above.
- 3.36. See Note 1.20 above.
- 3.40. By that time Islam had already spread far and wide. Perhaps there lay a further attraction in having a unique calendar which was not even adjustable to those of the Iranians, the Christians and the Jews all of whom were now regarded as conquered peoples. This pride in distinction and uniqueness, a very human weakness, was displayed in our own times by Muhammad Ali Jinnah when he eulogized his 'two nations' theory in the following memorable words :
- "We are a nation of hundred millions with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and *calendar*, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions, in short, a distinctive outlook on life and of life. Hindus worship the cow, we eat it and our heroes are their enemies."
- I remember my attention being particularly drawn to the word 'calendar' when reading the above statement displayed prominently in the Muslim League Camp in Delhi a few months before the partition of the subcontinent.
- 3.41. The following verbatim extract from my unpublished book, **FACTS and FANCIES**, printed and bound by the Central Government Press of the then Hyderabad State, in 1947, just prior to the Partition of India, will show how closely I had reached, within three years of having started on the search, to

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the solution which has now been discovered and elaborated in these lectures :

“My own theory, which I hope one day to support with evidence, is that the transposition of a mid-summer month to mid-winter was probably the outcome of a sudden change of the month of Hajj from the autumn to the spring and the consequent juxtaposition of the two halves constituting the Arab year.”

Dr. M. Hamidullah, of the Osmania University, on reading this paper in manuscript, tells me that it is even possible, though not likely, that such a transposition took place during the brief all-round sway of the Fatimide dynasty which was notorious for its unorthodoxy : like many other notable incidents in history, it is not impossible that the record of this also was lost in oblivion.

- 3.48. See Islamic Culture; The ‘Month’ in the Qur’an, Section IV, January, 1977.
- 3.51. See note to 1.5
- 3.53. See in note 3.41 above how this had been foreshadowed 30 years earlier.
- 3.54. See note to 2.13.

EARLIER COMMUNICATIONS

1. *FACTS and FANCIES*, Hyderabad, India, 1947. A book of essays, a majority among them analysing the four calendars then prevalent in Hyderabad State, and submitting for the first time the thesis that the two verses of the Qur'an (IX : 36-7), generally interpreted as the prohibition of intercalation, in fact, implied a suggestion to adopt the purely solar calendar then prevalent both among Iranians and Christians as against the luni-solar calendar of the Jews, which was then being followed more or less closely, by the Muslims.
2. English translation of Caussin de Perceval's article on the Arab Calendar before Islam, published a hundred years ago in *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, in 1843. ISLAMIC CULTURE, Hyderabad, India, Vol. XXII, No. 1, April 1947.
3. Fresh Observations on Perceval's 100 Year Old Notes on the Arab Calendar before Islam, ISLAMIC CULTURE, Hyderabad, India, Vol. XXII, No. 2, April 1948.
4. The Crescent and the Moon, JOURNAL OF CALENDAR REFORM, New York, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, June 1953. This article repeated the thesis originally presented in *Facts and Fancies*, 1947, and suggested that the Muslim countries accept the proposed World Calendar then under consideration of the United Nations.
5. The First Decade in Islam, THE MUSLIM WORLD, Hartford, Connecticut, April, 1954. Referred to by Montgomery-Watt in *Mohammad in Medina*, p. 339.
6. India's Calendar Horizons, JOURNAL OF CALENDAR REFORM, New York, April, 1954. A resume of the four calendars analyzed in item 1 above.
7. The Jewish Origin of the world Calendar, JOURNAL OF CALENDAR REFORM, New York, December 1954.
8. Must the Hajj Rotate Round the Seasons ? ISLAMIC REVIEW Woking, England, March 1956.

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9. *The Message of the Qur'an-Presented in Perspective*, Charles E. Tuttle Co. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan. A full translation of the Qur'an, with the 114 Suras with original Arabic text presented in perspective order. The *Nasi* explained in Appendix C I at the end of the volume.
10. *The Genesis of the Purely Lunar Calendar and its Influence on World History*. A printed Paper distributed at the meeting of the American Oriental Society, held in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Penn. in March 1976.
11. *The 'Month' in the Qur'an*, ISLAMIC CULTURE, Hyderabad, India Vol. II, No. 1, January 1977.

**The Confluence
of
Islam and Hinduism**

by
B. N. Pande

The rise of Islam is one of the marvels of history. In the summer of AD 622, a prophet without honour in his own country, left his native city to seek asylum in the town of Yathrib—since known as Madinat-un-Nabi, 'the city of the Prophet', more than two hundred miles north of Mecca, the town which had cast him out. Little more than a century later, the successors and the followers of the fugitive, were ruling an empire, which extended from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian to the cataracts of the Nile, and included Spain and Portugal, some of the most fertile regions of southern France, the whole of the northern coast of Africa, upper and lower Egypt, their own native Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Transoxiana.¹

It was in AD 711 that the first Muslim invader, Muhammad bin-Qasim, crossed the sea, defeated Dahir, and laid the foundation of the first Muslim Kingdom in Sind. When the Arab commander reached Alor, the citizens resisted the invaders vigorously for several months. Then they sued for peace, insisting on two conditions : one, that no resident of the city be killed, and two, that there should be no interference with their places of worship. Muhammad bin Qasim in accepting these terms said : "The temples of Hindustan are like the churches of Christians, the synagogues of Jews and the fire-temples of the Magians."²

Regarding the invasion of Sind two things may be noted : (i) that the oppression of the native rulers was the prominent cause of the success of the Arabs; and, (ii) that apart from the slaughter and plunder during the actual course of war, the moment victory was won and peace concluded, a most enlightened policy of administration was followed which stands in shining contrast to the deeds narrated in the contemporary European history. Here are some of the Qasim's orders :

“Muhammad Qasim ordered 12 dirhams weight of silver to be consigned to each man, because all their property had been plundered. He appointed people from among the villagers and the chief citizens to collect the fixed taxes from the cities and villages that there might be a feeling of strength and protection”³

Muhammad bin Qasim maintained their (Brahmans') dignity and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence. They were protected against opposition and violence. Each of them was entrusted with an office.

Hajjaj, Governor of Iraq, the uncle of Qasim and his immediate superior, wrote to him as follows : As they (Hindus) have made submission and have agreed to pay taxes to the Khalifa, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection and we cannot in any way stretch our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like.

He (Muhammad-bin-Qasim) directed the nobles, the principal inhabitants, and the Brahmans to build their temples, traffic with the Muhammadans, live without fear and to strive to better themselves. He also enjoined them to maintain the indigent Brahmans with kindness, observe the rites and customs of their ancestors and give oblations and alms to the Brahmans according to former practice.⁴

The invasions of the Ghaznavides were of the nature undertaken more for the sake of plunder than conquest. Mahmud, whom historians have invested with the character of a religious zealot, had in fact little ecclesiastical fervour. His chief aim was the establishment of an empire from the Punjab to the Euphrates, and his Indian adventures were mainly intended to provide him with the means for the fulfilment of his imperialistic designs, which embraced even the subordination of the Caliph to his will. This explains why he attacked one after another, the great centres of wealth in northern India and never seriously considered the problem of subjugating and ruling the country. A curious light is thrown upon his policy and proceedings by the fact that in his armies which fought on the confines of his dominions, Indian troops formed part of his forces. There is no doubt that the Ghaznavides held a high opinion

of the military qualities of the Hindus, and the Hindus appeared to have had no repugnance to serving them. Mahmud's son Masud employed Servand Rao in his fight with his brother, and Tilak son of Jai Sen to bring to book Ahmad Nialtigin the rebel governor of the Indian province. Again he raised Hindu troops to fight against the Saljuk Turks, while his successor deputed the Kotwal of Ghazni to recall Bijai Rai a Hindu general to Ghazni from where he had fled on account of some political dissensions.

The conquests of Muhammad Gohri and his general Qutb uddin Aibak were in the nature of a triumphal march made easy by the internecine quarrels of the Rajput princes who then controlled the destinies of northern India. Within the interval of less than a quarter of a century the whole of northern India had not only been overrun but brought under subjection. But the establishment of Muslim rule implied little more than the substitution of Hindu Rajas and Zamindars by Muslim chiefs. Sir Wolseley Haig in the Cambridge History of India points out :

"The rhapsodies of Muslim historians in their accounts of the suppression of a rising or the capture of a fortress, of towns and villages burnt, of whole districts laid waste, ...might delude us into the belief that the early Muslim conquest of Northern India was one prolonged holy war waged for the extirpation of idolatry and the propagation of Islam, had we not proof that this cannot have been the case... . All Muslim rulers in India from Mahmud downwards, accepted, when it suited them to do so, the allegiance of Hindu rulers and landholders, and confirmed them as vassals in the possession of their hereditary lands."⁶

And again, "on this (Hindu) population they (the Muslim rulers) relied not only for the means of support, but also to a great extent for the subordinate machinery of government; for there can be no doubt that practically all minor posts connected with the assessment and collection of the land revenue and with accounts of public and state finance generally were filled, as they were made generations later, by Hindus

"Rebellion and overt disaffection were repressed with ruthless severity, and were doubtless made occasions of proselytism, but the sin was rebellion, not religious error, and there is no reason to believe that the position of the Hindu cultivator was worse under a Muslim than under a Hindu landlord.

"It was certainly possible for Hindus to obtain justice even against Muslims"⁵

It may be conceded at once that the Arab conquest of Sind was an insignificant event in the history of Islam, from the political point of view. But the effects of this conquest upon Muslim culture were profound and far-reaching. When the Arabs came to India, they were astonished, at the superiority of the civilization which they found here. The sublimity of Indian philosophical ideas and the richness of the Indian intellect were a strange revelation to them. The cardinal doctrine of Muslim theology, that there is one God, was already known to the Indian saints and philosophers. The Arabs found that, in the nobler arts which enhance the dignity of man, the Indians far excelled them. The Indian musician, the mason and the painter were as much admired by the Arabs as the philosopher and the man of learning.

Tabari records that Khalifa Harun once sent for an Indian physician to cure him of an obstinate and painful disease. The Arabs learnt from the Indians a great deal in the practical art of administration. The employment of Brahmin officials on a large scale was due to their better knowledge, experience and fitness for discharging efficiently the duties of administration. A great many of the elements of Arabian culture, which afterwards had such a marvellous effect upon European civilization, were borrowed from India. Arab scholars sat at the feet of Buddhist monks & Brahmin pandits to learn philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry and other subjects of study. The court at Baghdad extended its patronage to Indian scholarship. During the Khilafat of Mansur (AD 750-774) Arab scholars returned from India to Baghdad carrying with them two books, the **Brahma Siddhanta** of Brahmagupta and his **Khand Khadyaka**. These works were translated by Al Fazari into Arabic with the help of Indian scholars. It was from these two works that the Arabs learnt the first principles of scientific astronomy. There is ample reason to endorse Havell's view that it was India, not Greece, that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth, formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals, and inspired its most characteristic expressions in literature, art and architecture.

Arab authors have accepted in unambiguous terms the superiority of Indian achievements. Thus Al-Jahiz (A.D. 869) writes : "The Hindus excel in astrology and mathematics. They have a special Indian script. They excel in medicine and possess some wonderful secrets of that art, in particular those remedies that are of the greatest use in the most dangerous diseases. They have developed to a perfection their art like sculpture, painting, and architecture. They are the inventors of chess. They make good swords and know all the tricks of fencing. They know charms that can remove poison and pain from the body. Their music is pleasant and they have all sorts of dances. From India we received that book called **Kalilah-wa-Dimnh**. These people have judgement and are brave. In some virtues they surpass the Chinese."⁶

Yaqubi (A.D. 895) observes : "The Hindus are superior to all other nations in intelligence and thoughtfulness. They are more exact in astronomy and astrology than any other people. The **Brahma Siddhanta** is a good proof of their intellectual powers; by this book the Greeks and the Persians have also profited."⁷

Al-Idrisi (A.D. 1154) speaking of the accomplishments of the Hindus, says : "The Hindus are by nature inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty, and faithfulness to their promises are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side."⁸

Another Arab historian, Quazi Sa'id, observes : "The Hindus have always been considered by all other people as the custodians of learning and wisdom. Their knowledge of God ascertains His unity and purity. To kill or injure an animal is a sin with them."⁹

Influence of Buddhism on Islam : Long before the Muslim scholars translated Hindu works into Arabic or Persian, and before the Muslim travellers brought news from India, the Muslim had some glimpses of India's religious conceptions through Persian literature and also through the Buddhistic influence that still lingered in some of the most remote parts of Iran. They knew the Buddhists as 'Samaniyah'. The word 'Bud' or 'But' had long ago degenerated into the sense of idol-worship

and conveyed no other meaning. **Buzasaf**, that is, **Budhisattva** was known to them as the founder of Buddhism. Not long ago Buddhism had flourished in Balkh, Transoxiana, Khurasan, Turkistan and Persia, and to some extent also in Iraq, before the Muslims conquered them. After these countries were converted to Islam, the Buddhist priests did not at once stop their preaching. The rosary is one of the objects that Muslims inherited from the Buddhists. The Sufi doctrine of **Fana** is the Nirvana of the Buddhists. The whole Sufi system of spiritual **Muqamat** (stations) or **chakras**, that the seeker after illumination realizes on his way to 'extinction', is Buddhistic.

The inhabitants of Balkh and Bukhara had displayed a strong tendency to revert to their old Buddhist habits of thought. Abu Narshakhi (AD 943) relates in his history of Bukhara : "Every time the people of Bukhara were conquered, they accepted Islam, and no sooner than the Arabs retired, they gave it up again."¹⁰

Twice a year there used to be held a *bazar* in which people sold Buddha's idols. On each market day the sale of idols used to amount to fifty thousand dirhams. Muhammad bin Jafar has recorded that "the *bazar* continued down to our times". (AD 940).¹¹

A good number of thinkers amongst Muslims, especially in the Abbasid reign, were more or less directly influenced by Buddhism. Ibn Muqaffa' (AD 760) translated the *Kalilah wa Dimnh* from Pahlavi into Arabic. In his introduction to the *Kalilah wa Dimnh* he describes an ascetic in the following words : "And I found that divine tranquillity comes over the ascetic when he is absorbed in meditation; for he is still contented, unambitious, satisfied, free from cares, has renounced the world, has escaped from evils, is devoid of greed, is pure, independent, protected against sorrow, above jealousy, manifests pure love does none any harm and remains himself unmolested"¹²

Abul 'Ala-al-Ma'arri, the famous blind poet (AD 933-1058) was a veritable 'Buddhist', nay even a 'Jain'. Von Kramer considers him as one of the greatest moralists of all times whose profound genius anticipated much that is commonly attributed to the modern spirit of enlightenment.¹³

Explaining the philosophical aspect of idol-worship, Abul Fazl says : "The inhabitants of this land are religious, affectionate, hospitable, genial and frank. They are fond of scientific pursuits, inclined to austerity of life, seekers after justice, contented, industrious, capable in affairs, loyal, truthful, and constant. The true worth of this people shines most in the day of adversity and its soldiers know no retreat from the field. They, one and all, believe in the unity of God; and as to the reverence they pay to the images of stones and wood and the like, which simpletons regard as idolatry; it is not so. The writer of these pages has exhaustively discussed the subject with many enlightened and upright men, and it became evident that these images of some chosen souls nearest in approach to the throne of God are fashioned as aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering, while the worship of God alone is required as indispensable."¹⁴

Long before Europe had learnt to enquire about religion in a scientific and detached spirit, many Muslim learned men had compiled books of comparative religion in which they displayed an amazingly free and rationalistic attitude of mind. Among them was that most eminent scholar Abu Raihan al-Biruni who compiled a comprehensive treatise on Hindus' religions and philosophies as early as the eleventh century.¹⁵

Throughout the middle ages the Muslims took enormous pains to acquaint themselves with the religious literature of the Hindus. They translated almost all the important texts into Persian—the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharat, the Ramayana, the Dharma Shastra, Puranas, the Yoga Vasistha, the Yogashastra, Vedanta Shastra, etc.¹⁶

Among later writers may be mentioned the name of Mirza Jan Janan Mazhar (b. 1699). Mazhar wrote about the Hindu worship of Idols : "In Idol worship, the process is similar to the **Dhikr**, contemplative ritual, which is prescribed for Muslim Sufis."¹⁷

Mahmud Shabistari (AD 1317), the well-known writer of *Gulshan-i-Raz*, writing on the theme of idol worship, explains the difference and similarity between it and Islam : "The idol is the expression of love and unity in this world, and to wear the sacred thread is to take the resolve of service. As both faith and unfaith are founded in existence, unity of God is the essence of idol

worship. As things are the expression of existence, one out of them must at least be the idol. If the Muslim knew what the idol is, then he would not go astray in his faith. The latter did not see in the idol anything but external creation, and for this reason he became Kafir in the eyes of the law. If thou too would not see that reality is hidden in the idol, thou wilt also be not known as a Muslim according to the law."¹⁸

Islamic mysticism originated and grew in two regions of the Muslim world, ancient Khorasan and Mesopotamia. In both these regions seekers of truth and enlightenment among the Muslims came into close contact with Indian mystics. The whole of Khorasan was studded with Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples at the time of the Muslim conquest as is testified by Hiuen Tsiang who had passed through these lands barely seventy years earlier. In Mesopotamia, Jundeshapur, Damascus, and Baghdad were centres of learning where Hindu scholars taught Indian science and Hindu ascetics (yogis) held debates with Muslim scholars. The Pramukhas of the Nava Vihara of Transoxiana became the prime ministers (*Baramika*) of the Abbasid Caliphs and they invited Hindu doctors, astronomers and scientists to Baghdad and encouraged the translation of Sanskrit treatises into Arabic. Thus it was that the philosophy of pantheism and the practical discipline of Yoga passed into the Sufi circles of Middle East.¹⁹

The mystic teachings of Vedanta, on the one hand, inspired Islamic mysticism and on the other, gave birth to the movement of Bhakti in India. Ramanuja was the pioneer of this Bhakti movement.

The Bhakti Movement : The spirit of Bhakti moved across the country from one end to the other. As Priyadas points out in his *Bhaktirasabodhini*, "The tree of Bhakti was once but a sapling; now it has climbed to the sky with its glory spread over the earth. Once but a feeble thing, now contentedly sways the mighty elephants of the passions."²⁰

It was in schools of Rama Bhakti and Krishna Bhakti that the doctrines of mystic practices were developed, and the differentiation of the stages of progress towards unification with God, and of the emotions which accompanied them and the causes that excited and enhanced the emotional states and psychic conditions which followed them, expounded.

The process of training in devotion implied worship for the Adorable One, sorrow for one's sins, doubt of all objects other than He, celebration of His praise, living for His sake, assigning everything to Him, resignation to His will, seeking Him in all things, renouncing anger, envy, greed and impure thoughts.²¹

The states of emotions and processes bear comparison with what the Muslim Sufis taught in regard to *hal* and *muqam* (states of rapture and stages of ecstasy). For instance, Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, the author of the oldest treatise on Sufism, recounts the seven stages, namely, (1) Repentance, (2) Abstinence, (3) Renunciation, (4) Poverty, (5) Patience, (6) Trust in God and, (7) Satisfaction; and the ten psychic states, namely, (1) Meditation, (2) Nearness to God, (3) Love, (4) Fear, (5) Hope, (6) Longing, (7) Intimacy, (8) Tranquillity, (9) Contemplation and (10) Certainty.

Apart from the founders of the four Sampradayas—Ramanuja, Madhava, Vishnuswami and Nimbadiya—who composed their religious treatises in Sanskrit and the propagators of Vaishnavite Bhakti of the schools of Rama and Krishna, who appealed to the conservative-minded among the general public, there was a third group of mystics who employed the language of the people to preach their radical creeds. They mostly belonged to the lower castes and their movement represents the urge of the unprivileged masses to uplift themselves. Some of them were persecuted by government, some incurred social opprobrium, and others were not regarded as worthy of notice. But they were held in high esteem among the humbler classes who followed their simple teachings with eagerness and understanding. They laid stress upon the dignity of man, for they thought that every individual would reach the highest goal of human life by his own effort. They rejected the claim to special sanctity of priests (Pandits and Maulvis), of books (scriptures of Hindus and Muslims), of temples and pilgrimages, of rites and ceremonies, and encouraged the establishment of direct relation between man and God. The movement arose in the fifteenth century and continued till the middle of the seventeenth.

The leaders of this group hailed from all parts of India, but their teachings manifest the distinct influence of Islam on their beliefs. In the Hindi-speaking region, the most notable

reformer was Sant Kabir, who was a powerful exponent of devotional faith centered on an impersonal, transcendental God, and a fearless denouncer of hypocritical and superstitious practices, Hindu or Muslim. Love of God and man was his religion, and he accepted whatever he thought true in Hinduism and Islam.²² There were a number of other teachers whose point of view was similar to that of Kabir and who founded their orders in different parts of the country.

In the Punjab, Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion which was nourished by his nine successors. The last of them, Guru Govind Singh, transformed Sikhism into a military mission.

In Maharashtra, Namdeo, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas were noted saints who were hostile to idolworship, and indifferent towards external acts of religion such as vows, fasts, austerities, pilgrimages, etc. They worshipped Vitthal, the one God who conferred tranquillity, and prayed for release from the snares of the illusory world. They condemned caste distinctions and sought to reconcile Hindu and Muslim faiths.

Bengal had the good fortune to produce Chaitanya, who was a devotee of Krishna but at the same time opposed to the Brahminical system of ritualism and caste. Among his disciples was Thakur Haridas, a Muslim. But there were sects in Bengal which went far beyond Chaitanya in their criticism of Hindu orthodoxy, for example the Kartabhajas.²³

The Virasaivas or Lingayats of the Kannada region were a sect which came into existence in the twelfth century and rapidly spread in Mysore and the neighbouring districts. Their belief in one God who cannot be represented by images or propitiated by sacrifices, and their rejection of caste, show their independence from the conservative religious ways. They did not approve of sacrifices, fasts, feasts and pilgrimages; nor did they recognize distinctions based on birth. A pariah and a Brahmin were equal as members of the sect.²⁴

In the deep South, the Tamil Sidhars rejected the theory of transmigration and the authority of the Shastras. They held that God and love are the same and desired mankind to live in peace, considering love as God.²⁵

Thus a powerful religious impulse which drew its inspiration from Hindu as well as Muslim sources, spread all over India

and sought to bring together the masses into a faith which transcended social, intellectual and communal barriers.

Islamic Mysticism : The stirring in the Hindu society had its parallel in the Muslim community. We have seen that Sufism even before its arrival in India had absorbed the main features of Vedanta—for instance the philosophy of absolute monism. The Indian Advaita had become the Muslim **Wahdat-al-Wujud**.

Ibn al-Arabi, the great master of Islamic mysticism, affirms that God is one and the universe is His appearance. Creation is a process of emanation of which the three steps are : (1) the stage of absolute unity (ahadiat), (2) the stage of latent or potential multiplicity (wahdat), and (3) the stage of apparent or actual multiplicity (wahidiat). The multiplicity expresses itself in souls (Ruh), forms (Mithal) and bodies (Jism).²⁶

For both, there is a common discipline. It includes purification of self, mastering of passions and desires, filling of the mind exclusively with the thought of God, obtaining control over bodily functions and mental processes till the objective world ceases to distract consciousness, and till man passes away (fana, nirvana) from phenomenal existence and attains union with the divine. The soul stands self-enlightened and unperturbed by temptations and apprehensions.²⁷

The Muslim conquest of India was very slow. It took them six centuries to reach the southern confines of India. The invaders came to India in three stages. The first invasion took place in A.D. 712, the invaders being Arabs led by Muhammad bin Qasim. The second set of invasions occurred at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. These were led by Subuktigin and Mahmud of Ghazni who belonged to a Turkish family. The final stage, which led to the establishment of Muslim rule in India, consisted of the invasions of Muhammad Ghorī two hundred years later.

Muhammad bin Qasim maintained the dignity of Brahmins and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence. They were protected against opposition and violence. Each of them was entrusted with an office.

Dr. Ishwari Prasad in his History of Medieval India says :
"It is not difficult to determine Mahmud's place in history. To the Musalmans of his day, he was Ghazi, a champion of faith, who tried to extirpate infidelity in heathen lands. To the Hindus, he is to this day an inhuman tyrant, a veritable Hu, who destroyed their most sacred shrines and wantonly wounded their religious susceptibilities. But the unbiased enquirer who keeps in mind the peculiar circumstances of the age must record a different verdict. In his estimate, Mahmud was a great leader of men, a just and upright ruler according to his own lights, an intrepid and gifted soldier, a dispenser of justice, a patron of letters, and deserves to be ranked amongst the greatest kings of the world."¹⁸

After the Ghaznavis came the Ghoris. Their first exploit was the destruction of the city of Ghazni which Mahmud had converted into one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Alptgin followed up his victory and took the city of Ghazni by storm. The finest buildings of the city, exquisite memorials of greatness and splendour of Mahmud, were demolished, and during the seven days the Ghori chieftain remained in occupation of the town "the air from the blackness of the smoke continued as black as night, and those nights, from the flames rising in the burning city, were lighted up as bright as day. Raping and massacre were carried on with greatest pertinacity and vindictiveness, and men, women and children were either killed or made slaves. The dead bodies of all the Sultans of Ghazni except those of Mahmud and Ibrahim were dug out from their graves and treated with indignity and burnt."¹⁹

The Ghoris next turned their attention to India. The victories of Shahabuddin Ghoris are described by Persian chroniclers as victory of Islam, but when the actual facts are analysed, even historians who can in no way be described as partial to the Muslims, form the following estimate of Shahabuddin :

"It cannot be alleged that the religious fervour actuating Shahabuddin and his Mohammadens was stronger than that actuating the Rajputs. Although Mohammadan historians describe the former as making a religious war, Shahabuddin was fighting for conquest of territory and not for extending religion. Indeed we find that conversion of the people to Mohammadanism was not his motive; it was conquering Northern India."²⁰

The Confluence of Islam and Hinduism

After Shahabuddin the campaigns of Qutubuddin and Iltutmish are described in the self-same strains. But when we prune away the hyperbolic setting we find :

“Qutubuddin and Iltutmish were not fanatical Muslims and were wise rulers who saw the justice and even the wisdom of not interfering with the religion of the people”.³¹

Although in the medieval period the head of the State in India was a Muslim, the State was not Islamic. The State did not follow the injunctions of the holy scripture—the Quran, the Hadith, or the laws elaborated in the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence. It is a mistake to call the medieval State of India theocratic, for it did not function under the guidance of the Muslim theologians.

Almost every one of the Muslim monarchs of India from the thirteenth century onwards expressed his inability and indicated the impossibility of conducting government in accordance with the Shariat. Iltutmish, Balban, Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad Tughlaq were among the pre-Mughal sovereigns of India who questioned the suitability of applying Muslim Law to India. Zia-ud-Din Barni, the historian, in his *Fatawa-Jahandari* says, ‘True religion consists in following in the footsteps of the Prophet . . . But royal government, on the contrary can only be carried on by following the policies of Khusrau Parvez and the great emperors of Iran.’ He admits that “between the traditions (Sunnat) of the Prophet Muhammad and his mode of life and living and the customs of the Iranian emperors and their mode of life and living there is complete contradiction and total opposition.” But he points out that the **Shariat**, which is the command of God, could be followed in State matters only in exceptional times. Muhammad succeeded in enforcing **Shara** because he was directly inspired by God, and the first four Khalifas did so because they had been the associates of the Prophet. But their successors were faced with two irreconcilable alternatives : traditions of the Prophet and the policy of the Iranian emperors. But “Prophethood is the perfection of religion and kingship is the perfection of worldly fortune. These two perfections are opposed and contradictory to each other, and their combination is not within the bounds of possibility.”³²

Iltutmish was approached by some **Ulema** with the request that as the Hindus were not the people of the Book (*ahl-i-Kitab*)

who could be taken under Muslim protection as dhimmis, they should be asked to accept Islam and in case of refusal put to sword. Iltutmish asked his Wazir to give an answer, and he replied that the request was impossible of execution. So far as Balban is concerned, Nizam-ud-Din the historian observes: "He gave precedence to the affairs of the State (over religion)",³³. Barni states: "In the matter of punishment and exercise of royal authority he acted without fear of God, and whatever he regarded to be in the interest of government, irrespective of whether it was in accord with **Sharia** or not, he carried into action."³⁴ Alauddin's discussion with Qazi Mughis-al-Din is well known. His parting reply to the Qazi was, "Whatever I consider to be in the interests of Government, and find to be the requirement of the time, I order. I do not know what the Exalted God will do to me on the Day of Resurrection."

Professor M. Habib says: "It is true that Muslim kings, mostly of—foreign extraction, sat on Indian thrones for some six or seven centuries. But they could only do so because their enthronement was not the enthronement of 'Muslim rule'; had it been otherwise, they could not have lasted for a single generation."³⁵

Among the Mughal emperors Babar, because he reigned for such a short period, and Humayun, because he was so beset with difficulties, had little opportunity to pay much attention to administrative matters. Akbar inaugurated a State policy which was not subordinated to the dictates of Islam. He treated all religions alike and regarded it his duty to make no difference between his subjects on the basis of religion. He threw open the highest appointments to non-Muslims. He married Hindu princesses and allowed them to retain their religion and perform Hindu rites in the palace. Their sons were successors to the Mughal throne. He eliminated the interference of the Ulema by assuming the authority to give final decisions on religious questions on which their might be conflicting opinions among the **Mujtahids** (Muslim divines). In many social and other matters he showed respect to the sentiments and traditions of his non Muslim subjects. Among these the most important was his abolition of **Jazia** (poll tax on the Hindus). Abul Fazl says, "Kingship is a gift of God And on coming to exalted dignity if he does not inaugurate universal peace (toleration) and if he does not regard all conditions of humanity,

and all sects of religion with the single eye of favour and not be mother to some and be step-mother to others—he will not become fit for the exalted dignity.”³⁶ Again he adds, “Differences in religion must not withhold him from his duty of watching, and all classes of men must have repose, so that the shadow of God may confer glory.”³⁷ Thus, in the words of Ibn Hasan, “Both Islamic law and Hadith ceased to be the code of government.”³⁸

The Muslims adopted many Hindu marriage customs, and followed a number of practices which were repugnant to Islamic law; for example, in the matter of fixing the degree of kinship for eligibility in marriage, in prescribing limits of endogamy and exogamy based upon tribal and class divisions, in the observance of ceremonial accompanying the marriage contract. Laws of inheritance were supplanted by custom (*urf*) in many parts of India. Widow marriage and divorce were frowned upon as among the Hindus.³⁹

The various Hindu and Muslim festivals were celebrated with impartial splendour. On the Dasehra, the anniversary of Rama's victory over the demons, the Imperial horses and elephants were arrayed in decorated canopy and paraded for inspection. On the Raksha-bandhan, the Hindu nobles and Brahmins fastened strings on the Emperor's arm. Divali saw gambling in the palace, and Shivaratri was duly observed. Nor were the Muslim 'Id and shab-e-barAt neglected.⁴⁰

Marriages between Muslims and Hindus were rare, but those among the ruling families were well recognized. The Mughal emperors were not the pioneers of this policy. In Kashmir Hindu-Muslim marriages were of a long-standing. Zain-ul-Abedin (1420-70) married the two daughters of Raja Manakdeo of Jammu.⁴¹ Another daughter was married to Raja Jasrath, the Muslim Gakkhar chief.⁴²

The Bahmani kings of the Deccan allied themselves with Hindu families. Taj-ud-Din Firoz (1397-1422) married the daughters of Deva Raya of Vijayanagar and Narsingh Rao of Kherla.⁴³ Ahmad Shah Wali, the ninth Bahmani ruler, wedded the daughter of the Raja of Sonkhed. Yusuf Adil Shah, the Sultan of Bijapur (died AD 1510), took to wife the sister of Mukund Rao, a Brahmana, and she became his chief queen. Amir Barid of Bidar (died AD 1539) followed the example.⁴⁴

Akbar, Jahangir, Farrukh Siyar, Sulaiman Shukoh and Sipihr Shukoh took Hindu princesses for their wives. The Hindu royal family of Kachh formed matrimonial alliances with the Muslims.⁴⁵

On the other side, the Hindu was far too ridden with caste inhibitions to receive a Muslim lady in the innermost sanctum of his palace. Yet such instances were not unknown, in Rajauri, Ladakh and Baltistan, Jahangir noticed inter-marriages between the two communities.⁴⁶ The love affair of Peshwa Baji Rao I with Mastani is well known. She was a dancing girl who became the Peshwa's constant companion and "accompanied Baji Rao in his campaigns and rode stirrup to stirrup with him."⁴⁷

In 1734 she bore the Peshwa a son, Shamsheer Bahadur, who was brought up as a Muslim, the Brahmanas having refused to allow him to enter the Hindu fold. He was killed at Panipat in 1761. He was succeeded in his jagir by his son Ali Bahadur. In 1787 when Mahadji Sindhia suffered reverses, reinforcements were despatched from the south under the command of Ali Bahadur as the representative of the Peshwa's house.

It was realized by the Muslim rulers on the whole that, in the conditions existing in India, the Islamic laws promulgated for the Arab society of Medina were not strictly applicable. The form of society which the Prophet of Islam envisaged and in which the State was the Church and the Church the State, did not last more than thirty years. The Umayyads ceased to function as Imams and became merely heads of State. The Abbasids who came after them shed the simple Arab manners, surrounded themselves with pomp and pelf, and introduced in their courts the etiquette, ceremony and splendour of ancient Iran.⁴⁸

In 1258 the Mongol conqueror destroyed the Caliphate, and a new era began in the Islamic civilization. The old concept of a single Muslim society with a single chief disappeared. It need not surprise us, therefore, if we find Muslim rulers and Muslim divines in India differing in their views concerning government and the people. "From the time of Iltutmish, who expressed his inability to follow the advice of the Ulema in the matter of imposing Islam on the Hindus by force, to Balban, Ala-ud-din Khilji, Mohammad Tughlak and Sher Shah, most of them held the view that combination of religion and kingship was not

possible. Similar opinions prevailed among provincial Sultans of Kashmir, Bengal and the Deccan."⁴⁹

Search For Religious Synthesis : "The Mughals endeavoured to transmute this negative attitude into a positive policy. Babar, before his death, advised Humayun not to distinguish between a Muslim and a Hindu. Akbar's courageous efforts in this behalf are well known. Akbar found that there was no dearth of people in every religion who thought of themselves as perfect, who misinterpreted their religious belief and did not bring the standard work of their religion to the knowledge of the common people. Thus the spirit of the faith remained concealed. Akbar found it essential to prevent the people from falling victims to the nefarious designs of such custodians of faith, and decided that if the standard works of different religions were translated into simple language, they will be able to know the truth for themselves. This would put an end to the monopoly of those who did not state the real spirit of their religion to their respective followers."⁵⁰

Akbar initiated a bold policy so that in his age "the pillars of blind following" were demolished and a new era of research and enquiry in religious matters commenced."⁵¹

The translations of Sanskrit works prepared in Akbar's reign were illustrated by the court painters. One of the copies of the Mahabharat made for the Imperial Library was in the possession of the Maharaja of Jaipur.⁵² Several independent translations of other Sanskrit works were made in the reign of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, besides the works of Dara Shukoh.⁵³ Abdul Rahman Chishti (died 1683) gave an Islamizing explanation of the Bhagawad Gita in his mir, **mir, at-ul-haqAiq.**⁵⁴

Several original works on the fine arts, sciences and the philosophy of the Hindus were also written. The most noteworthy is the **tuhfat al-hind** composed by Mirza Muhammad-ibn-Fakhr-al Din Muhammad, in the reign of Aurangzeb, at the request of Kukaltash Khan for the emperor's son, Prince Muhammad Mu'izz-al-Din Jahandar Shah. Jahangir did not depart from the tolerant ways of his father and Shahjahan after some hesitation continued on the whole to follow the same lines.

Aurangzeb's Outlook : Unfortunately, Aurangzeb sought to turn back the hands of the clock. But he too realized ultimately

the futility and undesirability of mixing religion with politics. In his *ahkAm* (precepts) collected by Hamid-ud-Din Khan, a favoured officer well known by his sobriquet "dagger of Alamgir" (Nimcha-i Alamgir), the following passages occur: "What have the worldly affairs to do with religion? And why should bigotry intrude into matters of religion? For you there is your religion, for me mine (Lakum dinokum wa lia din—Quran)." If the law were followed it would have been necessary to annihilate all the Rajas and their subjects. Another of his precepts was: "What concern have we with the religion of anybody? Let Jesus follow his own religion and Moses his own."⁵⁵

Aurangzeb blamed his teacher, Mulla Saleh, for his narrow outlook. Bernier reports:

Aurangzeb asked Mulla Saleh: "But what was the knowledge I derived under your tuition?" and complained, "Was it not incumbent upon my preceptor to make me acquainted with the distinguishing features of every nation of the earth; its resources and strength; its mode of warfare; its manners, its religions, its 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, accidents, or errors, owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions have been effected?" He added, "A familiarity with the language of surrounding nations may be indispensable in a king, but you would teach me to read and write only Arabic. Forgetting how many important subjects ought to be embraced in the education of a Prince, you acted as if it were chiefly necessary that he should possess great skill in grammar, and such knowledge of law and of the sciences only through the medium of Arabic? I have a perfect remembrance of your having, during several years, harassed my brain with idle and foolish propositions, the solution of which yield no satisfaction to the mind, propositions that seldom enter into the business of life. When I left you, I could boast of no greater attainment in the sciences than the use of many obscure and uncouth terms, calculated to discourage, confound, and appal a youth of the most masculine understanding. 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 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 motions of its parts. I should have been more indebted to you than Alexander was to Aristotle."⁵⁶

Synthesis in Art and Architecture : Most of the Mughal emperors were deeply interested in art. They were both patrons and critics, encouraging talent and guiding skill. They invited to their courts great masters of painting from Central Asia and Persia. They gathered the humble but competent practitioners of art of India. The two worked together and the one was influenced by the other. The result was a style of wondrous beauty. Whatever the subject, the picture is always bathed in clear light, every detail is rendered with immense care, the ground is carpeted with green and trees are in bloom. The mien of the human dwellers in these scenes is one of good cheer, the hearts are elated, heads are held high and the eyes look straight.⁵⁷

The style of painting at the Mughal courts became the prototype of the schools at the courts of provincial governors and of the Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan and the hill States in the Himalayas. Humayun brought with him two pupils of Bihzad, namely Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad. Akbar invited Farrukh Qalmaq and Aqa Raza. But among his artists, there were many Hindu painters of great ability like Basavan, Daswant and Kesho. They were entrusted with the illustrations of works like Shah Namah, Khamsa-i-Nizami, Babar Namah and Timur Namah, as well as the Mahabharat, the Ramayana, Nal Damyanti and Panchatantra. Jahangir carried the art to perfection. He has stated in his **Tuzuk** that he could distinguish between the style of all living and dead painters and could say who the painter of a particular picture was. One of his painters was Mansur who was an expert in painting birds and flowers. Bishandas excelled in portrait painting and Murad and Manohar were unequalled in drawing. Shahajahan maintained the high traditions of his father. The great painters of his reign were Muhammad Nadir Samarquandi, Faquirullah Khan, Mir Hashim, Bishandas and Bichittar. Though the art continued under Aurangzeb, it began to decline rapidly after him.⁵⁸

Painting is the delicate plant and architecture the stately tree that adorn the arbour of culture. The Mughal emperors.

endowed with an extremely refined taste in the arts, nurtured both with loving care Babar laid out beautiful gardens with running water, cascading fountains and marble pavilions. Humayun erected a seven-chambered palace in which each hall was dedicated to one of the seven planets. Akbar created Fatehpur Sikri. Jahangir directed the completion of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, and the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra. Shahajahan's contribution to India's architectural monuments is well known. The Red Fort in Delhi with its numerous halls, mansions and mosque, the Jama-Masjid, and above all, the incomparable Taj Mahal, are immortal witnesses of his taste.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar says : "Two hundred years of Mughal rule, from the accession of Akbar to the death of Mohammad Shah (1556-1749), gave to the whole of Northern India, and much of the Deccan also, oneness of the official language, administrative system, coinage, and also a popular lingua Indica. Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal emperors, their administrative system, official nomenclature, court etiquette and monetary type were borrowed more or less by the neighbouring Hindu Rajas.

"All the twenty Indian Subhahs of the Mughal Empire were governed by means of exactly the same administrative machinery with exactly the same procedure and official titles. Persian was the one language used in all office records, farmans, sanads, land-grants, passes, despatches and receipts. The same monetary standard prevailed throughout the Empire with coins having the same names and same purity and the same denomination, differing only in the name of mint town. Officials and soldiers were frequently transferred from one province to another. Thus the native of one province felt himself almost at home in another province; traders and travellers passed most easily from city to city subah to subah, and all realized the imperial oneness of this vast country."⁵⁹

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- 28 Dr. Ishwari Prasad, The History of Medieval India, p. 91.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 110-111.
- 30 C. V. Vaidya, Medieval Hindu India, Vol. III, p. 361.
- 31 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 362.
- 32 Fatawa-e-Jahandari, translated by Prof. M. Habib and Dr Afzal Begam, Medieval India Quarterly, Vol. III, Nos. 1 & 2, July-Oct., 1957, p. 55.
- 33 Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, Tabqat-i-Akbari (Text edited by B. De), Vol. I, p. 82.

- 34 Zia-ud-Din-Barni, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (Text).
- 35 See *Medieval India Quarterly*, op., cit., p. 5.
- 36 Abul-Fazl, *Akbar Nama* (Translated by Beveridge), Vol. II (Calcutta, 1912), p. 421.
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- 38 Ibn Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p.61.
- 39 Vide Tuper, C.L., *Punjab Customary Laws*; also R., Burn, *Census of India, 1901, Vol. XVI, Part-I*, pp. 92 et. sq.
- 40 Dr. Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir*, pp. 99-100.
- 41 See Janaraja, *Rajatarangini* (translated by J. C. Dutt), p. 86; Srivara, *Zain Rajatarangini* (translated by J.C. Dutt), p. 194.
- 42 *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXVI, 1907, p. 8.
- 43 H. K. Shervani, *The Bahmanis of the Deccan* (1953 Edition), p. 144, et. sq.
- 44 M. G. Ranade, *The Rise of Maratha Power*, p. 31; also John Briggs, *History of Rise of Mohammadan Power in India*, Vol. III, (Calcutta 1910), pp. 495-6.
- 45 Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. II, p. 163, footnote.
- 46 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Roger's Translation), Vol. II, p. 181.
- 47 *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi*, quoted by G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 118.
- 48 Dr. Tarachand, *Society and State in the Mughal Period*, p. 58.
- 49 Ibid., p. 59.
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- 51 Ibid., p. 4.
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- 53 Ibid., 1883, pp. 257-71.
- 54 *India Office MS.*, 1269.
- 55 Dr. Tarachand, *Patel Memorial Lectures*, pp. 60-61.
- 56 F. Bernier, *Travels*, op., cit., pp. 155-160.
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- 58 Ibid., p. 109.
- 59 Jadunath Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 129-30.

**Distortion
of
Medieval Indian History**

by
B. N. Pande

In this vast land of ours have dwelt, since time immemorial, peoples of different races and cultures and into this land entered races from beyond the mountains and the seas. But the old inhabitants and the new comers, after they had struggled and fought, eventually forgot their enmities, made peace and joined in their common endeavour. Each epoch of such a fusion was marked by an efflorescence of culture in which the different elements were so cunningly mixed as to make one whole.

This unity of spirit has ever been conveying to the different groups and communities, which form part of the whole, known as India, the fundamental realization that although the waves upon sea are many and play of winds upon its surface gives rise to varied and even contradictory phenomena like calms and storms, yet the substance of this multiplicity and variety is the unchanging sea.

The socio-economic continuity is the distinguishing feature of Indian history. The harmony found in the many-sided cultures of the people of India stems from this source. Thus although India has many religions, many languages, many races, its fundamental attitudes towards life have persisted through centuries and millennia. It is a remarkable fact that the socio-economic structure of India, which originated in the settlements of the Aryans and their assimilation of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, continued without any radical change till the nineteenth century.

This unity of her history, her ideals and of her humanity is the living spirit of India. It is greater than any of its particular manifestations in time or in type. It underlines the multiplicity of our creeds and sects, customs and institutions, and art and philosophies. It underlines our historic failures and successes, our struggles and triumphs. It abides in the midst of these changes. It is this spirit which fused the pre-Dravidian, the Dravidian and the Aryan, into that ancient social organism, which found utterance in the sublime philosophies, beautiful crafts, the stirring

arts, which make up the first chapter of our history. Rama and Krishna, Mahavira and Buddha, Chandragupta and Ashoka, Valmika and Vyasa worthily represent the spirit of this culture. The monuments of Sarnath and Sanchi, the paintings of Bagh and Ajanta, the temples of Khajuraho and Bhubaneswar, the dramas of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti constitute the living memory of this glorious age.

The close of this epoch saw the impact of new races—Arabs, Turks and Mughals. The ancient culture of India came into violent conflict with the new-comers, but even before the political struggles had ended, our construction had begun. Islam and Hinduism, which appeared at the start, so antithetical, at last intermingled, each one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and, from their synthesis, grew the religion of **Bhakti** and **Tasawwuf**, the religion of love and devotion, which swept the hearts of millions following different religions and sects of India. The currents of Islamic sufism and Hindu **Bhakti** combined into a mighty stream which fertilized old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was in this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconciling the puritanical severity and awe-inspiring transcendence of Islam into the luxuriant fullness and abundance of forms and the intuitive perception of their immanent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of architecture and painting, music and poetry and love-inspired religion which are the heritage of Indian history during the middle ages.

A harmonious study of Indian History, a study both wide and deep, seem urgently called for now, more than ever before. The question arises : can we cut up history into little bits, and say : this is ancient history, this is medieval and that is modern history ? The central doctrine of the modern scientific study of history, according to the great Oxford Professor Freeman's teaching, is the unity and continuity of history. The theory is supported by Dr. B. R. Bhandarkar, who says : "We cannot divide history of India into the three water-tight compartments, namely the Hindu period, the Mohammadan period and the British period. Nothing can be more absurd. In the first place they should be either Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian, or ancient, medieval and modern. The first is a communal division of Indian history and should be

banished from all history books for ever. The second classification may be resorted to for convenience of study, especially for the study of culture. But it should be invariably borne in mind that although in the world of thought there may be a temporary division of history for the sake of specialisation, in the world of action history ought to be treated as having a continuous sequence. This, in fact, is the basic idea of history, as any student of historiography will tell us".

Let us consider the facts that are responsible for continuously aggravating disunity, disharmony and disintegration between Indian communities. The underlying primary cause is mis-understanding. This mis-understanding takes many forms and expresses itself in numerous ways. It inspires the interpretation of Indian history and makes it possible for extremists on both sides to press the distortion of historical facts and movements into service to uphold their different theories. The distrust affects our judgement of men and their motives and exaggerates every intentional or unintentional neglect into a deliberate piece of oppression, and every petty incident of a quarrel or suppression of a breach of law and order into a calculated piece of atrocity. This suspicion colours the whole outlook upon life; every little difference of customs, manners, modes of speech and dress, ways of living and of vocational pursuits is magnified into profound difference of culture, of economic, social, political and spiritual ideals. Is there any wonder that every clash of personal and of group ambition is regarded as a symptom of deep social cleavage and of communal and cultural disharmony ?

The task is not easy, because unfortunately the histories of India which have been taught in our schools and colleges for generations past were originally compiled by European writers. And Indians have not yet succeeded in shaking off the biases inculcated by their European teachers. These so-called histories have produced indelible impressions on the minds of their readers and corrupted the springs of national life. They have laid emphasis on difference, and drawn pictures in which the relations between Hindus and Musalmans bear most prominently the marks of violence, conquest, rapine and religious bigotry. They have presented the Muslims as destroyers of Hindu culture and traditions, despoilers of Hindu temples and palaces, and brutal idol-breakers

who have offered to their Hindu-victims the terrible alternative of conversion or the sword.

It is hardly surprising that educated men in India, drugged with such poisonous stuff from the most impressionable period of their lives, grow up to suspect and distrust each other. The Hindu has been brought to believe that the Muslim period of Indian history, which extends over eight hundred years and more, is a nightmare. Not only does he feel no pride in it, but when he turns back his mind to find inspiration in the past, he skips over this long interval and draws highly idealized pictures of the golden past which lies beyond. The Muslim, on the other hand, having lost the power built-up by his co-religionists to a Christian nation from the West, and being regarded as a mere intruder by the Hindus, naturally feeds his self-respect upon deeds by which he won conquest and glory and completely ignores the remoter past which moulded his cultural achievement of which he sought to be justly proud. How British historians have used these sentiments would be clear from the following quotation from the well-known compilation, Sir H. M. Elliot's "History of India as told by its Own Historians". The passage occurs in the general preface to volume I: "We behold kings sunk in sloth or debauchery and emulating the vices of a Caligula or a Commodus. Under such rulers we cannot wonder that the fountains of justice are corrupted: that the state revenues are never collected without violence and outrage; that villages are burnt and their inhabitants mutilated or sold into slavery; that the officials, so far from affording protection, are themselves the chief robbers and usurpers; that parasites and eunuchs revel in the spoils of plundered provinces; and that the poor find no redress against the oppressor's wrong and proud man's contumely. The few glimpses we have, even among the short extracts of this single volume, of Hindus slain for disputing with Muhammedans, of general prohibitions against processions, worship or ablutions, and other intolerant measures, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders, and massacres and of the sensuality and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoined them, show us that this picture is not overcharged".

A glimpse into official British records will show how the policy of Divide-et-Impera was taking shape. The Secretary of

State, Wood, in a letter to Lord Elgin said : "We have maintained our power in India by playing-off one part against the other and we must continue to do so. Do all you can, therefore, to prevent all having a common feeling".¹

George Francis Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, wrote to Curzon, "I think the real danger to our rule in India not now but say 50 years hence is the gradual adoption and extension of Western ideas of agitation, and, if we could break educated Indians into two sections holding widely different views, we should, by such a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our system of government. We should so plan the educational text-books that the differences between community and community are further strengthened".²

Cross informed the Governor-General, Dufferin, that : "This division of religious feeling is greatly to our advantage, and I look for some good as a result of your Committee of Inquiry on Indian Education and on teaching material".³

Thus under a definite policy, the Indian history text-books were so falsified and distorted as to give an impression that the medieval period of Indian history was full of atrocities committed by Muslim rulers on their Hindu subjects and the Hindus had to suffer terrible indignities under Muslim rule. And there were no common factors in social, political or economic life.

Now let us briefly examine the truth of these allegations. Let us see what the contemporary Muslim historians say : Qazi Mughis-ud Din laments : Although in the medieval period the head of the State in India was a Muslim, the State was not Islamic, the State did not follow the injunctions of the holy scriptures—the Quran, the Hadith, or the laws elaborated in the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence. It is a mistake to call medieval state in India, theocratic, for it did not function under the guidance of the Muslim theologians.

Almost everyone of the Muslim monarchs of India from the 13th century onwards expressed his inability and indicated the impossibility of conducting government in accordance with Shariat. Iltutmish, Balban, Allaudin Khalji and Mohammad Tughlaq were among the pre-Mughal sovereigns of India who

questioned the suitability of applying Muslim law to India. Zia ud-Din Barni, a historian, in his *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, says :

“True religion consists in following on the foot-steps of the Prophet. But royal government, on the contrary, can only be carried on by following the policies of Khusro Parvez and great emperors of Iran”.

He admits that : “Between the traditions (Sunnat) of the Prophet Muhammad and his mode of life and living, and the customs of the Iranian emperors and their mode of life and living, there is a complete contradiction and total opposition”.

But he pointed out that Shariat, which is command of God, could be followed in State matters only in exceptional times. Muhammad succeeded in enforcing Shara because he was already inspired by God; the first four Khalifas did so because they had been the associates of the Prophet. But prophethood is a perfection of religion and the kingship is the perfection of world fortune. These two perfections are opposed and contradictory to each others, and their combination is not within the bounds of possibility.

Nizam-ud-Din, observes : “Balban gave precedence to the affairs of the State over religion”⁴.

Barni states : “In the matter of punishment and exercise of royal authority he acted without fear of God and whatever he regarded to be in the interest of government, irrespective of whether it was in accord with Shara or not, he carried into action”⁵.

Allaudin Khalji's discussion with Qazi Mughis-ud-Din is well known. His parting reply to the Qazi was : “Whatever I consider to be in the interest of Government, I order. I do not know what the exalted God will do to me on the day of Ressurrection”⁶.

Prof. M. Habib says : “It is true that Muslim kings, mostly of foreign extraction sat on Indian thrones for some six or seven centuries. But they could only do so because their enthronement was not the enthronement of the Muslim rule. Had it been otherwise they could not have lasted for a single generation”⁷.

Distortion of Medieval Indian History

Now, let me give a few illustrations as to how the historical facts have been distorted.

While I was doing some research on Tipu Sultan in 1728 at Allahabad, some office-bearers of Anglo-Bengali College Students Union approached me with a request to inaugurate their History Association. They had directly come from the college with their text-books. Incidentally, I glanced through their history text-book. I opened the chapter on Tipu Sultan. One of the sentences that struck me deeply was :

"Three thousand Brahmins committed suicide as Tipu wanted to convert them forcibly into the fold of Islam".

The author of the text-book was Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Har Prashad Shastri, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Calcutta University. I immediately wrote to Dr. Shastri for the source of his information. After many reminders came the reply that he had taken that fact from the Mysore Gazetteer. The Mysore Gazetteer was not available either at Allahabad or at the Imperial Library, Calcutta. So I wrote to Sir Brijendra Nath Seal, the then Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University, seeking a confirmation of the statement of Dr. Shastri. Sir Brijendra Nath Seal forwarded my letter to Prof. Srikantia, who was then busy editing a new edition of the Mysore Gazetteer.

Prof. Srikantia informed me that the episode of the suicide of 3,000 Brahmins is nowhere in the Mysore Gazetteer and he, as student of history of Mysore, was quite certain that no such incident had taken place. He further informed me the Prime Minister of Tipu Sultan was a Brahmin, named Purnea, and his Commander-in-Chief was also a Brahmin, named Krishna Rao. He supplied me with the list of 156 temples to which Tipu Sultan used to pay annual grants. He sent me 30 photostat copies of Tipu Sultan's letters addressed to the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Math with whom Tipu Sultan had very cordial relations. Tipu Sultan, as was customary with the rulers of Mysore, daily visited the temple of Lord Ranganatha located inside the fort of Srirangapatnam before taking his breakfast.* Prof. Srikantia suggested that Dr. Shastri might have based his narrations on the so-called "History of Mysore" by Col. Miles, who claimed to have translated his "History of

*Statement made in the Sentence lacks evidence (K.B.L.)

Tipu Sultan" from a Persian manuscript which was said to be in the personal Library of Queen Victoria. On investigation, it was found that there was no such manuscript in the library of Queen Victoria, and that most of the facts in Col. Miles's history book were concocted and false.

Dr. Shastri's book was approved as a course book of history for high Schools in Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, U. P., M. P., and Rajasthan. I approached Sir Ashutosh Chaudhary, the then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, and sent him all the correspondence that I had exchanged with Dr. Shastri, with Mysore University, Vice-Chancellor, Sir Brijendra Nath Seal, and Prof. Srikantia, with the request to take proper action against the offending passages in the text book. Prompt came the reply from Sir Ashutosh Chaudhary, that the history book by Dr. H. P. Shastri has been put out of course.

However, I was amazed to find the same suicide story was still existing in the history text-books which had been prescribed for junior High School in U. P. for the students of VI, VII and VIII classes in 1972.

In **YOUNG INDIA**, edited by Mahatma Gandhi, dated January 23, 1930, on page 31 appeared the following item :

'Fateh Ali Tipu Sultan of Mysore is represented by foreign historians as a fanatic who oppressed his Hindu subjects and converted them to Islam by force. But he was nothing of the kind. On the other hand, his relations with his Hindu subjects were of a perfectly cordial nature...The Archaeological Department of Mysore State is in possession of over thirty letters written by Tipu to the Shankaracharya of Shringeri Math. These letters are written in the Kannada characters.. In one of the letters written to the Shankaracharya in 1793 Tipu acknowledges receipt of the Shankaracharya's letter and requests him to perform *tapas* (i. e. to undergo self-purificatory discipline) and to offer prayers for the welfare and prosperity of his own realm as for that of the whole universe. And finally he asks the Shankaracharya to return to Mysore; for, the presence of good men in a country brings down rain and makes for good cultivation and plenty. This letter deserves to be printed in letters of gold in every history of India, and no apology need, therefore, be offered for reproducing

Devanagari characters, the original Kannada, which is full of Sanskrit words, some of these being printed here :

श्रीमत्परमहंसदियथोक्त । बरुदाकिंतादन्था शृंगेरी श्री सच्चिदानन्द भारती स्वामी गलवरिये । टीपुसुलतान बादशाह रबरु सलाम । ता उ बरसि कलुहिसिद पत्रिकेहन्द सकल अमिप्रायऊ तिलियलायितु । ता उ जगद्गुरु वालु सर्वलोककुः क्षेम आगवेकु जनरु स्वस्थदल्लि हरेवेकिम्बदागि तपस्सु माडुत्तले इद्दीरी । सरकारद क्षेमवु उत्तरोत्तर अभिवर्धमान आगुवन्ते त्रिकाल तपस्सु माडुवल्लियु ईश्वरप्रार्थने माडुत्ता बरुउद् तम्भनथा दोडुडवरु यावदेश दल्ली इधारयो आदेशिकके मले बिले सकलवु अगि सुभिक्षवागि इरसककदादरिन्द परस्थल दल्लि बहल दिवस ता उ यातके इरवेकु होदकेलसवन्नु क्षिप्रदल्लि अनुकूलपठिसिकोंडु स्थलके सागिबरुवन्ते माडिसूवद् । तारीख 21 माहे राजीसाल सहर सन् 1220 महम्मद । परिधावी संवत्सरद माघ बहल 14 लु खत्त सुव्राऊ मुनशी हजुर ।

“Tipu made lavish gifts of land and other things to Hindu temples, and temples dedicated to Shri Venkataramanna, Shrinivas and Shriranganath located in the vicinity of Tipu's palaces still bear testimony to his broad-minded toleration, and indicate that the great martyr at any rate—for a real martyr he was in the cause of liberty—was not disturbed in his prayers by the Hindu bells calling people to worship the same Allah whose devotee he was. Tipu died fighting for liberty, treating with contempt the suggestion that he should surrender to the enemy. When Tipu's corpse was recovered from among the heap of 'unknown soldiers' whose fate he proudly shared, it was found, that even in death his hand had still clutched the sword which was his instrument for the vindication of liberty. Let us remember the following seasonable words of Tipu : 'Better a lion's life for two days than a dog's life for two hundred years.' and also the lines repeated at the end of each stanza of an elegy composed in his honour : 'Ya Allah, it is better to die beneath the clouds of battle raining blood upon our heads than to live a life of shame and degradation.'”

Similarly, when I was the Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality (1948-53), a case of mutation (Dakhil Kharij) came up for my consideration. It was a dispute over the property dedicated to the temple of Someshwar Nath Mahadev. After the death of the mahant, there were two claimants for the property. One of the claimants filed some documents which were in the possession of the family. The documents were the farmans issued

by Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb conferred a Jagir and a cash gift on the temple. I felt puzzled. I thought that the farmans were fake. I was wondering how Aurangzeb, who was known for the demolition of the temples, could confer a Jagir on a temple with the words that "the jagir was being conferred for the puja and bhog of the deity"? How could Aurangzeb identify himself with idolatry?

I felt sure that the documents were not genuine. But before coming to any conclusion, I thought it proper to take the opinion of Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. I laid the documents before him and asked for his opinion. After examining the documents, Dr. Sapru said that these farmans of Aurangzeb were genuine. Then he asked his munshi to bring the file of the case of Jangum Badi Shiva Temple of Varanasi, of which several appeals were pending in the Allahabad High Court for the past 15 years. The mahant of the Jangum Badi Shiva temple was also in possession of various other farmans of Aurangzeb granting Jagir to the temple.

It was a new image of Aurangzeb appeared before me. I was very much surprised. As advised by Dr. Sapru, I sent letters to the mahants of various important temples of India requesting them to send me photostat copies, if they are in the possession of the farmans of Aurangzeb, granting them jagir for their temples. Another big surprise was in store for me. I received copies of farmans of Aurangzeb from the great temples of Mahakaleshwara, Ujjain, Balaji Temple Chitrakut, Umanand Temple Gauhati and the Jain temple of Shatrunjai and other temples and Gurudwaras scattered over northern India. These farmans were issued from 1065 AH (1659) to 1091 AH (1685).

Though these are only a few instances of Aurangzeb's generous attitude towards Hindus and their temples, they are enough to show that what the historians have written about him, was biased and is only one side of the picture. India is a vast land with thousands of temples scattered all over. If proper research is made, I am confident, many more instance would come to light which will show Aurangzeb's benevolent treatment of non-Muslims.

In the course of my investigations on the farmans of Aurangzeb I came in contact with Shri Gyan Chandra and

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Dr. P. L. Gupta, the former Curator of Patna Museum they have also been doing research of great historical value on Aurangzeb. It pleased me that there were some other scholar-investigators of truth who were contributing their share in clearing the image of much-maligned Aurangzeb, whom the biased historians have made the symbol of Muslim rule in India. An aggrieved poet has sorrowfully said :

tumheN IEdeKE sArI dAstAN men yAd hai itnA

ke Alamgir hindukush thA, zAlim thA, sitamgar thA I

(i. e., of the thousand year Muslim rule in India they remember only this much that Alamgir was a butcher of Hindus, and a tyrannical and cruel monarch).

While accusing Aurangzeb as an anti-Hindu monarch, much has been made of a farman, which is popular by the name of 'Banaras Farman'. This farman belongs to a Brahmin family of Varanasi (Banaras), resident of Mohalla Gauri. In 1905 it was produced before the City Magistrate by one Mangal Pandey, son of Gopi Upadhyaya's daughter. It drew attention of the scholars and it was published for the first time in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1911. And since then it has been often quoted by the historians. Without realizing the real importance of the farman, they accuse Aurangzeb of banning the construction of Hindu temples.⁹

This farman was issued by Aurangzeb on 15 Jamadi, I 1065 A. H. (10 March, 1659) to the local officer of Banaras in disposal of a complaint made by some Brahmin, who was the custodian of a temple and was being harassed by some persons. It runs as follows :

Let Abul Hasan worthy of favour and countenance trust to our royal bounty, and let him know that since in accordance with our innate kindness of disposition and natural benevolence, the whole of our untiring energy and all our upright intentions are engaged in promoting the public welfare and bettering the conditions of all classes, high and low. In accordance with our holy law, we have decided that the ancient temples shall not be destroyed, but new ones shall not be built.

In these days of our justice, information has reached our noble and most holy court that certain persons interfere and harass

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the Hindu residents of the town of Banaras and its neighbourhood; and the Brahmin keepers of the temples, in whose charge these ancient temples are; and that they further desire to remove these Brahmins from their ancient offices, and this intimidation of theirs cause distress to that community.

Therefore, our royal command is that, after arrival of this lustrous order, you should direct that, in future, no person shall in unlawful way interfere or disturb the Brahmins and other Hindu residents at these places, so that they may as before remain in their occupation and continue with peace of mind to offer prayers for the continuance of our God-gifted Empire, so that it may last for ever. Treat this order as urgent

This farman is explicitly clear on the point that Aurangzeb did not issue any new order against the building of the new temples. He only referred to the practice that was already in continuance and he simply affirms to adhere to that practice. As regards the already existing temples, he is explicitly against their destruction. The farman further shows that he was keen on his Hindu subjects being able to live in peace

It is not the only farman of its type. Banaras has one more farman to show that Aurangzeb was really very keen that the Hindus should be able to live in peace. It runs :

“At this auspicious time an august farman was issued whereas Maharajadhiraj Raja Ram Singh of Ramnagar (Banaras) has represented to the most holy and exalted court that a mansion was built by his father in Mohalla Madho Ram, on the bank of Ganga at Banaras for the residence of Bhagwat Gosain who is also his religious preceptor, and as certain persons harass the Gosain, therefore, our Royal Command is that, after the arrival of this lustrous order the present and future officers should direct that in future, no person shall in any way interfere or disturb the Gosain, so that he may continue with peace of mind to offer up prayers for the continuance of our God-given Empire, that is destined to last for all time. Consider this as an urgent matter. Dated 17th Rabi, II, 1091 A.H.”

Some other farmans with the Mahant of the Jangambari Math, show that Aurangzeb never tolerated any encroachment on the rights of his subjects whether they were Hindus or Muslims.

He dealt severely with the culprits. One of these farmans, refers to a complaint filed in the court of Aurangzeb by the **Jangams** (i. e., the followers of Jangam sect—a Saivite sect) against a Muslim resident of Banaras named Nazir Beg and the imperial order thereon says : "The officials of Haveli Muhammada-bad—known as Banaras Subah Allahabad, are to be informed that these days Arjunmal and Jangams, residents of Pargana Banaras, have appeared before (the Emperor) and have made complaint that Nazir Beg, a resident of Banaras, has by force taken possession of five Havelis, which they had in Qasba Banaras. It is, therefore, ordered that if their case is found true and the title of the complainants proved, Nazir Beg should not be allowed to enter the said Haveli, so that in future the Jangams may not appear as complainants before me to seek their redress.

"This farman is dated 11th Sha'ban San 13 Julus (1672 AD)"¹⁰

The other farman in the possession of the same Math, dated 1 Rabi-al-awwal, 1078 A.H., relates to the restoration of the possession of the land that was granted to the Jangams. It runs :

"All the present and future Jagirdars and karoris in pargana Haveli Banaras subah Allahabad are informed that according to the order of the Emperor dated 9 Amardad Illahi, 178 bighas of land has been granted to the Jangams to help them in their maintenance. The old officials have verified this fact, before this. On the present occasion also they have produced evidence bearing the seal of the Malik of the said parganasto the effect that they are, as before, in possession of the land and their title is clearly proved. Therefore, according to the order of Emperor, the same has been left to them as the sacrifice (**Nisar**) for the head of the Emperor. The said land should be returned to them from the beginning of the kharif crop of San 10 as it was before and they should not in any way be interfered with, so that these Jangams may utilize the income of every crop in their maintenance of the kingdom of the Emperor. Herein they shall fail not and act otherwise."¹¹

This farman does not only show that justice was inherent in him, but also that he made no distinction in distributing the **Nisar** to Hindu mendicants. The said land of 178 bighas was in all probability donated to the Jangams by Aurangzeb himself as

we have another farman dated 5th Ramadan 1071 A H., which refers to this land in following terms :

“The present and future officials of Pargana Haveli, Banaras, subordinate to Subah Allahabad, are to be informed that under the order of the Emperor to the effect that 178 bighas of land in pargana Banaras is allotted to Jangams to help in their maintenance. The Jangams have appeared at this time also in the Darbar of the Emperor. Their rights are proved and that the same persons are alive and in possession of the land. Therefore, the said land has again been given to them as before as a sacrifice for the head of the Emperor. The said land should be treated as a mufti land as detailed below, so that they may utilise it and may pray for the continued existence of the kingdom of the Emperor.”¹³

Another land-grant to a Hindu religious preceptor in the town of Banaras was given by Aurangzeb in 1098 A.H. which is as follows :

“At this auspicious time an august farman was issued that as two plots of land measuring 5 8 dira', situated on the bank of the Ganga at the Benimadhoh' ghat, in Banaras (one plot is in front of the house of Ramjivan Gosain and on the bank of the central mosque, and the other higher up) are lying vacant without any building and belong to Bait-ul-mal we have, therefore, granted the same to Ramjivan Gosain and his son as inam, so that after building dwelling houses for the pious Brahmins and holy faqirs on the above mentioned plots, he should remain engaged in the contemplation of God and continue to offer prayer for the continuance of our God-gifted Empire that is destined to last for all time. It is, therefore, incumbent on our illustrious sons, exalted ministers, noble umras, high officials, daroghas and present and future Kotwals, to exert themselves for the continual and permanent observance of this hallowed ordinance; and to permit the above mentioned plots to remain in the possession of the aforesaid person and his descendents exempt from all dues and taxes, and not to demand from him a new sanad every year.”¹³

Aurangzeb seems to be very careful to respect the religious sentiments of his subjects.¹⁴ We have a farman of the Emperor issued on 2 Safar of the ninth year of his reign, in favour of Sudaman Brahman, the Pujari of Umanand temple of Gauhati in

Assam. This temple and its Pujari, were granted a piece of land and the income of some forest for the bhoga (offering to God) and the maintenance of the Pujari by the Hindu rulers of Assam. When Aurangzeb occupied the province, he immediately issued the said farman confirming the earlier Hindu grant of the land and income in favour of the said temple and its Pujari.

The text of the Gauhati Farman runs as follows :

“Be it known to the present and future administrators of important affairs, Chaudharis, Qanoongos, Muqaddams and peasants of patta Bengesar in the Pargana of Pandu in the Sarkar of Dakhinkul that 21/2 Biswa of land out of village Sakara, the Jama (total revenue) of which was thirty rupees, was settled on Sudaman and his son, the Pujari of Umanand, according to the orders of the previous rulers. At this time the truth of the title (claim) out of the aforesaid maintenance rupees twenty cash out of the Mahsul (collections) of the said village and the rest of it . the jungle-land exclusive of the Jama from Intakhali village being settled as the maintenance of the aforesaid grantee it is incumbent upon them (officers) to leave the cash and the land in possession of the above-mentioned perpetually, permanently and for life-time after separating from both the Mahals so that they (grantees) may utilise them for their maintenance and bhog and engage themselves in prayers for the continuance of the kingdom to eternity. They should not allow any let or hindrance on account of revenue taxes and other cesses or demand a fresh Sanad and if there be they should not rely upon it. Considering this as binding upon them, they should not swerve from it. Written on the 2nd of safar in the 9th year of the Accession of His Majesty.”¹⁵

That Aurangzeb had the attitude of tolerance towards Hindus and their religion, is further supported by the priests of the Mahakaleshwar temple at Ujjain. This is one of the chief temples of Siva, where ‘deep’ light is burnt day and night, continuously without any break. This deep is known as Nanda deep. Four seers of ghee used for this Nanda deep, was provided by the state from the remote past. And the priests of the temple say that it continued in the Mughal period also; and even Aurangzeb honoured this ancient tradition. Unfortunately they have no royal

order to support their claim. But they have a copy of an order issued by Murad Bakhsh, during the reign of his father dated 5th Shawwal 1061. A. H. This order was issued by him on behalf of the Emperor on the petition of one Devanarain, who was the then priest of the Mahakaleshwara temple. Hakim Muhammad Mehdi, the Waqianawis, looked into the old records and testified the claim of the petitioner. Thereupon, it was ordered that four seers (Akbari) ghee be provided by the tahsildar of Chabutra Kotawali for said **deep** of the temple.

The copy of this order was issued by Muhammad Sa'dullah in the year 1153 A.H, i.e., 93 years after the original was issued.

The present priests infer from the issue of the copy after such a long interval that the original order continued to be carried on during all this intervening period which covers the reign of Aurangzeb also. Had this order no worth at this late period, no one would have cared to obtain the copy of a dead letter. Some other royal papers deposited in the archives of the said temple were brought to my knowledge by the then Mahant Lakshmi Narain who also possessed a few papers of the time of Aurangzeb.

Generally historians talk of the demolition of the Chintaman temple constructed by the Nagarseth of Ahmedabad but they remain dumb on the fact that the same Aurangzeb gave lands for the Shatrunjaya and Abu temples to the same Nagarseth.

The sanad granting land to the Shatrunjaya temple runs :
“(and) the end of which will be happy, Satidas, the jeweller has represented to that noble, most holy, exalted and elevated presence through persons who constitute the holy assembly of the court, that whereas according to a Farman of His Majesty, the exalted (and) as dignified as Solomon, the protector of the office of the successor (of Muhammad), the shadow of God, dated the nineteenth of the holy month of Ramadan, in the year, thirty-one, the district of Palitana, which is called Satranja in the jurisdiction of the Sorath Sarkar, a dependency of the Subah of Ahmedabad (and revenue of which two lacs of Dams) has been settled as a perpetual In'am on the petitioner (and) that he (the petitioner), therefore, hopes that a glorious edict may also be

granted by our court. Therefore, in the same manner as before we have granted (to the petitioner) the above-mentioned district as a perpetual In'am. It is, therefore, incumbent on the present and the future managers of the Subah and the above-mentioned Sarkar, to exert themselves for the continual and permanent observance of this hallowed ordinance (and) to permit the above-mentioned district to remain in possession of the above-mentioned person and of his descendants in the lineal succession from generation to generation, and to consider him exempted from all demands and taxes and all other dues and not to demand from him in respect hereof a new sanad every year, and they shall not swerve from this order. Written on the 9th of the month of Telkand in the Hijra year 1068 (1658)."¹

The Nagarseh helped Aurangzeb in some war, and being pleased with his services he gave some land-gift at Girnar and Abu to the temples therein. It runs as such :

"In the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful. (Tughra) O ye Faithful, obey God and obey the Prophet and those in authority among you.

“(Seal) Abul Muzaffar Muhy-ud-Din Muhammad Aurangzeb 'Alamgir Badshah Ghazi.

"At this time, the exalted Farman is issued that since Shantidas Jawahari, son of Sahasbhai, of the Shrawak community has solicited and been hopeful of special favours, and has greatly helped the army during its march with provisions, and expects to be honoured with special rewards, therefore, the village (deh) of Palitana, which is under the jurisdiction of Ahmedabad, and the hill of Palitana famous as Satrunja, and the temple on it, all those we give to the said Satidas Jawahari of the Shrawak community, and the timber and fuel which is to be found on the hill of Satranja should belong to the Shrawak community, so that they may utilise these for whatever purpose they like. Whoever guards the hill of Satranja and its temple should be entitled to the income of Palitana, and they should continue in prayer for the maintenance of the eternal government. It is necessary that the administration and officers and the Jagirdars and the karoris of the present and future should absolutely not allow any deviation or alteration in this.

“Besides this there is a mountain in Junagarh famous as Gimal (Girnar), and there is another hill at Abuji under the jurisdiction of Sirohi. We give these two hills also to Satidas Jawahari of Shrawak community as a special favour, so that he may be entirely satisfied. It is necessary for the officers that they should not allow any one to interfere with these, and no one among the Rajas should obstruct him and they should always help him as such action will bring to them royal pleasure. And they should not demand a new sanad every year, and if any body makes any claim about that village and the three hills, which we have given to him, he will be liable to the censure and curses of the people as well as of God. Another separate sanad has also been given to him.

“Written on the tenth of great Rajab, the Hijri year 1070 (March 12, 1660).”¹⁷

But there are instances which prove beyond doubt that Aurangzeb did order demolition of Vishwanath temple at Varanasi and the Jama Masjid at Golkunda, and the reasons that were given out for the demolition of the temple and the mosque may give benefit of circumstances to Aurangzeb. The story regarding demolition of Vishwanath temple is that while Aurangzeb was passing near Varanasi on his way to Bengal, the Hindu Rajas in his retinue requested that if the halt was made for a day, their Ranis may go to Varanasi, have a dip in the Ganges and pay their homage to Lord Vishwanath. Aurangzeb readily agreed. Army pickets were posted on the five mile route to Varanasi. The Ranis made a journey on the Palkis. They took their dip in the Ganges and went to the Vishwanath temple to pay their homage. After offering Puja all the Ranis returned except one, the Maharani of Kutch. A thorough search was made of the temple precincts but the Rani was to be found no where. When Aurangzeb came to know of it, he was very much enraged. He sent his senior officers to search for the Rani. Ultimately, they found that the statue of Ganesh which was fixed in the wall was a moveable one. When the statue was moved, they saw a flight of stairs that led to the basement. To their horror, they found the missing Rani dishonoured and crying deprived of all her ornaments. The basement was just beneath Lord Vishwanath's seat. The Rajas expressed their vociferous protests. As the

crime was heinous, the Rajas demanded exemplary action. Aurangzeb ordered that as the sacred precincts have been despoiled, Lord Vishwanath may be moved to some other place, the temple be razed to the ground and the Mahant be arrested and punished.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in his famous book, "The Feathers and the Stones" has narrated this fact based on documentary evidence. Dr. P. L. Gupta, former Curator of Patna Museum, has also corroborated this incident.

Now, about the demolition of Jama Masjid : The Ruler of Golkunda, the famous Tanashah, after collecting revenues of the State, did not pay his dues to Delhi. In a few years they were accumulated into crores. Tanashah buried this Khazana and erected a Jama Masjid over it. When Aurangzeb came to know of it, he ordered the demolition of the mosque. The buried khazana was seized and utilised for the benefit of the people. These two examples are sufficient to show that Aurangzeb did not make any distinction between a temple and a mosque, in the matter of judicial finding.

Unfortunately, the incidents and characters in the Medieval and Modern History of India have been distorted and falsified in such a way that distortion and falsification are being accepted as God's own truth, and an accusing finger is raised against those who try to discriminate between facts and fiction, between reality and distortions, between truth and untruth. The vested communal interests continue to distort and falsify history.

It is most unfortunate that the fundamentalists on both sides are somewhat busy distorting not only medieval Indian history but also misinterpreting vedic and Quranic tenets and injunctions. Unscrupulous politicians are sowing winds of hatred forgetting that their countrymen will have to reap the whirlwind.

I would humbly draw the attention of such misguided politicians and biased historians to the 19th century band of reformers headed by Rammohan Roy, Mahadev Gobind Ranade, Swami Vivekanand and Ram Krishna Paramhans on the Hindu side, who by their liberal interpretation of Hinduism showed the new generation the human values of religion, and on the other

hand the Muslim band of humanist reformers led by Sir Syed Ahmed who set the pace of Muslim renaissance. Sir Syed was a devout Muslim. But he was concerned with the religious and cultural downfall of his community. He found sanction from Islam itself for his progressive and secular approach. He was aware that in India Islam needed a Luther.¹⁸ His secularism and rationalism was based on a saying of the Prophet :

"I am no more than a man; when I order you anything respecting religion, receive it, and when I order you anything about the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than a man."¹⁹

He concluded that Islam has nothing to do with worldly affairs. According to him it is wrong to believe that Islam is directly related to all worldly matters and that, therefore, nothing can be done without obtaining a religious sanction. The regulations and the laws of Islam should not be identified with Islam itself. They can be replaced by better laws. "It is also wrong", Sir Syed said, "to hold the books of jurists incorporate infallible truth and are sufficient for the guidance of our affairs. Reason is the only weapon which can decide the value of social and moral code of Islam."²⁰ He held that the principles advocated by Islam are more ethical and are common to all other religions. He vehemently criticised the Ulema, who made all the institutions established by the Prophet as a part of Islam.

Sir Syed stood for keeping the political life separate from religion. He asserted that neither the people are required to know the religion of the ruler nor the government should interfere into the religion of the people. Every good government follows this principle. Any government which refused to follow it cannot be described as civilized government. By emphasising this principle, Sir Syed clearly shows that State should not be a religious state and it should not make any distinction between the people on the basis of religion. In the context of India he believed that all the people irrespective of their faith constitute one Nation. Religious difference should not undermine the vital unity of the people. The progress of the people demanded that the leadership should be in the hands of the secular persons. This attitude was responsible for Sir Syed's opposition to the Pan-Islamic movement of

Jamaluddin Afghani as well as the protagonists of Hindi-Urdu controversy, a blow to his concept of composite culture.

Sir Syed's legacy of secularism was carried forward by Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Chiragh Ali and S. Khuda Bakhsh. Mohsin-ul-Mulk took Sir Syed's rationalism to its logical end. This was a great encouragement to the secular thinking of a section of Muslims. These religious ideas found expression in one of his letters he wrote to Sir Syed :

"The light and glare of scientific knowledge and enquiry has driven out irrational and obsolete concepts. The modern mind is illuminated by the lustrous and bright ideas and regards such concepts as superstitious and preposterous. And now such irrational and barbarous ideas are hardly amenable to the sensible and rational mind. The only unfortunate victims of such funny superstitions are those who indulge in the luxury of childish talk and heresay.

"Divinity, mercifulness and omnipresence—the qualities ascribed to Supreme Being are all a magnificent humbug. Worship and prayer springs out of fear and apprehensions on the part of the brutes and unlettered. Intuition is but a nightmare. It should better be understood, that the so-called soul or spirit is not immortal. The Day of Judgement is an absurd unreality. Hell and Heaven are concepts without any substance, reward and punishment is the sad work of superstition. Death is the final emancipator of every complication and agony and misery. Such, for instance, are the reflections of those who are rational, strong of will, and swim in the ocean of sciences."²¹

Even Ameer Ali due to the influence of Sir Syed asserted that :

"To suppose, therefore, that every Islamic precept is necessarily immutable is to do injustice to history and to the development of human intellect."²²

He also argued that certain injunctions of the Quran are historically relevant only to the Prophet's day. It means that Islam as preached by the Prophet is not wholly applicable to all the spheres of life. According to Ameer Ali, no law is immutable. It becomes out of date after a radical change in the society.

Therefore, law should be in consonance with the exigencies and the requirements of the time.²³

It is significant that Ameer Ali supported the abolition of polygamy. He regarded it "as much opposed to the teachings of Mohammed as it is to the general progress of civilized society and true culture."²⁴ Ameer Ali held that polygamy is abhorrent to the laws of Islam.²⁵ He also opposed the existing practice of divorce.

"The prophet looked upon the custom of divorce with extreme disapproval and regarded its practice as calculated to undermine the foundations of society. He repeatedly declared that nothing more displeases God than divorce," said Ameer Ali.²⁶ These ideas regarding the Muslim personal law impel a change which permits polygamy as well as divorce. The change perhaps will be more in keeping with the spirit of Islam than the maintenance of the status quo.

Chiragh Ali's view of Islam was also strikingly secular and liberal. To him,

"Islam as a religion is quite apart from inculcating a social system. The Mohammedan polity and social system have nothing to do with religion."²⁷ Islam is so sufficiently elastic that it can adopt itself the social and political revolutions going on around it.²⁸ It is not a barrier to the political, social or moral innovations.²⁹ Chiragh Ali regarded the Prophet primarily as a reformer who supplanted ancient Arabian superstitions by monotheism, elevated the moral standard of Arabs and other people and improved the lot of women by restricting polygamy, discouraging slavery, and abolishing infanticide.³⁰ To Chiragh Ali, the Mohammedan common law or Shariat is by no means unchangeable or unalterable.³¹ The Prophet did not compile any code, but permitted the Muslims to frame any code of Civil or Common law and to found systems which would harmonize with the times and suit the political and social changes going around them.³² The Prophet, Chiragh Ali believed, never combined the Church and the State into one.³³ The ideas supplement Sir Syed's view on Islam.

S. Khuda Bakhsh also forcefully advocated the separation of religion from social and political life. He attempted to free Islam

from the "fetters of Authority and the Dead Hand of the Past".³⁴ He held that "it would be a merest affront to contend that religious and social systems, bequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration."³⁵ He did not consider Quran as *Corpus juris civilis* to be accepted for all time.³⁶ His view was that the subordination of religion to the State is a step forward in the direction of reform and progress.³⁷

S. Khuda Bakhsh was a supporter of secular politics. He did not consider the institution of Khilafat a basis of the unity of the Muslim world. On the contrary he commented that the abolition of the Khilafat ended a fiction and laid the path open for the development of Nationalism and finally removed once for all the embargo upon liberalism.³⁸ What is also significant in Khuda Bakhsh was that he opposed the idea of the promotion of Muslim unity in isolation with the Indian solidarity. This makes him politically different from Ameer Ali and Mohsin-ul-Mulk. He wanted that the Muslim solidarity should be merged into a higher, nobler Indian solidarity.³⁹ Badruddin Tyabji's view were similar to those of Khuda Bakhsh. He also advocated the separation of worldly and financial affairs from religion, and pleaded that in their own interest the religious leaders should keep themselves aloof from all purely financial and mundane matters.⁴⁰

Sulaiman Nadvi, another great scholar, admitted the separation of Church and State in Islam.⁴¹ It is to be noted that the liberals in the last quarter of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th Century were guided by scientific developments. Their effort was to decide the validity of the social laws on the basis of science. Mohsin-ul-Mulk declared that "science can submit to no confines or limitations; it is not merely speculative, it is pragmatic, demonstrable and experimental It has confuted the traditional concepts of religion to such an extent that only two alternatives remain: either to allow religion to die a natural death or to interpret religion in the light of the new knowledge."⁴² Thus the scientific approach and the ineffectivity of religion in non-spiritual matters should be considered as the foundation of secularism among the Indian Muslims.

For the first time in the history of Islam in India, liberal ideas were propounded that religion should not come in the way

of social progress, and that it should concern itself with spiritualism rather than with the temporal sphere of life. Therefore, they discarded the traditional notion of Jihad, Darul-Harb and Darul Islam, and political pan-Islamism. It was the first concerted attempt towards the modernization of Islam in this country.⁴³

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**The Legacy of Islam:
A Panorama of Composite Culture**

by
B. N. Pande

Late Dr. Shafa'at Ahmed Khan, a well-known scholar of modern Indian history, rightly said that, "for the scientific student of history India is a fallow field beneath which lay buried a civilization and a culture which were to become objectives alike of admiration and respect. Indian historian must consequently, reach forth across the gulf of ages, and base his work on the severe frame work of abstract truth."¹

History demands a clear vision of the world in which we live. History is capable of changing our vision of the contemporary world. History requires imagination, yet it is not a mere romance. History demands philosophical background, yet it cannot be achieved by philosophic speculation. History rests on the belief that we are the products of our past and that it is desirable and necessary that we should know how we have come to be, what we are. But we have to acknowledge the fact that each generation creates its own past. Under the stress of nationalism and national aspirations of India the past is being re-examined and re-interpreted in accordance with new interests.

When the followers of Islam came to India they must have seen that the entire country lived upto high tenets in regard to religious tolerance, perhaps the highest for the age in which they were given. They must have wondered all the more that the people, who were so tolerant to outsiders and so free from all racial and political bias, were the most conservative in the world and rigidly exclusive in their social habits and customs. The mosaic of their caste system with its political replica of independent and conflicting units had to be built up anew into harmonious structure. The people had to be welded into common brotherhood and corresponding political unity had to be evolved to serve their common needs and save them from unending conflicts. The need of the hour was religious tolerance,

social and cultural synthesis, political integration and a secular outlook. Destiny had ordained the Mughals to play this unifying role, and in spite of disruption which followed at the end of Aurangzeb's rule, the convulsion of policies could not overwhelm the synthesis of social life, and Hindu-Muslim relations continued the same upto 1857.

The Universal surge of loyalty and devotion towards Bahadurshah, the symbol of political revolution conclusively showed, for the first time in history, that India had become politically self-conscious and that the foundations of Indian nationalism had been truly and deeply laid. ²

Throughout the medieval ages the Muslims took enormous pains to acquaint themselves with the religious literature of the Hindus. They translated books of important texts into Persian,—the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Dharma Shastra, the Purana, the Yoga Vashista, the Yoga Shastra and the Vedanta Shastra. ³

Among the later writers may be mentioned the name of Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan (1699-1781 AD). Mazhar said about the Hindu worship of idols :

In idol worship the process is similar to the *Dhikr*, contemplative ritual, which is prescribed by the Muslim Sufis. ⁴

Mahmood Shabistri (AD 1317), the well-known writer of *Gulshan-e-Raz*, writing on the theme of the idol worship, explains the difference and similarity between it and Islam :

“The idol is the expression of love and unity in this world, and to wear the sacred thread is to take the resolve of service. As both faith and unfaith are founded in existence, unity of God is the essence of idol worship. As things are the expression of existence, one out of them must at least be the idol. If the Muslim knew what the idol is then he would understand that religion consists in idolatry and if the idol worshipper understood the idol, he would not go astray in his faith”. ⁵

Sir W. W. Hunter in his book, *The Indian Musalmans* quoted *Fatwa* of the Qazi of Jaunpore in which he declares that Muslims should regard regions under the Maratha rule as *Dar-ul-Islam*, on the ground that the Rulers permit the Muhammadans to say their Friday and Id Festival prayers and maintain the laws of Islam

although the Musalmans have to ask them to appoint their *qazis* and governors.

In spite of the existence of two religions, there were not any deep cultural differences between them. They took pleasure in the study of each other's religion, philosophy and science. Their arts were common. They had no prejudices in regard to participation in the fairs and festivals of each other. They spoke the same language, wore similar clothes, furnished their houses in the same style, had similar outlook upon the life of this world, if not also the next. Their industry and commerce, urban and rural occupations, were parts of one economic system.

While in the middle ages, under Muslim rule Hindu and Muslim reformers had led movements of religious and moral purification concerned with both communities, the reformers of the 19th century were exclusive; for example, compare Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Dadu, Tukaram, Basveshwar, Pran Nath and others with Sir Saiyed and Swami Dayanand. The medieval religious leaders cared essentially for the substance and reality of religion and deprecated emphasis upon external acts, doctrines and dogmas; on the other hand the modern reformers have been concerned chiefly with the philosophy and tenets of religion rather than its inner emotional and spiritual content.

No account of cultural synthesis is complete without a discussion of religion. Of the Muslims' attitude towards religion other than their own, a great deal of misunderstanding prevails on account of the false propaganda spread by their enemies, especially European writers belonging to Church; and the result has been that the non-Muslim world has almost come to believe that Islam has been a religion of violence, of force, of uncompromising rigidity and bigotry. But the facts are, however, quite contrary to the popular belief. Long before Europe had learnt to enquire about religion under scientific and detached spirit, many Muslim learned men had compiled books on comparative religion in which they displayed an amazingly true and rationalistic attitude of mind. Among them was the most eminent scholar, Abu Raihan al-Beruni.

The underlying forces for this strong social synthesis were the great precepts of religion that acted as powerful brakes.

The Quran teaches tolerance. "Let there be no compulsion in religion" is its eternal commandment. And beautifully has the reason for this commandment been given: "But if my Lord had pleased verily all who are in the world would have believed together, wilt thou then compel men to become believers?"

The Bible teaches tolerance and forgiveness in these noble words: "Whoever smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." The commandment in the Quran "Recompense evil with that which is better" is almost a paraphrase of the Christian commandment. The same idea is expressed with greater fullness of imagery in the following words of the Quran: "And a paradise, vast as the heavens and the earth, was prepared for those who mastered their anger and forgave others".

The Bhagwad Gita says: "However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha." And again, "O Son of Kunti, even the devotees of other deities who worship full of faith, they also worship Me, though not according to the established custom."

In Akbar's time a unity was reached in the national consciousness which extended from the cottage to the throne. Akbar's efforts to give it the form of a new religion were bound to fail because religions could not be created through politics; and, also because a movement whose essence consisted in transcending all religious formalism could not be imprisoned in new bonds though cast in gold and set with diamonds. But, after this, politics could not be an obstacle in its path; and we find that throughout the Mughal period, though thwarted for a while to some extent, the movement continued to widen and deepen in its course.

It will be conceded by everybody that, so far as race is concerned, the Muslims of India, with the exception perhaps of a very microscopic minority, are wholly indistinguishable from the Hindus. There is scarcely any trace of the old Arabs, Turks and Persians left. It is impossible in the population of Sind to distinguish the vestiges of the Arab soldiers who invaded it under Muhammad Bin Qasim or of the Arab families which ruled over the valley for hundreds of years. The central Asian clans which entered India in the wake of the Ghaznavides Ghoris,

Mughals, Turks and Afghans and whose descendant continued to exercise authority and dominion for five hundred years and more, have similarly disappeared almost completely. The Muslim conquerors have not maintained their racial identity or clan organization and have merged themselves into the general mass of the Indian people. Tribes, clans and families whose names make such a noise in the annals of the of Muslim rule are today barely known and are all but forgotten. The process of assimilation has been continuous throughout the centuries. Conversion, marriage and settlement in India without any desire to return to or have relation with the peoples of the homelands have removed their differences and brought about racial homogeneity.

Socially the Musalmans of India developed an organization similar to that of the Hindus. Muslim societies in India, unlike Muslim societies in other countries, became divided into castes comparable with the Hindu caste system. Sayyids correspond with Brahmins, Mughal and Pathans with Kshatriyas, Shaikhs with Vaisyas, and the group of artisans craftsmen and labourers with Shudras. The distinctions between the four divisions were based not merely on economic and vocational considerations, but also on heredity, which was recognized throughout the middle ages as a factor of supreme importance among both the Musalmans and Hindus.

In every social system woman holds a characteristic position. Arab and Turkish societies differ considerably from Hindu society in this matter. Yet in India the Muslims followed not the customs of Arabia and Turkistan but those of India. In toilet, dress, ornaments, ways of social intercourse, daily routine of life, they adopted Indian ways and manners. The Muslim marriage ceremonies were adopted from Hinduism *Nisbat, Haldi, Mehndi, Tel, Mandwa, Barat, Jalwa, Kangan*, etc. were Muslim adaptations of Hindu ceremonies. The only difference that remained was, that in the Hindu marriage bride and bridegroom went round the fire to the chanting of Vedic *Mantras* while in the Muslim marriage they were joined together in bonds of matrimony by the *Qazi* who read appropriate verses from the Quran. Early marriage of girls, prohibition of widow marriage,

dependence and subordination of woman and the use of the veil were common to Hindus and Muslims⁵.

It is true that the religious fasts and festivals of the two communities were different but the manner of observing them was more or less similar. *Muharram* celebrations were assimilated to *Dasehra*, *Shab Barat* to *Shivaratri*, *Ramzan* and *Id* to *Navartara* etc. Besides there were many fairs and festive occasions which were common; and even so far as the peculiar communal festivals were concerned, the Hindus and the Muslims participated in both, e.g. *Holi* and *Muharram*.

The Muslims adopted many Hindu funeral ceremonies, for example, the *Tija*, the *Daswan* etc. Then ceremonies concerning pregnancy and childbirth like the seventh month, sixth day of child birth, the shaving of the child's head (*Mundan*=*Aqiqah*), licking of *Khir*, boring of ears, birthday anniversary etc., were common to both. Even such purely Hindu practices as the immolation of the widow on the death of her husband and *Jauhar* were occasionally resorted to by the Muslims. Ibn Batuta relates the story of the defeat of Ainus Mulk by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and tells how his wife plunged into death after her husband. Again the *Zafar Namah* describes the *Jauhar* committed by wife of Kamaluddin, governor of Bhatnair, when he proceeded to fight against Timur. Amir Khusru's admiration is evident from his famous lines :

*chUn Zan-e hindi kasE dar Ashiqi diwAna nEst
soKHtan bar sham'-e shauhar kAr-e parwAna nEst;*

Dress is the most outstanding expression of the inner character of a society—of its grades and classes, of its psychological values, tabus and reticences. From this point of view it is important to notice how Muslims in India largely discarded the garments worn in Arabia, Iran and Central Asia and mainly adopted Indian costumes and clothes. The use of Arab *arnama*, *jubba*, *ridah*, *tahmad* and *tasma* and of Central Asian *kulAh*, *nima*, *moza* etc., disappeared, giving place to Hindu *pagri* and *chira*, *kurta* and *angarkha*, *patka* and *dopatta pajama* and *Juta*⁷.

If we turn from such externals, to the cultural aspects of life, we find the same kind of fusion there. Let us consider the

sacrifices the Musalmans have made for the evolution of a common culture in India. Take the question of language which is of fundamental importance, the chief medium of expression of the intellect and of the spirit. Arabic is the sacred language of Islam. It was also the mother tongue of those early invaders who came to Sind. It is not now the language of any group of Musalmans in India, although it is studied by the learned for obvious reasons. Turkish was the spoken language of the Muslim conquerors from Central Asia; Persian was the language of the court from the beginning of Muslim rule till its final overthrow. Neither of these languages is today spoken by the Indian Muslims, nor has the conqueror imposed them on the conquered.

On the contrary, the Muslims adopted the Indian languages and enriched them with words drawn from their languages. The Muslims of Punjab speak Punjabi, of Bengal Bengali, of Gujarat Gujarati; in other words, they speak the dialect of the region where they reside, and there is no difference between them and the Hindus in their forms of speech. There remains one language regarding which much controversy rages today, namely, Urdu. Now Urdu is not a Muslim language, it is not spoken in any of countries where Islam is or has been the religion of the majority of the people, the homelands of the conquerors of India. Urdu belongs to Aryan branch of languages. Its basic structure, grammar and the greater part of its vocabulary are Indian. In fact the origin of Urdu is the dialect which is spoken round about Delhi and which is known to linguists by the name of *Khari Boli*. It became the spoken dialect of the Musalmans also when they settled in and about Delhi. The spoken dialect evolved into a literary language and both Hindus and Musalmans have made it as such throughout the centuries. In fact it may be truthfully said that, before the use of English among the Indian educated classes, Urdu occupied the position of the *lingua indica* of India.

According to Havell, a great admirer of Hinduism, Islam influenced the Hindu social life in two ways. There was a rise of rigidities in the Hindu society. Islam also gave the depressed and downtrodden masses the prospect of improving their social status and economic lot. Havell says that the Muslim success

in India cannot be explained away by external factors alone. It became possible owing to the political disintegration and moral degeneration of India since the death of Harsha. Havell has emphatically observed that it was not the philosophy of Islam but the democratic nature of the Islamic society that attracted the attention of the Indian people ⁸.

The Arabs were the first among the Muslims to come to India, and they had settled down firmly in South India by the end of the tenth century. Henceforth Muslim influence began to grow rapidly. They were heartily welcomed as traders and were allowed by the local princes of Malabar to acquire lands and to practise their religion freely. Islam is essentially a missionary religion and the Arabs experienced no difficulty in preaching their gospel and winning converts from the local people. They created a great stir among the Hindu populace as much by their peculiar beliefs and worship as by the zeal with which they professed and advocated them ⁹.

Islam found a congenial atmosphere in South India. Religious conflicts had been going on in South India as Neo-Hinduism had been struggling with Buddhism and Jainism for ascendancy. The religious atmosphere bewildered the common people; and it was at such a juncture that Islam appeared on the scene with a simple formula of faith, well-defined dogmas and rites. The result was a large number of voluntary conversions of unsophisticated people to Islam followed by the conversion of the last of the Cheraman Perumal Kings of Malabar to the new religion in the first quarter of the ninth century. According to some, it was with a view to propitiating the Arab traders so that they might enrich the Kingdom of Malabar by their prosperous trade and commerce that the Perumal King embraced Islam. Whatever might have been the motive of the Malabar King, it cannot be gainsaid that the Muslims came to acquire great influence and importance in Malabar region under the patronage of the local princes. The number of Muslim settlers in the dominion of the Zamorin of Calicut continued to increase by leaps and bounds, and in his eagerness to train his men as expert mariners and sailors, the Zamorin "gave orders that in every family of fishermen in his dominion one or more of the male members should be brought up as Muhammadans" ¹⁰.

Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta and Abdur Razzak noticed a large number of Muslim settlers along the Western coast with their mosques and flourishing centres of trade. Each settlement of the Muslims in the Eastern and Western coasts grew into a centre of religious propaganda. It is really surprising that within the course of a few centuries, before the advent of the Turks, large areas in the Eastern and Western regions turned into centres of Islamic civilisation and culture without the least resistance from the Sons of the Soil. The rise of the Bahmani Kingdom in the South offers a glaring instance of the impact of Islam in South Indian politics and culture. This impact is much more glaring when we take into account the rise of Bijapur and Golkonda as two other great Muslim kingdoms in the later days.

Northern India came into direct contact with Islam from the time of Muhammad bin Ghori. From the thirteenth century onwards Hindu imperialism based on loose confederation of autonomous principalities gradually gave way to Turkish suzerainty and paramountcy. Hinduism came face to face with a dynamic religion which threw a challenge to the philosophic basis of Hinduism, attacked its social structure and denied its pantheistic doctrines.

Speaking of the moral effect of Muslim conquest, Cunningham writes :

"The influence of a new people who equalled or surpassed Kshatriyas in valour, who despised the sanctity of Brahmins, and who authoritatively proclaimed the unity of God and His abhorrence of images, began gradually to operate on the minds of the multitudes of India . . . New superstition emulated old credulity. *Pirs* and *Shahids*, saints and martyrs, equalled Krishna and Bhairav in the number of their miracles, and the Muhammadans almost forgot the unity of God in the multitude of intercessors whose aid they implored".¹¹

In the words of Cunningham again :

"The first result of the conflict (between Hinduism and Islam) was the institution, about the end of the fourteenth century, of a comprehensive sect by Ramananda of Banaras. He seized upon the idea of man's equality before God, and admitted all classes of people as his disciples".¹²

Islam entered Kashmir in the fourteenth century A.D. The people welcomed its exponent, the great Shah Hamadan, with open arms, and the synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religious thought found its greatest exponents in Lalleshwari and Sheikh Nurud-Din, who continue to be held in great esteem by both Hindus and Muslims. Kashmir has witnessed dark periods of religious persecution, but the people, true to their tradition, have lived like brothers, giving solace and shelter to their brothers in distress.

Two names that come very easily to an average Kashmiri's lips are Lalitaditya (724-760 AD) and Zain-ul-Abidin (1422-1474 AD). Lalitaditya ushered in an era of national glory, prosperity and peace. He was tolerant towards all schools of religious thought. Buddhism and Hinduism, the two prominent creeds of the time, received patronage at his hands—a Hindu ruler, who constructed temples for the Buddha as well as for Shiva, Vishnu and other gods. The king offered liberal patronage to men of letters. Learning flourished, and Kashmir became the "cynosure of foreign scholars, and many cultural missions set out from the country." His faults, as recorded by Kalhana, notwithstanding, he was above religious bigotry. His commander-in-chief was a Buddhist and so were many of his high officials. To talented men of all nationalities he showed great respect and regard. He brought from Kanauj the two famous poets Bhavabhuti and Vakpatiraja and installed them in his capital in Kashmir. Zain-ul-Abidin, popularly known as Bud Shah (the great king), was not a conqueror but remains a beacon light for the people of Kashmir for their cherished principles of tolerance and fraternal living. "Possessed of a broad and tolerant outlook", says Pandit Anand Koul, "and dominated with a desire to benefit mankind, he ruled with such equity and justice and did so much to improve the

material prosperity of the people that one cannot fail to admire him...Zainul-ul-Abidin was deservedly surnamed '*Bud Shah*' or great king. In spite of six centuries having rolled by since he lived, his name is still remembered with genuine reverence and gratitude. Take the name of *Bud Shah* before a Kashmiri and at once he will, with a happy countenance, rhyme with '*Padshah*' "

During the reign of Sikandar Zain-ul-Abidin's father, the Hindus suffered enormously through the persecution of his minister Siya Butt, a new convert to the Muslim faith. It is said that the Hindus fled away and only eleven families remained in Kashmir. With Zain-ul-Abidin's ascending the throne, confidence returned to them. He sent messengers to them inviting them to return to their homeland. They responded with pleasure. He gave the pride of place in his court to Shri Butt, a great physician, and Jonaraj, a great historian who updated the chronology *Rajatarangini*. Himself a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit, he encouraged the translation of a major portion of the Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian. The *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* was also translated into Persian during his reign? A general toleration of all faiths was proclaimed and practised. The king built temples and penalized the killing of cows and himself abstained from meat-eating during the holy festivals of the Hindus. The *Rajatarangini* gives a detailed account of how the king took part in the annual *Nag-yatra* festival when he would don the robes of a Hindu mendicant and performs the journey in the company of other pilgrims.

Two other names that come easily to the lips of a Kashmiri are of Lalleshwari, more popularly known by the homely name of Lal Ded (Mother Lal), and Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, better known as *Nund-Rishi*. They are believed to have been contemporaries. Both of them as mystics saints and poets, continue to have an equal claim on the affection of both Hindus and Muslims. In fact, both communities hold forth divergent views as to which community they originally belonged.

Lalleshwari was a follower of Shaivism. Born towards the middle of the fourteenth century AD, she preached the message

of truth and peace in the language of the people. Her poetry, known as *Yakya*, is committed to memory by thousands regardless of their religious faith. Her verses are quoted even in daily conversation, and their wide use has given a healthy direction to individual and community ideals.

In one of her sayings, she exhorted people not to differentiate between a Muslim and Hindu. "They are not different", she said, "Know thyself, if thou art sane", she advised. In a verse, she castigated the fanatical followers of so-called "religion" and said:

O Mind, hast thou become intoxicated at another's expense?
Why hast thou mistaken truth for untruth?
The little understanding hath made thee
attached to others' religion,

Subdued to coming and going, to birth and death !

Lal Ded criticized the cold and meaningless way in which religious rituals were performed. She said that God did not want meditations and austerities. The abode of bliss could be reached only through love.

Nund Rishi, born in 1377 AD, was a pious man. His fame as a saint and the glory of his spiritual attainments travelled far and wide, attracting to him a great number of followers. His verses have become stamped in people's memory. He preached against the snares of false preachers :

I saw a priest blowing out fire (and)
Beating a drum to others,
The priests have nice big turbans on their heads,
They walk about daintily dressed,
Dressed in priestly robes they indulge in mutton,
They run away with cooking pots under their arms.

The Rishi exhorted his followers to perform good actions. He wanted people to lead disciplined lives in which they cared about others. In one of his sayings, he asks :

Thou hast eaten six platefuls, one like another,
If thou art a priest, then who are robbers ?

No wonder, King Zain-ul-Abidin was the chief mourner at Nund Rishi's funeral. During his lifetime, he founded an order of Rishis which exercised tremendous influence on Hindus too. The last of the great Hindu mystic poets, Parmanand, who died towards the end of the last century, contributed a great deal towards uplifting people morally and spiritually.

This rich tradition in history and literature has had its impact on the life of the people of Kashmir. The family of a Hindu emissary who was deputed to negotiate with Ranjit Singh to rescue the people of Kashmir from the tyranny of Pathan rule, was given protection by a Muslim shawl-merchant who preferred death to the betrayal of trust. The holy cave of Amarnath, which was declared "lost" during Pathan rule, was rediscovered by one *Malik* of a village in the vicinity of Pahalgam. To this day, the Muslim *Malik* family receives a share from the offerings made by the thousands of Hindus who visit the holy cave annually. The shrine of *Shah-e-Hamadan* and the temple of Mahakali exist together at Khanqah Mohalla in Srinagar city. The shrine of *Makhdum Saheb* and the temple of goddess *Sharika* at *Hari Parbat* are also similarly situated. Be it *Id* or *Shivaratri*, the participation is not only of one or the other community but of the people of Kashmir as a whole. One may even say that the spectacle is unique to Kashmir.¹³

Faith in the unity of God was not to them an intellectual proposition alone. It was infused with universal love. Love alone could lead to the realisation of oneness.¹⁴ Nizamuddin Aulia is quoted as saying :

"The main purpose and objective of man's creation is the love of the Supreme Being."¹⁵

Along with the love of God goes the love for His entire creation. Nizamuddin Aulia explained it thus :

"Oh Muslim ! 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."¹⁶

Their love had no boundaries. It was limitless. It took every one under its magnificent umbrella.

The universality of love of that age is well expressed in the inscription Abul Fazal inscribed in a temple in Kashmir. It runs thus :

O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee,
And in every language I hear spoken people praise Thee.
Polytheism and Islam flee after Thee.
Each religion says, Thou art one without equal . . .
He who from insincere motive destroys this temple,
should first destroy his own place of worship.¹⁷

Thus we find that on both the intellectual and the emotional levels, the saints' outlook extended like an ocean.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the saints was that they were not passive seekers of truth. They actively sought to purge the community of all evils out of the fathomless love that surged in their hearts. Renunciation of the world has never been an ideal of these saints. They remained in touch with life, kindled in it a new zest and contributed to the socio-cultural and moral development of the community.

It is true that quite a number of them renounced the world and annihilated their selves (*Fana fi-Allah*). "Sheikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri kept standing in the jungle for years. Sheikh Ahmed Khattu fasted for forty days continuously, each fast broken by one date. Sheikh Mohammad Ghous Gwaliori spent twelve years in meditation on the mountains of Chinar." But renunciation was not the general tendency of these saints.

Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia explains it thus :

Renunciation does not imply giving up garments or food. Renunciation requires both. One should take food and wear a dress. However, it is but essential that one should spend whatever one earns. One should not keep his heart (in worldly things) and should remain detached throughout.

Hazrat Khwaja Gesu Daraz in the Deccan insisted upon his disciples that they remain in service : "If noble souls gave up their missions, undesirable people would slip in, to the grief of common people. The greatest worship is to do justice with everyone and never be tempted by wealth."¹⁸

"It is incumbent on everyone," says Sheikh Sharafuddin, "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."¹⁹

In the same manner the values of honest labour were praised. Shah Latif of Sind proclaimed thus :

Not sloth but honest and persistent labour
Will win the coveted prize.

The mountains yield no diamonds to lovers of lassitude.
Neither the stars know any rest nor rivers any tranquillity.

How will you amass spiritual wealth if you sleep all night ?
Out of the eight principles that Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi laid down with Quranic sanction for functioning of Khanqah, two were that the people of Khanqah should learn to value time and completely shake off indolence and lethargy. The whole life and energy should be submitted to do good to others.²⁰

Khwaja Gesu Daraz (of the Deccan) used to advise :

Look, the tree stands erect in the scorching heat but it provides shade to others. Wood burns itself to provide comfort to others. It is thus natural that a man should undertake pain in order to provide pleasure to others.

The outlook of the Muslim saints as well as of the Bhakti saints aimed at purifying the soul. It ridiculed formal worship. It raised the banner of intrinsic equality between man and man. It set high moral standards for society. Bodily pleasures were deprecated and the joys of the soul, truth, justice, self-sacrifice, and submission to the will of God were extolled.

It was during this period that modern regional languages developed. Love and devotion expressed themselves in poetry and music. They were instruments in bringing about union with God.

The common people flocked around the saints. The aggrieved sought solace, the guilty admitted guilt, the bereaved found peace and the frustrated a ray of hope.

The saints in turn identified themselves with the people. They picked up the folk language of the area, and used it as an instrument for preaching faith and love of God and high moral ideals. A large number of saints were poets of a high order, who turned each of the folk languages into an independent standard language with its own treasure of literature. By blending words of different stocks, expressions of different cultures, and by mixing poetic styles of Persian and *Apabhramsha Prakrit*, they created fine poetry.

Shah Latif Bhittai (AD 1690) was a Sufi poet of Sind. He is ranked by authorities of that language as one of the greatest poets of the world.²¹ His *Risalo* is a sacred work and a unique treasure in Sindhi language.

He was an ardent devotee of Sufi philosophy. He explains it thus citing Rumi :

The whole diversity is His seeker and He

The fountain source of Beauty—thus says Rumi.

In his love of God he would make no difference between man and man :

When truth is one, and the Beloved (God) the same, why should man fight over the means ?

He expressed this theme of devotion and love in a multitude of colours and variegated musical tunes.

Shah sings of his eternal love in *Sur Yaman Kalyan*, in *Sur Sorath*, in *Sur Asa*, in *Sur Maazuri*, in *Sur Sarang*, in *Sur Kapaiti*, in *Sur Rag*, in *Sur Doha* and many others.

He loved the beauty of Sind, its fields and dales, its mountains and rivers. His *Risalo* contains references to *Lokhpat*, *Girnar*, *Jaisalmar*, *Thar*, *Ganjar*, *Hano* etc. He visited almost all important places in Sind and every time he had a new spiritual experience. About Ganja Hills he says :

Those who get acquainted with Ganja Hills

Become saints, forsaking all books and scriptures.

He was a true lover of nature. The sight of the Hill and the Kinjhir Lake on the way inspired him to sing :

The water runs below, the blossoms above,
and lovely forests stand on the sides :

The fragrance of Tamachi saturates the air;
With the blowing of the north breeze,
the Kinjhir becomes a cradle.

Many other saints translated Persian and other classical stories into Sindhi. *Hatim Tayee, Laila Majnu.* and *Gul-i Bakauli* have added to its literary stock.

Sheikh Fariduddin Shakarganj, popularly known as Baba Farid, is regarded as the first poet of Punjabi language. There were other Sufi poets before him—Masood Sa'd Salman was one of them. His name has been mentioned by Amir Khusru, and others as the first poet of Punjab. But his *Divan* is not available today. Other names were of Khatib Ali²² (AD 1093-1148) and Abdul Rahman (AD 1018). But with Baba Farid a new star shown on the horizon of Punjab. He granted an independent status to Punjabi by his *dohas*. These *dohas* are highly revered and are preserved in *Granth Saheb*. They portray ecstatic love for God. He implores people not to be contented with outer appearances but to see within : ²⁸

If anybody hits you, do not repay him back in the same coin,
Since you are to go to Heaven, better touch his feet (Doha 7).
Oh, Farida, why do you wander in the thick of the jungle ?
You are searching for Him outside yourself,
While He is hidden within you. (Doha 18).
How is it possible to sow *kikar*
but start expecting a crop of *kishmish* ?
Weave wool but aspire for silken cloth ? (Doha 23).

There is a long array of poets who have greatly contributed to building up Punjabi language like Syed Shah Waris (AD 1375-1395), Qutban AD 15 3), Sultan Baba (AD 1631-1691), Ali Hyder (AD 1690-1785), Bull:ey Shah (AD 1680-1752), Shah Sharif (AD 1724), and many others.

All these saints were highly catholic in their attitude. They had intense yearnings for God. In the words of Sultan Baba :

I am not a Hindu, nor a Muslim,
I am not a mulla nor a kazi.
My heart does not fear death,
Nor does it long for paradise.
Oh God, give me Your vision,
Everything else is false.

Hindi and Urdu, both the languages, developed out of *Khari Boli*. Amir Khusru²⁴ (AD 1255-1325), a disciple of Nizamuddin Aulia, is regarded as the first poet of *Khari Boli*. Prior to him whatever works survive they are in *Arsha Apabhramsha Prakrit* or *Saurseni Apabhramsha*.

In *Khari Boli*, it is said, Amir Khusru has written one lakh stanzas consisting of *pahelis* (riddles), *do sukhna*, *kah-mukarnis*, *savnias*, etc. They were so simple and flawless that they soon entered the everyday language of the people Hindi and Urdu developed in the direction that he indicated. He had an intense feeling of love for everything that was Indian. His *Hindiwi* is very congenial to Indian life. People still sit together in the village meeting place and test each other's wit through Khusru's riddles. His songs on the rainy season are still sung by young girls while swinging in the rainy season. His *dholak* songs are still heard on festive occasions like marriages.

Amir Khusru was deeply devoted to Nizamuddin Aulia, who was his spiritual master. When he passed away, Khusru is reported to have recited the verse :

gori sowEy sEj par mukh par dArE kEs
Chal khusru ghar ApnE sAnjh hui chau dEs

(The beloved lies on the coach
with her black tresses scattered over face.

Oh, Khusru, return to your home,
Night has fallen over the whole country.)

It is said that Khusru combined in his personality the variegated colours of Indian culture. He was poet, mystic, artist, humorist, musician, soldier, historian naturalist, linguist and above all a humanist

In that age, Amir Khusru painted Hindi literature with many hues. In his period principles of literature were not well defined. Poetry was harnessed for religion and politics. It was not an ordinary thing to create a literature for popular recreation.³⁶

From the thirteenth century onward, not only Khusru but a large number of Sufi saints contributed to the development of Hindi language.

Mulla Dawood (AD 1295) produced *Prem Katha Chandayan*. Qutban in 1501 produced *Mirgavati*. Malik Manjhan brought out *Madhu Malti* in 145. Malik Mohammad Jaisi wrote *Padmavati*. Sheikh Rahim was known for his *Prem Ras*. Many other works of Noor Mohammad, Qasim Shah, Usman and Jan are also noteworthy. A new climate developed wherein devotional songs were sung. *Nirgun Bhakti* and *Sagun Bhakti* dominated the religious thinking of the day. Thus Hindi got a start and it flourished at the hands of these Sufis and saints.

Urdu has never been a court language. It was regarded as a language of the *bazar* and the *lashkar*. Urdu and Hindi both developed out of the interaction between the indigenous tongues and Persian, Turkish and Arabic words.

In the Deccan, Khwaja Gesu Daraz' *Mi'raj-ul-Ashiqeen* (AD 1422) is supposed to be the first work of Urdu. It is a philosophic treatise. *Mi'raj-ul-Ashiqeen* has a surprisingly smooth flow and it determined the future development of Urdu and Hindi both in the South and in the North.

Besides Khwaja Gesu Daraz, a very prominent writer of this common language was Shah Miranji (1496). He wrote both poetry and prose. Wajhi's *Sab Ras* is well known. Shah Burhanuddin Janam and Shah Aminul A'la were others who developed this language in the South.

Growing out of the *Magadhi Apabhramsha*, modern Bengali assumed the status of a standard language in the fourteenth century. During this period the entire country was waking to new religious heights. The keynote of this movement was the apprehension of the unity of God and the belief that He can be achieved through intense love. God views everyone equally,

whether he is *Brahmin* or *Chandal*. Shri Chaitanya initiated the *Krishna Bhakti* movement. The Sufi movement in Bengal flourished through Jalauddin Tabrezi. Shri Chaitanya had many Muslim followers who were *Vaishnoi* and had abundant poetic work to their credit.²⁶ The close interaction of Sufism and Chaitanyaism gave rise to Baul songs²⁷ (AD 1625-1675). They were a creation of Hindu-Muslim unity. This was a movement against all externalism whether of Hindus or of Muslims. It aimed to break all external restraints :

You wander aimlessly :
Mandir, Mandir, Masjid, Masjid;
Oh, my teacher,
What a headache it is
The foolish, while weeping, look at me.

Among the Muslim saints whose contribution to the development of modern Bengali is recognized without question is Daulat Kazi. According to Shanti Ranjan Bhattacharya, he was the author who introduced novel-writing in Bengali. His book *Sati Meenavati* had a historic significance. Then there was Ala'ul, creator of a large number of *Vaishnavite* songs. His *Padmavati* is well reputed. Besides, he translated a large number of Persian books into Bengali, like Nizami's *Haft Paikar*, or *Sikandarnama*, etc. His *Vaishnava Padawalis* are very popular in Bengal. Another was Syed Sultan. Besides *Vaishnavite* songs, he has written books on Islamic religion like *Gyan Pradeep*, *Hazrat Mohammad Charit*, and *Nabi Bangash*. In *Nabi Bangash* he counted all *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, *Shri Krishna* as *Nabis*, and showed great respect towards them. Mohammad Khan wrote *Maut-ul-Husain* (1645) and Hayat Mahmood wrote *Ambia Bani*. Syed Murtaza was poet of the first rank in *Vaishnavite* songs. His *Pad Kalpataru* is well known. Sabit Khan wrote *Vidya Sundar*. Ali Raja is known for his books *Gyan Sagar*, *Saraj Koloop*, *Dhyan Mala*. He has depicted the love of Radha and Krishna, Ravan and Mandodari, and Yusuf and Zulekha. His conclusion is that one rises from the love for a person to love for the entire creation and the Creator. A volume of Akbar Shah has been discovered. It is in praise of Lord Krishna. Inayatullah translated *Chahar Darwesh*.

A reference to the Pathan rulers of Bengal like Sultan Nasir Shah (AD 1282-1325) and Sultan Husain Shah, and their religious tolerance, is necessary. They declared Bengali to be the official language of the regime. They got the *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavat Purana* translated into Bengali. This is regarded as the first translation during these early days.²⁸ The great poet Vidya-pati had dedicated his poems to Sultan Nasiruddin. The Sultans were patrons of the Bengali language and tried to enrich it in many ways. According to S. R. Bhattacharya,²² Shah Husain patronized 'Tarja Geet'. It is supposed to be the earliest form of the Bengali poetry. (Nazr-e-Zakir)

Upto the fourteenth century, Gujarat Apahramsha was spoken in Gujarat. Since Gujarat is situated on the western border of India, there was a direct interaction with people of Arabia and Persia. Many Gujarati Saints and Sufis became famous. Among them names of Sheikh Ganjul Ilm (1391), Syed Burhanuddin (1411) and Sheikh Wajihuddin Gujarati are well known. One can see in Gujarati works like *Ramal Chand* and *Kath-Da-Prabandh* the absorption of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words.

Kashmir and Persia had a long history of contacts even before Kashmir's political amalgamation in the Delhi Sultanate. The impact of Persia was direct. The Sufis loved the Kashmiri language and filled it with the romantic Sufi philosophy. Mahmood Ghani, Khwaja Habibullah Nowsbaharwi and Nooruddin were the reputed Sufis of their times. In a Kashmiri *Ruba'i* Sheikh Nooruddin says :

Don't yield before His bows,
Don't turn your head if you are injured
by the thrust of His sword.

Accept willingly all the calamities that He has sent to you,
Only then would you be honoured in this world and after.

Mahmood Ghani translated many classic Persian works like *Yusuf Zulekha*, *Laila Majnoon*, *Sheereen Farhad*. Saifuddin translated *Gulshan-e Raz*.

Music has been another field to which the saints contributed generously. They came to realize that, like poetry, music also elevates emotion to the ecstatic state necessary for union with God.

Both the *Chishtiya* and the *Qadria* fraternities sanctioned *Sama'*, musical rhythms, that enhanced the effect of poetry. They enabled the devotee to be plunged in a state of trance called *Haal*. The effectiveness of *Sama'* can be gauged by the fact that many a Sufi embraced death while listening to certain poetic lines which intensely affected their hearts. It is said that Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki surrendered his life while hearing the following poetic line :

kushtagAn-e KHanjar-e taslIm rA
har zamAn az GHaib jAn-e dIgarast.

(To those who have been killed by the dagger of submission, there comes new life every moment from the unseen world)

Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, an authoritative work of Sheikh Abdul Haq Mohaddis, shows the keen interest of the saints in *Sama'* music as a path to the spiritual realms. One of the many incidents that *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* quotes is that of a young man who was attending an audition at the house of a Sufi, and heard the words :

jAn be-deh, jAn be-deh, jAn be-deh,
fA'ida-e guftan-e bisyAr chIst.

(Surrender life, surrender life, surrender life;
It is of no avail to talk and talk.)

All of a sudden the young man burst out crying "Surrendered, surrendered, surrendered", and his life ended.

Such incidents were not few. Sometimes in order to maintain the emotional pitch, a single poetic verse had to be repeated for hours together.

In the beginning, Persian poetry was resorted to for such gatherings. Persian had been a highly developed language with the treasure of scores of Sufi poets like Attar, Rumi, Jami, Sa'di etc.

Amir Khusru, in his devotion to his preceptor, wrote four volumes of Persian poetry. Each word of his poetry is permeated with divine ecstasy. To match it with appropriate music, he needed to be an expert musician, which he was, being well versed in both Persian and Indian music.

Hakim Mohammad Ikram Imam Khan, a reputed musician of Oudh, in his book *Ma'din-ul-Musiqee* writes :

Amir Khusru had such a mastery of Persian music and the *ragas* of Hindi that he was supposed to be a *naik* of that age. In place of the *Pakhawaj* he invented the *Dholak*, and in place of the *Been* he invented *Sitar*. He used to teach music to boys endowed with good voice. *Dhuroo, Rahwa, Matha, Chind, Persand, Dhurpad* were commonly used. He introduced six new modes : *Qaul, Qalbana, Naqsh, Gul, Tarana* and *Khiyal*.

He was a master in the Persian musical system called *Naqsh*. Persian poetry was sung to twelve tunes. Each had two shades, resulting in twentyfour *ragas*. Each *raga* was to be sung at a particular hour of the twenty-four hours of night and day. It goes to the credit of Amir Khusru that he invented novel *ragas* by combining Persian music with the Indian. Many of these *ragas* have gone out of use, but still many are a delight to musicians like *Yeman, Zulf, Sarparda* and *Gazgiri*, etc. He also invented many musical forms like *Sawani, Farodast Pashto, Qawaali* etc.

After the thirteenth century, music was accepted by these saints as a sacred treasure. It was developed by reputed and dedicated musicians.³⁰

In this climate it was easy for kings and nobles to patronize music and enrich it with new forms and a new content. The name of Sultan Husain Sharqui, a ruler of Jaunpur, was second only to Amir Khusru's in this field. It became a fashion among the nobility and kings to equip their sons with instruction in music as a necessary part of education.³¹ There were Sufis and saints everywhere who were expert in music and worked for its advancement, like Sheikh Malli Khan Gujarati, Sheikh Alauddin and Sheikh Jamal Sahib.³² Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia was himself a great critic of music.

Syed Nizamuddin Madhunaik was expert in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. He wrote two books on music : *Nad Chandrika* and *Madh naik Singhan*. Makhdoom Bahauddin Bunnais was another Sufi who devoted his life to get an access to the Divine

through music. He invented two musical instruments : *Saz Khiyal* and *Khat Ras*. He wrote a number of *Zikria* in praise of God which were sung in those days in the *Lalit, Bilawal, Todi* and *Kalyani ragas*.

An overwhelming number of musical *gharanas* (schools) of repute owe their allegiance to the early saints. These schools might have been fostered by rulers of States. Yet they drew their inspiration from saints, particularly of the Chistiya order, like Tamras Khan's *Gharna* of Delhi, Ustad Faiyaz Khan's *Gharana* of Agra, Huddu Husain Khan's *Gharana* of Gwalior, the Fateh Ali and Ali Bakhsh *Gharana* of Patiala, Alla Diya's *Gharana* in Kolhapur, the Mushtaq Husain and Ishitiyaq Husain *Gharana* of Rampur. In earlier times it was ecstatic and religious devotion to music that institutionalized a particular form of music and rendered it into a school which attracted both Hindu and Muslim disciples.

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Religion and Social Contradictions

by
Ali Ashraf

The relationship between religion and social change is indeed a complex and controversial question in the history of world thought. It is, so to say, a double-edged relationship; both continuously act and react upon each other. At the same time there is a degree of autonomy enjoyed by each.

No serious-minded student of history can fail to recognise the role played by religion in accelerating or thwarting social change.

On the other hand, religious leaders and thinkers have admitted the relevance of social condition to the emergence of religious teachings. Every religion while claiming to be based on eternal values is inevitably born in a particular *milieu* and bears its imprint. It is primarily a response to the problems arising out of it in time and space.

That sets the limits not only to the ideals and aspirations that move the people, but also to the degree to which these are implemented or get transformed in the process.

Islam from the beginning has openly and frankly occupied itself with the problem of social change. Not surprisingly, therefore, in the past as well as today, the socio-economic and political struggles in the Muslim world, and among Muslims everywhere, have been and are being conducted in the name of Islam. Consequently, religion is frequently to be found on both sides of the barricade.

Islam's social polity has never been free from contradictions. Indeed early Islam was a period of intense social strain and strife leading to sanguinary conflicts within that society.¹ There has been a tendency among certain circles to ignore or underplay this fact and, when this was no more tenable, to ascribe it to intrigues on the part of foreign agents². But such oversimplified explanations do not hold.

Mecca was already a thriving trade centre before Islam. With the conquests of new lands and the fast expansion of trade, there was great increase in wealth, and slaves and other merchandise. Acquisition of wealth was inevitably followed by its accumulation and concentration. This led to an early polarisation within Islam. The voice of protest raised by a Companion of the Prophet, Hazrat Abu

Zar Ghifari, was neither a sudden development nor could it be a lone voice. That he had to be banished from Medina only goes to show that he was becoming a social menace to the powers that be.

The very martyrdom of the second Caliph, Hazrat 'Umar, and the circumstances under which it took place, epitomise the two basic contradictions which afflicted that society. An Egyptian Scholar, Dr. Taha Husain, has given an account of this incident :

“Mughira bin Shu'ba³ had a slave who was one of the captives from Nahravand. This man was proficient in a number of trades... He came to Hazrat 'Umar with complaint. His master, he said, took away as his ownership dues an excessive portion of his day's earnings. Hazrat 'Umar, on the other hand, after due consideration, came to the conclusion that the amount fixed by Mughira was justified”.⁴

A few days later, the same slave fatally stabbed the Caliph in the mosque during the morning prayers.

Taha Husain has underlined another aspect in the behaviour of this Iranian slave. Whenever he saw in the streets of Medina Iranian child slaves, he would bemoan their fate saying that the Arabs had eaten away the youth of Iran.⁵

There may be nothing extraordinary in this story. But it is highly revealing. The practice of making the slaves work on wages and appropriating their earnings in the name of ownership rights was prevalent in Arabia from before Islam. It continued after it. But the phenomenal rise in the number of slaves consequent upon the conquest of new lands led to its unprecedented expansion.⁶ The repeated instructions urging humane treatment of slaves do not indicate social tranquillity but deepening conflict. Social peace required that it be kept within limits. Moreover, this had led to the emergence of new, national or ethnic contradictions.

A society bearing within it such intense contradictions could not continue to exist without a strong centralised state. Arabia before Islam had no state. Islam did not do much to retrieve that situation. Obeying those having authority (*ulu'l-amr minkum*) and mutual consultation (*shura bainahum*) cannot serve as substitute for the institution.

Mulana Abul A'la Maudoodi has regretted the passing away of the pious Khilafat and its replacement by kingship¹. But under the circumstances this transition, perhaps, was inevitable. And the state, moreover, in those conditions, could only be a hereditary dynasty. The Kharijis⁸ were against the state, as such, as an institution, and, therefore, opposed both the contending houses. But it was no more possible to keep the growing and expanding Islamic society in conditions of original tribal bliss and simplicity. In the very nature of things the Kharijis could not and did not last very long. Others who challenged the Umayyads did not oppose the principle of hereditary dynasty; they only put forward the claim of another, their own, dynasty. Even with them at the helm, the situation probably would not have been much different. History demonstrated this when later the Ismailis⁹ got the opportunity to set up the Fatimid Caliphate in Kairawan (297 A.H.,/909 A.D.) and then in Egypt (356 A.H.,/966 A.D.).¹⁰

But in discussing this question, Maulana Abul A'la Maudoodi has pointed to a significant fact. Of course, there is nothing new in the criticism of the practice of clan and family patronage that came to be the dominant factor in the selection of military and administrative cadres under the third pious Caliph. This, in fact, proved to be the first step in the slippery path in the transition to a despotic, hereditary state.¹¹

Maulana Maudoodi does not deny that those selected in this manner were efficient administrators and competent leaders.¹² But who were they? And what did their predominance signify?

They belonged to the clan which had already dominated the socio-economic life at Mecca (and consequently of Arabia too) before Islam; and these were the men who had opposed and fought against Islam as long as the fight was possible. On this score, however, nobody need doubt their sincerity and the genuineness of their faith in accepting Islam. What, however, is relevant to our present discussion is the fact that within a little more than a decade after the passing away of the Prophet, the same old clan (or class) of wealthy Meccan traders succeeded in assuming political power under the new dispensation.

This could not but leave its impact on the religious disputes within Islam.

Maulana Shibli No'mani has characterised the early religious differences to be essentially political.¹³ Moreover, he has traced them to the lifetime of the Prophet himself. He has noted that all the religious schisms that took place in early Islam, for example, between the Sunni and Shia, the latter and the Kharijis, between the Mu'tazila¹⁴ and the Ashai'ra¹⁵, and the Batinis¹⁶ and the rest were primarily due to political causes.

Shibli has given an interesting account of the way political differences within Islam led to bitter controversies concerning faith and ideology. The Umayyad state was a highly repressive one. But the rulers accepted no responsibility for their actions on the plea that man does only what God wills him to do. But this did not prove very convincing to those who suffered at their hands. This gave rise to a fundamental division between the schools of *jabr* (determinism) and *qadr* (free will), as also between traditionalism and rationalism.¹⁷

It is not without significance that the rise of Islamic rationalism coincided with the overthrow of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids. One of the first and most significant indications of the new orientation of Muslim thought was the extensive production of Arabic translations of works dealing with philosophical and scientific subjects. Thus, eighty years after the fall of the Umayyads, the Arabic-speaking world possessed Arabic translations of the greater part of the works of Aristotle, of the leading neo-Platonic commentators, of some of the works of Plato, of the greater part of the works of Galen, and portions of other medical writers and their commentators, as well as of other Greek scientific works and of various Indian and Persian writings.

This is not the place to trace the development of the various schools of rationalists, philosophers and scientists who certainly included some of the biggest names in world thought. But within a comparatively short time, stagnation and decline overtook the intellectual world of Islam.

Syed Ameer Ali has ascribed this phenomenon to the nomadic Mongol invasion.¹⁸ Besides being escapist this explanation is not borne out by facts. It only betrays a tendency to pass on the internal decline to external causes. Indeed the Abbasid Caliphate and the society that it led and represented had lost its vitality some four hundred years before the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols.

Indian Islam has long felt satisfaction and silent pride in the campaigns of adventurers like Mahmood of Ghazna, perhaps because he was a supporter of Orthodoxy and his campaigns also aimed at destroying the Qaramatian kingdoms of Mansura (Sind) and Multan. We are prone to forget that Ghaznavi's services to Islam also included his raids in Central Asia which softened the heartland of Islam for the Mongol invasion.

The decline of Islam was accompanied by an intensification of its inner contradictions and the counter-offensive mounted by Orthodoxy. It aimed at closing the doors of all external influences, of any innovation of thought and intellectual freedom.

The more perceptive among the apologists of Orthodoxy in Islam are not unaware of this state of affairs. Thus Sheikh Mohammad Ikram says :

"In the theological and intellectual history of Islam there is no dearth of sky-high peaks. But after the first three or four centuries of Islam only those personalities flourished who were concerned not so much with developing the Islamic system of thought, with retaining the dynamism and the potent forces of life, and with re-opening its closed intellectual and spiritual lifesprings, as with maintaining the system in the form in which they had inherited it from their predecessors".¹⁹

Sheikh Ikram admits that "when this approach is made the basic and permanent principle of intellectual life then, obviously, it blocks the path of scientific progress and the capacity for intellectual advance is lost".²⁰

But he justifies the use of this harmful palliative on the plea of its "great importance in the preservation and formation of the national psyche. It becomes not only useful but also necessary in

times when national life is faced with the danger of disintegration as in the Abbasid Caliphate during the excesses of the Mu'tazila or with us during the reign of Akbar".²¹

It is not difficult to see, however, that such efforts at 'the preservation of the national psyche' have only resulted in distorting it beyond recognition.

Such precisely was the service rendered by Imam Ghazali.²² His is certainly the greatest name in the Orthodox revivalism of Islam, the final stage in the evolution of Orthodox Muslim theology.

Among the achievements on which his greatness rests may be mentioned the attack on the rationalists and philosophers of Islam, and the re-establishment of the supremacy of obscurantism over reason. Accordingly, not only the religious truths in the Qur'an are revealed, but also all ideas of good and evil acquire their validity from revelation. This was obviously meant to refute the Mu'tazila claim that moral differences between good and bad have objective reality and can be perceived by reason.²³

But Imam Ghazali's crusade was waged with equal vehemence against the Shia Ismailis who, with their widespread underground following and organisation, constituted a more immediate danger to the established order. Greater efforts were required to lay the ghost. Imam Ghazali wrote one of his first works against the Ismailis at the behest of the reigning Abbasid Caliph and named it after him.²⁴ But, obviously, one book could not be sufficient against such a formidable foe. The Imam had to devote three more of his works to this subject.²⁵

Having thus vanquished two of his main adversaries, Imam Ghazali turned to mollify the rest. Sufism, till then, had not taken its place in Orthodox Islam. It was more of a conduit of mass discontent against the established order and against Orthodoxy. But it was far from inculcating any attitude even bordering on rationalism. This provided the basis for a compromise. It was Imam Ghazali's great contribution to make possible the admission of a modified Sufism into Orthodox Islam.²⁶

Last but not the least, Imam Ghazali's great services included the preparation of an educational curricula for schools which has continued to serve the Orthodox institutions ever since. The Imam laid primary importance on the teaching of theology. But while repudiating and eschewing material sciences, he had to make some compromises. Without ceding ground to the rationalists, he accommodated, for obvious reasons, medicine and astronomy. "Philosophers too", he said, "have attained truth by revelation, and the main substance of medicine and astronomy is based on such revelation".²⁷ For the rest, all sciences which did not have any basis in revelation had to be given up. Thus was ushered in the long night of intellectual stagnation whose dark shadows have not yet been completely dispelled.

Maulana Maudoodi has quoted Ibn Khaldun to the effect that the Imam wanted the establishment of a kingdom in any part of the world which should be based purely on the principles of Islam.²⁸ This provided the inspiration for the kingdom of Muwahhidin in north-west Africa established by one of Imam Ghazali's students, Ibn Tumart (d.1129 AD). This political aspect, however, is considered to occupy only a secondary place in the Imam's total work.²⁹

But in the light of the results for the success of his mission, this assessment needs revision. In any case, a near contemporary historian, Maqrizi, holds a different opinion. Shibli has quoted this author to the following effect :

"Muhammad Ibn Tumart learnt *Ash'ari* theology from Imam Ghazali. The result was that in the kingdom of Muwahhidin it was permitted to shed the blood of all those who held on to a school of faith opposed to Ibn Tumart. They killed vast multitudes whose number is known only to God. Thus spread the *Ash'ari* faith throughout the (Islamic) world."³⁰

Ibn Tumart's actions may or may not have been directly responsible for the predominance of the *Ash'ari* school. But there is no denying the fact that the ideology of Orthodox Islam as found today, especially in the Indian sub-continent, has been influenced and moulded by Imam Ghazali, more than anybody else.

Since the 13th century, especially after the Mongol carnage and the fall of Baghdad, Delhi became the most important centre of Orthodox Islamic thought. Muslim *Ulema* in their hundreds flocked to seek refuge here. Historian Barni relates that a delegation of these *Ulema* waited upon Sultan Iltutmish (1210-1235) to complain that lakhs and crores of Hindus in India continue to be idol worshippers but they have neither been made to accept Islam, nor on refusal beheaded. They were, however told of the utter impracticability and suicidal character of this course of action. On another occasion, another Sultan, Alauddin Khilji curtly told one Qazi Mughisuddin that let Islamic *Shariah* be your concern, I have to do what I consider necessary to carry on the government.³¹

Mention has already been made of Sheikh Ikram's opinion (held in common with many others) that in India during Akbar's regime Islam faced the danger of disintegration. And that this state of affairs explained, if not justified, intellectual stagnation as a sort of a defence mechanism. It is ironical that Sheikh Ikram's own arguments lead into a different direction.

Sheikh Ikram expresses agreement with Prof. Athar Abbas Rizvi that Akbar did not found any new religion or even a mystic order.³² He is even critical of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for exaggerating out of all proportions the services Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi is said to have rendered in the defence of Islam during Akbar and Jehangir's reigns.³³

Rizvi considers that Akbar's religious leadership was limited to preventing the Sunni Orthodox *Ulema* from using the state to serve their own ends. Moreover, Akbar's greatest sin in the Orthodox eyes was to have made the Hindus an equal partner in the administration of the state.³⁴ It would appear that this was one of the main reasons for Sirhindi's ire against the great Mughul rulers. Ikram admits that "in his (Sheikh Sirhindi's) letters, intense hatred and anger has been expressed against non-Muslims, and frequently the faithful have been urged to insult and humiliate them."³⁵ Ikram has tried to explain this away as a reaction to the rise of aggressive Hindu revivalism of the period.³⁶ Perhaps he could find a more cogent explanation in the loss of monopoly enjoyed by the Orthodox Sunni Turani nobility in the state services and the administration

It is interesting to note that Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's injunctions were not adopted as the basis of state policy even by persons like Aurangzeb. When a courtier Ameer Khan, characterising the Shi'a as 'bad in religion', pleaded for their replacement by Sunni Musalmans, Aurangzeb wrote back : What have the affairs of this world got to do with religion, and religion with bigotry ?²⁷

Now, this as a plea for the separation of state and religion and for a secular policy may have its limitations. Nonetheless it is significant.

If Aurangzeb and his predecessors came to accept this as the guiding principle of state policy, it was certainly not because their religion led them to it but they sought religious justification for what life had forced upon them.

Much of the crisis in present day Indian Islam is due to the lack of a clear distinction between the lay and the spiritual, and the failure to restore the dynamic spirit of Islam.

Javed Iqbal has raised a pertinent question : Why should Muslims not recognise that they have been wrong ? What is living in Islam's tradition has to be distinguished from what is dead.²⁸ This requires the development of a critical approach. The willingness to approach and evaluate their past critically is the touchstone of Indian Muslim's ability to face their future with confidence and advance boldly.

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1. Immediately after the death of the prophet began the struggle for succession between, on the one hand, the original inhabitants of Medina, and on the other, the immigrants (*Muhajirin*) from Mecca and also among the latter themselves, between the Prophet's clan on the one hand, and the rest on the other. Even while the dust raised by these conflicts had not settled down, a large number of *Beduin* tribes reneged. Foreign military campaigns pushed the internal conflicts in the background. But within a little more than a decade, they surfaced again, resulting in the murder of the third Caliph by a group of Muslim Dissidents variously estimated at more or less two thousands. The fourth Caliph, Hazrat Ali did not enjoy a day of tranquillity and peace during the six years of his rule at the end of which he was assassinated by anarchistic rebels from among his own followers.

2. Some writers (latest among them the late Maulana Sayeed Ahmad Akbarabadi) consider the assassination of the second Caliph, Hazrat 'Umar, to be the outcome of foreign, Iranian, conspiracy; while the developments leading to the murder of the third Caliph, Hazrat Usman, have been ascribed to the conspiracy hatched by a Jewish convert Abdullah bin Saba.

3. Mughira bin Shu'ba was one of the companions of the Prophet, and was appointed Governor of the newly-conquered *Kufa* by the second Caliph.

4. Dr. Taha Husain: **Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq Aur Hazrat Farooq Azam**, Urdu translation, Nafees Academy, Karachi. p. 242.

5, Ibid, p. 243.

6. Hazrat Zubair bin 'Awwam, for example, who was one of the early Muslims, a cousin of the Prophet, and a son-in-law of the first Caliph, had extensive trading interests, large properties, and owned a thousand slaves who brought to him daily income from their earnings. Thus writes Baihaqi :

kAna liz Zubair alf mamlUk tu'addi ilaihi'l-khirAj
(Baihaqi, Sunan-i-Kubra, Hyderabad Vol 8, p. 9)

Hazrat Zubair bin 'Awwaam was no exception. Hazrat Talha, another companion, was a wealthy person. Same was the case with the second Caliph, Hazrat 'Umar, who owned vast landed properties and a number of oases (nakhlistan). Baihaqi, Sunan Kubra, vol. vi, p. 160. Ibn Sa'd relates that even after becoming Caliph, he carried on extensive export import trade :

'an IbrAhIm anna 'Umar kAna yattajero wa huwa Khalifatun wa jabhaza 'iran ila ash-shAm.

The third Caliph, Hazrat 'Usman, of course, was the wealthiest among them all. The fourth Caliph, Hazrat 'Ali, owned four large farms and an oasis which are said to have yielded an annual income of 40 thousand dinars :

'an abi ja'far (Imam bAqir) mA qutila ibn' 'AffAn hattA balaghat 'alaih 'ala miatai alf (yanya bin Adam qarashi, kitAb al-khirAj, p. 83).

Concentration of wealth and slaves was not confined to the Caliphs and the leading Companions. Economic benefits of foreign conquests percolated even lower below.

The growth in the economic importance of the slaves was mainly due to the fact that able-bodied Arabs were mobilised for foreign military campaigns; and besides, slaves were in great demand for paying to their masters their ownership dues from their (the slaves') daily earnings. Those among the prominent Companions who realised daily payments or ownership dues from the earnings of the slaves, included Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq and most of his colleagues. Says Baihaqi :

kAna li abi Bakr ghulamun yakhroju lahU al-khirAj wa kAna Abu Bakr ya'kulu minha (Baihaqi, sunan-i-kubra 8/9).

7. ... "This khilafat was ultimately transformed into kingship ... and this transformation led the state of the Muslims astray from their principles of governance." (yeh khilafat Akhbar kAr mulUkiyat men tabdil hui aur ... is taghayyur ne musalmanon ki riyasat ko usule hukmAni se kis qadar hatA-diyA.) See Maulana Abul A'la Maudoodi : Khilafat wa Mulookiyat (Urdu), third reprint, 1974, p. 96.

8. The Kharijis originally consisted of some of the troops of the army of Hazrat 'Ali, the fourth Caliph. Extremely pious in their personal lives, the Kharijis claimed to stand for the 'pure' Islam of the days of the Prophet, opposed all wars among Muslims, and condemned both, the fourth Caliph as well as his opponent Ameer Mu'aviya. They were responsible for the assassination of Hazrat 'Ali in AH 41.

9. The Ismailis are a branch of the Shi'is, the other being the Isna 'Ashari (the Twelvers). They branched off after the sixth Imam Ja'far Sadiq and owed allegiance to his eldest son Ismail who had died during the life of his father. The Isna 'Ashari believed the imamat to have passed on to another son of Imam J'afar Sadiq, namely Imam Musa Kazim, while the Ismailis believed the imamat to continue in the line of Ismail through his son Muhammad.

10. The Ismailis later founded the Fatimid Caliphate at Kairawan in North Africa (in the region between Morocco and Birqa) in 297 AH/909 AD and later in Egypt in 356 AH/966 AD. It were they who founded the Jami'a Azhar in Cairo. Their missionaries had built up a highly well-knit underground organisation with wide ramifications throughout the medieval Islamic East. The Fatimids were destroyed by the Kurdish General Salahuddin of the anti-Crusade fame. The Ismaili centre at Alamut defeated all attempts at capture by the Abbasids and their Turkish satraps. It was ultimately captured and destroyed by the Mongol Halaku who also sacked Baghdad in 656 AH/1258 AD.

11. For a discussion of this question see ch. iv of **Khilafat wa Mulookiyat** (Urdu) by Maulana Abul A'la Maudoodi.

12. Ibid.

13. Shibli No'mani : **Maqa'at**, V. p. 18, also **Umul Kalaam**, I, p. 17.

14. **Mu'tazila**, of whom Wasil bin 'Ata (d. 131 AH) is generally regarded as the founder, were a sect of rationalistic tendencies. They were opposed to the doctrine of the eternity of the Quran. They called themselves "the people of unity and

justice" (ahl *al-tawhid wa'l-'adl*). The first part of this title implied that they alone were defenders of the doctrine of divine unity; the latter meant that God conformed to an objective standard of just and right action so that he could not be conceived as acting arbitrarily and in disregard of justice.

15. **Asha'ira** represented a school of orthodox scholasticism founded by Abul Hasan Ash'ari (270-340 AH). At first an adherent of the Mu'tazila, he later renounced their views, while opposing the Aristotelian doctrine introduced by the Mu'tazila and the *falasifa*, al-Ash'ari himself came under attack from the more reactionary orthodox who disapproved the use of philosophical methods as applied to theological subjects. This use of philosophy in the explanation and defence of religion came to be known as *ilm Kalaam*.

16. **Batinis**, a sect of the Shi'is which believes in the hidden (*bAtini*) meaning of the Quran as against the apparent (*zAhiri*). This belief bases itself on verse III/7 of the Quran dividing the verses into those of established meaning and others which are allegorical. And then the Quran goes on to say : *ma ya'lamu ta'wiluhu illallah wa ar-rAsikhUna fil'ilm yaqulUna Amanna bihi* (Al-i-'ImrAn 3/7). Now, this part of the verse has been read differently by different exegesists. Some, the majority, put a stop after *illallah* thereby limiting the knowledge of the allegorical verses only to God. Others, on the other hand, continue the sentence to include "*wa ar-rAsikhUna fil al-'ilm*". Read thus, the construction would run : "No one knows its hidden meaning except God and those who are firm in knowledge". (See Abdullah Yusuf Ali, English translation of the Holy Quran, text and f. n. on p. 123).

All sects of the Shi'is recognise the validity of *ta'wil*, of the hidden meaning of the Quran, to some extent or the other. But the doctrine was most developed by the Ismailis. Among them the **Nazaris**, generally known as the **Khojas**, accept only the hidden meaning of the Quran. Some others, e. g., the Dawoodi and Sulaimani Bohras recognise both the hidden (*bAtini*) and the apparent (*zAhiri*) meaning of the Quran as binding.

17. Shibli No'mani : *Maqalat* 5/18 & *Iim ul-kalaam* 1/17.

18. Syed Ameer Ali, *The spirit of Islam*, 1922, pp. 399-400.

19. Sheikh Mohammad Ikram : Yadgar-i-Shibli, Lahore, 1971, p. 247.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Imam Ghazali (b. 450/1058–d. 505/1111) was among the most prominent scholars and thinkers of Islam, achieving that distinction at the early age of 34 with his numerous writings, and his position as the head of the Nizamia Madrasa of Baghdad, the most important centre of learning of the times.

23. See Imam Ghazali, Tahafatul falAsifa (Destruction of philosophers), urdu translation.

24. The reigning Abbasid Caliph was Mustazhar Billah, and the title of Imam Ghazali's work was Mustazhari.

25. The three books are : Hujjatul Haq, Fasl al-Khilaf and QAsim al-bAtiniyah

26. De Lacy O'Leary, Arabic Thought and its Place in History. London, 1939. pp 223-224.

27. Ibid p. 223.

28. Maulana Abul A'la Maudoodi : Tajdeed wa Ihya i Deen, Delhi, 1978, p-72.

29. ibid,

30. Al-Maqrizi : Tarikh-i-Misr II/358 in Shibli, Ilmul Kalaam, 1/90-91.

31. Ziauddin Barni, in KM Ashraf, Hindustani Muslim Siyasat, (Urdu), Delhi 1963, p. 113.

32. Akbar ke Aa'In wa ahkAm ko Akbar aur Abul Fazl hi nahin badAyUni bhi rawish yA'ni tarIqa kahtA hai; yeh aik mazhab na tbA irAdat wa 'aqIdat kA silsila thA (Ikram, Rood-i- Kausar, Lahore, p. 129).

His (Akbar's) Sulh-i-kul came into being for political and humanitarian reasons. The regulations he circulated to all officers of the imperial domain were intended to remind them that the duties of royalty and command were of a caretaking nature and that it was imperative that no officers interfered with the people's religion, and creed...

The *Din Ilahi* ... was not a religion and was not even a mystic order... ; no new religion or religious order had in effect been invented. (SAA Rizvi; *Religious & Intellectual History of the Muslims*, pp. 415, 417)

33. KisI ne bhi Hazrat Mujaddid ko Akbari IlhAd kA qAti' qarAr nahin diyA. 'Ilmi halqon men yeh da'wA sab se pable Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ne kiyA...TazkirA men (Ikram, *Rood-i-Kausar*, p. 277).

34. Akbar's religious leadership was limited to preventing the orthodox Sunni 'Ulema from using the state to serve their own ends. His most significant departure from earlier practice was to stop the state from becoming an instrument monopolised by the orthodox Muslim community. (SAA Rizvi, op cit., pp. 415-16.)

35. Hazrat Mujaddid ke khaton me ghair muslimon ke khilAf ghaiz-o-ghazab kA izhAr kasrat se huA hai; aur unhain zall karnain ki jA baja talqIn hai (Ikram, *Rood-i-Kausar*. p. 318).

36. ibid pp. 319,321 and following pages.

37. "umUre dunyA rA bA mazhab chi nisbat wa kArhAi mazhab rA ba ta'assub chih dakhal" in K. M. Ashraf, op. cit., p. 122.

38. See Javed Iqbal: *The Ideology of Pakistan and Its Implementation*, Lahore, 1959.

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by
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In the present emotionally changed atmosphere in the country, any reference to Islamic law, perhaps inevitable, leads one's mind to the famous or infamous (as you like it) Shah Bano case and the Supreme Court judgement on it.

This case and the passionate controversy round the SC judgement, however, do not constitute the main theme of our discussion. Rather it is proposed to concentrate attention on certain aspects of the development of Islamic thought in this sub-continent with reference to Islamic law.

Someone has remarked that reform of Muslim Family law constitutes the karnel of Islam's modernisation in the present era. If one could entertain any doubt regarding this, the present controversy has done much to dispel it. Personal law has been turned into the central issue of Islam's existence and Muslim's well-being in India. All other issues pale into insignificance. Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi considers that "... the Supreme Court's recent judgement has rendered Islam unsafe in this country." Incidentally, there is little that is new in this approach. One is reminded of earlier occasions when the same kind of protest was voiced, e. g., against the abolition of slavery in 1843, or against the Sarda Bill in the late 1920s which proposed to raise the marriageable age for boys and girls. The agitation against this Bill was spearheaded by the late Maulana Mohammad Ali. He condemned this as an interference in religion. But this attitude was no peculiarity of the Muslims. Earlier Tilak also had vehemently opposed the age of Consent Bill more or less on similar obscurantist grounds. At the same time, however, there were substantial changes in or abrogations of Islamic laws in this country which went unheeded or, at least, no public protests were mounted against them. We shall not go into their reasons here.

But what needs to be noted is that during the last two hundred years and more, Muslim attitude to civil law, the nature and importance of their sources, and to the question of the need to reform and change the laws, has not remained stationary. There is evidently a distinct evolution in their ideas.

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In dealing with this subject, no doubt, one has to beware of the dangers of exaggeration. The evolution of such ideas was not common. But while initially individual thinkers elaborated them, and often faced opposition, their ideas slowly and gradually percolated among the people, and became part of their consciousness.

A characteristic feature of this process, in India as elsewhere, has been the persistent struggle between the forces of orthodoxy and traditionalism, on the one hand, and those of rationalism, change and progress, on the other. In fact, the dynamic spirit of Islam could be translated into reality only through the struggle against orthodoxy. This struggle continues unabated with its zigzags, and ups and downs, repeatedly springing into life and activity, often in unexpected corners and quarters.

In Indian Islam, the first though not very consistent attempts towards working out a this-worldly, social basis of the *shariah* were made by Shah Waliullah (1703-1765).

Shah Waliullah and his school of thought have been, directly or indirectly, the predominant influence in Sunni Muslim religious and intellectual life in the Indian sub-continent from the mid-18th century onwards. Shibli No'mani has written: "Considering the intellectual decline that set in among the Muslims after Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Rusd or rather during their times, it was beyond imagination that a man of genius will again be born... But a person like Shah Waliullah was born before whose works the achievements of Ghazali, Razi and Ibn Rusd pale".¹ Maulana Abul A'la Maudoodi has described the Shah as "a free thinker and commentator whose thoughts have broken free of the limitations of circumstances and time".² Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi has ascribed his own ideas of utopian and revolutionary democracy to Shah Waliullah. A comprehensive and objective assessment of the Shah yet remains to be done. His ideas, no doubt, bear considerable impress of the intellectual stagnation and political decline of Islam. But the point is that his teachings represent the stirrings, yet hesitant and weak, towards a new orientation. In that lies his significance.

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Among Shah Waliullah's main contributions may be mentioned the fact that he broke the shackles of *taqleed* (compulsory adherence to one of the four main schools of Islamic jurisprudence) which is the single biggest factor in the intellectual stagnation of Islam. While conceding its usefulness in the case of the common man, he denied its religious necessity for the educated and the qualified. But that required the Quran be made available to them in a language that they could read and understand. Shah translated the Quran anew in Persian and faced violent opposition for this; his two sons prepared its Urdu translations respectively.

Shah Waliullah's main point of departure, however, was the attempt to work out the social basis underlying the Quranic injunctions. In his own words :

“The Shariah aims at the reform of society. But no Shariah takes shape in a vacuum. It develops in the context and on the basis of usages and customs of the society concerned. This is also true of the Islamic Shariah. The customs and usages of the Arabs, and among them especially of the tribe of *Quraysh*, constituted the raw material for the Shariah of Islam. The Prophet only corrected the distortions that had crept in³”.

It is necessary that the contents of the Shariah be in accord with the knowledge and social customs (*urfifaqaat*) of his (the Prophet's) people; and, in comparison to others, the conditions of his own people should have been taken into greater consideration⁴”.

Of course, Shariah was based not on social considerations alone⁵. It was also based on revelation. But in this dualism between reason and revelation, the lines could not be drawn very clearly.

But considering the narrow national basis of the Islamic Shariah, the question naturally arose : Was it meant to be confined only to Arabia and, at the most, to some neighbouring countries ? What was the basis of the eternal and universal validity of the Islamic Shariah ?

Thus Shah Waliullah's attempt to provide a rational, social basis for the revealed Shariah was up against a serious problem, and the argument got involved in a contradiction.

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The Shah came out with an explanation in which the universality and eternal validity of the Islamic Shariah is based not on any question of principle but only on considerations of practical feasibility—the difficulty or impossibility of finding out the usages and customs of the vast number of nationalities inhabiting the earth, and of preparing separate and specific Shariah for each one of them⁶. Obviously, such an argument could appear to be plausible only in an age when computers had not made their appearance.

But even in the pre-computer decades of this century, Shah Waliullah's arguments left many of his followers in a quandary.

It led Maulana Shibli No'mani to virtually deny the mandatory character of the Shariah⁷.

Iqbal also took almost the same line. After giving a summary of the Prophetic method as explained by Shah Waliullah, he says : "The Shariat values (*Ahkam*) resulting from this application (e. g., rules referring to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations."⁸

But why only rules referring to penalties for crimes? This limitation is somewhat arbitrary. After all even family laws are not an end in themselves. Iqbal is obviously unable to rise above the pitfalls inevitable in all such half-way rationalisations.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had preceded both Shibli and Iqbal. He proved to be more perceptive than both. Some of the more glaring limitations of Shah Waliullah did not escape his notice. He independently discussed the principles of the exegesis of the Quran. In a different context where some of the discoveries of natural sciences were sought to be rejected on the plea of being opposed to the Quranic text. Sir Syed argued for the word of God (revealed text) to be understood in terms of the 'work of God' (nature); its meaning, he averred, will have to be interpreted and re-interpreted in the light of the ever-growing contours of human knowledge and the ever-progressing and latest discoveries of natural sciences⁹.

Sir Syed applied the same principles of exegesis of the Quran in matters concerning social affairs. Of course, he too came to the conclusion that cutting off the hands of a thief as given in the Quran is not compulsory. But he went much further. Modern civilisation considered polygamy to be barbaric. So also the system of human slavery. The Quran at one place enjoins 'adl (justice, equity) between wives¹⁰; at another, it says equity is impossible¹¹. It was not difficult for Sir Syed to argue that read together, the two verses sought to prohibit polygamy. In the same way, he argued that the Quran sought to gradually abolish slavery. The fact that none of the earlier exegesists and traditionalists had ever gleaned this intent of the Quran did not bother Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Sir Syed's ideas were carried forward in a more radical way by Moulavi Chiragh Ali (Nawab Azam Yar Jung), perhaps the most scholarly and enlightened of his colleagues. Maulavi Chiragh Ali insisted on complete flexibility and freedom for the legislative authority in the matter of law making. He repudiated any suggestion as to the relevance³ of the traditional 'sources' of civil Law in Islam. Discussing in detail each of the 'sources' of Islamic jurisprudence, he showed them to be completely insufficient to serve as 'sources'.

"The Quran", he said, "does not teach us social or political laws... The purpose of the Quran or the *Ahadees* (Prophet's Traditions) is not to elaborate Civil Law (which in this case includes Personal, Penal and Fiscal Laws) or military law. No doubt, reference has been made to certain questions pertaining to civil or political law; but the aim is only to prohibit certain extremely pernicious practices which were prevalent in those days...

"The most essential civil and political problems of Islamic Shariah said to be based on the Quran have been deduced from a single word or sometimes from a single phrase. Uncalled for insistence on following the letter, neglect of the true intent of the Quran has become a characteristic of our exegesists and our jurists. Of the six thousand verses in the Quran, there are only about two hundred which relate not only to civil, penal, fiscal and political

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matters, but also to prayers and religious rites. It is obvious, that these verses can not provide definite guidance of specific rules about civil law. Many conclusions drawn from them are no more than mere speculations".¹²

In the prevalent Islamic jurisprudence the Traditions (of the Prophet) are accorded a high position as a 'source'. Without them, it is said, the Quran cannot be understood. Maulavi Chiragh Ali rebutted this argument by pointing out that the Prophet, his Companions, and successors had condemned the practice of compiling these traditions. This denudes them of any religious authority.

The third 'source' of Muslim Law consists of the jurists, four of whom are considered to be the most authoritative. Chiragh Ali notes that none of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence has claimed any finality for their teachings or legal opinions. They never insisted that their analogical deductions or their opinions be compulsorily followed by their contemporaries, not to speak of the future generations of this vast Islamic domain.

Moulavi Chiragh Ali thus takes the position that the so-called Muslim civil law has no religious sanctity in Islam. It is subject to change by the legislative and judicial authority of the land.

Chirag Ali's book was originally written in English and translated into Urdu only after the death of the writer.

It is difficult to say if Mohammad Ali Jinnah had ever heard the name of Chiragh Ali. But on the question of Personal Law the views of the two appear to be very akin. This is evident from the following incident :

On 6 February, 1912 an amendment to the Special (Civil) Marriage Act was moved by Bhupendra Nath Basu in the Viceroy's Legislative Council. It sought to provide for the registration of civil marriages between persons belonging to different religious denominations. Till then both the parties to such marriages had to declare that they belonged to no religion. The amendment was lost. And it could become law only after independence in 1954. But the 1912 amendment is memorable if for nothing else then at least Mr. Jinnah's speech on the subject.

When Jinnah rose to speak, the Law Member, Sir Ali Imam drew his attention to the Quranic injunction prohibiting Muslim males from marrying women outside the people of the Book (the Jews and Christians besides, of course, the Muslims) and a Muslim women from marrying any but a Muslim.

Jinnah, on the other hand, reminded the Law Member that it was not the first occasion in the history of legislation in this country when this Council had either ignored or amended Islamic law in such a way as to make it suitable to meet the requirements of the times. He cited many examples. The Islamic Law of contract is not recognised anymore. The Islamic Penal Law which had continued to be in force even after the establishment of British rule in India, has been completely abrogated. The Law of Evidence as set forth in the Islamic Law is nowhere prevalent in this country. Then there was the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1854. Under Muslim Law a person in the event of apostasy lost all rights of inheritance. This, too, has been abrogated.

"I submit", said Jinnah, "that these are the precedences for which we should follow in order to be able to meet the requirements of the times. For this many a precedence can be found even in Islamic Law".

When Chiragh Ali's book appeared in English, Sir Syed counselled against its translation into Urdu for fear of Orthodox opposition. Jinnah, in his case, was not unmindful of this. "Undoubtedly", he said, "the position of a Hindu or Muslim representative is full of risks because the Orthodox are opposed to it. But I would submit, that a representative has certain duties towards the nation and there is no reason why he should not express his personal convictions without fear".¹³

Mr. Jinnah, no doubt, always expressed his personal convictions without fear but certainly not without political considerations. His concern for secular personal law for Muslims subsided with the turn in his political strategy towards the two-nation theory and towards partition of the country. After the formation of Pakistan, however, he appears to be reviving his ideas of secular nationalism. Of course, now it had to be secular Pakistan.

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nationalism. He had embarked upon it in his very first speech inaugurating the new state on August 14, 1947.

Both he and Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan were opposed to the concept of a theocratic state for Pakistan. The latter categorically stated in the Pakistan National Assembly in March 1949 that the question of theocracy, and of special rights of the *ulema* in the process of law-making had no place in Islam. Sovereignty, he said, belongs to the people; "...the people are the real recipients of power. This naturally eliminates any danger of the establishment of a theocracy. It is true that in its literal sense theocracy means the government of God. In this sense, however, it is patent that the entire universe is a theocracy, for is there any corner in the entire creation where His authority does not exist? But in the technical sense, theocracy has come to mean a government by ordained priests who wield authority as specially being appointed by those who claim to derive their rights from their sacerdotal position. I cannot overemphasize the fact that such an idea is absolutely foreign to Islam. Islam does not recognise either priesthood or any sacerdotal authority. And therefore the question of a theocracy simply does not arise in Islam..."¹⁴.

The question of the reform in Muslim Personal Law in Pakistan was also settled in the light of this understanding. In the composition of the reform commission, the *ulema* were not allowed any special position even on the plea of specialised knowledge of the text and the *Sunna*. In fact, it was noted by a perceptive writer that in Pakistan "the reformation is not emanating from those trained in Islamic disciplines in Muslim Seminaries so much as from those who had no formal Islamic training...None of the leading commentators on Islam has had a theological background".¹⁵

On August 4, 1955, a seven member commission was appointed to study the existing laws of marriage, divorce and family maintenance to determine whether those laws needed modification "in order to give women their proper place in society according to the fundamentals of Islam". The commission was composed of six persons, three of whom were women, and one religious scholar.

An idea of the commission's approach to reform of Personal Law can be had from the writings of Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim who was the secretary of the commission and wrote the introduction to the majority report. He wrote :

“Islam is not the name of any static mode or pattern of life; it is spirit and not body; it is an aspiration and not any temporal or rigid fulfilment. The essence of life is constituted of permanence and change. The ideal only is permanent; the changes or the regulations that deal with particular situations of a particular epoch can never assume the status of the ideal. Land and capital mean different things in different epochs; the mode of handling them must change accordingly.”¹⁶

The trouble with the traditionalists, as Khalifa Abdul Hakim sees it, has been that they confuse the permanent Ideal with the temporary regulations. As a result Islam lies buried beneath heaps of retrograde legalism and life-thwarting practices, its spirit smothered by centuries of clericalism and despotism. The report of the commission was a limited attempt to clear some of the ‘heaps’. The religious member of the commission, Maulana Ihtishamul Huq submitted a note of dissent. On the basis of the majority recommendations of the commission, an ordinance described as **the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance** was promulgated in 1961. It has continued to be in force since then.

The rules under the ordinance provide for certain limited reforms, e. g., registration of marriages, restrictions on bygamous marriages and on the husband's freedom to divorce. But the major step is the provision granting the right of inheritance to orphaned grandchildren.

It will be seen that the main importance of the commission's report lies not so much in the concrete measures adopted on the basis of its recommendations as in the principles and the philosophy underlying them.

That philosophy is in line with and carries forward the tradition of development of Islamic thought in India. But the development proceeds through zigzags, and ups and downs. In Pakistan

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there is a retrogression. The consequent crisis has engulfed all aspects of life. In the name of Islam, the people have even been denied a constitution to run their state and govern themselves.

In India, too, the struggle continues but on a different level. It will be a prolonged struggle. But whatever be the temporary stages, the final outcome cannot be in doubt. The direction of the road traversed so far, the orientation of the development of the last centuries, makes it amply clear.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Maulana Shibli No'mani, *Al Kalaam* 1, 87
2. Maulana Abul 'Ala Maudoodi, *Tajdeed-o-Ihya-i-Deen*, 89-90.
3. Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah-il-Baligha*, Urdu translation by Abdul Haq Haqqani, 223-224.
4. *ibid.* p. 18.
5. *ibid.* 12.
6. *ibid.* 255.
7. Maulana Shibli No'mani, *op. cit.*
8. Mohammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 172.
9. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Tahreer fi Usul-ul-Tafseer al Quran* pp. 3 and 12.
10. The Quran, III, 13,
11. *ibid* III, 13.
12. Chiragh Ali, *A'zam-ul-Kalaam fi Irtiqa-il-Islam* (retranslated from Urdu), pp, 17-18.
13. The extracts from Jinnah's speech have been retranslated from the Urdu given in the history of Jamiat-ul-Ulema, *Jamiat-ul-Ulema Kya Hai?*, 11.
14. Liaqat Ali Khan quoted by Malcolm H. Cerain, *Islamic Reform*, p- 5.
15. Freelan Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 19.
16. Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, quoted by F. Abbott, *op. cit.*, 207.

**The Wahabi Movement
and
the British**

by
Ali Ashraf

The Wahabi movement, no doubt, has been a great watershed in the transition of Indian Islam to modern times¹. It has roused great passions for and against it, and extremes of attitudes both as religious reform and as a political movement. One cannot help admiring the selflessness, bravery and sense of sacrifice exhibited by its activities. These qualities, however, should not come in the way of an objective assessment of the phenomenon.

Some of the early chroniclers² of the movement had stressed its loyalty to the government of the East India Company. Later when patriotism came to be valued at a premium, the movement was described as consistently and remorselessly anti-British³. Later still, with the coming into vogue of the social and economic approach to historical phenomena, one writer even claimed it to be an India-wide peasant revolt and "the country's most prolonged peasant upheaval"⁴.

Such diverse and even contradictory characterisations only indicate that the movement was a complex affair, with its own inner contradictions, and its own different temporal and regional characteristics complicating and sometimes even distorting the future development of Indian Islam. And therefore any simple generalisation cannot present a true picture of the movement through all its phases and in the different regions of the country.

What came to be known as the Wahabi movement⁵ in this country had little to do with its Arabian name-sake, and can be traced back only to the teachings of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) of Delhi. He supplied the ultimate inspiration to the whole movement. Shah Waliullah was very much concerned with the almost sudden disintegration and collapse of the Mughal empire following Aurangzeb. He stands out among his contemporary *ulema* in that he did not confine himself to theological disputes. With all his limitations, he devoted his attention to the causes of the downfall of the Mughal power, worked out an outline of a Muslim utopia where the rulers would be just the people God-fearing, pious and prosperous and where the infidals would be made to carry out the meanest and most onerous duties⁶. It was to be a society of feudal bliss. But the crucial question remained: how to re-establish Muslim dominance in this land?

The Marathas had reached Delhi. And the Shah could see no better way of subduing them than to invite Ahmad Shah Abdali⁷. It is another matter that the rout of the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat paved the way for the consolidation of Sikh power in the Punjab⁸. And moreover when Abdali's forces approached Delhi, the Shah grew panicky about the safety of his own person and family from the depredations of the troops of this 'Saviour' of Islam⁹,

Maulana Abul 'Ala Maudoodi has expressed surprise that Shah Waliullah nowhere in his writings refers to the danger that the English pose to this country.¹⁰ After all, Plassey and the defeat of Sirajuddaula had taken place five years before the death of the Shah.

Maulana Maudoodi is only partially correct. Shah Waliullah was not unaware of the presence of the British in India. In his long letter to Abdali giving a brief resume of the situation in this country, Shah Waliullah approvingly mentions the fact that the descendants of the Nizamul Mulk (of Hyderabad) have managed to win over the British to their side against the Marathas.¹¹

It will, no doubt, be idle to speculate whether Shah Waliullah would have recommended the same strategy to other Indian Muslim rulers of the time. But two facts seem to point in that direction. In that same letter, the Shah refers to Sirajuddaula of Bengal in derogatory terms as "immature" and "thoughtless"¹². Was it because Sirajuddaula had shown the "immaturity" and audacity to take up arms against the British East India Company and its Officers?

On the plane of ideology and faith, the Shah pleaded for '*wahdatul Adyan*' (oneness of religions)¹³. But this 'oneness' was confined to the 'Semitic' religions which in India, in effect, meant Islam and Christianity. By preaching this oneness, was Shah Waliullah preparing the ground for their political alliance in the future?

Shah Abdul Aziz, the eldest son of Shah Waliullah and his successor, was the person who directly influenced and inspired the leaders of the Wahabi campaign.

He is the author of the famous *fatwa* declaring India to be *darul harb*¹⁴. Now this one word has been torn out of its context to build fantastic theories to project him as an inveterate enemy of the British. From *darul harb* to anti-British *Jihad* was considered to be but one step. Perhaps there could be no better example of the unwarranted reading of one's own thoughts and wishes into another person's words. More recent studies bring out the fact that the real significance and import of the *darul harb fatwas* were the very opposite of what is generally made out¹⁵.

All of Shah Abdul Aziz's six *fatwas* concerning India being a *darul-harb* are in answer to questions which sought to get over particular economic difficulties. The problem concerned the legality or otherwise of property rights in land acquired from or under the British, and of interest-bearing transactions. By declaring India to be *darul harb* even while Mughal rule continued in name, Shah Saheb concluded that property right on land obtained from or under the British would be valid and permanent from the view of *Shariat* (religious law). The question arose because in the opinion of some jurists a country which was once a *darul Islam* would always remain so even though it passed into the hands of the infidels. Their occupation would be considered temporary as also all property transactions. With the re-establishment of Islamic rule old owners will be able to resume ownership rights over lands which had been alienated from them under the rule of the infidels. Shah Abdul Aziz rebutted this position. By declaring India to be *darul harb*, he recognised the British to be the *de jure* rulers and Masters of this country, and accepted the validity of the permanent settlement of land under Cornwallis¹⁶.

The other problem concerned interest-bearing transactions prohibited under Islam. The Shah opined that prohibition of interest did not apply to transactions between Muslims and non-Muslims living in *darul harb*¹⁷.

Shah Abdul Aziz was on good terms with British authorities in Delhi. The English had restored to him an old land grant (*madad-i-motash*) to the family which had been cancelled on the orders of a *shia* wife of Mohammad Shah. The petition submitted to the British authorities expressed the Shah's faith in British

justice¹⁸. Shah Abdul Aziz, moreover, permitted English education as well as service under the British.¹⁹

Syed Ahmad Brelvi, the leader and the chief-organiser of the Wahabi campaign in the frontier against the Sikhs, was a disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz.²⁰ Under the circumstances, it is unlikely that anti-British feeling was ingrained in the Syed by the teachings of his preceptor.

As proof of Syed Ahmad Brelvi's political attitude against the British, the following story is related: It is said that when Ameer Khan Pindari entered into an agreement with the British who carved a small principality for him, the Syed left his service in protest and went back to Delhi. The *Hayat-i-Tayyeba*, however, gives a contrary version. Far from being opposed to the agreement between Ameer Khan and the British, the Syed was its main architect.²¹ This may need further corroboration from official sources. But in any case the story of the Syed leaving Tonk in protest against the agreement is not borne out by facts. Ameer Khan and his son Waziruddaula continued to be ardent supporters of the Wahabis, and in later years when Syed Ahman gave marching orders for Peshawar, for the anti-Sikh Jihad, he asked his followers to gather in Tonk where they were the guests of the Nawab.²² Obviously this agreement would not have been possible if the movement had developed anti-British over-tones, or if the British were suspicious of the aims of the movement. The Nawab of Tonk continued to be one of the chief financiers of the Jihad movement.

It is no secret that during his journey to Mecca for Hajj, as well as through the preparations for Jihad, Syed Ahmad Brelvi received active support from the British. While travelling by boat on the Ganga, Syed Ahmad and his party of about 700 were entertained on the way not only by Muslim zemindars but also by English indigo planters and factory owners. One such Englishman had got food prepared for the whole lot of them and got it delivered on the boats.²³ In Calcutta where they prolonged their stay upto three months, frequent public meetings were held and speeches made. In one such meeting, somebody raised the question

of **Jehad** against the British. The Shah (Ismail Shaheed) categorically ruled it out.²⁴ The Shah also addressed a meeting especially organised for Englishmen.

Later when preparation for the **Jehad** was being made, Sheikh Ghulam Ali, a prominent citizen of Allahabad, was deputed by Syed Ahmad Brelvi to carry the information to the Governor of NWFP (present-day U.P.) and to ask for his permission. It was granted. So long as law and order in the British territory was not disturbed, Ghulam Ali was told, the British authorities had no objection to the preparations for the proposed **Jehad**.²⁵

English support was not confined to this benevolent neutrality. It is well-known that a Hindu *mahajan* with whom the monetary collections for **Jehad** were deposited, embezzled some amount. A case was filed by Maulana Mohammad Ishaque in the court of William Fraser, the Commissioner of Delhi. The decree was issued in favour of the Maulana.²⁶ Muslim employees of English factories were allowed leave to go for short periods to serve in the **Jehad**.²⁷

All this does not give us the picture of a movement against British rule in India.

Now before we proceed further, two questions remain to be considered :

Firstly, why did the Wahabis decide to fight against the Sikhs? For the fact is that Ranjit Singh was a broad-minded ruler. His official policy was free of religious discrimination against the Muslims. Shah Ismail Shaheed himself, who was deputed by Syed Ahmad Brelvi on a secret mission to investigate the conditions of the Muslims in the Punjab under Sikh rule, had reported that "Ranjit Singh himself was not so cruel and oppressive".²⁸

Under these conditions, why was **Jehad** declared against the Sikhs in the Punjab?

Secondly, why did the British benevolently allow this **Jehad** to be waged, though not from their territory?

The British were apparently on good terms with Ranjit Singh. But they were only waiting to annex the Punjab. The **Jehad** would, no doubt, weaken Sikh rule there.

The Wahabi Movement and the British

The English had other designs too. They and the Sikhs both had their eyes on Sind. The transit camps of the **Mujahidin** through Sind were likely to adversely affect Sikh influence there. In this connection, it is to be noted that when Syed Ahmad Shaheed entered Sind on his way to the tribal areas in the frontier, he was suspected of being a British spy.²⁹ As to the consequences of the Wahabi campaign for the fate of Sind, P. N. Khare has noted that "though the Syed was finally defeated and killed by Kanwar Sher Singh in 1831, he had indirectly saved Sind from falling into the hands of the 'infidels'.³⁰

Thus it can be said that in the first phase of the movement till the episode of Balakote, the Wahabi movement, both subjectively and objectively, was an ally of the British, encouraged and aided by them in every way.

After Balakote, slowly and gradually the **Jehad** movement disintegrated. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan has characterised it as a period of decay which had set in after 1830.³¹ It was only during a phase of this period that anti-British tendencies developed in sections of the movement.

Among the causes of this transformation, a fundamental change in the objective situation has to be noted. The enemy had been replaced. History had now put the English in place of the Sikhs.

But the immediate cause was the British invasion of Afghanistan with the aim of putting Shah Shuja on the throne. Bereft of any leadership, the Wahabis participated in the defence of Afghanistan. One thousand of them were killed; three hundred in Ghazni alone. This was the first confrontation of the Wahabis with the British.

In 1845, Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali returned from Patna and gave a semblance of organisation to the remnants of the Wahabi forces in the frontier. The British, having defeated the Sikhs in 1846, had imposed a settlement on them under which Gulab Singh was handed over Kashmir. The latter, in the course of consolidating his authority in his newly acquired dominions, came into conflict with the Wahabis. He had the support of the British forces. Thus came about the second confrontation of the

Wahabis against the British in what is known as the battle of the Doob Pass near Muzaffarabad. The Wahabis surrendered after a brief encounter. Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali were made to return to Patna (1847/48) where they had to execute security bonds for two years' good conduct. After the period of restriction was over, the two brothers returned to Sithana in 1850. It was then that differences arose between them over the question of attitude towards the British.

The Wahabi leadership was not of one mind on the question. The differences on the issue crystallised round the personalities of the two Patna brothers Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali. There is a tendency among certain historians to underplay this difference. Even when they take note of it, they are unable to offer any better explanation than temperamental reasons. But the phenomenon displayed aspects which went beyond personal traits.

It has been generally noted that while the majority of the Patna centre as of the rest were ranged with the moderate Wilayat Ali, the Bengalis, on the whole, supported the radically anti-British stance of Enayat Ali.³³ This support could not be temperamental; and if it was, it had something to do with class temperament. But the historians of the Wahabi movement have failed to realise the class significance of this seemingly small detail. The Bengali group, because of its background and its experience, represented militant peasant consciousness. Enayat Ali who, unlike his elder brother, had spent long years of his missionary life among the Muslim peasantry of East Bengal, found himself at one with them. Wilayat Ali's supporters came from a different social background, and their class composition was different. Under changed circumstances, this became the genesis of the temporary anti-British turn in the Wahabi movement.

Enayat Ali became the leader after the death of Wilayat Ali towards the end of 1852. He immediately started a series of border attacks against the English outposts. But Enayat Ali's activities then or some years later, even in 1857 were not taken seriously by the British authorities. Otherwise they would have

found it unsafe to denude the Punjab of European troops and recruit so many Punjabi Muslims to fight elsewhere for the cause of Britain.

The fact is that the Wahabis as a community, either in the frontier or in the rest of the country, did not identify themselves with the 1857 revolt. At best there was quite a confusion among them. The Delhi rebel leader Bakht Khan is said to be a Wahabi. A branch of Wahabi *moulavis* supported the uprising at Sambhal in western U. P. On the other hand, Moulavi Mahboob Ali, a prominent Wahabi of Delhi who had recently returned from the mujahid camp in the frontier to Delhi, refused to sign a fatwa enjoining upon Muslims to participate in the Sepoy uprising.³⁴ Sheikh Nazir Husain, an eminent Wahabi aalim who ran his own madrasa in Delhi, was opposed to the uprising. He was arrested on suspicion but a certificate from the Commissioner of Delhi testifying to his loyal services secured his release.³⁵ Forjett, who unravelled the Sepoy conspiracy at Bombay, testifies to the co-operation he received from Wahabis of high ranks³⁶ William Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna, had made pre-emptive arrests of some Wahabi leaders in the wake of 1857. But he had done so without any grounds, and on his own admission "more for the purpose of holding them as hostages of good conduct for their whole brotherhood than with the expectation of having sufficient evidence to punish them"³⁷ And as the Lt. Governor of Bengal stressed in his Minute of the 30th September 1858, "Nothing was at any time proved or **even alleged** against the Wahabis". (stress added).³⁸

This much should be sufficient about the vicissitudes in the Wahabi attitude towards the British.

It is futile to discuss whether it was a revivalist or reform movement. Mention has been made of its opposition to **taqleed** (blind adherence) to any one of the medieval jurists; it sought to re-introduce widow-remarriage among Muslims. These were, perhaps, its only contributions to reform Muslim society. For the rest it preached a return to the pristine purity of the original Islam of the Prophet's days bitterly opposing all accretions and innovations which subsequent developments had inevitably

brought in. In practice this made them stuck with petty (theological?) details about the length of one's trousers above or below the ankles, the position of hands during prayers, the volume of sound in pronouncing 'Amin', etc. The bitter and often violent disputation over these insignificant non-issues were only a reflection of their inability to grapple with the realities of the situation.

All this resulted in the failure of what Masood Alam Nadvi has described as the 'first Islamic movement in India' to build at any time the unity of either the Muslims as such, or simultaneously or in the alternative, of the peasantry and the downtrodden, irrespective of community.

Of course, being in its own consciousness a religious movement, it could not aspire to make the latter its aim. It, therefore, chose as the base of its operations a territory which was purely Muslim in composition. But the efforts in the 19th century to restore in content and form the pious Caliphate of 1300 years ago could only result in a most reactionary and repressive dictatorship inviting bitter opposition from the local people. That became the fate of the short-lived khilafat of Syed Ahmad Brelvi who had himself declared as the 'Ameer-ul-Momineen'. It suffered the most telling and perhaps the most decisive blows from its co-religionists of the area.

Most of the Muslim historians of the movement have ascribed this to the unreliability, greed and deceitfulness of the tribal chiefs and their men who were always ready to go with the highest bidder, be it the Sikh *darbar* or, later, the agents of the British.³⁹

This oversimplified explanation has prevented a critical or self-critical assessment of the nature and activities of the Wahabi mujahidin in the frontier from being undertaken. It is only recently that the 'other side' of the case, the Pathan version, so to say, has been provided by writers who are sons of the soil.

Sheikh Mohammad Ikram admits that now that the Afghan viewpoint has also been expressed to some extent, it appears that the basic differences were economic and political.⁴⁰ The Afghan had extended their support to Syed Saheb in the hope that he

would free them from the Sikhs and their taxes. But when Syed Saheb established his own system it had the same burden of taxes. A more distinct and sharp difference which made the local ulema oppose the mujahideen was on the question of ushr (one tenth). Khan Ilah Bakhsh Khan Yusufi has written in this context that the ushr used to be paid to the local ulema. The party of mujahideen began realising it themselves on the plea that this was the share of the Ameerul Momineen, the title which had been assumed by Syed Ahmad Brelvi.

Besides these economic and political causes, there were a number of emotional factors touching upon the religious beliefs, customary practices and family life of the tribal people which made them inveterate enemies of the mujahideen. Observance of customary laws and practices was sufficient for man to be declared an apostate and severely punished and sometimes even assassinated; Propaganda in support of widow remariage is one thing. But when young widows were forced into marriage against their Wish—and that too with the mujahideen this was looked upon as greater oppression than anything practised by the Sikhs.⁴¹

Thus the 'Islamic' state which was sought to be set up with Syed Ahmad Shaheed as 'Ameer-ul-Momineen' turned out to be an oppressive feudal regime. Under the circumstances its destruction was inevitable.

The Wahabi movement is no more a live issue though it continues a lifeless existence in the form of the **Ahl-i-Hadees** Conference and a sub-community which has fast lost its *raison d'être* and its contours of exclusive identity.

But the myth lives on. Myths, moreover, have an innate tendency of growing, amassing all the accretions available from the ruling value-systems of the intervening period. Maulana Ismail Panipati has hit the nail on the head when he said that "in fact, after the emancipation of the country every religious group is busy working out proofs of the anti-British credentials of its leaders."⁴² One need have no objection against this essay in self-deception. But the trouble is that it also provides 'patriotic' alibi for buttressing a fundamentalism which is at the same time highly divisive.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. **Wahabism's** opposition to **taqleed** (blind compulsory adherence to medieval jurists) did help in opening Indian Islam to modernist influences. But for **Wahabism** neither the Deoband School of anti-British Scholasticism, nor Sir Syed Ahmed's reform movement especially on the plane of ideology, could have been possible.

2. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was, perhaps, the first person to write about the **Wahabis**. His biographical note on Syed Ahmad Shaheed was written within 15 years of the latter's death. It was written in 1847 and is included in the 16th volume of his collected writings. Sir Syed reverted to the subject in 1871 when he wrote a critical review of William Hunter's book **Our Indian Muslims** which appeared in an issue of the **Pioneer** of Allahabad.

Other early writers include : Maulana Jafar Thanasari, **Wahabi** activist and publicist, author of **Sawanih Ahmadi** etc.

He is a controversial figure. He has been described as "a person who had shown great courage in the course of the trial and had refused to compromise with his convictions". (Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi, **Ulema in Politics** Karachi 1972, pp. 172-173). The same writer and some others have accused him of being "guilty of replacing the word **Nasara** (Christians) by the words **Sikhan** or **draaz muyan** (long haired) and making other changes in the text". (ibid., f. n. on p. 144). Other early chroniclers are Moulavi Abdur Rahim Sadiqpuri, Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, and Mirza Hairat Dehlavi.

3. Among writers belonging to this category mention may be made of Ghulam Rasul Mehr and Prof. Qeyamuddin Ahmad.

4. This view has been expressed by Suprakas Roy in his work **Bharater Krishak Bidroha-o-Ganatantrik Sangram** (Bengali) pp. 261-269. He has come to the conclusion that the Wahabi movement began as a movement for religious reform but gradually changed its character, turning into a political and economic movement. What is more, it grew into an India-wide peasant

revolt. He adds that it was, in fact, India's most prolonged peasant upheaval (1830-1870). See also Narhari Kaviraj **Wahabi and Fraizi Rebels of Bengal**.

5. The people concerned and their movement never called themselves **Wahabi** and, in truth, disliked this epithet. Despite similarities between them and the followers of Ibn Abdul Wahab of Nejd, Arabia, differences were greater. The 'Wahabis' of India had this epithet applied to them by their Muslim opponents as a term of opprobrium. The term gained wide currency.

Subsequently, on the basis of a representation made by Wahabi leaders, the Government in 1888 issued orders that the term 'Wahabi' be replaced by **Ahl-i-Hadees** i. e., people following the Prophet's Traditions. (See **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed** vi, 210-212). Despite this, however, the term persists.

6. Shah Waliullah, **Hujjatullah-il-Baligha**, Urdu translation by Khalil Ahmad Israili, Islami Akademy, Lahore, 11/315.

7. Letter to Abdali in **Shah Waliullah ke Siyasi Maktubaat** ed. Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, 1969, p. 12.

8. Abdali's "repeated incursions destroyed Mughal administration in the Punjab and at Panipat he dealt a crippling blow to Maratha pretensions in the North. Thus, he created a power vacuum in the Punjab which was filled by the Sikhs." Khuswant Singh, **A History of the Sikhs**, pp. 167-68.

9. That Shah was worried about his own safety in case of Abdali's entry into Delhi is evident from letters he wrote to two of his friends "to obtain a letter from one of Durrani's friends about this sincere friend's protection..." (Rampur MS No. 245 quoted by SAA Rizvi, **Shah Waliullah and His Times** p. 302.

10. Abul A'la Maudoodi, **Tajdeed-wa-Ahyia-i-deen** Delhi, p. 127.

11. **Shah Waliullah Ke Siyasi Maktubaat**, op. cit. p. 8.

12. Ibid p. 10

13. **Hujjatullah il-Baligha**, op. cit. p. 228

14. Literally, country of the enemy; but it was generally used for countries not under Muslim rule, and not having treaty relations with a Muslim state.

15. For this discussion the present writer is indebted to the articles by Prof. Mushirul Haq of Jamia Millia, in **Islam Aur Asre Jadeed**.

16. **Fatwa-I-Azizia I/162-163.**

17. Ibid I/28.

18. SAA Rizvi, **Shah Abdul Aziz's Madad-i-Ma'ash in Delhi and the British in Islamic Society and Culture** (ed).

19. He permitted his own son-in-law Abdul Hai to join British service from which he resigned only when he was asked to proceed for **Jehad**.

20. **Ulema-i-Hind ka Shandaar Maazi**, part iii, p. 13.

21. Mirza Hairat Dehlavi, **Hayat-i-Tayyeba**, p. 513.

22. Ibid.

23. **Ulema-i-Hind ka Shandaar Maazi**. 111/57.

24. Sawanb Ahmadi, p. 75; also **Ulema-i-Hind Ka...**111/64.

25. Sawanib Ahmadi quoted by **Ulema-i-Hind ka...**111/68-69.

26. **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed Ahmad**, ix pp. 142-143.

27. William Hunter, **OUR Indian Musalman**, p. 12.

28. Mirza Hairat Dehlavi, **Hayat-i-Tayyeba**, p. 207, quoted by Qazi Javed, **Afkar-i-Shah Waliullah**, p. 189.

29. Maulana Ismail Panipati, **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed**, XVI/251 f.n.

30. PN Khera, **British Policy Toward Sind upto the Annexation, 1843**, p 8, quoted by Qeyamuddin Ahmad, **Wahabi Movement in India**, p. 75.

31. **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed**, IX/143.

32. Prof. Q. Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

33. ibid, p. 1 2.

34. **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed**, IX/142.

35. See **Hayat-i-B'ad al Mamaat**, by Hakim Fazl Husain.

36. Forjett, **Our Real Danger in India**, London, 1877. p. 131.

37. Forrest, **A History of Indian Mutiny**, III/401.

38. Quoted by Surendranath Sen, Eighteen Fifty.

39. Prof. Q. Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

40. Sheikh Mohammad Ikram, **Mauj-i-Kausar**, p. 30.

41. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, **Shah Waliullah Aur Unki Siyasi Tahreek**, p. 108.

42. Ismail Panipati. **Maqalaat-i-Sir Syed**, XVI/319 f.n.

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Religion and Politics
under
Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan

by
Prof. Mohibbul Hasan

According to Valentia, once a *pirzada* complained to Haider Ali that some Hindus of Seringapatam had beaten up his followers, who had attacked a Hindu procession, and demanded redress from him as head of a Muslim government. Haider Ali replied angrily : "Who told you that this was a Muslim government ?"¹ These words very vividly sum up Haider Ali's concept of government and his attitude to the relationship between religion and politics. They show that he regarded religion as a purely personal matter having no connection with public affairs, and believed that in a territory mainly inhabited by non-Muslims, it would be foolish to think of establishing a Muslim State.

Haider's concept of government was the product of several factors. First, there was his family background. His forefathers had been *Sufis* attached to the shrine of Jamal-ud-Din Husaini commonly known as Gisu Daraz. Although himself not a *Sufi*, Haider revered the *Sufis* and paid visits to their tombs. Secondly, he was influenced by the tradition of religious toleration that existed both in the Muslim and Hindu States of the Deccan and South India. Thirdly, as a *pragmatic* and a statesman possessed of great *foresight* he realised that, ruling as he did an overwhelmingly large non-Muslim population, it would be suicidal to think of establishing a Muslim State. Throughout his career, therefore, he did two things. First, he did his best to win over the goodwill of Hindus; and secondly, he kept religion and politics apart, never permitting his personal beliefs to influence the latter.

Haidar appointed Hindus to high position in his government. At the time of his death, out of five officers in charge of different departments, three were Hindus, namely, Krishna Rao, Purniya and Shama. In addition, his revenue officers and diplomatic agents were mostly Hindus.² Haidar continued the *Inam* grants of the time of the Rajas to Brahmins and temples.³ He presented various articles to the temples in Mysore, for example a *Sankh* to the temple in Devanhulli, and some vessels to Sri Ranganatha temple in Seringapatam.⁴ Although this was against the *Shari'a*, he did not care. In fact, he went much further in violation of it. When the temple of Sri Ranganatha was damaged as the result of fire, he had it rebuilt in one month. He also laid the foundations of Gopur temple in Conjeevaram during his invasion of the Carnatic in 1780, but it could not be completed owing to his war with the English.⁵

In the matter of coinage also he followed a policy which though un-Islamic, took into account Hindu sentiments. He allowed the retention of gold coins which had the figure of the Hindu god Siva and his consort on the obverse. Similarly, the half *pagoda* had on the reverse a figure of Vishnu with a discus in the right and a conch in the left hand; and the *Ganapati pagoda* had on its obverse the figure of an elephant with an uplifted tail.⁶

Haidar's attitude towards the Christians of Malabar was also very liberal. He granted the Catholic church in Calicut 2,420 *fanams* yearly, and allowed the Catholics complete freedom of worship.⁷ Later, however, this grant to the church was cancelled along with the trade privileges which the Portuguese had until then enjoyed in the Mysore kingdom, because, in 1768, when the English attacked Mangalore, the Portuguese gave them help in its conquest.⁸

Similarly, Haidar Ali's harsh treatment of Hindus in Malabar was not due to religious but to political considerations. The Nayars had again and again rebelled; so Haidar punished them by circum-

cising them and recruiting the Nayar boys into his *chela* battalion, which he had formed on the lines of the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire. He also converted some of his European prisoners from motives which had nothing to do with religion. Since he needed Europeans as artificers, engineers and officers for his army, he hoped to persuade them to enter his service.⁹

Haidar Ali was very much influenced by his Hindu environment. This is evident from his belief in the efficacy of certain ceremonies. Thus, he ordered the performance of *Japam* in Hindu temples before setting out on a campaign. Similarly, buffaloes were sacrificed on the occasion in accordance with the Hindu tradition, and he usually marched against the enemy only after the Brahmins had declared that the hour and day were auspicious.¹⁰

It has been maintained that Haidar did not set aside the Raja of Mysore and himself assume the title of a king in deference to Hindu sentiments, and that is why every year at the annual *Dasahra* festival, he allowed the Raja to come out of his palace and show himself to his people. But the fact is that, if after he had consolidated his position, Haidar had deposed the Raja there would have been no resistance, for, on account of his benevolent rule he was extremely popular both with his Hindu officers and Hindu subjects. Later, when Tipu, his son and successor, did eventually put an end to the rule of the Wodeyars and declared himself Sultan, there was no opposition. It seems, therefore, more probable that the reason why Haidar did not think it necessary to assume the title of an independent king was first, that he possessed in practice full sovereign powers. He struck coins in his own name, received envoys of Indian and foreign powers and sent his own to them and made war and concluded peace. Secondly, he might have been influenced by the examples of the Peshwa, the Nizam, the Nawabs of Oudh, the Carnatic and Bengal, none of whom were *de jure* rulers, although in practice enjoying sovereign powers. That is why Haidar Ali also remained content with the position he occupied and did not desire for any change. Besides, the assumption of

the title of an independent ruler might have created diplomatic problems. It would have had also no meaning unless confirmed by the Mughal Emperor, but this confirmation was not an easy thing to secure.

Tipu Sultan, for the most part, followed in the footsteps of his father. He appointed Hindus to high offices of State.¹¹ He not only continued the *Inam* grants of the previous reigns to Brahmins and temples but gave fresh grants.¹² In the course of the Third Anglo-Mysore War, when he visited Conjeevaram, he gave 10,000 *Huns* towards the construction of the Gopur temple whose foundations had been laid by his father,¹³ and like his father, wrote letters to the Jagatguru of Sringeri Math couched in respectful and polite language. In 1791 some Maratha horsemen plundered the monastery of its valuable property, and displaced the sacred image of the goddess Sarada. When Tipu came to know of this he sent the Math money, grain and other articles for the consecration of the goddess.¹⁴ In Nanjundesvara temple at Nanjangud a jade *linga* was installed by Tipu's orders. Tipu also gave elephants, jewels, silver and gold vessels to various other temples in the kingdom.¹⁵

Tipu, like his father, allowed the Hindus complete freedom of worship. The magnificent temple of Sri Ranganatha is situated within the fort of Seringapatam, about one hundred yards west of the palace, from where the Sultan heard daily the ringing of temple bells and the hymns chanted by Brahmin priests. Yet he never interfered with these. The Narasimha and the Gangadhare-svara are the other two big temples inside the fort and near the palace. But neither in these nor in the thousands of other temples scattered throughout his kingdom, did Tipu ever prevent Hindus from offering worship. On the contrary, he often made grants to the Brahmins to perform their religious ceremonies in the temples. He also distributed money for the performance of religious ceremonies among the Muslims.¹⁶

Despite all this, Tipu was very strict in the performance of his obligatory prayers and keeping the *Ramazan* fasts; and throughout the day he carried a rosary in his hand. He had great reverence for 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and inscribed on his weapons the words '*Asadullah al-Ghalib* one of 'Ali's title. He also revered the other Shi'a *Imams* and named many of the coins after them. The manuscripts of his library had the names of Fatima, Hasan and Husain stamped on them. The ambassadors he sent to constantinople were instructed to lay offerings on his behalf at the tombs of 'Ali and Husain at Najaf and Karbala, and they were to ask the Caliph's permission for constructing a canal from the Euphrates to Najaf, where there was a great shortage of water.¹⁷ Tipu was greatly interested in Sufism, and under his patronage a number of books were written on it. Like his father, he revered Muslim saints and conferred grants for the up-keep of their tombs; he also held Hindu *sadhus*, saints and gods in high respect. Further, like his father, he was extremely superstitious, and believed that the performance of certain ceremonies could avert misfortune. Everyday he consulted the astrologers attached to his court about his stars. He fed Brahmins and bore the expenses of Hindu religious ceremonies performed to invoke success for his arms. On every Saturday, without fail, according to the advice of the astrologers, he made an offering to the Seven Stars of seven different kinds of grain, of an iron pot full of sesame oil, of a blue cap and coat and one black sheep and some money. All these articles were distributed among the Brahmins and the poor. On the morning of 4th May, 1799, before Seringapatam was captured by the English, Tipu had been warned by both Hindu and Muslim astrologers that, since it was an inauspicious day for him, he should remain with the army till the evening, and in order to avert disaster he should give alms. After his bath, therefore, he distributed money and cloth among the poor who had gathered there. To the chief priest of Chennapatna, he presented an elephant, a bag of oil-seeds and two hundred rupees. To the other

Brahmins he gave a black bullock, a milch she-buffalo, a male-buffalo, a black she-goat, a jacket of coarse black cloth, a cap of the same material, ninety rupees, and an iron pot filled with oil, and previous to the delivery of these articles, he held his head over the pot in order to 'see the reflection of his face and thereby avert misfortune'¹⁸

To a man who possessed such eclectic beliefs and was so catholic in his outlook, it would be a mistake to attribute either religious fanaticism or even religious motives. If he crushed the Hindu Coorgs and Nayars, he did not spare the Muslim Moplahs. His forcible conversion of Coorgs and Nayars to Islam was not due to religious but political motives. He had warned them several times that they should remain peaceful. But they ignored his warnings and repeatedly rebelled. He, therefore, converted them as a punishment. However the conversions were on a much smaller scale and not as large as mentioned in some of the accounts. Besides, some of the conversions were voluntary.¹⁹

In his relations with Indian or foreign powers also, Tipu, like his father, was not influenced by religious considerations. He sent embassies to Persia, Afghanistan and Oman to obtain military help or promote commercial relations. He sent a mission to Constantinople for military and commercial reasons as well as to legalize his position as ruler of Mysore, because he had failed to secure confirmation of the title from the Mughal Emperor due to English intrigues. He made war on the Muslim rulers of Savanur, Kurnool, Adoni, Hyderabad and the Carnatic just as he fought against the Marathas and the Raja of Travancore. However, although religious considerations did not influence his State policy. Tipu, unlike his father, did not hesitate to exploit religion if it served his purpose. In his efforts to win over the Nizam against the English he appealed to his religion, pointing out that for the good of Muslims they should forget their past differences and unite against the common enemy. Similarly, to obtain the support of the Ottoman Sultan,

he tried to excite his religious sentiments by dwelling on the atrocities which the English were committing on the Muslims in India. While these religious appeals were ineffective, as in the case of the French, he made appeals to their self-interest, stressing the danger to which they were all exposed by the British designs of aggrandisement. The same appeal he made to the Marathas; but in addition, he tried to arouse their patriotic feelings²⁰

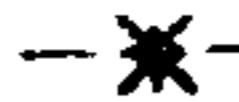
There are, however, some instances in which Tipu, persecuted unlike his father, the *Mahdavites*, a Muslim sect founded by Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur at the end of the 15th century. Tipu imposed a ban on their religious practices; and when despite this, they ignored his orders, he exiled them from his kingdom.²¹ It was a strange contradiction in his character that while he himself held superstitious beliefs and indulged in un-Islamic practices, he refused to countenance the same in some of his Muslim subjects.

It was his religious beliefs and ideals that determined the attitude towards certain social practices and customs and religious ceremonies. For example, he banned many practices during the time of *Muharram* because he regarded them as un-Islamic. He forbade prostitution, and tried to put a stop to polyandry in Malabar and Coorg. In some parts of Malabar women did not cover their bodies above the waist; so Tipu decreed that no woman should go out of her house without being properly dressed. He abolished the custom of human sacrifice which was practised in the temple of Kali Devi near Mysore city. He also banned the use of liquor and other intoxicants in his kingdom²²

Tipu was anxious to give a moral basis to his government, for he had a high sense of duty to his office, and believed that his subjects constituted a unique trust held for God, the real master.²³ He, therefore, spared no pains to promote the welfare of his people, and was busy from morning till evening with state affairs. He personally supervised every department of the Government, and endeavoured to check the laxity, speculation and oppression of his

officers by admonishing them and sometimes by inflicting upon them deterrent punishments.⁴

There is no evidence to suggest that Tipu tried to establish an Islamic State, for like his father, he too knew that such a thing was impossible. However, from some of his actions it appears that he wanted to play the role of a Muslim ruler. Thus, he called his state *Saltanat-i-khudadad* (God-given State) He instituted a new calendar called it *Mauludi*, dating it from the spiritual birth of the Prophet instead of from his flight (*Hijrat*). And he named some of the months after the Prophet and 'Ali. The same Islamic bias is evident in the names he gave to the new coins he introduced. The gold and silver coins were called after the Prophet, the first two Caliphs and the twelve *Shi'a Imams*. The copper coins, with the exception of the double paise, which is called after the third Caliph, bear the Arabic and Persian names of stars.²⁵ It seems that Tipu made these innovations as a concession to Muslim orthodoxy and also to satisfy his own conscience. However this did not imply any basic change in and departure from his policy of toleration.



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**Introduction and spread
of
Islam in Kashmir**

by

Prof. Mohibbul Hasan

It was during the Sultanate period that Islam became the religion of the majority of the people of Kashmir, and since this had profound and far-reaching results, we must try to understand how it was introduced and it spread.

The earliest reference to Muslims in Kashmir is in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, where it is mentioned that Lalitaditya's son and successor, Vajraditya, who ruled in the early part of the 8th century, "sold many men to the *mlecchas*, and introduced into the country practices which befitted the *mlecchas*." These *mlecchas* were, probably, Muslims and the men whom they purchased must have been later converted to Islam. These appear to have been the first converts to Islam in the Valley. Later, Harsha employed Turkish soldiers and was influenced by Muslim fashions in dress and ornament. In the early part of the 12th century again we find a Kashmiri ruler employing Muslims in his army. From the travels of Marco Polo, it appears that by the end of the 13th century there was a colony of Muslims in the Valley, for he says that its inhabitants, the Kashmiris, do not kill animals but that if they want to eat meat they buy it from the Saracens. These Saracens were, most probably, Kashmiris who had become converts to Islam.

The first specific reference in the chronicles to conversion is that of Rinchana, a Buddhist ruler of Kashmir, which was brought about by the efforts of Sayyid Sharafuddin, commonly known as Bulbul Shah, who was a sufi saint of the Suhrawardiya order. The chronicles and the Sufi *Tazkiras* represent this event as the outcome of a miracle. They say that unable to make up his mind as to which

was the best religion, Rinchana decided to accept the faith of the first person he saw in the morning. And since the first person he saw from his palace was Bulbul Shah, a Muslim, he embraced Islam. But this is too naive an explanation to be believed, for people do not change their religion in such a way. What actually must have happened is that Rinchana, who was spiritually restless and inquisitive and hankered after truth, failed to get any satisfaction either from Buddhism, the faith in which he was born, or from Hinduism, the faith of his subjects. It was at this time that he came into contact with Bulbul Shah who explained to him the teachings of Islam. Rinchana was impressed by these teachings, which were simple and free from caste rules, priesthood, superstition and narrow formalism, and, therefore, accepted the Islamic faith. The conversion of Rinchana was a landmark in the history of Islam in Kashmir, because the example set by him was followed by a number of nobles, and according to a tradition by 10000 people. After Rinchana's death a number of sufis visited Kashmir among them Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who belonged to the Kubraviya order of Sufis, was the most prominent. He is said to have made 37,000 converts. These figures should not be taken too literally because both the Sufi accounts and the chronicles have a tendency to exaggerate. What these figures do indicate is simply this, that both Bulbul Shah and Sayyid Ali Hamadani made a number of converts. Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, the son of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who also visited Kashmir and stayed there for 12 years, continued the work of his father. But the next large scale conversions that took place were the result of the efforts of Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) and his minister Suhabhatta, who had become a Muslim under the influence of Muhammad Hamadani.

While studying Sultan Sikandar's religious policy, there are two things to be kept in view. First, he tried to introduce a number of social reforms like the abolition of *Sati*, the banning of gambling and the prohibition of wine and other intoxicants. These measures were not intended to persecute any community, but were

meant to ameliorate the condition of all his subjects. On the other hand, Sikander introduced certain other measures whose object was certainly to secure converts. For example, he imposed the *Jizya* upon non-Muslims, and due to the economic pressure many must have become Muslims. Those who did not want to pay left the Valley. But we must remember that Sikander never compelled any one to become Muslim, if he paid the *Jizya*.

As regards the destruction of temples, Jonaraja accuses Sikander that there was no village or town left where temples were not razed to the ground. There is no doubt that Sikander destroyed temples, but not to the extent mentioned by Jonaraja or the Persian chroniclers. This is clear from the fact that Mirza Haidar, writing after 150 years of Sikandar's death, testified that "first and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand her idol temples. In the rest of the world there is not to be seen, or heard of, one building like this. How wonderful that there should be 180 of them." Abul Fazl and Jahangir also mention of the lofty temples in a state of perfect preservation. In reality many of the temples whose destruction has been attributed to Sikandar were destroyed by earthquakes. Some suffered due neglect, and some had already been destroyed during the pre-Sultanate period by the Rajas of Kashmir, namely, Jayapida, Sankaravarman, Adhimanyu II and Harsha.

When Zainul-Abidin ascended the throne he completely reversed his father's religious policy. He allowed every one full freedom of belief and worship. He recalled those Brahmans who had left the country under his father, and permitted others who had embraced Islam to return to their former faith. He banned cow-slaughter, and gave Hindus the right to perform their customs. He allowed them to repair and rebuilt temples and, in some cases, he himself had them rebuilt. He practically abolished the *Jizya* and other taxes which specially fell upon the non-Muslims. He participated in Hindu festivals, enjoyed the society of learned

Hindus and Buddhists, and appointed them to positions of responsibility.

The next person who carried on intensive missionary activity was Mir Shamsuddin. As a result of the liberal policies pursued by Zainul-Abidin and his successors, the Hindus had recovered some of their former position and strength. In a communal riot, which took place during the reign of Haider Shah, they caused damage to the *Khanqah-i-Mua'lla*. This provoked a reaction and Shamsuddin, protected and encouraged by some nobles, began his missionary work and achieved considerable success not only in the Kashmir valley but also in Baltistan. Those who played an important part in continuing his work after his death were Shaikh Makhdum Hamza, Baba Daud Khaki and Jamaluddin Bukhari.

Now the question arises as to when did a majority of the inhabitants of Kashmir become Muslim. There is evidence to show that in the time of the chak rulers the dominant religion of the Valley was Islam. But just as it is difficult to say with certainty as to when Islam was first introduced in the Valley, so it is not possible to specify any definite period when the process of conversion was completed. Stein's view that the adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population had become an accomplished fact during the second half of the 14th century is not borne out by facts. When Sayyid Ali Hamadani visited the Valley at the end of the 14th century, he found the Muslims in a minority. Sikandar ascended the throne in 1389 and ruled till 1413. It is impossible to believe that in the course of 24 years he could have converted the whole Valley to Islam, particularly, when we remember that in the early years of his reign he was a minor, and power was exercised by his mother, who acted as Regent. Moreover, most of the work of proselytisation accomplished by him was undone by his son and successor, Zainul-Abidin, who completely reversed his religious policy. And from the accounts of Jonaraja and Srivara it is clear that there were still a large number of Hindus in the Valley and they had regained their position under Zainul-Abidin and his

successors. The conversion of Kashmiris to Islam, therefore, cannot be limited to any specific period; it was a long-drawn process extending to about 300 years. The only definite thing that can be said about it is that not until the early part of the 16th century were the great bulk of the people converted to Islam.

I have given so far a brief history of the spread of Islam in the Valley but this does not fully explain the problem of how this was accomplished. Actually rulers of Kashmir were, for the most part, indifferent to the missionary activities of Sufis and the *Ulema*. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that they discouraged these activities. The only ruler who actively took interest in them was Sikandar, but much of his work was undone by his son and successor, Zainul-Abidin. Thus it is not the Sultans but the Sufis who were mainly responsible for introducing and spreading Islam. But for this they did not use compulsion, because they were neither capable of employing it, nor did they have the sanction of the State behind them. Their methods were persuasion, discussion and discourse. And they won over the hearts of the people on account of their simplicity, sincerity, piety and devotion. But we must remember that despite all these qualities, the Sufis would not have been able to make much headway, had they not been helped by certain objective conditions. Since about the 12th century society in Kashmir was in the process of social, political, and religious disintegration, caste rules had been relaxed, Brahmans had become arrogant, sectarianism was prevalent, the priests were uneducated, true spiritual values were lacking and religion consisted in nothing more than belief in superstitions and the performance of certain prescribed ceremonies. Buddhism also had become decadent and could not offer spiritual satisfaction to the people. It was these conditions which had driven Rinchana into the fold of Islam, and had provoked Lalla Did to protest against the Saivite beliefs and practices.

I should mention one more cause which helped the spread of Islam. This was the laxity of caste rules resulting from Buddhist

influence. A rigid caste system acts as a strong cohesive force, and thus serves as a powerful defence mechanism against the infiltration of foreign ideas. But in Kashmir, under the Buddhist influence, there had been a relaxation of caste rules and, as a result, the Hindu Society's power of resistance had been undermined. Islam, therefore, did not have to face the same degree of opposition in Kashmir as it did in other parts of this sub-continent where the caste rules continued to be rigid and the society was able to set up barriers against external influences. These facts go to explain why Islam's success in Kashmir was much more rapid and complete than in any other part of this sub continent.

THE IMPACT OF ISLAM

That the impact of Islam on Kashmir was profound and far-reaching is evident from the statement of Jonaraja who complains that "as the wind destroys the trees and locusts the shali crop, so did the *Yavanas* destroy the usages of Kashmir" and that "the kingdom of Kashmir was polluted by the evil practices of the *mlecchas*." Similarly Srivara, writing in the second half of the 15th century, says that Hindus had adopted blamable practices and given up preference for prescribed ceremonies. Now what were the blameable practices which the Kashmiris began to adopt and the usages which the foreigners began to destroy. These practices were that caste rules became relaxed; foreign dress, manners and customs began to be adopted; strange dishes began to be relished and what was most shocking was that even beef began to be liked by some Hindus.

It is necessary to point out here that while Kashmir was subject to foreign influences and was assimilating strange practices and usages, she herself was not slow in converting others to her own way of life. Thus many Muslims, while they celebrated their religious festivals, also participated in the Hindu festivals of Gana-chakra Sripanchami and others. They regarded the Hindu places of worship as sacred, and sometimes they even worshiped idols.

Although their religion was opposed to caste system, they continued to observe caste distinctions. Caste names were kept, marriages were arranged on caste basis and caste functions were not given up. The Sultans also, like their Muslim subjects, adopted Hindu practices. They participated in Hindu festivals, visited Hindu temples to beseech the aid of the gods, and in order to avert calamities they performed sacrifices and bestowed grants on the Brahmans. They also performed the *Homa* ceremony at the time of the coronation. The only difference was that instead of a Brahman priest and the chief minister, the *Shaikhul-Islam* applied the *tikka* to the ruler's forehead and made offerings of gold and flowers.

The mutual influences which the Hindus and Muslims exercised on each other was not confined to manners and customs, but also extended to the realm of ideas and religious beliefs. The ideas of Lalla Did, for example, were greatly influenced by Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Nuruddin Rishi. Lalla Did, who lived in the 14th century, was greatly dissatisfied with the Saivite beliefs and practices. Under the influence of Islamic ideas, which she came to know through her contact with these saints, she denounced the caste system and criticised idol worship as silly and useless. She looked upon the world as an illusion, yet she also stated that it was not necessary for a man to become a hermit in order to achieve the absorption of the individual soul into the Supreme, but that even a householder could obtain Ultimate Release. In this there is evidence of the influence of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who believed that in order to be a good Sufi it was not necessary to renounce the world. In fact, he denounced celibacy and asceticism. Lalla also learnt from the Sufis to use words in an esoteric sense. From them also she imbibed the idea of the Divine Love, and like them she employed the word 'Beloved' to denote the Godhead.

Just as Lalla Did came under Islamic influence, so did Nuruddin Rishi and his followers accept the ideas of Hinduism. The Rishis of Kashmir stood midway between the Sufis and Hindu

Sadhus. They, in fact, represented a compromise between Hinduism and Islam. The Rishis were Muslims but, like the Hindu ascetics, and unlike the Sufi saints, they preferred a life of retirement, living in caves and jungles, away from human habitations, to pray and meditate. Like the Hindu ascetics they renounced the world, leaving their wife and children, inflicting bodily sufferings upon themselves, and regarding the world as an illusion.

The impact of Hinduism and Islam on each other led eventually to a synthesis. This, of course, does not mean that there had been no difficulties in the way, and that the process had been an easy one. Actually the first resistance that was offered was by the Hindu society itself, which felt itself on the defensive. But its resistance proved to be futile. The statements of Jonaraja and Srivara, already quoted, reveal their agony and suffering at the complete failure of Hindu Society to set up a dam against the advancing tide of Islamic beliefs and practices. But as these defences weakened and Islam began to achieve success, it found that it was itself on the defensive. For the new converts refused to break their links with the past, and carried with them their old beliefs and practices. The result was that from the 14th to 16th centuries there was a constant conflict between those who wanted to keep to their old customs and usages and those who were insistent upon introducing the Perso-Islamic way of life. The champions of the latter were the Turks and Persians, who had settled in the country in large numbers, and the *Ulema* and Sufis, both Kashmiri and foreign.

In the course of his visits to Kashmir at the end of the 14th century, the great Sufi saint Sayyid Ali Hamadani found that there was nothing to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims in dress, manners and customs. At Alauddinapura, in Srinagar, there was a temple which was visited every morning both by the Sultan and Muslims of the town. To avert famine Shihabuddin performed the *Yagna* and distributed gifts to the Brahmans. Moreover, he had two wives, who were sisters, a clear violation of Islamic

principles. Sayyid Ali was shocked to see these things and advised the Sultan to change his and his peoples' way of life. Qutubuddin accepted some of the saint's suggestions, but ignored others which were likely to antagonise his subjects. Sayyid Ali's son, Mohammad Hamadani, who also visited Kashmir, continued the work of his father, and it was under his influence that Sikandar tried to enforce the *Shari'a*, imposed *Jizya*, introduced prohibition, banned *sati* and the playing of musical instruments. Under Zainul-Abidin a number of Sufi and learned *Ulema* entered the Valley, but although the Sultan respected them he did not give up what they regarded as un-Islamic practices, Zainul-Abidin was inclined to be in favour of a more liberal interpretation of Islam.

During the later Shah Mir period there were two persons who deserve to be mentioned as revivalists. These were Mir Shamsuddin, the founder of the Nurbakhshiya sect, and Mirza Haidar Dughlat. Under Zainul-Abidin and his successors many of the un-Islamic practices, which had been discontinued by the Muslims under Sikandar, came to be revived. Mir Shihabuddin, who had arrived from Iraq in the spring of 1502, was anxious to wean the people away from such practices. He soon won over some influential nobles, among whom was Musa Raina the prime minister of Sultan Mohammad Shah, and under his patronage he began his crusade. Once while the Hindus were celebrating the spring festival on the Koh-i-Maran, Shamsuddin proceeded there and put a stop to these festivities on the ground that Muslims were participating in them and every one, including women, were drinking wine and behaving indecently. Shamsuddin even belaboured some of the persons who opposed him. When the next morning the Hindus complained to Mohammad Shah about Shamsuddin's high handed behaviour he was so angry that he wanted to put him to death, but was dissuaded by his counsellors.

Mirza Haider Dughlat, who ruled Kashmir from 1540 to 1551, was an able ruler. But he was a great fanatic and a champion of Islamic orthodoxy, which he was anxious to revive at all costs.

For this purpose he persecuted the Nurbukhshiya, whom he regarded as heretics, and banned all Sufi orders, because the sufis led immoral lives, ate and drank forbidden things and spent their time interpreting dreams and prostrating themselves before one another. But Mirza Haider's rule did not last long. The Kashmiris rebelled against him on account of his narrow-mindedness and fanaticism and killed him.

Three more names deserve to be mentioned in order to complete the list of those who carried on the struggle on behalf of orthodoxy. These are Shaikh Hamza Makhdum, his disciple, Baba Daud Khaki and Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi. But their definition of un-Islamic beliefs and usages was very wide. They not only regarded Hindu beliefs and practices as un-Islamic, but also the *Shi'ite* beliefs and usages. Thus it came to pass that in opposing *Shi'ism*, which had been lately gaining ground in the Valley, they came into conflict with the chak rulers who were Shi'ites. Therefore, they approached Akbar and requested him to send Mughal troops for the conquest of Kashmir. That appeared to them the only way to restore orthodoxy.

Now, what was the result of struggle which the *Ulema* waged for over two centuries. The result was no doubt a substantial gain for orthodoxy. At the same time it should not be forgotten that customs, beliefs and practices were too deeply embedded in the life of the people to be completely uprooted and replaced. The Kashmiris, no doubt, accepted the new values, but they did not forget the old. The result was a synthesis between the two. The legal system was replaced by the *Shari'a*, but the customary law continued to exist side by side. Caste and untouchability disappeared but it reappeared in a new garb. Idol worship was abolished, but the Hindu image gave place to the tomb of a Muslim saint, and the old places of worship still retained their sanctity for the Muslims. Thus the Islam which emerged in the Valley was not the same which had been introduced by the followers of the great Sufi orders. It had comprised itself and had thus become considerably transformed

The Hindu Muslim Syndrome

by

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji

Towards the close of A.D. 1980, the 1400 years of the Muslim Hijri calendar ended. Right from its inception, through all these centuries, Islam has influenced India, and in turn been influenced by her. Indeed, in recognition of this, the Government of India has made a special effort to celebrate this event worthily.

The moment, therefore, seems opportune for attempting an evaluation of one of its most, if not the most, momentous of the consequences, its impact on India. Obviously, in a lecture of this kind, I shall have to restrict myself to only one facet of it. Broadly, I shall call it the Hindu-Muslim equation in India.

Significantly, the political and material aspects of this equation are much better known than its psychological and emotional factors. This is symptomatic of the post-independence position of Muslims in India. Though its largest minority (even sometimes alleged by their friends or agents-provocateurs, as the case may be, to be its largest single homogeneous community) they are progressively apt to be reckoned only in physical terms. Their percentage in the population of every state is noted. But this is about all.

It is indeed paradoxical when one considers that there is hardly any aspect of Indian life and civilization that has not been affected by Islamic influence, or for that matter any aspect of an Indian Muslim's way-of-life that does not show marked traces of what may be called the pre-Islamic components of Indian civilization, how little Hindus and Muslims really know about each other. It is a rare Hindu or Muslim who, when asked even about the fundamental features of the other's beliefs, principal religious

ceremonies or festivals, in brief of what lies at the heart of the other's inner life, will be able to answer coherently. Usually there will be no response; the enquiry being shrugged off by some such hackneyed phrase "God knows. They go their own way and we go our's." And that will be the literal truth. He really will not know nor will want to know it, being content to let the matter rest in the mind of the All-knowing.

Take even the reference to the Hijri (in English dictionaries "Hejira") calendar that I have made. Few non-Muslims will be able to explain its significance, why it is so called, or why it began from that date. And, what is more, they will not care. To forestall this here, I might explain that it refers to the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Yathrib in 622 A.D. His life was then being increasingly threatened in his home town, Mecca, for preaching Islam. In Yathrib, in contrast, he was enthusiastically received. Its inhabitants whole-heartedly accepted Islam. To mark this historic turning point, the Muslims called their calendar the Hijri calendar, starting from that event. Yathrib was also renamed al-Madina (the City of the Prophet) in its honour.

How to explain this paradox, this hiatus in Hindu-Muslim relations? Centuries of cohabitation in the widest sense, and yet such frigid psychological remoteness from each other! Probing into it involves delving into history. This may become tedious but must be inflicted.

The first contact of India with Islam was through Arab traders calling on the west coast. Commerce between India and Arabia dates back of course to pre-Islamic times — now, however, due to the florescence of Islam in the latter, along with goods it also brought in new ideas. Both were equally welcome to the local Hindu Rajas. Some Arabs even settled down among them, being freely allowed to build houses and mosques. The rigid caste system and social taboos prevalent locally no doubt ruled out close fraternization, but otherwise Hindu-Muslim relations thrived. Both sides were interested in and respected each other's customs and beliefs. If they found something congenial in them they did not disdain adopting it.

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Then in 712 A. D., more or less an outcrop of the Arab conquest and conversion of Iran, the 17 years old Mohammad bin 'al-Qasim overran Sind. That physical confrontation too did not poison the psychological and ideological relations between the conquering Muslim Arabs and the local inhabitants. It was not a religious war but of conquest — a stronger power preying on a weaker. Indeed, toleration of Hindu beliefs was proclaimed. Al-Qasim notably declared that “temples shall be regarded in the same light as the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews and the Fire temples of the Magians.”

Three hundred years later this picture of Islamic tolerance was however shattered. The Ghaznavid incursions — hordes of former Budhists, converted to Islam, who poured down Central Asia and Afghanistan—were animated almost equally by lust for plunder as by vengeance against all they themselves had previously worshipped. Started by Subuktigin in 977 A. D., they continued regularly under Mahmud from 1000 A. D. to 1027 A. D.

This was a period when even so scholarly a traveller like al-Beruni (1010 A. D.) declared : “We believe in nothing in which they believe and vice-versa.” Hindu-Muslim relations and understanding plummeted to rock bottom.

When, however, the Delhi Sultanate was established (1206 A. D.) and regular government under Muslim leadership spread over a major part of North India, a marked change for the better occurred. The oft-quoted words of Amir Khusrau (1218 A. D.), (a favourite both of the Tughlaq monarch and Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia, the Sufi saint) can be taken as a representative index of the prevailing sentiment :

“I know that in this land lie concealed wisdom and ideas beyond compute. Greece has been famous for philosophy but India is not devoid of it. All branches of philosophy, astrology, divination of the past and future are known. In divinity alone the Hindus are confused, but then, so are all the other peoples. Though they do not believe in our religion, many of their beliefs are like ours.”

The influx of Sufi divines and saints, the establishment of their orders in India, the Chishti, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi, etc.,

powerfully influenced the lives and thinking of both Muslims and Hindus. Their message of love, tolerance and brotherhood among all God's creatures spread. Saints like Kabir and Nanak carried on the good work.

The Mughal conquest did not seriously disrupt this. On the contrary, the wisdom and long reign of Akbar succeeded in setting up an enduring social and administrative pattern of secular toleration, understanding, mutual appreciation and exchange of ways of thinking and expression. It was ethically so just, and administratively so expedient that deviation from it was demonstratively suicidal. When Aurangzeb tampered with it, the retribution was terrible. His successors desperately tried to revert to the old pattern, but it had lost some of its credibility. Nevertheless, when the Mughal Empire finally disintegrated it was due mainly to the feebleness of the ruling class, both Muslim and Hindu. Sectarianism or religious fanaticism had little to do with it. After all, the last attempt in 1857 to save the Empire was fought under a secular banner—that of an Urdu loving poet, Bahadur Shah Zafar.

The intrusion of the British changed its complexion. Initially, they too fought their wars and maintained their position on more or less the same lines as the Mughals and other Indian contenders for supreme power. Once established, however, as the supreme imperial power, they had necessarily to exploit every opportunity available and — if not available to create it — to keep the opposition against them divided. Otherwise they could hardly have ruled India for as long as they did. It was not difficult for the British to keep Hindus and Muslims psychologically and emotionally divided as they had really never got united on their own. Even in Akbar's time it had largely been only a marriage of convenience.

Perhaps, if the British had not thrown in a new, highly combustible dynamic element — the Western — into the simmering cauldron of Indian civilization at that particular moment, things might have taken a different turn.

The break-up of the Mughal Empire splintered the country into distinct territorial and dynastic units. But there was no sharp cleavage on communal lines. Alliances between Hindu and Muslim

leadership and soldiery were taking place all over without regard to religious affinities. Their value was judged not by their religious complexion as by their capacity for delivering secular gains.

Above all, in spite of political and administrative fragmentation, culturally and socially the country remained remarkably united. The composite culture deliberately fostered by Akbar had in the succeeding centuries seeped into every nook and corner of India. Whether it was a Maratha court, or a Sikh or Rajput or South-Indian, the norms were those set in Delhi, Agra and Lahore. It had also found acceptance among the people. A new language compounded of well-known elements, new styles of dress, art, food, music, architecture, drawing on the best from both the cultures, had won widespread acceptance. Their harmonious blending was regarded as the true expression of Indian civilization.

Why then did this cultural and social rapprochement get arrested with the establishment of British rule in India? Why ignorance and prejudice in regard to each other among Muslims and Hindus become progressively more marked?

The advent of the British and their rapid ascendancy over the other rival contenders for supreme power in India — Mughal, Maratha, and others — indeed dealt a stunning, if not a death, blow to its burgeoning composite culture and civilization.

That culture had in past two centuries been taking root and spreading throughout the country. It had spread rapidly in the good years, languished or stood still in the lean years, and just managed to survive the years of drought. Nevertheless, by and large, it had taken firm roots and continued to spread, despite, and in some ways perhaps even as a consequence of, the political disintegration of the Mughal empire.

With the British however increasingly dominant — and soon to be supremely dominant — over all Indian affairs, the value and prestige of the composite culture, fashioned jointly by Hindus-Muslims not only for the purpose of co-existence but for fraternisation, slumped. It had to yield pride of place to western civilization, and Persian/Hindi/Urdu as the prime lingua franca of India had to surrender to English.

The Akbar pattern of Indian civilization was now definitely down-graded.

The current ruling class, whether British or Indian, strove increasingly to mould themselves on the western pattern. They set the standard for the emulation for all those who aspired to achieve worldly success.

The former urge to study classical oriental literature — Persian, Turkish, Arabic — favoured by the earlier rulers of the country, that had become hereditary in a wide range of castes and classes traditionally engaged in state service, progressively atrophied. No longer was a knowledge of them considered a passport for entry into the ranks of the gentry or even the intelligentsia. Even more disastrous was its effect on the parallel movement on a very much more limited scale, but nonetheless of almost equal significance, of a small but influential segment of the Muslim intelligentsia to acquire a real knowledge and appreciation of Indian classical languages, literature, traditional customs, and habits. This ceased almost entirely.

Practically, all such efforts now began to be concentrated on a study of western civilization, English literature and language, and Christianity. Even those Indians who personally reacted against becoming wholly westernised — the "Brown Englishman" of Macaulay's conception — almost automatically slipped into the habit of bringing up their own children entirely on western lines, leavened with some grounding in their own particular community's traditional lore and literature.

Thus, a Hindu gentleman would give his son a western education plus some grounding in Sanskrit/Hindi, but unlike his own father or grand-father would no longer consider it necessary to teach him any Persian/Arabic/Urdu.

Similarly, or even more markedly the former interest that at least a small segment of the Muslim intelligentsia had taken in traditional Hindu literature, religion and philosophy almost completely ceased.

This cultural about-turn was a spontaneous manifestation of the age-old practice of worshipping the rising sun. The reins of

power had slipped from the hands of Muslim and/or Hindu rulers nurtured in the Akbar tradition of secular government and civilization into those of the British. To most, the British success in vanquishing Indians by using western techniques for waging war provided irrefutable proof of the superiority of western civilization over the oriental.

In fairness, it must be noted that the thrust of the demand for extending facilities for imparting knowledge of western civilization and teaching English in India came not from the Englishman ruling India as a part of any plot to derail Indian nationalism and civilization, but from Indian leaders of the calibre of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Tagore, etc.

At its inception, its effect on upsetting the social relations between the two major communities of India, and on their still rather precariously balanced cultural and aesthetic equation with each other, was not realised : It could hardly have been, as far too many imponderables were involved. Nonetheless, just as the pressure for a wider and wider extension of facilities for imparting western and English education grew, the demand for sectarian education among both Hindus and Muslims also gathered momentum.

If the British Indian administration at the time had been anxious (as presumably a national secular government would have been) to develop unity among the Indian people and promote cohesion between its different cultural elements, it would have taken steps to remedy this. On the contrary, however, the whole rather fragile myth-sustained fabric of British administration in India rested on its ability to ensure that it should not have (after the 1857 experience) again to face a common Hindu-Muslim front on any major issue. Naturally therefore they did nothing about it, even if they actually did not provoke it.

Thus, the prospects, during British days for establishing a psychological and emotional understanding between Hindus and Muslims through the promotion of mutual knowledge and appreciation among them of each other's basic culture and traditions progressively receded. By the time the British decided to quit India, they had altogether disappeared.

A single illustration of how things worked or were manipulated will suffice. The two great educational institutions set up by the two communities for keeping alive their own classical traditions, cultural heritage, and religious ethos were the Banaras Hindu University and the Aligarh Muslim University. Yet, they were allowed to work almost in isolation of, if not in antagonism to, each other. No conscious attempt was made in either of them to promote the Akbar type of secularism. This gave a free field to the propagation of the "two nation theory." It is not without significance that its most ardent champion, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was in many ways an epitome of Lord Macaulay's "Brown Englishman." A Muslim with scant knowledge of Islamic history or its classical literature, and of course, almost wholly ignorant of Sanskrit literature, Hindu civilization and culture, his credentials for judging the incompatibility of the two cultures coexisting and cohering on the same soil were impeccable. He was almost equally uninformed by both.

Broadly speaking then, the position at the time of Independence was that there was only a dwindling number of Hindus and Muslims in what might be called the Indian intelligensia, who were really representative of Indian civilization as a whole. Only a few were aware of the respective contributions made to it by its Islamic and Hindu donors. The general awareness of the contribution made to it — and no doubt it is considerable — by western civilization was far greater. If a Hindu was asked about Indian civilization, he would talk of it almost exclusively in Vedic terms together with a few references to borrowings from the West. If a Muslim, he would know little about its Vedic foundation; he would speak only of its Islamic elements and some newly acquired western features.

After Partition, the position worsened further; and though since then there has been a slow climb-back to what may be called the Akbar pattern of secularism in administration and politics, there is still almost no sign of a positive approach being made in the educational and cultural fields, where it is most needed.

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Complete isolated exclusive efforts are still being made for the encouragement of Sanskrit studies. To a lesser degree the same is being done for Persian and Arabic. Hardly any effort is being made (as was done by Akbar) to encourage the comparative study of these great languages and literatures through the joint efforts of Hindu and Muslim scholars. For promoting national integration it is essential to induce Hindus and Muslims to explore their joint heritage together. A true secular society in India can only be built up if there is mutual appreciation by the different types of people inhabiting India of each other's contribution to its civilization. Ultimately, this would enable a consensus to be reached on the contents of a really secular composite culture of which every Indian could be proud of, and acknowledge as his own.

For this purpose, it is necessary to mobilise the energies and idealism of the various cultural and social organisations in India, as for example this one, that at the moment seem to be ploughing their own exclusive lonely furrows in this field.

A significant sign of the possibilities of this happening occurred at the time of the 1977 general elections. By a strange quirk of history, the RSS and the Jama'at-e-Islami leaders found themselves confined in the same jail. Their surprise was even greater when they discovered that they had much in common not only in regard to the political situation, but about many aspects of their material and spiritual lives.

As a result, friendly feeling developed between them, and on release, much talk of their coming to some basic understanding on the ways in which they could cooperate for promoting Hindu-Muslim relations and advancing the spiritual and moral health of the country.

Unfortunately like most good things aired during the Janata regime, all this soon evaporated.

Nevertheless, if a more purposeful government, with a clear conception of the secular policy that it was resolved to implement — a positive policy patterned on the Akbar model in the fields, not only of administration but education, culture, and

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the arts — should decide to take up the issue from where it was left hanging in the air, much could be achieved. It should be possible to utilise the possibility of such a rapprochement between the principal organisations concerned with the ethos of the two great communities, and those of others, to work out in detail what should be attempted, how, and in what stages in each field.

No short term solution for the communal problem can of course be expected from it. That, at the moment, can unfortunately only be effected by an efficient deployment of the law and order machinery. But for finding a permanent resolution of the Hindu-Muslim syndrome — the basic cause of Hindu-Muslim conflict—I do not think that we could do better than follow the Akbar pattern.

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Islam & the Modern World

by

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji

Last night I spoke about one particular aspect of the impact of Islam during the course of its long history — its effect on Hindu-Muslim relations in India. Indeed, in our different ways we have all been affected by the revelation of Islam to the Prophet and his communication of the message to all who would hearken to it, 1400 years ago. And we are celebrating it. I am sure, though, that in many of us, there must lurk a guilty feeling that we have done so little, if anything at all, to make that message meaningful. What have we done to give it a worth-while content in promoting human understanding, well-being, good-will, or even for its own honourable survival? All that most of us can claim is that, as we ourselves still exist, and as many of us profess to be Muslims, Islam has survived this span of 1400 years, through the sheer fact of our presence. If, however, we were prepared to be perfectly honest about it with ourselves, we would be led to admit that what we are really celebrating is not so much the survival or the impact of Islam as such during this span of centuries, as that of Muslims, or rather of those who presume to call themselves such.

Well, there is nothing wrong in celebrating any event, no matter, whether we have had anything to do with it or not, provided it offers one either entertainment or instruction; preferably both.

In this lecture, I shall try to be as straightforward and direct with you as it is possible to be in such circumstances and in such surroundings.

To-night, I should like to concentrate attention, primarily, not so much on "Islam in the Modern World", as on Muslims in the Modern world; not so much on the principles and ideals of Islam, as on how its principles and ideals are being currently interpreted, applied, and realised both by Muslims and non-Muslims, in other words, by humanity as a whole. Even more relevant to our purpose, to my way of thinking, would be to get the second-half of my subject, viz. "Problems and Prospects", framed in the right perspective. According to me, this would concern the problems and prospects of persons professing Islam, and not of "Islam" as such. To me, it seems almost blasphemous to identify the "problems and prospects" of Islam with the "problems and prospects" of persons professing Islam or claiming to be Muslims. How can one be certain that the principles and ideals of the former were being faithfully reflected in the actions of the latter? There will be, and there always have been, wide differences of opinion over this.

This thought was uppermost in my mind when I had the privilege of calling on Ayatollah Khomeini. It was just a few weeks after his triumphal return from exile to Qum in 1979 and the formation of the Islamic Government of Iran under his aegis. So much was I stirred by the occasion and his personality that I actually voiced my hopes and fears to him. By calling a State "Islamic", I said, it did not become Islamic. How often in the past, had not the assumption of such a nomenclature done incalculable injury to the reputation of Islam and the Prophet's teachings and example? What grievous wounds had it not inflicted on the honour of millions of Muslims all over the world when by its subsequent conduct, outlook and performance it had failed to live up to the Islamic principles, ideals and prospectives that they cherished? The Ayatollah had replied to me shortly. "You wait and see what we shall do".

I confess that in the last two and a half years, I have not seen much evidence of the prevalence of the Islamic spirit there — of rituals yes, but little of the spirit as I conceive it. Two years and a half is of course a very short spell of time in the life of a nation,

particularly after a revolution. We can, therefore, still hope that something really Islamic, chivalrous, hospitable, brave and generous will emerge to justify its being called an Islamic revolution, and the State, an Islamic State.

I refer to this, not with the intention of denigrating: making a value-judgement on the Islamic nature and contents of the Iranian revolution. That would be a presumptuous exercise; we know too little and it is yet too early, considering its cataclysmic nature, and the throes that still beset it. I wish only to underline the difficulty with which one is faced, even when confronted with a living example, right before one's eyes, of distinguishing, let alone separating, the spiritual Islamic element from the human element of, if you like, frailties, animating the actions and attitudes of persons, sincerely professing Islam who claim to be carrying out its behests according to their own lights.

A month or two ago, I saw an absorbing series of films depicting "Life on Earth". They were done for the B. B. C. Television by David Attenborough. Some of you may not have seen them. As they impressed me greatly I shall dwell on them somewhat. They illustrated in a systematic sequence the principal elements of the extant evidence that natural scientists and historians have so far been able to find of the origin of life on this planet. Through examples of insects, animals, birds, fishes and plants, and intermediate and undermined creatures, found surviving or extinct on land, in the sea and air, or rocks and fossils, they vividly, and I thought convincingly, demonstrated the process by which the Creator animated the world. According to these scientists, this process began some 5000 billion years ago. That is at least what I now remember. I may be making a mistake, as, frankly, I am bad at remembering figures, being congenitally indifferent to those that lie far beyond my ken. Here, it seems to me, however, that it matters little whether it was a hundred or two hundred billion years ago, or thousands of them. What is worthy of note is that in this context, the passage of the span of 1400 years that we are celebrating, seems almost like a flash in the pan, or the momentary bedazzlement by a streak of summer-lighting.

Further, according to this investigation and computation, the emergence of man as we know him (or think we know of him) on the scene was millions and millions of years after the first stirrings of life manifested themselves on earth. In a telling passage, the substance of which even penetrated into my anti-numerology-oriented-consciousness, the narrator summed up this aspect of life on earth, by a simple analogy. He said that if we were in our imagination capable of telescoping the whole inception of the life-on-earth process and evolution, into the time-span of a calendar year, retaining its customary divisions into months, weeks and days, of course with the appropriate multiplication of its years, months, weeks and days, as the case may be, by billions or millions, we would reach the conclusion that man appeared on the scene only on the 31st of December of that year ! A very young person indeed in comparison to the billions and millions of years older species of living creatures with which the planet abounded then, and many of which it still sustains !

As I grow older, my regard for age has, perhaps disproportionately, increased; and I must confess that this fact about man, being so low down, when viewed in this context, in the scale (the protocol rating as it were, dating from the time of his presentation of credentials on earth) of sentient creatures on this planet, occasionally disturbs me. I begin to question our facile assumption that man is its central feature, and all else has to be viewed not only through his eyes, but judged in accordance with man-made laws, principles and perceptions. Is this not a gigantic self-delusion of living, if not in a fool's paradise, in vacuity ?

Almost automatically then, human-ego rushes to the rescue; it smartly slams the door shut on such subversive and disturbing speculation. If man came so late on the living stage, it insinuates, is he not on that account itself entitled to the highest place on it ? But then again, when the stimulant of the ego upsurge subsides a little, the rather absurd analogy between this late-entry on earth of man and that of VIPs in private drawing rooms and public halls comes to mind. How the latter stalk into gatherings well after the appointed time, when every seat has already been occupied

by those who had come in time. How they glare round the room at the occupied seats with dislike; their eyes focussed only on the front and most conspicuous seats. With what disdain do they stare on the occupants of those seats to make them feel uncomfortable, to wonder whether they had not inadvertently taken the places reserved for these late-comers. The ushers at such functions, always anxious to add to its numbers and avoid unpleasantness, if it can be done at someone else's expense, promptly take advantage of the uncertainty already implanted in the minds of the lawful occupants. They induce them to vacate their places, and the VIPs ensconce themselves there with great self-satisfaction.

In this what man has done on earth? Is this somewhat the light in which Islam too is looked upon by the older religions?

Now, Islam among the great religions of the World is a late comer — being only 1400 years old. How should it project itself? How is it projecting itself? How will it project itself in the next Hijri century?

As I repeat these questions to myself, my memory goes back to an occasion when I was in Aligarh, and the late Pandit Sunderlal — that splendid man! — had come there on a visit. We were talking during an 'Id-e-milad' function in the City. He had just delivered a most moving panegyric on the life and teachings of the Prophet. Our conversation concerned the seemingly eternal topic of the Hindu-Muslim syndrome — its quirks, twists, tragedy and comedy. Pandit Sunderlal then said something that I am always reminded of when I think of this question. He spoke with a tinge of asperity and sarcasm. This was a novel tone for him to employ when discussing Hindu-Muslim issues. I have not got his words, but this is what they conveyed to me:

"It is only some 1300 years ago that the Muslims had a teacher, a messenger of God like Mohamnad, an incomparable historical figure", he began.

"The Prophet's life, words and deeds have been vividly recorded by his contemporaries. They are not based on myths and

legends like those of the other great prophets who preceded him. It is the same with the message that he communicated. Its authenticity is unchallenged and unchallengeable. Together they represent Islam in corporal and spiritual form on earth. In contrast to the picture of Islam that they present, look at what the Muslims have done to Islam in the last 1300 years !”

He then went on to say “The Hindu religion is some 5000 or 6000 years old. Its facts, myths and legends, its propiæts and its Godhead have all got mixed up. It requires much perseverance, perspicacity and discrimination to understand its basic spiritual insights and revelations. Hinduism over the millenniums has become a victim of its own subtleties. The caste system has even imposed limits on the understanding of its real message by all its followers.

The Prophet removed all such barriers and impediments for his followers. He put everyone of them in direct communication with his God. He scrupulously refrained from making even the slightest suggestion that he was in any way an intermediary between God and man. He insisted that he was only a messenger conveying God’s message to man. The Prophet as an intermediary is only being brought in, against his own express injunctions to the contrary, by those who either love him too much, or by those who wish to exploit his unique mission in Islam, to impose their own authority over its followers. The first border on idolatry, and have, therefore, to be guarded against. The latter have to be exposed and, if need be, resisted !”

He concluded by saying : “If Muslims go on, as they have been, corrupting the true message of Islam, I shudder to think what they will reduce it to, in even half the span of time that Hinduism has experienced since its inception !”

This may sound a rather dismal note at the opening of the next century of Islam in the Modern world, or as I would prefer to call it, the Contemporary world. That is not my objective. Primarily, what I want to draw attention to is the comparative “newness”, the modernity of Islam viewed in juxtaposition to many

of the earlier established great religions that still continue to prevail on earth. There is *prima facie*, therefore, no valid reason on this count to doubt or fear that Islam will not be able to provide an answer to contemporary problems.

I must make it clear that I am not dealing here with the doubts, and hopes (?) of those who believe (and I should like to repeat, believe) that spiritual beliefs are false illusions, and that the sooner the belief of those, who do not share their disbelief in them, are dissipated and destroyed, the better will the human race thrive. I can only marvel at the utter belief of such unbelievers in their own disbelief!

To return to my theme : Indeed, in my understanding of Islam, this was one of the main thrusts of the Prophet's preaching. He emphasized, when he enjoined the people whom he addressed to accept the message that he had brought to them, that it was the latest and the last that they would receive on the subject directly from the Creator. Alongwith that, he stated in most unambiguous terms that the message he had brought was not a new one. Since the beginning of life on-earth, a series of Prophets and divine messengers had been sent to communicate it to them. All of them had to be honoured for the work that they had done in spreading it. His main task, he repeatedly reiterated, was to correct the abuses and the distortions to which the divine message had been subjected by human beings during the course of the millenniums that had elapsed since its original dissemination by the series of prophets and seers sent down to preach it.

Therefore, it seems to be incumbent, particularly on an occasion like this, that we in our turn should search our hearts and minds to ascertain how far the teachings of the Prophet, and the message that he had communicated to us 1400 years ago, still prevail and operate in their original spirit among us. To what extent and where, as Pandit Sunderlal and many others, Muslims and non-Muslims, students and critics, admirers and opponents of Islam, have written and spoken about it, have we gone astray, stumbled, or been misled ? The literature on the alleged corruption,

distortion and dishonesty with which Islam has been riddled and exploited in the centuries since its birth is immense.

The normal reaction of most Muslims to it is either to dismiss it as anti-Islamic propaganda, or to consider the shortcomings and failures as the inevitable impact of time and circumstances on the effectiveness of the implementation of any principle or rule of conduct over the years. There is of course much to be said for both these points of view. Both can be justified by taking up specific examples of individuals, incidents, periods and places. To me, trying to be as dispassionate as possible, but knowing well that in matters such as these, that concern one's inmost beliefs, it is impossible to be wholly dispassionate. One can only make an attempt to do so.

On that basis, I cannot help feeling that, paradoxically, the answer lies in the earlier overwhelming success of Islam in the temporal world, the astonishingly facile, and unprecedented victories that the Muslims won against the then decadent empires of the East and the West. The latter had originally been founded by people whose principles and conduct had once been as noble and pure as their own. They had corrupted them, through the centuries for the sake of acquiring greater and greater temporal and material power. When the Muslims installed themselves in their place and began aping their ways, it was almost inevitable that they too should suffer the same fate. Once the Muslims got involved in problems that concerned not so much man's equation with his Creator, and the regulation of his relations with his fellow human beings on the basis of humanity, brotherhood and equality, but with the acquisition of power and dominion and domination over other human beings and lands, their fate was sealed. Islam as such had little to do with it, as Muslims had begun to consider Islam more as a talisman for acquiring material success in this world, than as a principle for leading a good life in conformity with the spirit of the Qur'an and the Prophet's example.

Now, it is perfectly true that in Islam, unlike, perhaps, in Christianity and in Hinduism, the pursuit of a successful life in a material sense is not incompatible with leading a good life in the

spiritual sense. In fact, one might even say that a good life in the Islamic sense, means a life that is harmonious in both its material and spiritual aspects. The two are inextricably linked together; they are a part of the same conception and not separate entities. Both are God given and depend on his bounty, that has to be earned by conforming to his injunctions.

Nonetheless, Islam cannot be judged only on the basis of the material success or failure of the persons who claim to be Muslims. It has to be judged by the spiritual and ethical values that it has succeeded or failed to bring into their lives, and in those of the people among whom they live or are associated with, as well as by its success or failure in the material aspects of their existence.

If one looks back on the history of Islam during the last fourteen hundred years, one will find that there have been periods when the material prosperity of those who called themselves Muslims at that time was enormous, but the spiritual and ethical values of Islam were at a low ebb and vice versa.

Obviously, we cannot put the spiritual and the material contents, success, value, received from Islam (or whatever other encompassing term we may choose to apply to it) during the various phases, developments and turns, through which Islam has passed in its fourteen centuries of existence, into separate weighing pans. Any attempt to assess what their individual contribution has been to life-on-earth would be even more futile. What would be the criterion on which we would judge their respective weights? How shall we determine what the right proportion should be between them — the spiritual and the material? My mind boggles at the complicity of the exercise. Of only one thing I am certain, that to whatever conclusion I would arrive at, it would promptly be proved wrong.

To take some of the best known periods of Islamic history, for purposes of illustration; the Umayyad, the Abbasid, the Fatimid, the Safavid, the Osmanli, the Spanish *tour de force*, how differently have they been viewed and judged by various historians, scholars, soldiers, statesmen and Ulema, depending on their

particular bent of mind and interests, or the school of theology to which they subscribed. Is it really possible — is it within the competence of man, to judge what the relative Islamic contents was in the lives of the people who lived under these regimes, let alone to split its impact into separate spiritual and material components ?

To come nearer home, is it really possible to judge whether the contribution of Islam to India was greater or lesser during the time of the Sultans of Delhi, compared to what it was in the different reigns of the Great Mughals, the Qutub Shahis, or Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan? In my personal opinion, Islam made its greatest impact in the material sense, as well as in the spiritual sense of influencing the way of life and thought of its people as a whole, during the reign of Akbar. The Editor of a paper whose whole ostensible object is to champion Islam and propagate its principles and values has, however, recently dubbed Akbar as “that great misguided buffoon” I was struck not so much by his perspicacity, as by the particular expression used; it so pithily demonstrated the perfect harmony prevailing between his knowledge of Akbar’s character and of English idiom. Unfortunately, it does not lead us any further in answering the questions that I have put before you. Those, I am afraid will have to be left for answer at our final reckoning with the Creator.

This, however, leads me on to an aspect of Islam that I think has been neglected. It deserves in my opinion to be specially emphasised in a country like ours, where the bulk of its citizens are non-Muslims. Earlier, I had referred to the significance of the Prophet’s stress on linking Islam with the message preached by the prophets and divines who had preceded him. I should like now to associate this in, your minds, alongwith his insistence on the universality of Islam. It was to be a blessing for all mankind, not just for the comparative few (that was particularly so in his own life-time) who formally call themselves Muslims. Considered in this light, the ups and downs of Muslim — Kings and Princes, Ministers and MPs., Clerks & I A.S. Officers — though certainly of great interest and importance to other aspiring Muslims, in particular, is not and cannot be either a very reliable or even significant

yard-stick for assessing the position of Islam or its problems and prospects in this country or anywhere else. The latter encompass a much, much wider field — that of humanity as a whole. How has Islam affected it in the last 1400 years? How is it likely to affect it in the coming centuries?

I have an uncomfortable feeling that in our absorption with ourselves as Muslims, in our desire to make ourselves out as the "chosen" people in contravention to the Prophet's warning and injunctions against the indulgence of any such conceit or complex, we have tended to ignore the enormous contribution that Islam has made to the way of life, thinking and praying, of mankind as a whole, merely because it has not been made directly by Muslims as such. It has been made through the agency of non-Muslims who have appreciated Islam — its values, its principles, way of thinking, and attitude towards God and other fellow human beings. Islam's influence on all these aspects of human activity, feelings and understanding of man and God, has been profound. Soon after it burst on the world in a remote desert, it fanned out from there and flamed over a good part of the then known world. Its physical confrontation and conflicts with rival forces and ideologies metamorphosed the political, ethical and intellectual climate of the times and of those regimes, in particular. The so-called "Dark Ages" prevailing there ultimately blossomed forth into the Renaissance. A new age of enquiry, discovery, speculation and experiment began. Literature, law, science and even religion were revitalised, rehabilitated, transformed and, sometimes, transfigured by a new infusion of energy, inspiration, and enthusiasm as a result of this encounter with Islam. Muslims and non-Muslims collaborated in this — an early example of joint ventures — Islamic forthrightness, clear-cut guidelines, gave a new sense of direction, of self-confidence, and helped to clear much of the doubt, mystification, confusion, and double-talk that had accumulated round the divine messages that had earlier been sent down from high through successive prophets and seers. It thus liberated the consciences and set free from shackles the minds and hearts of an infinitely larger number of persons than only those who formally chose to enrol themselves as Muslims. The new laws, the new social order, the new sciences that germinated as a result

of this fertilisation, had as much of the new Islamic spirit and contents in them as the formal Islamic teachings and principles had those of the messages and teachings of the earlier prophets and divines. How could it have been otherwise? Had not the Prophet himself declared that he was bringing no new message; only the old one in its true form!

Due to a loss of self-confidence, particularly in the last few centuries, and especially in India with the loss of temporal dominion, Muslims have become almost pathologically anxious to demonstrate their "separateness" from the rest of mankind. They progressively tend to emphasize their differences from them instead of trying to do, what they so brilliantly did in their heyday, to bring out the "commonality" in human beings, their common ends, and to bridge the different paths by which they seek to reach them. This reversal of attitude and, even more, the mentality that inspires it, seems to me to go contrary to the spirit of Islam, its traditions, and above all the glorious example set by the Prophet by his life and pragmatic day-to-day conduct. In that the importance of judging each action by the nature of the intention (*niyat*) behind it, has been so often stressed and given so much significance, that to continue to judge acts only on the basis of their conformity to tradition, for even the letter of laws formulated centuries after the Prophet, seems to me un-Islamic in spirit. To me, therefore, the lack of initiative shown, the fear-complex manifested, and the abject withdrawal into their shells with all windows and doors barred, by Indian Muslims, whenever any question of taking joint action with their fellow non-Muslim compatriots on matters concerning social reforms is raised, as for instance for framing a Common Civil Code, it is a source of deep disappointment.

It seems to me that in India most of the eagerness, self-introspection, organisational effort and community-concern that is now being manifested by Muslims in the future of Islam as a catalytic element in Indian civilisation, seems to be almost wholly focussed on efforts to better their own economic, political and temporal-power position. In brief, it is towards the material aspects of Islam as a way of life and conduct that their eyes and energy are turned. The spiritual qualities required to make a man a good Muslim are

overlooked. I hope I am wrong in thinking that they are being relegated well into the background. The general assumption seems to be that if those who call themselves Muslims had more jobs in the Services, more seats in Parliament, more say in the public and private enterprises, business houses, etc., all would be well with Islam in this country; it would become a vital factor once more in shaping its destiny.

It is quite evident that, if this were to happen, the individual lot of many such deprived and neglected persons would improve out of all recognition. But would this *ipso facto* be a contribution of Islam to the civilising, humanising and spiritual enlightenment of India? One may be forgiven for doubting it. Would all these new "Muslim" office-bearers and business-men bring into the affairs of this country, its administration, rule of law, probity and general standard of efficiency any element that could be considered as a direct consequence of their being Muslims? — of trying their best to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet?

Surely, this would only happen, if the persons concerned were, in their public and private life, as determined in demonstrating in practice the spiritual and moral aspects of their religion as they were concerned in acquiring the material benefits that they sought from it.

These are the kinds of "Prospects and Problems" of Islam in the next century that come to my mind. To bolster up our courage for facing them, I shall end with quoting a saying of the Prophet. It has brought me personally much solace :

"Verily, we are in an age in which if we abandon one-tenth of what is ordered we shall be ruined. After this a time will come when he who will observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be redeemed."

Is the beginning of the 15th century of Hijri the time that the Prophet was thinking of?

INTRODUCTION—It was the invading Turkish armies from Central Asia that brought Sufism to India around 1200 A.D. Though graves of martyrs, some of whom are alleged to have been Sufis, exist in Sind, Uttar Pradesh, Gujrat, Rajasthan and the Deccan, they are isolated instances of a sporadic Muslim presence in the sub-continent¹. The development of Indian Sufism did not begin on a broad scale till *silsilahs* or mystic orders were introduced simultaneous with the expansion of Muslim military and political power into the northern region of Hindustan. One by-product of the *silsilahs* was a distinctive corpus of Indian Sufi writings. To understand this literature we must first examine the structure of the *silsilahs* from which it arose, to which it continuously related and without which it remains almost incomprehensible.

CHISHTĪ SILSILAH :

Foremost among the mystic orders of early medieval India was the Chishtīya². For a period of over 200 years, it was the dominant force in Muslim spiritual life of the sub-continent. Not only did it establish a pattern of discipline and a singular outlook for its own adherents but it made an impact on other mystic orders as well as the Muslim ruling class and even the non-Muslim populace of northern Hindustan. In effect, the genesis of Indian Sufism is synonymous with the development of the Chishtī *silsilah*.

Beyond India the Chishtīs enjoyed only a sporadic success; to the present day they are scarcely known in other areas of the Muslim world, and they cannot be said to have produced any non-Indian saints of lasting fame. But within India they became spiritual kings. Their first standard-bearer was Mu‘in ad-dīn Sijzī Ajmerī (d. 1233 A.D.). Stripped of its numerous legendary accretions, his biography still inspires admiration (though to the diehard skeptic it may sound

presumptuous or even preposterous). It is reported that by the end of the 12th century A.D. he had travelled through much of the Muslim world. He had met many of the great Sufi shaykhs of his time, and obtained their spiritual *barakāt* or blessings. Then the Prophet Muḥammad appeared to him in a dream, directing him to go to India and settle in a place resembling Medina. Obstacles beset him. He persisted, finally reaching Ajmer, then the stronghold of a local Hindu dynasty, situated amid mountains in a desert setting not unlike that of Medina. The social climate of Rajasthan was indifferent to Islam and probably hostile to its outspoken propagators. Mu‘in ad-dīn was very old. Yet he made converts; he trained disciples; he founded a spiritual dynasty. Most of his successors we know only in name; some are so obscured by accretions of legend that no kernel of historical information can be gleaned from their biographies. Two, however, we know comparatively well; Quṭb ad-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1232 A.D.) and Ḥamīd ad-dīn Suwālī Nāgaurī (d. 1276 A.D.)³. Like Mu‘in ad-dīn, both men traced their lineage to venerable Muslim families outside of India, though Ḥamīd ad-dīn was actually born in Delhi. In his early life, Ḥamīd ad-dīn had been, by his admission, a ne‘er-do-well, with profligate tendencies. An encounter with Mu‘in ad-dīn changed the course of his life. Joining the company of men attached to the Ajmerī saint, he subjected his body and his spirit to the rigorous asceticism of Sufism. Once designated to be a successor of Mu‘in ad-dīn, he chose the vocation of a farmer and, together with his wife, settled in Suwal, a village just outside Nagaur, then one of the major commercial centers in Rajasthan. Kings and lesser rulers attempted to assist him (probably to gain spiritual merit for themselves, as was the custom in medieval Islam), but he resisted all such efforts. His rejection of one royal offer epitomizes the poverty and humility for which Ḥamīd ad-dīn has always been renowned⁴ :

The *muqta‘* or local administrator of Nagaur offered a plot of land and some cash to him. The Shaykh declined, explaining that none of his elder saints had accepted a government gift. The *muqta‘* then reported the matter to Sultan Iltutmish. A royal messenger was despatched, with 500 silver *tankahs* and a *farmān* conferring a village (i.e., the income of a village) on the saint. When the *muqta‘* approached the saint with the royal gifts, Ḥamīd ad-dīn ran to tell his wife. At that time they were living in such straitened circumstances that she wore a tattered scarf on her head, and the saint, a grimy loin-cloth around his waist. On hearing the news, his wife exclaimed,

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“O master, do you want to squander years of spiritual devotion and sacrifice by accepting this gift? Do not worry. I have spun two seers of yarn. That will be enough to prepare a loin-cloth for you and a scarf for me”. Delighted with her reply, Shaykh Ḥamīd ad-dīn reported to the *muqia* that he had decided not to accept the royal gifts.

While Ḥamīd ad-dīn passed his life as a farmer in far off Rajasthan, the other major successor to Mu‘īn ad-dīn settled in the capital city of the Sultanat. Qutb ad-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī did not choose Delhi as his habitat. He went there at the direction of his *pīr*. The orthodox *ulamā* objected to his presence. They constantly harrassed him. Once he almost quit the city, but when the Sultan interceded on behalf of Qutb ad-dīn, Mu‘īn ad-dīn was persuaded to allow his favorite disciple to remain in the capital.

We know very little about the activities of this reclusive but inspiring saint. The *majdhūb* element predominated in Quṭb ad-dīn to such an extent that he expired at an early age while listening to a verse sung in *samā*. In the Sufi tradition, he became a martyr to love, offering his life as selflessly as had the early warriors of Islam. The story of his death itself became part of the lore that was shared among Indo-Muslim mystics and told and retold in order to inspire others⁵.

One time (relates a medieval hagiographer) Quṭb ad-dīn attended a gathering at the house of ‘Alī Sijzī, a dervish who was related to Mu‘īn ad-dīn Chishtī. He was a neighbor of Quṭb ad-dīn and now lies buried near him. The *qawwāl* recited this verse of Shaykh Aḥmad Jām (may God have mercy upon him) :

کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را هر زمان از غیب جانی دیگر است

Those slain by the dagger of submission,
Every moment get a new life from the Unseen.

This line so captivated Quṭb ad-dīn that for four days and nights he remained dumbfounded, continually longing to hear this line repeated. On the fifth night, he died. Amīr Ḥasan Dihlawī has referred to the event in a quatrain which is recited to the present day.

جان برین یک بیت داده است آن بزوک آری این گوهر ز کانی دیگر است
کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را هر زمان از غیب جانی دیگر است

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That saint who gave up his soul on this verse—
 Take note : what a rare gem he was,
 Those slain by the dagger of submission,
 Every moment get a new life from the Unseen.

Quṭb ad-dīn attracted countless people in 13th century Delhi. His closest associate was a Suhrawardī saint, Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī, but it was a lonely, ascetical figure from the Punjab who became his principal disciple and the man on whom he conferred his considerable spiritual gifts. Farīd ad-dīn Mas'ūd "Ganj-i-Shakar" (d. 1265 A.D.) enjoyed the formal blessings of both Quṭb ad-dīn and Mu'in ad-dīn, having received the *barakah* of the Ajmerī saint during one of his infrequent visits to Delhi. On the unexpected death of Quṭb ad-dīn⁶, Farīd ad-dīn succeeded him as head of the Chishtī order. He was invited to live in the capital city of the Turkish sultanate. He declined, preferring instead to eke out his meagre existence in Ajodhan, a small town of the Punjab, since renamed in his memory Pakpattan ('the pure village'). Outwardly, his life was tumultuous. Farīd ad-dīn had to weather spiritual competition with the great Suhrawardī saint, Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā. He contended with political intrigues from jealous, local officials; he even survived assassination attempts from disconsolate visitors. Yet Farīd ad-dīn remained at peace with himself and immersed in the love of God. Like his predecessor, Quṭb ad-dīn, he experienced the most intense moments of spiritual communion during the recitation of verse, whether in *samā'* or in the semi-privacy of his prayer cell. The man who was to become his successor, on frequenting the cell of Farīd ad-dīn, reported⁷ :

"Often I would see the Shaykh in a grave demeanor, with his head bared, as he recited the following verse :

خوآهم كه همیشه در دقائے تو زیم خاكي شوم و بزیر پائے تو زیم
 مقصود من خسته ز كونیں تولى از بهر تو میوم و برای تو زیم

I wish that always I may live in loyalty to You
 May I become dust and live under your feet.
 My goal, beyond both worlds, is You.
 It is for You I die, and for You I live.

After he had finished reciting the verse, he would prostrate himself. Only then would I enter and lay my head at his feet. "Khawāja", he would ask, "what do you wish?" I would then ask for some spiritual gift, which he would grant. But many times since I have regretted that I did not ask to die in *samā'*.

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The saint who reports this story and by it reveals not only his loyalty to his *pīr* but to the whole Chishtī tradition of affirming and extending the use of *samāʿ* was Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā (d. 1325 A.D.). In many ways, Niẓām ad-dīn represents the pinnacle of the early Chishtī *silsilah*. He had begun a promising career as a scholar in Delhi, but gave it up to become a disciple and eventually the principal successor of Farīd ad-dīn. There were several stars which comprised the galaxy of Farīd ad-dīn's company. They included the Shaykh's own progeny—5 sons and 3 daughters—many of whom emulated his ascetical devotions. There was also Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī, an eminent poet and astute counselor, Najīb ad-dīn Mutawakkil, the younger brother of Farīd ad-dīn and his alter ego (insofar as either saint could be said to have possessed an ego); and Ṣābir 'Alī, the mysterious, terrorizing zealot of Kalyar in northern Uttar Pradesh. All made substantial contributions to the growth of Chishtī influence among the Indian Muslims of their generation. Yet Niẓām ad-dīn outshone them: in humor, in pathos, in love and in poetry he was an exemplar whom many reckon as the greatest Indo-Muslim saint of all time. His stature in Delhi was enhanced through his association with the poets, Amīr Ḥasan and Amīr Khusrau, as well as the historian *nonpareil*, Ḍiyā ad-dīn Baranī. The greatest achievement of Niẓām ad-dīn, however, was to establish the provincial dispersion of the Chishtī order on a firm basis. In the opinion of some, including Baranī, Niẓām ad-dīn admitted too many men into the Chishtī fold as his disciples. History, none the less, bears out the wisdom of his open-ended policy, even as it attests to the inspiration of his ceaseless quest for truth. To far flung areas of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan, Niẓām ad-dīn sent able disciples well versed in Chishtī practises yet sensitive to the needs of the local populace. Many of them are still venerated in the places where they first planted the Chishtī banner.

Shortly before his death, after having directed the activities of the Chishtī order for more than half a century, Niẓām ad-dīn appointed as his principal successor a man who, if we accept the testimony of recorded sayings from both saints, was almost opposite to him in temperament. Naṣīr ad-dīn Maḥmūd "Chirāgh-i-Dihlī" (d. 1356 A.D.), struggled with the burdens of a Sufi *shaykh*. He constantly longed for the reclusive life which Niẓām ad-dīn had ordered him to abandon. At the same time, he relaxed the Chishtī discipline of strict obedience to the *pīr*. Niẓām ad-dīn had never performed the *hajj* because his own *pīr* had not. Often he had criticized the false pride

of *hājīs*. Naṣīr ad-dīn, on the other hand, openly voiced his desire to go to Mecca. Prostration before the *pīr* or spiritual guide was a controversial practice of the early Chishtīs. Naṣīr ad-dīn prostrated himself before his *pīr*, but did not allow his own disciples to prostrate themselves before him. Naṣīr ad-dīn was also indifferent to poetry and lukewarm at best in accepting its spiritual value for others. Above all, it was his approach to *samā'* that separated Naṣīr ad-dīn from Nizām ad-dīn and other Chishtīs. The following anecdote appears to justify Naṣīr ad-dīn's wariness toward *samā'*, but its very tone also underscores the extent to which Naṣīr ad-dīn deferred to orthodoxy rather than the absolute authority of his *pīr*⁸.

It is recorded that one day several of Nizām ad-dīn's disciples were sitting together listening to a woman singing and playing a tune on the drum. Naṣīr ad-dīn, who had been sitting with them, got up to leave. His friends urged him to stay, but he refused, saying: "this activity is contrary to accepted practice (*sunnah*)". They replied, "Are you rejecting *samā'*, which is an accepted practice of your own spiritual master?" "That is not sufficient proof," he rejoined; "you must adduce some supporting evidence from Qur'ān or *hadīth*". Some of the disciples reported this matter to Nizām ad-dīn, saying, "Naṣīr ad-dīn said thus and so? . . ." The Shaykh, however, had no doubt about the sterling character and probity of Naṣīr ad-dīn. "He has spoken the truth," affirmed the Shaykh.

While in outlook and practice Naṣīr ad-dīn differed from his Chishtī predecessors, he did produce an array of scholarly disciples. Some, like Qāḍī 'Abd al-Muqtadir and Aḥmad Thānesarī, composed Arabic poetry that won acceptance and praise beyond the borders of India. Others, like Sadr ad-dīn Ḥakīm and Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ja'far, developed elliptical styles of thought and expression without parallel in the history of the Chishtī order. It is not clear that Naṣīr ad-dīn designated a successor. His foremost disciple was a saint of diverse talents whom many acknowledged as his de facto successor, despite the suggestion that the Chishtī *tabarrukāt* were buried with Naṣīr ad-dīn. In temperament Sayyid Muḥammad Husainī "Gesū Darāz" (d. 1422 A.D.) resembled Nizām ad-dīn. His predilection for verse, his ease of conversation with Hindus and, especially, his attention to *samā'* as the locus for spiritual growth—all link him to the exemplar saint of the Chishtīya rather than to his own *pīr*. At the death of Naṣīr ad-dīn, Gesū Darāz continued the Chishtī tradition in Delhi. For over 40 years he lived in the capital city of the decli-

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ning Tughluq dynasty. Then, in 1398 A.D. presaging Timur's invasion of India, he departed Delhi with a few of his followers. The hardy troupe made brief stops in Gwaliyor and Gujarat before settling in the eastern Deccan at Gulbarga. It was there, at the furthest outpost of medieval Indian Islam, that the Sayyid left his enduring mark, patiently gaining the trust of local rulers, adapting the Chishtī outlook to regional customs and building a spiritual network that persists, with great influence, to the present day.

Literary output of the Early Chishtī Saints :

As an effective missionary agency the Chishtī *silsilah* succeeded. It established numerous regional branches and disseminated the teachings of Sufism throughout the area of Hindustan under Muslim rule. Yet the authentic literature produced by the major Chishtī saints of the Sultanate period is astonishingly meagre. For the whole of the 13th and the first half of the 14th century, we find no book written by the major *shaykhs* from Mu'īn ad-dīn through Naṣīr ad-dīn. It is small wonder that in one of his recorded conversations Nizām ad-dīn approvingly quotes the precedent of Sayf ad-dīn Bākharzī (d. 1260 A.D.), the illustrious Kubrawī saint. When his *murīds* used to goad him about his sparse literary output, noting that every great *shaykh* had written a book or made some sort of compilation, Sayf ad-dīn would rejoin, "Every verse of mine is equivalent to a book".⁹

Like Sayf ad-dīn, Nizām ad-dīn wrote only poems or prayers and a few scattered letters. The bulk of reliable information we have about him and his fellow Chishtīs is found in the recorded conversations (*malfūzāt*) that were collected and frequently embellished by their close followers. Foremost among this literary genre is *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, a selection of Nizām ad-dīn's conversations on sundry topics during the evening of his life (1307-22 A.D.)¹⁰. Though compiled by the poet Amīr Ḥasan, they were edited by the saint himself and may be said to reflect his chaste, understated tone. In style *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* is preeminent among all *malfūzāt* of medieval Indian Sufism : it exemplifies the virtue of Persian prose as a simple but effective tool for communicating diverse situations, moods and thoughts. It captures the spirit of Nizām ad-dīn's towering presence, his absolute loyalty to his *pīr*, his taste for poetry and *samā'* and his empathy with the sufferings of his fellowmen. We hear him crying and laughing and praying. Above all, we delight in the stories of which he and his

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followers seem to have an inexhaustible stock and which are invariably told to illustrate a viewpoint or practice peculiar to mystics. One story may be related here¹¹ :

Concerning the death of saints, one of those present told the story of a certain saint who expired while slowly repeating the name of God. The eyes of Nizām ad-dīn filled with tears, as he recited the following quatrain :

آیم بر کوی تو پویان پویان رخساره بآب دیده شویان شویان
بیچاره ده وصل تو جویان جویان جان میدهم و نام تو گویان گویان

I come running to the end of Your street.
Tears are washing and washing my cheek.
Union with You—what else can I seek ?
My soul I surrender as Your name I repeat.

Fawā'id al-fu'ād repeatedly suggests the didactic intention of Nizām ad-dīn; it seldom burdens the reader with superfluous detail or exaggerated encomium. Nor do we feel Amīr Ḥasan calling undue attention to his role in the Shaykh's councils. He intrudes often enough to let us know that he was not merely recording Nizām ad-dīn's every word and motion, but he remains in the back-ground rather than the foreground of most conversations.

A second Chishtī collection of *malfūzāt*, *Khair al-majālis*, was also made by a poet, in this case one who had been admitted to the company of Naṣīr ad-dīn. Ḥamīd Qalandar's work is useful for the information it provides about the life and outlook of a distinguished, early Indian saint. Yet it lacks the simple elegance of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*. Ḥamīd was a *qalandar* only in name, and a poet only in temperament. His scholarly ambitions were held in check by literary and spiritual shortcomings : he was not a poet of the rank of Amīr Ḥasan, and, unlike the resolutely ascetical Naṣīr ad-dīn, he seems to have been inclined to hesitancy and self-doubt. If Ḥamīd cannot refrain from intruding his own personal frustrations into the pages of *Khair al-majālis*, it is at least in part because he wants to voice the mildly adversary relationship that existed between him and his *pir*. Two distinctive passages from *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* and *Khair al-majālis* exemplify the difference not only between Amīr Ḥasan and Ḥamīd Qalandar but also between the saints whom they describe¹² :

One time (reports Amīr Ḥasan) the subject under discussion was *samā'*. "I am perplexed", I said; "no matter how many of the customary acts of devotion, or even how many of the special devotions of the dervishes, I perform, I am frustrated.

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Yet when I participate in *samā'*, complete tranquility and peace of mind overcome me. A similar state is produced when I am in the company of my spiritual master, for at that time my heart is free of the passions of the world and the lower self". "Is your heart then also free of attachments?", asked the Shaykh. "Yes, it is", I replied.

"*Samā'*", the Shaykh commented, "is of two kinds: assaulting and non-assaulting. The first is the kind which assaults the listener when he hears a (beautiful) voice or a line of poetry. It produces an agitation in him and, therefore, is called "assaulting". It is inexplicable. The second is "non-assaulting"; that is to say, it has the effect of transporting the listener to some other place, whether it be to the presence of God, or to the presence of the Shaykh, or to some place which he just happens to recall.

Hamīd Qalandar begins his account of the 18th council by saying: "I received the blessings of kissing the feet of the Shaykh". "In this city", "I submitted, "nothing matters to me except the sacred tomb of Shaykh Niẓām ad-dīn and, after that, the blessings of meeting with you". "So long as one does not pursue the path", replied Naṣīr ad-dīn, "he will not arrive at the goal. If you are idle and still hope to reach the goal, you will not reach it. Striving is the precondition for success". "Those who strive in us, surely we will guide them to our paths" (Q. 29, 69). Afterwards he added, "And what is the fruit of this endeavor? Through striving you obtain the purification of the heart from any object other than God, and you become totally absorbed in the task of conforming your will to His." Then he added, "This is the true meaning of 'There is no god but God'. Purifying the heart from anything other than God is the denial ('there is no god . . .'), while absorbing oneself in obedience to God is the affirmation (. . . . but God)". "O Master", I rejoined, "this humble creature is in some small measure preoccupied with God, but to practise continual fasting is virtually impossible. The climate of Delhi in the summer is notorious; the wind is like a rain of fire. With every breath, one's thirst increases". "O dervish", exclaimed Naṣīr ad-dīn, "if you cannot keep the fast, at least reduce your consumption of food". And then he added, "Where do you go to busy yourself with God? To your house, or to some other place?" "In my house", I replied, "there is

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much disturbance and commotion, but it does not impede me; and if I should be disturbed, I may go out to some garden or isolated spot, under some trees, where I see no one and no one sees me". "And do you not also take along an inkstand and some paper", enquired the Shaykh, "in order to busy yourself composing *ghazals* and other forms of poetry? It was not this sort of preoccupation to which I was referring. What is required of you is to preoccupy yourself with God". "Alas!", I exclaimed, "you have correctly intuited the whole matter. If a line of poetry comes to me, I write it down, and then I focus my attention on God again". "If you are able to focus your attention on God (in such a manner)", replied Naṣīr ad-dīn, "that is commendable, for there is no thicker veil between God and man and no greater impediment to spiritual progress than composing poetry".

In both passages the writers confess their frustrations to their respective spiritual guides. But how disparate are the responses of the two saints! Nizām ad-dīn turns the discussion away from Amīr Ḥasan's problem to a generalized depiction of *samā'*. Naṣīr ad-dīn, on the other hand, dwells on the spiritual inadequacies of Ḥamīd Qalandar, concluding that even, the accommodation he has made between his ascetical and creative impulses is ill-founded and unacceptable. At least part of the variance in tone between these two passages must be imputed to the uneven talents of their respective authors; Amīr Ḥasan excelled as a poet and a Sufi, while Ḥamīd Qalandar languished on both counts. Yet Naṣīr ad-dīn corrected *Khair al-majālis*, just as Nizām ad-dīn had corrected *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, and therefore, the passage in each case bears the impress of the saint indirectly as well as directly: stern asceticism divorced from poetry and music (except on rare occasions) was as much the mark of Naṣīr ad-dīn as limitless compassion inspired by music and abetted by verse was the mark of Nizām ad-dīn.

At about the same time that Ḥamīd Qalandar was recording the conversations of Naṣīr ad-dīn (ca. 1350 A.D.), Amīr Khurd was compiling his extensive memoirs of Nizām ad-dīn which he entitled *Siyar al-awliyā* (*Biographies of Saints*). The book is, in fact, neither a *tadhkirah*, as its title implies, nor a collection of *malfūzāt*, but an untidy amalgam of both literary genres. It has several defects. Amīr Khurd unabashedly borrows much material from *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, though he scarcely refers by name either to Amīr Ḥasan or to *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*. He also indulges in literary excursions that are more

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confusing than edifying to the modern reader. Like virtually every medieval Muslim writer, he also has pretensions to poetry. Often he manages to cite his own mediocre verses, sometimes side by side with those of Khusrau or Sa'dī or Sanā'ī. The contrast is at best instructive, at worst distracting. Yet, despite these shortcomings, *Siyar al-awliyā* would be of inestimable value if only for the detailed biographical notices it provides of all the Chishtī saints and their companions up till the time of Niẓām ad-dīn. The ninth chapter, moreover, provides a unique collation of Chishtī statements on *samā'* (mystic music). The information on Niẓām ad-dīn alone is enormous. Not all of it can be accepted as authentic: the inevitable legendizing tendency, with its cycle of miracles and self-inflating stories, has already begun to affect Amīr Khurd's portrayal of Niẓām ad-dīn, even though reference to fabricated hagiographical writings about Niẓām ad-dīn (e. g., *Afdal al-fawā'id* of Amīr Khusrau) has been omitted. Most of the biographical data in *Siyar al-awliyā* has the ring of authenticity about it, and we may accept each invocatory prayer, letter and counsel that Amīr Khurd ascribes to Niẓām ad-dīn as a treasure snatched from the engulfing anonymity of pre-Mughal history, still resplendent with the sparkling genius of this early Chishtī saint. Consider, for instance, the counsel that he gave to the learned Ḥusām ad-dīn Multānī when the chains of voluntary poverty began to chafe him, as they did many of the formerly prosperous disciples of the Shaykh¹³.

"Your humble servant has received a charitable donation", explained Ḥusām ad-dīn. "I am thinking that I should give some of it to my family and reserve the rest for the needs of guests. Often days go by, and I receive nothing. On account of this, my family suffers and guests go away disappointed. In such a circumstance, is it not better to accept a large donation and preclude the possibility of wanting to take a loan?" "How can you be a dervish if you fall into the trap of planning?" rejoined Niẓām ad-dīn. "The true dervish is he who, if he is given something, spends it. Otherwise, he waits patiently and tolerates his disappointment. But he does not fall into the trap of trying to manage his affairs.

"The dervish should not be a door to door beggar", he continued. "Of this kind of beggar there are two types: the public and the private. The public beggars are those who go from door to door asking for charity. The private beggars are those who busy themselves in remembering God in some

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corner of their house, but they continually say to themselves, 'Perhaps some increase in livelihood will come to me'."

The public door-to-door beggar is better than the private one, for public beggary is just what it appears to be, while the private beggar appears even to himself to be busy with God but inwardly he moves from door to door".

Another early Chishtī writing of great historical importance was also a collection of *malfūzāt*. *Jawāmi' al-kalim* records the conversations of Sayyid Gesū Darāz just after his departure from Delhi (ca. 1399-1400 AD). They were compiled by his eldest son and disciple, Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusainī, en route to Gujarat. *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, though completed at the end of the 14th century, belong to the first half of that century, since much of its content focuses on Chishtī saints of earlier generations, their teachings, their practices and, of course, their stories. Some of the anecdotes are contained in the *malfūzāt* already cited, i.e., *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* and *Khair al-majālis*, but many are unique. We also find Nizām ad-dīn more frequently mentioned than Gesū Darāz's own *pīr*. And when references are made to Naṣīr ad-dīn, they place him in a very different light from the sober guardian of tradition portrayed by Ḥamīd Qalandar in *Khair al-majālis*. The following anecdote from *Jawāmi' al-kalim* almost appears to be describing another Naṣīr ad-dīn¹⁴ :

Once the Shaykh was sitting in his *khānqāh*, and on hearing the following couplet he was overcome with ecstasy :

جفا بر عاشقان گشتی نخواهم کرد هم کردی قلم پر دیدلان گفتمی نخواهم داندم دانندی

You have sworn not to oppress your lovers,

yet us you oppress.

You have sworn not to write off those

who lost their hearts to you; yet us you obliterate.

The poet Maulāna Mughīs wrote a letter describing what had happened in this gathering. He maintained that the above couplet carried no true meaning. "To apply terms like 'oppressive' and 'tyrannical' to God is heretical", he argued, and made other statements in a similar vein. He gave a copy of the letter to Maulana Mu'īn ad-dīn 'Imranī, who sent it to the Shaykh. Naṣīr ad-dīn read it and then sent for Maulāna Mu'īn ad-dīn. When the Maulāna arrived, the Shaykh returned the letter to him without comment. After presenting the Maulāna with a turban and a shirt, he gave him permission to leave.

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Subsequently, there was a Sufi assembly in which Naṣīr ad-dīn was so moved by the following quatrain that he became manifestly agitated and began to dance :

ما طبک مغانه دوش بیباک زدیم عالی علمش بر سر افلاک زدیم
از بهر یکے مغیبتہ میخواره صد بار کلاه توبہ بر خاک زدیم

Last night we fearlessly beat the drum of a young tavern goer;
We raised his flag high into the skies.

For the sake of this tavern-going youth we all became drunk;
A hundred times we flung the cap of repentance into the dust.

Then, still highly agitated, he went up to sit on the roof and sent for Maulāna Mughis. The Maulāna was distraught.

Reluctantly, he paid a call on the Shaykh. "Now, Maulāna," said Nasir ad-din, "record all the foolishness you see here."

Having spoken these words, he dismissed the Maulāna, who never returned to the *khānqāh* and died shortly thereafter.

Jawāmi' al-kalim is also full of poetry, much from the Sayyid's own lips, and for the first time in a work about one of the major Chishtī Shaykhs we find references to the writings of Muhyī'd-dīn Ibn al-'Arabī. Not all of them are friendly, and one anecdote from his own youth underscores the Sayyid's aversion to Ibn al-'Arabī's most popular mystical treatise, *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam*¹⁵.

Maulāna Jamāl ad-dīn Maghribī [recalls Sayyid Gesū Darāz] had complete mastery of *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam* of Muhyī'd-dīn Ibn al-'Arabī. Moreover, he was a well-traveled man, deeply learned, knowledgeable about the world and well advanced in years. He also knew most of the great Shaykhs of his time.... He professed faith in the doctrines expounded in the *Fuṣuṣ*: in fact, he had written an extremely fine commentary on this work. For two years, I studied obediently under him, supporting his position with citations from Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. At his direction I established prooftexts for the entire *Fuṣuṣ*. But one day I ventured to express a hint of disagreement on one point. The Maulāna was startled, as though he had just been awoken from a deep sleep. "My dear Sayyid", he protested, "I have put such trust in you! How can you say such a thing?" Then I began to support my viewpoint with rational arguments and scriptural citations. I covered every point, down to the last detail. For six months we continued in this manner. Every day I would call attention to problematic doctrines in the *Fuṣuṣ* and express my disagreements with him.

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After I had defended my views, he would say, "My dear Sayyid, go pray to the Prophet". (It is a custom among the Arabs that when someone puts forth an unconvincing argument, they say, "Go pray to Muhammad". That is to say, "stop talking pointlessly and go pray to the Prophet for guidance"). Finally one day after a protracted discussion, he said, "My dear Sayyid, wait a little". He knelt as if he were going to meditate. He reflected for a while. At that time he was an old man of eighty and I but a youth of twenty or so. Finally he declared, "Mīr Sayyid is a dervish among dervishes; you have converted me", and putting his hands on his ears, he bowed his head toward me—.

Jawāmi' al-kalim is the last of the major biographical writings about the early Chishtī *shaykhs* of India. Together with *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, *Khair al-majālis* and *Siyar al-awliyā*, it provides the sum total of verifiable historical data about the thought and lives of the pre-Mughal Chishtīya. It is meagre. Though these writings have great value, they do not begin to measure the full significance of the saints whose words they record. The fault lies initially with the saints themselves. Until Sayyid Gesū Darāz they chose not to write. Writing was devalued, even demeaned, as we saw earlier in Niẓām ad-dīn's glowing estimate of the terse poetry of Sayf ad-dīn Bākharzī. The resulting literary gap, however, is without precedent in the development of a major Sufi *silsilah*. Consider, by contrast, the prodigious reflections in prose and poetry, Arabic and Persian, of 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī and Najm ad-dīn Kubrā.

The conscious decision on the part of the first Indian Chishtis not to write had a predictable consequence. The dearth of writings by or about these saints stood in such glaring contrast to their spiritual achievements and the legends which soon developed about them that credulous followers, seeking 'more' information to bolster their lively faith, found it in spurious works. Pious forgeries are hardly unique to the early Chishtī *silsilah*; wherever saints have flourished bogus works have sprung up in the fertile soil of saint-worship. But the Chishtī forgeries exhibit two recurrent characteristics: (1) they came into existence at an early date, probably in response to *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, which they awkwardly imitate, and (2) though spurious *dīwāns* and *awrād* collections appear at random, the fraudulent *malfūzāt* are sequential and 'complete' in their patterning. Hence, we find *Anīs al-arwāh*, purporting to be the *malfūzāt* of 'Uthmān Hārūnī compiled by Mu'īn ad-dīn, *Dalīl al-'ārifīn*, the conversations

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of Mu'in ad-din supposedly overheard by Quṭb ad-din, *Fawā'id al-sālikin*, the best of Quṭb ad-din's *dicta* allegedly preserved by Farīd ad-din, and *Rāḥat al-qulūb*, instructions from Farīd ad-din said to have been copied down by Niẓām ad-din. It would seem that there was no need to continue this line of forgeries by preparing *malfūzāt* of Niẓām ad-din, inasmuch as *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* already existed and bore ample testimony to the spiritual magnanimity of Maḥbūb-i-Ilāhī, as Niẓām ad-din was often affectionately called. Yet we find a spurious *malfūzāt* linked to Niẓām ad-din also; indeed, *Afḍal al-fawā'id* purports to be nothing less than the conversations of Niẓām ad-din recorded by his favorite disciple, the lauded court poet, Amīr Khusrau¹⁶. All of these works, including *Afḍal al-fawā'id*, are patently frauds. It must be conceded that they do have incidental value for estimating the mood of popular piety in 14th century Delhi, and we do find one important mid-14th century Chishtī saint citing their contents in describing technical terms of special importance to Sufis¹⁷. Yet on the whole, they seriously distort the historical image of the saints whom they awkwardly attempt to eulogize.

Fortunately for the students of Indian Sufism as well as its present day adherents, some disciples of the great Chishtī *shaykhs* did produce books. Prior to the time of Niẓām ad-din the most extensive writings came from saints outside Delhi. Quṭb ad-din Bakhtiyār Kākī wrote little, perhaps nothing, but Ḥamīd ad-din Suwalī Nāgaurī, the other major disciple of Mu'in ad-din, produced many literary gems. The most valuable was *Uṣūl at-ṭarīqat*, a question/answer handbook that must have served as a kind of catechism for his followers. It was one of the first *ishārāt* or instructional treatises from the pen of an Indo-Muslim saint. (This genre of literature later became very important for all Sufi *silsilahs* in the subcontinent). The subtle directness of the former saint from Nāgaur is exemplified in his explanation of the Sufi concept of death¹⁸ :

Q. What is the goal ?

A. That you daily recite the Qur'anic verse : "Everything perishes except His face" (Q. 55. 26) and apply to yourself the following quatrain :

کار است درای عالم رو آنرا باش در بند گهر مباحش رو کان را باش
دل هست مقام گاه بگذار و بیا جان منزل آخرت رو جان را باش

There is a work beyond all knowledge. Go and have it.
Don't go after the gem. Go and have the mine.

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The heart is a temporary abode. Leave it and come.
The soul is the last destination. Go and have it.

He has put a path before you. It is both narrow and long.
He has given you a life. It is both dark and short. And in
this short life He has commanded you to tread this long path.
The night of the world may be dark (for this world is nought
but darkness), yet in this darkness for your sake He has caused
the moon to shine. He created mankind in darkness but then
He caused the light of the heavens and the earth to shine upon
them, and He illumined the earth with the light of its Lord.
Arise and hasten, but you should count the moonlight as your
gain. And this short life that He has given you, take advantage
of it. Count yourself as already among the dead, and if you
are not dead, then know yourself to be subject to death, and in
your heart continuously focus upon this line of poetry :

جانی سے ہر آئینہ بخواہد رفتن اندر غم عشق تو دید اولے تو

Necessarily the soul will go from the body;
If it goes due to the pain of its love for You, that is
better,

But the negligent man, sleeping contentedly on the bed of neglect,
does not know that he has made a claim to love. Woe to him
who in bad faith has made a claim to love; if, when night
comes, he does not sleep with his Beloved, his name will be
etched upon the ledger of liars.

Q. When a man dies and his soul becomes separated from his
body, does it return to its origin or not ?

A. Whoever in his natural life has recognized his origin will
return to the origin of all life. He has learned about the veils
and hindrances and attachments of this world and the love of
that world has appeared in him. His desire for God abets his
love of God, so that he is able to throw aside veils and cut
through obstacles and break attachments. He turns his face
from existing things and brings himself to the source of
existence. He fulfills the obligations of every station but leaves
the appendages when he leaves the station. In short, he
experiences real death before his natural death. Whoever
lives like this, he will return to his origin; he will attain union
with God.

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Ḥamīd ad-dīn also wrote a number of essays on specific topics of mystic life and practise, including an impassioned defense of *samā'*. Occasionally he composed Persian verse, as the above quotation indicates. The intensity and pathos of his spiritual quest was reflected in his poetry. The *maqta'* or concluding stanza of one of his *ghazals* inspired his oldest son, Azīz ad-dīn, to martyrdom.¹⁹ On hearing the *qawwāl* sing :

جان بده و جان بده و جان بده فایده گفتن بسیار چیست

Surrender, surrender, surrender your soul !

What is the use of saying anything more ?

Azīz ad-dīn spontaneously echoed, "I have surrendered ! I have surrendered !" and gave up his soul to God. Fortunately, Azīz ad-dīn had married and produced children prior to his martyrdom; it was one of his sons, Farīd ad-dīn, also known as Chāk Parrān, who edited the discourses, essays, and poetry of the early Chishtīs from Nāgaur in a *malfūzāt* entitled *Surūr aṣ-ṣudūr*.

The senior disciple of Farīd ad-dīn Ganj-i Shakar, Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī (d. 1261 A.D.), also had a penchant for writing. He produced a copious Persian *dīwān*, running into two lithographed volumes. But his masterpiece was a small book of aphorisms in simple, catchy Arabic. Like *Uṣūl at-tarīqat* of Ḥamīd ad-dīn Suwālī Nāgaurī, the *Mulhamāt* of Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī must have served a propaedeutic function in the expansion of the new *silsilah*. One quotation will suffice to illustrate what K. A. Niẓāmī has described as 'the electric aptitude [of Jamāl ad-dīn] for seizing upon analogies':²⁰

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| يا احمد الحضور | في الصلوة نور | لان الصلوة عين و نورها حضور |
| يا احمد الصلوة | مع الحضور | ك موسى عليه السلام في الطور |
| يا احمد الصلوة | بها حضور و ذهن | كالطعام بغير ملح و دهن |
| يا احمد كل صلوة | ليس فيها الحضور | كالقمر المتحسرون ذهب عنة النور |

- O Aḥmad, awareness of God in performance of prayer is a light because performance of prayer is only an eye; its light is the awareness of God.
- O Aḥmad, he who performs prayer with awareness of God is like Moses—peace be upon him—on Mount Sinai.
- O Aḥmad, performance of prayer without awareness of God and attentiveness to Him is like food without butter or salt.

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- Ahmad, every prayer which is performed without awareness of God is like the moon in eclipse; the light has gone out of it.

However, it was the disciples of Nizām ad-dīn Awliyā who displayed the greatest penchant for literary creativity among early Chishtīs. The more difficult question is to determine which of the numerous writings of Nizām ad-dīn's spiritual progeny can be termed "Sufistic". Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325 AD), for instance, would have been reckoned a great poet even if he had not been attached to Nizām ad-dīn. Because the great poet became a disciple of the great saint, the relationship of the two men has been idealized and probably exaggerated in medieval *tadhkirahs*.²¹ Hence there is a popular belief, shared by many scholars, that Amīr Khusrau was a Sufi poet. The extant corpus of his work, which is the largest from any medieval poet of the subcontinent, contains a variety of verse forms: *qaṣīdahs*, *rubā'iyāts* and above all, *ghazals*. They delicately depict everything from the *gaucherie* of Delhi prostitutes to the unique qualities of betel leaf. His *Khamsah* (in awkward imitation of Nizāmī Ganjawī), historical *mathnawīs*, *dīwān* and occasional prose works—all attest to the monumental genius of Ṭūṭī-ye Hind (the Parrot of India), as Khusrau was affectionately known even in his own day. But they do not prove him to have been a Sufi poet; rather, they suggest that he was a superlative lyricist who deftly conflated Sufi with other, less traditional imagery.

Khusrau's contemporary, Amīr Ḥasan Sanjarī (d. 1336 AD), on the other hand, was indisputably a Sufi poet, not only because, like Khusrau, he was a disciple of Nizām ad-dīn but because his verse exhibits the humility, the pathos and the directness of one who has traveled the Path. In addition to a *dīwān* and the *malfūzāt*, *Fawā'id al-fa'ād*, earlier mentioned, Amīr Ḥasan wrote a short prose treatise, *Mukh al-ma'ānī*. It is a paradigm of speculative enquiry. Often couched in the form of letter mysticism or rhetorical questioning, it explores all the levels of meaning in the pivotal Sufi concept of 'ishq. Concerning *samā'*, for example, he writes:²²

One who has experienced ecstasy in *samā'* (*ṣāhib-e samā'*) finds it difficult to answer questions about *samā'* posed by an enquirer. Why? Because (1) the enquirer is in a state of distraction (*tafriqah*) while the respondent combines in himself all the qualities of love ('ishq); (2) the enquiry comes from the outer mouth, while the reply pertains to the heart; (3) the enquiry concerns the external reasons for listening to *samā'*,

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while the reply relates to its inner secrets; and (4) the enquiry is based on the exercise of intellect ('*aql*'), while the reply reflects the outpouring of love ('*ishq*').

Still another literarily-minded disciple of Niẓām ad-dīn was Diyā ad-dīn Baranī (d. 1338 AD), the author of *Tārīkh-i Firuzshāhī* and *Fatāwā-yi Jahāndārī*. Though attached to the company of the great Shaykh, Baranī seems to have neatly separated his spiritual from his secular life. Apart from eulogistic references to Niẓām ad-dīn, Baranī's historical writings are characterized by a passionate elitism that hardly befits a Sufi worthy of the name. Even Niẓām ad-dīn does not escape the ascerbic pen of Baranī for the egalitarian largesse which the Delhi saint evinced in conferring discipleship on a wide variety of men. However, Baranī is clever enough to combine his critique with eulogistic references to the keen insight and devotion of his *pīr*.²³

One day I went to see the Shaykh [he writes in the famed *Ḥasrat nāmāh*]. He was occupied from times of Ishrāq to Chāsht prayers in doing God's work. On that particular day many of God's servants were waiting to be made his disciples. I was thinking to myself just then that the saints of old exercised great restraint in making disciples, while Shaykh Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā liberally extended his hand to the elite and the common alike, making all sorts of people his disciples. I was about to ask him about this policy when the Shaykh intuitively sensed my apprehension and said: "Ask me anything else you want, but do not ask me why I give the hand of discipleship to all comers without first examining them." Then he added: "God in His almighty wisdom gives a particular quality to each age, which is manifested in the customs and habits of the people of that time—and you may not find that quality in the nature of character of people of some other period. The purpose of discipleship is to sever oneself from everything but God and to occupy oneself solely with Him. The saints of old did not enrol someone as a disciple until they saw that that person had cut himself off from the world entirely; but from the time of Shaykh Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l Khair, who was a true wonder of God, to the time of Shaykh Saif ad-dīn Bākharzī, and from the time of Shaykh Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī to the time of the reign of Shaykh Farīd ad-dīn, the same condition has persisted: there has been an onslaught of humanity beating at the doors of the masters

of the spiritual domain—people of every sort, kings and princes, men of fame and other sorts. Out of fear of hell they have cast themselves on the protection of the lovers of God. Hence the Shaykhs have made disciples from the elite and from the masses. But no one should compare the practises of saints from one age to another, on the assumption that since so-and-so made disciples in such-and-such a way, I should do likewise.”

What a contrast between Ḍiyā ad-dīn Baranī and Fakhr ad-dīn Zarrādī (d. 1347 AD), the courageous, learned and articulate disciple of Niẓām ad-dīn who authored an impressive treatise in defence of *samā'*. Chaste in its Arabic style, *Risālat uṣūl as-samā'*²⁴ covers all the controversial aspects of musical assemblies among mystics, from the beautiful voice and the recital of poetry to the use of instruments, the rending of garments and the pretense of ecstasy (*tawājud*). Written during the lifetime of Niẓām ad-dīn and probably at his direction, *Uṣūl as-samā'* was much discussed by both proponents and opponents of *samā'* throughout the 14th century. It became a major source for the earlier mentioned chapter on *samā'* in Amīr Khurd's *Siyar al-awliyā*.

Other disciples of Niẓām ad-dīn also wrote or inspired others to write about them. Burhān ad-dīn Gharīb (d. 1340 AD), though rebuked for some of his questionable practises in Delhi, became a pioneer of the Chishtī order in the western Deccan during the last years of his life. He inspired no less than four *malfūẓāt*; *Aḥsan al-aqwāl*, *Nafā'is al-anfās*, *Gharīb al-karāmāt* and *Baqiyat al-gharā'ib*—all compiled by three brothers, Ḥammād, Rukn ad-dīn and Majd ad-dīn. In addition, Rukn ad-dīn authored *Shamā'il-i anqiyā o-dalā'il-i atqiyā*, also known as *Shamā'il-i atqiyā*, an encyclopedic work citing extracts from over 100 sources—Indian as well as non-Indian, many of which are now extinct—to describe the seminal concepts and technical terms of *taṣawwuf*.²⁵

One other literary figure from this period merits mention. Outside of Delhi, seemingly unrelated to Niẓām ad-dīn but very much aware of him, lived a reclusive immigrant from Central Asia named Ḍiyā ad-dīn Nakhshabī (d. 1350 AD). According to the accepted biographical sketch of his life, Nakhshabī came to India in the early 14th century and settled in Badā'ūn, a city near Delhi famed for the medieval saints and literatures it produced, including the father of Niẓām ad-dīn and the teacher of Amīr Khusrau. With a rare single-mindedness Nakhshabī devoted the remainder of his life to

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research, reflection and writing. The resulting literary corpus staggers the mind—not so much in its profusion as in its topical diversity and consistently high quality.²⁶ The most famous of Nakhshabī's works was *Ṭūṭī Nāmāh*, the rendition of a Sanskrit fable into Persian verse. Its apt similes and melodious rhymes have immortalized the parrot as the symbolic messenger of Paradise for Indian Muslims. The persistent popularity of *Ṭūṭī Nāmāh* is attested by the large number of its manuscripts, many of them handsomely illustrated, which are to be found in libraries of the sub-continent and Europe. The work has itself been rendered into many languages, and a new, illustrated edition has recently been published in Austria.²⁷

The fame of *Ṭūṭī Nāmāh* has obscured some of Nakhshabī's other, equally superb writings. *Juz'iyāt-o-kulliyāt*, otherwise known as *Chahal Nāmūs*, graphically portrays the special functions which forty different parts of the body assume in the imagination of the poet and the discipline of the Sufi (for Nakhshabī, the two were inseparable). *Ladhdhāt an-nisā* is the poetic rendering of another Sanskrit classic, in this case, the notorious *Kok shastra*. *Sharh-i-du'ā-yi suryānī*, as its name implies, is also a translation, but from Arabic rather than from Sanskrit. Nakhshabī analyzes each line from the original Arabic poem prior to translating it; he also provides frequent excursions to explain the inner meaning of its cumulatively repetitious invocations. What to say of *Gulrez*? It appears to be a love story of the traditional Persian variety. Yet Nakhshabī has construed the relationship of Ma'sūm Shāh, the princely heir of the kingdom of Nakhshab, and Nushlab, the daughter of the queen of the fairies, in such a way that the tale becomes a religious parable in which numerous minor tragedies postpone and almost prevent the expected final triumph of virtue.

None of Nakhshabī's writings relate so immediately and effectively to 14th century Indian Sufism as *Silk as-sulūk*. After the usual opening remarks about his reason for writing the book, Nakhshabī presents an extended discussion of Sufi technical terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*), followed by an explanation of mystic principles, often through the telling of tales of early Sufis (similar to those found in Farīd ad-dīn 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*). Every *silk* (section) concludes with a fragment of Nakhshabī's own composition that summarizes, and sometimes adds a new twist to, the content of that section. The format is simple but subtle: as in the case of his other works, Nakhshabī has recast a well-known tale or saying to offer a new insight into a familiar subject. Though he frequently echoes the phraseology

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of *Fanā'ud al-fu'ād*—perhaps under the influence of his own Chishtī *pīr* Farīd ad-dīn “Chāk Parrān”²⁸.....the resulting essays offer a uniquely individualistic and often severe interpretation of early Chishtī doctrine.

Consider the concept of *balā* (affliction). It was central to the teachings of both the ancient Sufis and the Chishtīs. Like the concept of *saqr* or poverty to which it was closely related, *balā* embodied a paradox that had to be experienced to be understood: the seeker had first to divest himself of selfhood before he could know God. ‘Poverty’ and ‘affliction’ were verbal symbols of self-divestiture. Yet for Nakhshabī, *balā* involved nothing less than the mandate for the Sufi traveller to assume all the burdens of an errant human race:²⁹

For someone on the Way [he writes in *silk* 70] there have not been sown so many thorns of violence in his path that they may constitute a real affliction, any more than did the fire into which they threw Abraham or the axe with which they cut Zeckariah to pieces. Affliction is this which They strew before us when They cause us to precede all the people of heaven and earth. They bind to the skirt of our intercession the sinfulness of Adam’s race. We have to tread the path of deviants; we have to make apologies for the unrepentant; we have to do the work of the lazy. Sometimes They make us sit on the Throne which is “nearer than the distance of two bowlengths” [Q 53:9]. Sometimes they send us to the abode of violence of Abu Jahl. Sometimes they call us both the witnesser and the witnessed, the receiver and the bearer of good tidings. At other times they call us the bewitcher and the bewitched. Sometimes they send Gabriel to hold our stirrups, and sometimes they don’t let us enter Mecca without a peace treaty. Sometimes they bring the treasures of the Kingdom to the door of our cell; at other times for a little barley they send us to the door of Hoy Shahmā. Sometimes they let us into Khaibar by the hand of one of our servants; at other times they break our teeth with the rocks of the infidel. All this they do that the world may know that our Way is a Way full of affliction. If you intend to enter this Way, then enter on your head; otherwise take your troubles off this Path, for no one can tread it by walking on his feet.

نخشبى قرب ہے بلا نہ بود زخم قیسه همیشه بر دل کان است
 هر که از عشق دور از غم دور غم ر محنت برای نزدیکان است

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Nakhshabī, one cannot be near to God without affliction.
Adversity hammers and hammers at the mine of the heart.
Whoever is far from grief is far from love.
Grief and torment are the lot of the near ones.

Nakhshabī, with his brilliant rhetorical flourishes, and Naṣīr ad-dīn, in his disdain for writing, represent the polar images of an era that ended with their deaths. Throughout the 13th century and the first half of the 14th, the pattern of literary activity among the Chishtīs had been fairly constant. Apart from a few letters, poems, and prayers the major Shaykhs wrote nothing. Their followers may have composed *dīwāns* or *ishārāt* (instructional manuals) or an occasional speculative treatise, but it was through *malfūzāt* (transcribed conversations) of the Shaykhs that Indian Sufis affiliated with the Chishtī order communicated the most specific details about the mystic outlook of their times. Only two major literary figures emerge from the Chishtīs of this early period: Amīr Khusrau and Diyā ad-dīn Nakhshabī. Both were ancillary members of the *silsilah*, and though their writings were warmly appreciated and often quoted by later mystics they neither reflected nor affected the day-to-day activities of other Chishtīs.

Undoubtedly our picture of literary activity among the early Chishtīs would be fuller if all the works that had been written about the great Shaykhs had survived. There were writings the titles of which we do not even know today, and of those of which we know the titles, frequently the texts have not survived, or if they have, they exist only in fragmentary form in the excerpts quoted by a later author. With reference to Niẓām ad-dīn, for instance, we know that five *malfūzāt* of the saint were compiled by disciples. In addition to *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, however, only *Durar-i Niẓāmiya* is extant, and it is an inferior work.

The preservation or recovery of lost works would enlarge our knowledge but it would not modify our judgment of the literary productivity of this period. The major saints seldom wrote; they communicated their spiritual insights verbally and in person, whether to their disciples or to their numerous visitors. Surprisingly, the next generation of Chishtī Shaykh proved to be the most prolific writers in the entire history of that *silsilah*. Why such a sudden and dramatic shift in the literary fortunes of the Chishtīya? Several forces seem to have been simultaneously at work. (1) Although Delhi remained the political centrifuge of Muslim India, its rulers had to accept the

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gradual reduction of their domains during the last half of the 14th century. When Timur invaded and devastated North India in 1398-99, the authority of Delhi collapsed; in its stead regional dynasties, already on the ascendant, flourished everywhere. (2) At the same time, Niẓām ad-dīn's successors, who had fanned out into many parts of Hindustan, themselves produced able successors. As the second and third generations of regional Chishtīs found increasing favour in the hearts of provincial Muslims, they disseminated the teachings of the *silsilah* with minimal attention to Delhi and its saints. (3) Indian Islam, which had always been affected by events in other Muslim lands, was slow to respond to the penumbric doctrine ascribed to Ibn 'Arabī and labeled *waḥdat al-wujūd*³⁰; but during the latter half of the 14th century, immigrants from Iran and Central Asia who were convinced of the truth of Shaykh al-Akbar's teachings joined the Chishtī *silsilah*. They felt an urge to propound Ibn 'Arabī's construction of *taṣawwuf*; others felt an urge to refute it. Both groups resorted to writing.

Yet it is also possible that personal inclination as much as historical circumstances or theological duress impelled later Chishtīs to write down mystic speculations, scriptural commentaries, practical instructions, anecdotes, prayers, and, above all, poetry.

Three saints who were contemporaries—Mas'ūd Bakk, Sayyid Gesū Darāz and Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnāni...exemplify the shift in spiritual mood and literary tempo that took place among Chishtīs during the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Of the three, the two who came from Central Asia (Mas'ūd Bakk and Sayyid Ashraf) were supporters of *waḥdat al-wajūd*, though Mas'ūd Bakk was less explicitly an advocate of Ibn 'Arabī's views than Sayyid Ashraf. Gesū Darāz, as indicated earlier, was wary of Shaykh al-Akbar's speculations. All three were spiritually linked to Niẓām ad-dīn through his successors: two (Gesū Darāz and Mas'ūd Bakk) through his Delhi heirs, one (Sayyid Ashraf) through a regional saint. Two of them changed the course of their lives in reaction to Timur's invasion. For Sayyid Ashraf, the slaughter of his relatives in Simnan impelled him to seek solace in the authority of a *pīr*; for Gesū Darāz his premonition of an attack on Delhi prompted him to leave his home of more than half a century: he had to ensure not only his own survival but the continuity of the Chishtī *silsilah*. Together, Mas'ūd Bakk, Sayyid Gesū Darāz and Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnāni reflect the decentralization of the Chishtīya during this period; Mas'ūd Bakk, the youngest of the three, remained in Delhi;

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Gesū Darāz began his spiritual career in Delhi but moved to Gwaliyōr Gujarat and finally Gulbarga; Sayyid Ashraf settled in Jawnpur and had no attachment to Delhi, though he occasionally visited there.

In his biographic profile Mas'ūd Bakk (d. 1387 A.D.) resembles Nakhshabī. Like Nakhshabī, he migrated to India from Central Asia. (One tradition even alleges that he had been the governor of Bukhara in his younger days). Also, like Nakhshabī, after joining the Chishtī order, he became a recluse—sitting, praying, reflecting and writing. Occasionally he spoke to visitors, and the reports of his ecstatic utterances so outraged the Delhi 'ulamā that they succeeded in having him executed at the order of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq³¹. Before his untimely death, Bakk produced a few disciples whose names appear now and then in medieval *tadhkirahs*, but like Nakhshabī, he is primarily known for the lofty tenor of his writings. In addition to occasional letters, he wrote six books, of which four have survived to the present day: *Rawā'ih* or '*Ishq Nāmah*, *Nikāt al-'āsiqīn*, *Mir'at al-'ārifīn* and a Persian *dīwān*³². The latter two are the best known. The *dīwān* consists of *qaṣīdahs*, *rubā'iyāts* and *ghazals*, but like Khusrau, his *ghazals* are the most numerous and the most attractive of his verses. In the art of composing these beguiling connundra, he declares Sa'dī to be his master³³, and the mellifluous quality of his best *ghazals* suggests that he was a faithful, though somewhat erratic, student of the Shīrāzī lyricist. *Mir'at al-'ārifīn* also contains a large number of Bakk's poems, but since none of them are found in the *dīwān*, it appears that *Mir'at al-'ārifīn* was composed sometime after 1378 A.D., the year that Bakk completed his *dīwān*³⁴.

For subtlety of expression and depth of insight, there are few speculative writings in the history of Indian Sufism that can be compared to *Mir'at al-'ārifīn*. Divided into fourteen chapters to correspond to the numerical value of Ṭaha, a mystical name for the Prophet Muḥammad, it covers the entire range of topics on which Sufis have eternally mused: Existence, Unity, Knowledge, Love, Transcendence, Immanence, Union, Speech, Vision, Purity, Discipleship, Sainthood, Mystic Music and the Spirit. Some are discussed experientially with reference to the polar psycho-physical states in which they occur. The chapter on Love, for instance, treats both sobriety (*saḥw*) and inebriation (*sukr*), the chapter on Transcendence, both concealment (*satar*) and manifestation (*tajallī*), the chapter on Vision, both sleep (*nawm*) and wakefulness (*yaqāzat*).

Unlike other topics, however, Mystic Music and the Spirit comprehend three points of reference in the chapters where they are

described, For *samā'* the trifold pattern of *tawājjud*, *wajd*, and *wujūd* (induced ecstasy, real ecstasy and 'finding', i.e. finding God through music) is familiar to Sufis³⁵. But the postulation of three stages of *rūh* (the Spirit)—origin, subsistence, and return (*mabda*, *ma'ādash* and *ma'ād*)—is novel, at least within the writings of Indian Sufism which predate Mas'ūd Bakk.

Bakk's analysis of the Spirit exemplifies his approach to the mystical life: he is at once systematic and ecstatic. He begins by reviewing various answers that have been given to the major questions about the Spirit: how did it come into being? what is its relationship to the body? and how can man understand its operation? He probes the subtleties as well as the shortcomings of every viewpoint, and then at last sets forth his own assessment. Here, as elsewhere in the *Mir'at al-'ārijīn*, his language is less reminiscent of Ibn 'Arabī than of Suhrawardī Maqtūl (d. 1191 A.D.), and his extended imagery seems to anticipate the martyrdom which he was to share with his *ishrāqī* predecessors³⁶:

As for the Spirit, [he concludes], there is an aspect to every one of its manifestations, and in every aspect the source of manifestation shows forth a realm which signifies both origin and return. For the Sufis there are many subtle points in this process. Know that the origin expresses the secret of the Spirit, which is an aspect of the Lord of the morning in the depth of eternal beauty. This is potential knowledge, in the same sense that the power of illumination is latent in the sun. Return indicates the shining of the Divine aspect in the mirror of the human form. That illumination appears in stages. Its first appearance takes place in the attribute of the heart, just as in the mirror of the moon, the crescent is reflected from the face of the sun. When God considers the place sufficiently polished, the attribute is reflected in the whole person, in the same way that the crescent in the lunar mirror, when it waxes to full, causes the entire sun to appear in the form of the moon. This is the perfection of perfection.

From first to last the Spirit manifests itself as an aspect of the Divine splendor. With reference to origin, the Spirit is an aspect of eternity without beginning (*abad*), with reference to return, it is the beauty of eternity without end (*azal*). Return signifies the appearance of the Spirit in the mirrors of human forms: heresy and belief, happiness and sadness—all are part of this aspect. In searching for perfection, the Spirit progresses

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through cycles of prophethood and sainthood, just as sunlight progressively penetrates into the moon, transforming it from crescent to full. Everything appears as cycles and periods of return. How then does light come into the fullness of the Essence? Just as the moon begins to wane when it comes near the sun till it merges with the sun and the moon no longer appears and to the sun nothing appears except the sun—"Everything perishes except His Face" (Q. 28:88)—so return is an expression of the vision of God. The spirit appears as an aspect of eternity without beginning in the form of eternity without end. All creation reflects degrees of that appearance. Here it becomes light when every particle of the whole shines forth with the same splendor. Hence this dervish has said :

گر از خودی خویش برون آیی تو در پرده توحید درون آیی تو
در از روش چون و چرا بر گزری از خود شده بے چرا و چون آیی تو
You should come outside the realm of self
And enter into the veil of Divine Unity,
For when you go beyond asking when and why,
Leaving the self, you enter without why and when.

Mas'ūd Bakk's contemporary was the principal successor of Naṣīr ad-dīn, Sayyid Gesū Darāz. It is strange that little information has survived of the relationship between these two major figures of 14th century Delhi. One exchange of letters, preserved in the *Maktūbāt* of Gesū Darāz, suggests that they had profound doctrinal disagreements.³⁷ Yet the Sayyid shared Bakk's predilection for poetry, for mystic music, and above all, for the literary expression of spiritual truths. His own writings are said to number 105, although probably they did not exceed 40. While in Delhi he wrote very little, and most of his extant works are ascribed to the later period of his life, after he had settled in Gulbarga. Before we review the outline features of this vast corpus, we must ask the question : why would a man who has written little during most of his adult life become a literary windmill after the age of 80? Several explanations come to mind. Some have been broached in the preceding pages of this monograph; they are worth repeating here. Probably during the Delhi years the Sayyid not only formulated his thoughts but made extensive notes on the various mystical writings that he had read. Also, during the same period, he may have felt the urge to counteract what he perceived to be the restrictive or nefarious application of Ibn 'Arabī's thought to the mystic outlook of the Chishtīs. But it

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was after 1398 that two major forces impinged on his life and made writing not only desirable but necessary. First and foremost was the Mongol holocaust. The Sayyid left Delhi when he had a premonition (which his disciples interpreted as divine) that Timur was about to invade the capital. Gesū Darāz, like many of his fellow Muslims, must have feared that the entire mystic tradition in which he had been nurtured would be obliterated by the relentless plunders of the steppes. How could the varied teachings and memories of bygone Chishtī saints be preserved unless they were written down *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, which is among the earliest and most comprehensive of the Sayyid's writings, must be understood against the background of his narrow escape from near total disaster.

A second impetus to write arose out of the demands of Gesū Darāz's life after leaving Delhi. In Gujarat and even more in Gulbarga he was conscious of beginning a new *silsilah* in a region that was scarcely familiar with Islam. Gesū Darāz's position in the Deccan in the early 1400's was similar to that of Mu'in ad-dīn in Rajasthan two hundred years earlier: although the western part of the Deccan had been the focus of attention for some of Niẓām ad-dīn's disciples, including the aged Burhān ad-dīn Gharīb, the eastern region was almost devoid of Muslim traditions. The Sayyid could have followed the example of Mu'in ad-dīn or any of his Chishtī predecessors and chosen *not* to write, but his situation was theologically more complex than theirs. To disseminate Sufi teachings without committing the excesses of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, Gesū Darāz opted to mediate the entire mystical tradition as it was understood up until his time. Not surprisingly, many of his extant works are commentaries and translations³⁸.

In addition to a partial Qur'ānic commentary, a Persian translation of the famed *ḥadīth* collection, *Mashāriq al-anwār*, and a compilation of forty *Aḥādīth* (after the model of Nawawī's work), Gesū Darāz analyzed the two major guidebooks used by Indian Muslims for organizing *khānqāh* life: *Awārif al-ma'ārif* of Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī and *Ādāb al-murīdīn* of Abū Najīb Suhrawardī. Both commentaries exist in Arabic as well as Persian recensions. The biographies of early Sufis were broached and basic mystic terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*) explained in a commentary on *ar-Risālat al-Qushairīya*, again in both Arabic and Persian. Further commentaries—all in Persian—concerned the *Tamhīdāt* of 'Ain al Quḍḍāt Hamadānī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn 'Arabī, the *Ta'arruf* of Abū Bakr Bukhārī and a *risālah* of 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī.

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It was also in Persian that the Sayyid chose to write probing but often puzzling speculations on *taṣawwuf*. *Wujūd al-‘āshiqīn*, *Haḍā’ir al-quds*, *Istiqāmat ash-sharī‘at*, and *Asmār al-asrār* are works of spiritual artistry, stretching new horizons before Indian Sufis intent on finding the treasures of inner space. *Asmār al-asrār* is dazzling. Its 114 *asmār* or night discourses constitute a series of symbolic analogues, often couched in the form of stories with a mystic flavor but no fixed equivalents. The reader or listener (one can well imagine that many of them were recited in the circle of the saint’s followers) must discover the shades of meaning for himself. Only the numerical parallel of the *asmār* to the Qur’ānic *sūrahs* is obvious; the rest has to be pondered before it yields its delicate secrets. *Samar* 49, for instance, seems to describe a vision or a dream : ³⁹

One time it happened that I saw a lake the length and breadth of which only God knows, but it was no more than waist deep. Some people were wading into it, and I was among them. There was also a girl of about 15 years among the waders. The strange thing is that we were all naked up to the waist. This young girl was a beauty such that if the *houris* had been created from the reflection of her light they would have claimed to be gods. Her complexion and stature were like that of a young boy. Between us there was a distance of about one *farsang*. She beckoned me to her. In the same manner that they bring a bridegroom to the bride, they brought me a distance of one *farsang* to be united with her. A man from the world of the unknown was a witness to this. He threw a cloak over us, as though to hide us, and at that moment I saw myself clothed in the same beauty and grace as she. From between us the Prophet Jesus arose and cried out, “I am the Son of God.” The two of us began to quarrel, I saying that Jesus was my child and she saying, “No, he is mine”. Jesus was complaining and leaping about and denouncing both of us. “I am neither your son nor hers, “he would say. “I am only of myself and with myself.” And when the girl again said, “Jesus is mine,” “I remarked, “I find myself to be just like him and just like that water; I am everything.”

An old man drifting into reveries of his approaching journey into the Divine Presence --such is one interpretation of this *samar*. Another suggests that the bridegroom and the bride are the Spirit (*rūh*) and the lower soul (*nafs*) respectively, while Jesus (‘Īsā), their disputed progeny, represents the heart (*dil*); the sequential actions

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then become sub-symbols of an endless drama within the heart of man. Still another interpretation posits the girl, the interlocutor and Jesus as different aspects of *nafs*, i.e., *nafs al-'ammara*, *nafs al-lawwama* and *nafs al-muṭma'inna* (the recalcitrant soul, the blaming soul, the peaceful soul) respectively. In *Tabṣirat al-iṣtilahāt aṣ-ṣūfiya*.⁴⁰ Sayyid Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusaini, Gesū Darāz's oldest son, devotes an entire chapter to explaining the subtleties of this 49th *samar*, and only proves that its imagery recedes beyond the net of discursive reason.

Gesū Darāz wrote many other works, including a popular Persian *dīwan* and possibly two *isharat* in local Deccani.⁴¹ Yet his influence as a Sufi theorist and organizer was chiefly regional: his greatest popularity has always been in those areas where he and his successors lived, laboured and died, namely, Gujarat and the Deccan.⁴²

The pattern of regional dispersion and local fame among later Chishtīs is also evident in the case of Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (d. 1425 A.D.).⁴³ Originally he had been a disciple of 'Alā ad-daula Simnānī, the Central Asian Kubrawī saint noted for his opposition to Ibn 'Arabī's teaching. Sometime between 1340 and 1370,⁴⁴ perhaps in the company of Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, Sayyid Ashraf migrated to India. Unlike their common *pīr*, both Sayyids were zealous advocates of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and in that difference may lie a partial explanation of their journey to India. Sayyid 'Alī settled in Kashmir, where to the present day he is revered,⁴⁵ while Sayyid Ashraf eventually came to Bengal and enrolled as a disciple of 'Alā ad-dīn Bengālī, himself the successor of Akhī Sirāj, Niẓām ad-dīn's emissary to Gaur (Bengal). After some years, 'Alā ad-dīn ordered Sayyid Ashraf to propagate Chishtī teachings in Jaunpur. The Sayyid hesitated to accept: a popular Suhrawardī saint, Sayyid Ṣadr ad-dīn *aka* Chirāgh-i-Hind, had already claimed that region as his *wilāyat* or spiritual domain. But 'Alā ad-dīn assured Sayyid Ashraf of eventual success. He settled in Kichhauchha, a village in the district of Jaunpur renowned for its occult practitioners and yogin exorcists. He trained himself to be a masterful exorcist, and after outmaneuvering his Hindu rivals as well as Chirāgh-i-Hind, Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī became the master of Kichhauchha. For the rest of his life he zealously maintained this spiritual trust. At the same time he travelled extensively, visiting most of the Indian *mashā'ikh* of his day as well as many saints and poets outside of India. During one of his visits to Shiraz, for instance, he is reported

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to have joined in a poetic recitation with no less a person than the immortal Ḥāfiẓ himself. And the Sayyid wrote copiously. Titles of no fewer than 25 of his writings have survived, and partial or complete texts of 10 of these are available, mostly in manuscript form in libraries throughout the subcontinent.⁴⁶

Sayyid Ashraf's most famous works are *Laṭā'if-i Ashrafī* (abbreviated as *LA*) and *Maktūbāt-i Ashrafī* (abbreviated as *MA*). The *Laṭā'if* or Subtle Insights are discourses of the saint collected by one of his disciples, Niẓām Gharīb Yamānī, allegedly between A.H. 750 and 780. They are the most voluminous single *malfūẓāt* collection attributed to an Indian saint : comprising 60 *laṭā'if*, with introduction and conclusion, they run to almost 850 pages of small print in an extremely rare lithograph edition⁴⁷. The topics are diverse and their treatment extensive. Sayyid Ashraf's loyalty to 'Abd ar-Razzāq Kashānī, the well-known commentator of *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam*, is attested throughout the *Laṭā'if* but is especially evident in the chapters on Unity (*LA* 1) and technical terms (*LA* 7). Some chapters contain eloquent apologia, such as *LA* 20, in which he defends the Chishtī practice of *samā'*, and *LA* 27, in which he explains the proof of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the objections that Sufis have raised against them. In *LA* 16 his fascination with speculative thought accounts for the intricate explanations he offers of ecstatic utterances (*sharḥiyyāt*) attributed to early Sufis. His taste for poetry is apparent in the discussion of poetic images (*LA* 18) and the biographical sketches of Sufi poets (*LA* 54). (The latter *laṭā'if*, together with the introduction is thought to be a source used by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī in compiling his famed *tadhkirah*, *Nafahāt al-uns*)⁴⁸. Other *laṭā'if* are dedicated to explaining mystic practices, such as determining the *wilāyat* or jurisdiction of a saint (*LA* 2), meditating on the image of the Shaykh (*LA* 10), the use of scissors in initiating disciples (*LA* 12), and the practice of visiting saint's tombs (*LA* 17). Still others concern the mystical interpretation of obligations incumbent on all Muslims : *LA* 29-32 exposit the inner and, therefore, the essential meanings of prayer, fasting, alms-giving, pilgrimage, and holy war. Some of the most fascinating *laṭā'if* describe Sayyid Ashraf's own travels and meetings with different saints (*LA* 22-24).

The *Maktūbāt-i Ashrafī* belong to a different period of the saint's life than the *Laṭā'if-i Ashrafī*. In their entirety they appear to derive from the last phase of his long and highly successful spiritual career (ca 1390-1425 A.D.). Yet it is inconceivable that a scholarly saint with Sayyid Ashraf's disposition to write would have written

letters only toward the end of his life. Moreover, there are only 75 letters in the extant *maktūbāt* collection. Some of the lost letters must have belonged to an earlier period, overlapping with the *Laṭā'if*. Yet those 75 which comprise the present *Maktūbāt-i Ashrafī* are themselves highly interesting. They are addressed to a wide circle of friends, acquaintances and disciples. From their contents it would appear that many eminent Indian Muslims of the late 14th and early 15th centuries in India consulted Sayyid Ashraf's opinion on a variety of subjects. Some wanted him to resolve doctrinal difficulties. (*MA* 22, e.g., complies with Qādī Shihāb ad-dīn Dawlatābādī's request to justify Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation of Pharaoh's death, while *MA* 5 and 52 explain the levels of professing the Divine Unity and *MA* 7, the meaning of One with reference to the Divine Essence.) Others asked him to comment on the meaning of Qur'anic verses (*MA* 3 and 25) or puzzling *hadīth qudsī* (*MA* 40 and 41). Still others enquired about cryptic lines of poetry (*MA* 23, 31, and 39, e.g., concern verses from Amīr Khusrau, Sharaf ad-dīn Bū 'Alī Qalandar and Abū Sa'id b. Abī'l-Khair). Some of the most unusual letters contain his advice to rulers and commiseration with Muslims suffering under Hindu tyrants. His response to the entreaty of his fellow Chishtī, Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam, for relief from the oppression of Rājā Ganesh (*MA* 45) falls into the latter category, while directives to Sulṭān Hushang of Mandu (*MA* 28) and Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī of Jaunpur (*MA* 23, 24, and 46) fall into the former. He had two meetings with Timur to which reference is also made in the *Maktūbāt*. The second occurred in Meshhed sometime after Timur had sacked Delhi. It is reported that when Qirān as-Sa'dain asked the saint from Kichhauchha how to win battles (!), Sayyid Ashraf instructed him to recite *Sūrat al-Mujādalah* (*MA* 16). In many instances, the topics of the *Maktūbāt* are identical to the subject matter of the *Laṭā'if*, for instance, on the jurisdiction of a *shaykh* (*MA* 71 = *LA* 2), the benefits of visiting saints' tombs (*MA* 12 = *LA* 17), the scope of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and its dissenters (*MA* 19 = *LA* 27), the principal teachings and major Shaykhs of 14 *silsilahs* (*MA* 55 = *LA* 14) and the permissibility of *samā'* (*MA* 74 = *LA* 20). In general, the *Maktūbāt* give more explicit, if briefer, information than discourses on the same subject in the *Laṭā'if*.

The regional popularity of Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngir Simnānī in Jaunpur was mirrored by the success of his contemporary and co-*khalīfah*, Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam (d. 1415 A.D.)⁴⁰ in Pandua (Bengal). The exchange of correspondence between these two illustrious Chishtī

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saints has already been mentioned. Though they shared a common spiritual master, 'Alā ad-dīn Bengālī, their approaches to Sufism—both theoretical and practical—were very different. Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam expounds an exquisite theology of pain; he quotes the verses of Fakhr ad-dīn 'Irāqī and Farīd ad-dīn 'Aṭṭār but does not allow himself the metaphysical comfort of pantheism. Like earlier Chishtīs, he eschewed the company of kings, and though some historians have suggested that he may have been at least a tacit partisan in the dynastic struggles of early 15th century Bengal, ⁵⁰ the evidence is too circumstantial to be convincing. Moreover, apart from a single letter to Sayyid Ashraf, no copy of which is extant, his correspondence is free of anything but the outpourings of a soul tortured by its separation from the Beloved. In his old age, he writes :

My life has passed eighty, and I have sought peace of mind for sixty years, but from the evil of the lower self, I have not been free for one hour. Except wind in the hand, fire in the liver, water in the eyes and dust on the head [that is, except bad luck, lust, regret and humiliation], nothing has remained. I have not succeeded in acquiring anything except disappointment and shame, and wherever I have turned there has been pain and sighing.

در دردا باش اے برادر در دردا

Bear the pain, O brother, bear the pain.

دل مردان دین پر درد باید ز محنت فرق شان پر گرد باید

The hearts of the men of God must be full of pain.

From affliction, they must bow their heads to the dust.

However much I belabored myself from head to foot, I have not attained my purpose :

گفتم مگر که کار بسامان شود نه شد یار از جفای خویش پشیمان شود نه شد
گفتم مگر زمانه عنایت کند نه کرد بخت ستیزه کار بفرمان شود نه شد

I asked that my work might bear fruit—it has not.

And that the Friend from His tyranny might relent—He did not.

I asked that my times might be favorable to me—they were not.

And that I might be the master of my adverse fate—I was not.

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As his major disciple and successor, Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam chose a man whose literary tastes were as lofty as his own. Ḥusām ad-dīn Manikpūrī (d. 1477 A.D.) compiled two *malfūzāt* of his *ṣīr* during the latter's lifetime. *Anīs al-'āshiqīn* and *Rafīq al-'ārifīn* supplement the fragmentary impression we have of the saint's personality from the incomplete collection of his *maktūbāt* that has survived.⁵² *Rafīq al-'ārifīn*, especially, contains anecdotes that highlight the winsome ingenuousness of Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam :

Someone asked the Shaykh [reports Ḥusām ad-dīn]⁵³ :

“Why do the Shaykhs customarily shake hands after the *salām* at the end of the obligatory prayer? Please tell me what is the inner meaning of this practice.” “It is traditional,” replied the Shaykh, “that when a traveller returns from a journey, he shakes hands with his friends. When the dervish stands up in prayer, he becomes immersed in God : leaving himself, he goes on an inward journey. When he says *salām*, he comes back to himself. Hence he shakes hands with those present.”

A collection of Ḥusām ad-dīn's own *maktūbāt* number over 100. Together with *Jam' al-fawā'id*, a compilation of his *awrād*, they enable us to sense the spiritual mood of the Chishtī order in mid-15th century Bengal. Ḥasan Ṭāhir (d. 1503 A.D.), the successor of Ḥusām ad-dīn's successor, also wrote numerous tracts on mystic principles, the most famous of which was *Miftāḥ al-fa'id*.⁵⁴ Beyond these writings, our knowledge of pre-Mughal Bengalī Sufism is slim, and has to be sifted from later, often wildly legendary accounts of the early saints.

By the end of the 15th century, the network of the Chishtī *silsilah* had been extended over much of North India. Whereas the saints of the first period (Mu'īn ad-dīn through Naṣīr ad-dīn), together with their followers, had worked mainly in Rajasthan, the Punjab and what is present-day Uttar Pradesh, the regional successors of Nizām ad-dīn effected the spread of the *silsilah* through Awadh, Jaunpur, Bihar and Bengal, while in Gujrat and the Deccan their efforts were supplemented and brought to fruition by Sayyid Gesū Darāz and his spiritual descendants. The literary output of the first period was, as we have seen, occasional and topically limited, while the writings of the second period were numerous but chronologically restricted to the generation of Sayyid Gesū Darāz and Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī. The Bengalī Chishtīs represent an independent development. From the end of the 14th century their major *shaykhs*

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produced a steady stream of writings : *awrād* and poetry collections, together with *maktūbāt*, *malfūzāt*, and *ishārāt*. Yet they did not attempt systematic commentaries on mystical classics, *ḥadīth* collections or even the Qur'ān.

A separate branch of the Chishtīya also appears in the 15th century and is worthy of notice. The Ṣābirī Chishtīs, although mysterious in origin, became historically verifiable and increasingly important from the time of Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq (d. 1433 A.D.). None of the saint's own writings have survived, but after his death, in a manner of initiation not uncommon in the annals of medieval Sufism,⁵⁵ he chose as his disciple and principal successor a man amply endowed with literary as well as spiritual sensibilities. 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (d. 1538 A.D.) wrote prolifically on a wide range of subjects. In addition to a *tadhkirah* of his *pīr* entitled *Anwār al-'uyūn*, he composed 17 works, of which 9 have survived. The most engaging are his Arabic commentary on Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī's '*Awārif al-ma'ārif*', the favorite organizational manual for Indian Chishtīs, the *Rushdnāmah*, a speculative tract which implicitly adapts Hindu practices to the Sufi asceticism, and two collections of his extensive *maktūbāt*, *Makātib-i Quddūsī* and *Muntakhab-i Maktūbāt-i Quddūsī*. His own life and teachings are set forth in *Latā'if-i Quddūsī*, a *tadhkirah* composed by one of his sons, Rukn ad-dīn. The appendix of the *Latā'if* also offers a selection of 'Abd al-Quddūs' Persian verse. In the estimate of one modern scholar, however, they leave the impression of "a poet of limited technical proficiency writing in a hackneyed Sufi style."⁵⁶

Whatever his shortcomings as a poet, 'Abd al-Quddūs was a skilled organizer and theoretician of the Ṣābirī Chishtīya. His influence extended far beyond his own time. One of his disciples was the father of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624 A.D.), the major promulgator of the Naqshbandī tradition in Mughal India and founder of Naqshbandī Mujaddidīya while another branch produced a string of luminaries culminating in Ḥājji Imdād Allāh of Thanā Bhawan (d. 1899 A.D.), the foremost Indian Sufi of the ill-fated 19th century.⁵⁷ Before migrating to Mecca after the unsuccessful Revolt of 1857, Ḥājji Imdād Allāh influenced several major figures in the Deoband movement, as well as the founder of Aligarh Muslim University, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

THE SUHRAWARDĪ SILSILAH

While Chishtīs dominated the spiritual and literary life of pre-Mughal Indian Sufism, two other orders, the Suhrawardīya and the Firdausīya, also played important, albeit secondary, roles in the propagation of mystic ideals during this period. The Suhrawardīs can proudly claim the first major Sufi author of Indian Islam. Reputedly a bad organizer, Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī was nonetheless an impressive personality in 13th century Delhi. Like many of the early Chishtīs, he came to India after having travelled to the major centers of the Islamic world. It was allegedly in Baghdad that he met both Quṭb ad-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, the major successor to Mu‘īn ad-dīn Chishtī Ajmerī and the future ruler of the Slave Dynasty, Shams ad-dīn Iltutmish. Once in Delhi, Qāḍī became a fast friend and constant companion of Quṭb ad-dīn. Later he exchanged intimate letters with Quṭb ad-dīn’s successor, Farīd ad-dīn Ganj-i Shakar and in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*,⁵⁸ his erudition is glowingly recalled by the greatest of the Delhi Chishtīs, Niẓām ad-dīn. Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn shared the Chishtī predilection for *samā'*. He issued a *fatwā* or legal decree in its support, parried the attacks of critics and himself wrote couplets for recitation in the gatherings he attended, frequently in the company of Quṭb ad-dīn.

The Qāḍī’s writings are extensive and brilliant. Originally, they were said to have filled four bound volumes, but only fragments have survived : a partial Qur’anic commentary; a commentary on 40 *hadīth*, after the model of Nawāwī’s classic work; excerpts from a speculative tract, *Lawā'ih*; another speculative treatise, *Risālah-i 'ishqīya* also known as *Khayālāt al-'ushshāq*; and finally, his magnum opus, a mystical commentary on the 99 beautiful Names of God, *Tawālī'ash-shumūs*. Two quotations—one from *Tawālī'ash-shumūs*, the other from *Risālah-i 'ishqīya*—will provide a glimpse into the dialectical subtlety of this 13th century Suhrawardī saint. Concerning Ḥallāj, he writes in *Tawālī'ash-shumūs* :⁵⁹

Oh my brother, in the world of travelling toward God, peace of mind is not possible. “I am going to my Lord, and He will guide me” (Q 37 : 99) is proof of this. If Abraham had achieved composure, then why did he say, “He will guide me” ? For in the condition of Union the idea of separation is impossible. The secret of “I am the Truth” and “Glory be to Me” is this : that neither Manṣūr nor Abū Yazīd

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experienced separation at the time that he made this declaration.

By my life, at the station where "He" is to be said, to utter "I am the Truth" is impossible, and at the stage where one should declare "I am the Truth", the mention of "He" is erroneous and misguided. If the one who says "I am the good" were to say "He is the good", at that stage he would come out of the secret, but because he says "I" instead of "He", he will enter into the secret. Hence in the case of Manşūr, were he to have exclaimed "He" instead of "I", he would have come out of the secret, and he would have departed from the treasury of Unity. But since he said "I", he entered into the secret and ascended thousands upon thousands of stages.

Among the gem-like discourses of *Ishqīya* are some involved specimens of letter mysticism, such as the following :⁶⁰

When God is the First He is *rahmān*, and when He is the Last, He is *rahīm*. Hence every creature stands between these two attributes, that is, everyone dwells between *rahmān* and *rahīm*. Rather, the world is the dot of the *nūn* of *rahmān*. God is always looking with a merciful glance on the dot, and everything is maintained because of that glance.—Hence everyone who is dedicated to the Way of God and love of Him, just like the dot of the *nūn* which has found its place in the heart of *rahmān*, so he is always under the glance of the Beloved. Those who love another, however remain in the world of duality and polytheism; they are thrown on the back of God like the dots of *rahīm*.—Though the purpose of the dots is to convey distance and duality, were unbelievers not thrown on the back of God, *rahīm* would not come into manifestation. While the believers and righteous and lovers and gnostics and monotheists are exclusively dedicated to His love, as the dot of the *nūn* has its place in the heart of *rahmān*, yet sinners and hypocrites and polytheists and unbelievers, due to their love of another in the world of duality, remain distant and separated, like the dots of *yā*, from the glance of *rahmān* : instead, they are near the back of *rahīm*. In the glance of *rahmān* there is great favor, yet in the back of *rahīm* there is endless hope, and there can be no doubt that the generosity of the

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Bountiful One comes through the distance and separation of that *rahīm*.

Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn also composed Persian verse, graphic, intense, compact, all of it echoing his central pre-occupation : the love relationship is ambiguous and the seeker of God must continually strive for Union with a Beloved who has mandated separation in order to preserve the love relationship.

بے عاشق و عشق کار معشوق ہوا است تا عاشق نیست ناز معشوق کجا است

Without the lover and love the work of the Beloved is futile.

Unless there be a lover, what use is the coquetry of the Beloved ?

he writes in *Lawā'ih*.⁶¹ Like other Sufis, he found the scriptural authority for separation in Moses' dialogue with God on Mount Sinai (Q. 7 : 143). "*Arinī.....lan tarānī*" ["Show me....." (asked Moses), "you cannot see Me" (replied God)], and it was in this vein that he wrote the following famous quatrain in a letter to Farīd ad-dīn :

آن عقل کجا کہ در کمال تو رسد آن روح کجا کہ در جلال تو رسد
گیرم کہ تو پرده گرفتگی ز جمال آن دیدہ کجا کہ در جمال تو رسد

Where is the intellect that can perceive Your perfection ?
Where is the soul that can attain Your majesty ?
I want You to remove the veil from the face of beauty,
But where are the eyes that can behold Your beauty ?

A contemporary of Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī and, like him a successor of Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī was Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī (d. 1244 A.D.). After a checkered career in and around Delhi, Jalāl ad-dīn migrated East and became the most celebrated saint of Bengal. To the present day his fame exceeds even that which Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam later acquired among the residents of Lakhnauti. Anecdotes about him abound in the Chishtī literature as well as the Mughal period *tādhkirahs*. He also apparently inspired a biography in Sanskrit, *Shek subhodaya* (The Blessed Advent of the Shaykh), though the authenticity of the published work by this name is doubtful.⁶² No one is certain what happened to the successors of Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī. Only in secondary works like *Maktūbāt-i Asharfī* do we find reference to disciples of the Jalālī *silsilah* working

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in Bengal. There may be some truth to Sayyid Ashraf's conclusion that by the early 15th century the Jalālīs, together with other early Suhrawardī saints, "had gone under the dust of Bengal."⁶³

During the pre-Mughal period the strongest concentration of the Suhrawardīs was in Northwest India. The developed major centers first at Multan and then at Uch. Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā (d. 1249 A.D.), the earliest saint of this branch, was a contemporary of Qādī Hamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī and Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī. Like them, he was also a successor of Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī.⁶⁴ He began a redoubtable local tradition which was continued by his sons and grandsons, who were his spiritual as well as his biological successors. Through the 13th and 14th centuries, the Suhrawardīs maintained cordial but cool relations with their rival neighbors, the Chishtīs. For their part, the Chishtīs admired the spiritual discipline of Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī, and made extensive use of the *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, but they did not refrain from criticizing what appeared to them as the extravagant and "un-Sufi" lifestyle of Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā.⁶⁵ Bahā ad-dīn's immediate successor, Ṣadr ad-dīn 'Ārif, shared neither his father's predilection for wealth nor his indulgence in politics. Yet Ṣadr ad-dīn's son and successor, Rukn ad-dīn Abu'l-Faḥ, reverted to the tradition of his grandfather: he was comfortable with the ways of the world though otherwise spiritually advanced. Disparaging remarks about his affluence are frequent but probably exaggerated; he seems to have been on good terms with Nizām ad-dīn Awliyā and even performed his funeral prayers.

What we know about the daily life and thought of the Multānī Suhrawardīs is almost solely derived from the Chishtī records and medieval *tadhkirahs*. Three important Suhrawardī *malfūzāt* of this period have not survived. *Kanz al-fawā'id*, a *malfūzāt* of Ṣadr ad-dīn 'Ārif, *Majma'al-akhbār*, a similar work about Rukn ad-dīn Abu'l-Faḥ and *Fatāwā-yi ṣūfiya*, a later collection containing information about both these saints and their successors—all have perished. Only brief excerpts from them have been preserved in *tadhkirahs* of the Mughal period.⁶⁶

Fortunately, the medieval Suhrawardī saints of Multan did produce two stellar poets whose fame extended well beyond the Khyber Pass and whose works (at least in part) have survived to the present day. Fakhr ad-dīn 'Irāqī (d. 1289 A.D.) stayed for 25 years with Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā in Multan before proceeding to Kunya

where he met Ṣadr ad-dīn Kunyawī and perhaps also Jalāl ad-dīn Rūmī.⁶⁷ His *qaṣīdahs* in praise of Bahā ad-dīn radiate the warmth of the transcendental love which they shared. His *dīwān* also contains superb *ghazals* and *rubā'iyāts*. Chishtīs as well as Suhrawardīs appreciated the delicate verses of 'Irāqī : they were sung again and again by Chishtī *qawwāls*, and were frequently quoted by eminent Chishtī saints such as Sayyid Gesū Daraz and Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam Pandawī.

Among 'Irāqī's other works his *Lama'āt* has gained special fame, both because it gives poetical expression to Ibn Arabī's monistic speculations and because it was imitated by Jāmī in his 15th century work by the same name. In it 'Irāqī apotheosizes love ('*ishq*) as the only existent in the universe; he turns his *shahādah* into *lā 'ilāha illā'l-'ishq* (*lam'ah* 7). Elsewhere, he echoes the *Lawā'ih* of Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī when he asserts that separation from the Beloved is preferable to union with Him (*lam'ah* 22).

Amīr Ḥusaynī Sādāt (d. 1328 A.D.) was 'Irāqī's younger contemporary. He may have been a disciple of Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā or a disciple of one of his successors.⁶⁸ In either case, he joined 'Irāqī in celebrating the virtues of the Multanī Shaykhs, for instance, in the introductory chapters of *Kanz ar-rumūz*. Many of his works, including his *dīwān*, have perished, but at least five have survived,⁶⁹ and of them *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ* is unquestionably the most popular. It exists in multiple manuscript copies throughout the sub-continent, has been the subject of several commentaries, and was once lithographed (Delhi, 1911). In content *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ* does not differ from other *kutub-i sulūk* (writings on spiritual progress), such as Nakhshabī's *Silk as-sulūk*, with which it has sometimes been compared.⁷⁰ The choice of the Path, the nourishment of Love, the suppression of the lower self, the value of Seclusion, the necessity of Patience—all are familiar themes to every student or would-be practitioner of Sufism. What sets the book apart from others of this genre is the author's deft use of rhymed prose and his genius as a raconteur of Sufi tales. Frequently he uses the mere fragment of a story to introduce the major point of his discourse. For instance, in describing *jidd* and *ijtihād* (the exertion of effort and application of individual judgment on the Path to God), he writes :⁷¹

حکایت

روزے نشسته بودم ذرّه را دیدم که آفتاب بر او می تافت وار در پرتو آن نور خود را
همی یافت گفتم اے ذرّه عاشق که معشوق را مقابلی آخر بچه استعداد این مرتبه را قابلی
اے سوخته که با تو ساخته اند از کجا خاسته ای که تو خواسته اند -

نظم

آخر بچه آشنایی اے باد بگو گستاخ در آن زلف روی موه موه
من در طلبش در بدر و کوی بکوی تو در بر او لب بلب و روه روه
ذرّه گفت این مقام آن کسے را سزا است که اول قدمش ترک اجزا است نه دانسته ای
که کسے بے دفع اغیار یار نه بیند و بے رفغ غیار یار نیاید -

نظم

ای آنکه ازین دراز دستی خود را چو باز پائے بستی
یک بار گر این گره شود باز بر خیز که باز رستی ای باز
ای باز یگانه گر گریزی زین بند چرا نمی گریزی
غولے است که گود در کند پر اے گره سوت جهان تو می پر
خود بینی و خود نمائی ترا دو بند است این یک سخن به از هزار پند است -
هر که ازین دو خاص یافت حقا که حقیقت اخلاص یافت -

نظم

چون نفس تو از هوا بر آمد این هر دو صفت شهپر آمد
بر خیز و بپر تو هر در بالش آنکه بنشین بچهار بالش
خود بینی و خود نمائی نشان احوالی است این علت نه دارد هر که دلی است
او صافی که حجاب اهل معرفت اند میدان که هر یک نتیجه این در صفت اند -

نظم

ریا و کبر تو رزق است و انوس چرا از خود بقیه سازی بسالوس
مبین خود را و گم کن خود نمایی که باشی هم بدام خویش محبوس
ز خود بینی کشد بیچاره مروطی همان کز خود نمایی دیدن طاروس
مکن گردن کشی کز شومی کبر اسیر آمد بدست گیر کاروس
ز خود بینی چنان شد کار جمشید
که در شهنامه گوید شاعر طوس

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Story : One day I was sitting, and I saw a fleck of dust on which the sun was shining so brightly that the fleck reflected the light of the sun. I said, "O fleck of dust, O lover, you are face to face with the Beloved, how do you merit this honor ? O burnt one, they accommodated you, from where did you arise that they wanted you ?

In search of Him I wander from door to door and street to street.

O breeze, tell me, due to what friendship

Do you go boldly into those tresses, hair by hair ?

Already you are on His doorstep, lip on lip and face to face.

The fleck of dust replied : "This place is meant for me because my first step was to renounce multiplicity. Don't you know that no one sees the Beloved unless he drives away the rivals ? How can you enter without first dispelling the mist ?

O you who out of greed

Have tied your foot; like the eagle,

Once this knot is loosed,

You may arise and escape, o eagle.

Since you can fly, O lofty bird,

Why not escape this prison ?

The demon of death is stalking you.

Let both worlds be sacrificed for you : fly away !

—Egotism and self-display are the two chains which bind you. Note this sentence, for it is better than a thousand counsels : he who obtains release (*khalāṣ*) from these two chains, by God, he finds the essence of sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*).

Since your lower self has been reared in lust,

These two attributes have become its wings.

Arise and clip off these two wings.

Then go sit on the throne.

Egotism and self-display are the sins of double vision (*aḥwalī*). He who is a saint (*walī*) does not have this defect. You should know that all the attributes which veil the learned are the result of these two faults.

Your hypocrisy is a fraud, your pride a jest.

Alas ! Why carve an idol from deceit ?

Don't see yourself; put off that false front

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Otherwise you will be caught in your own trap.
From egotism the parrot must endure
What the peacock experienced from showing off.
Don't rebel; it was due to the ill effects of pride
That Kā'ūs became a captive in the hand of Gev,
Just as from egotism the fate of Jamshed became
What the poet of Ṭūs has described in the *Shāhnāmah*.

In this passage, as in most of *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, rhymed prose flows into poetry so smoothly that one has the impression of reading a continuous poem, with slight pauses. The use of imagery is also noteworthy. The fleck of dust and the eagle, though stock Sufi metaphors, are juxtaposed in an unusual way, suggesting that the attainment of Sincerity (or Union) requires both absolute stillness (a fleck of dust) and vibrant motion (an eagle in flight). The paradox of soaring stasis is reinforced by the command to cut off both wings and *then* fly. The final reference to *Shāhnāmah* is also rare among Indian mystical writings of the pre-Mughal period.

It was from their center in Māltan that the Suhrawardī *silsilah* developed a branch in Ucch. Sayyid Jalāl ad-dīn Surkh Pūsh (d. 1291 A.D.) settled there at the behest of his *pīr*, Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā. Though he himself wrote nothing (at least that he survived), his influence is believed to have been very great, and what he thought and said and did is now remembered because of his grandson, Sayyid Jalāl ad-dīn Makhdūm-i-Jahāniyān (d. 1383 A.D.). Makhdūm-i-Jahāniyān inspired loyalty and admiration among a wide sector of Muslim mystics, both Suhrawardī and non-Suhrawardī. There exist to the present day numerous Indian Chishtīs and Qādirīs who claim him as a saint in their *shajrah* or spiritual lineage. One reason for Makhdūm's fame may have been his extensive travels. Even within his own lifetime they became legendary, so that the epithet Jahāngasht ("he who has travelled the world") became added to his name. A fabricated work, *Safarnāmah-i Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān*, depicts his journeys as an endless sequence of mind-boggling *karāmāt*. Less exaggerated is the persistent oral tradition that Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān visited every saint's tomb in Hindustan, and planted a tree there. So gracious are the leafen arms which shelter the sacred burial spaces of early Indian *nashā'ikh* that it is tempting to ascribe at least this *karāmāt* to the peregrine saint from Ucch.

Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān exercised his pen as well as his feet. He wrote at length on many subjects. His extant works include two commentaries on *ḥadīth* collections, *Sharḥ-i Mashāriq al-anwār* and *Sharḥ-i Maṣābiḥ as-sunnah*, a compilation of *maktūbāt* (*Muqarrarnāmah*), and a Persian translation of Quṭb ad-dīn Dimashqī's *Ar-risālat al-makkīya*. Fortunately, many of his *malfūzāt* have survived, having been recorded, collected and disseminated by disciples. The most voluminous is also the most interesting: *Khulāsat al-alfāz jāmi'al-'ulūm* (Urdu translation: *Ad-durr al-manẓum*). It gives a vivid impression of the saint's personality. He was fond of Sufi anecdotes, intimately acquainted with Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, and consistently cogent in his explanation of mystic practices. *Sirāj al-hidāyat*, *Manāqib al-Makhdūm-i Jahāniyan*, *Mazhar-i Jalālī* and *Khazāna' al-fawā'id al-jalālīya* (also known as *Khazānah-i jalālīya*)—all contain valuable incidental information about the saint, but they lack the fluency of style and insightful observations of *Jāmi'al-'ulūm*.⁷²

The Suhrawardī *silsilah* flourished in medieval Bihar as it did in neighbouring Bengal. Its saints must have inspired much more literature than is now available to us. We know, for instance, that the ancestors and contemporary relatives of Sharaf ad-dīn-b. Yaḥyā Manerī (d. 1379 A.D.), were linked to the Suhrawardīya. Yet apart from the mellifluous verses of Aḥmad Chirampūsh (d. 1373 A.D.), a first cousin of Sharaf ad-dīn,⁷³ we have scant information on the 14th and 15th century Suhrawardī saints of northern Bihar.

In Delhi itself the Suhrawardī order flourished sporadically. Samā'ad-dīn Dihlawī (d. 1496 A.D.), a descendant of Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān, drew the brilliant poet Jamāl ad-dīn Kanboh "Jamālī" (d. 1536 A.D.) into the circle of his disciples. Jamālī, in addition to a *dīwān* and several independent *mathnawīs*, wrote the first *tadhkirah* on Indian Sufis which includes saints of more than one *silsilah*. Though *Siyar al-'ārifīn* was not completed till the time of the Mughal emperor of Humayun, it was begun during the Lodi period and contains a wealth of information about the Chishtī as well as Suhrawardī *mashā'ikh* of pre-Mughal India. Jamālī has sometimes been criticized for relying on oral evidence to supplement the sparse biographic data in earlier sources,⁷⁴ but *Siyar al-'ārifīn* is a masterpiece. Not only does its author make an objective assessment of saints from both *silsilahs* but he writes in a fluid style, punctuated with humorous, often poetical anecdotes.⁷⁵

FIRDAUSĪ *SILSILAH*

Like the Suhrawardī *silsilah*, the Firdausīya enjoyed mostly regional popularity, being scarcely known outside the Muslim community of Northern Bihar and Western Bengal. In the person of Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yahyā Manerī “Makhdūm al-Mulk”, however, it produced one of the outstanding saints of medieval India. Originally an offshoot of the Kubrawīya, the Firdausī order had floundered in Delhi in comparative anonymity until the young Biharī visited the capital during the late 1280’s. He chose not to enrol as a disciple of Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā, though the spiritual prowess of the great Chishtī saint must have impressed him as it did all visitors to Ghiyaspur. Instead, Sharaf ad-dīn became a disciple and successor of Najib ad-dīn Firdausī (d. 1291 A.D.), having been warmly greeted by his future master with these words: “O dervish, for years I have been sitting in wait for you. I have a sacred trust that is to be conferred upon you.”⁷⁶ Returning to Bihar, Sharaf ad-dīn became so dazzled with the lights of insight sparked by Najīb ad-dīn that he spent 15 to 20 years in the jungle before emerging from the Rajgir Hills to teach some of the local villagers. Eventually he established the Firdausī *silsilah* in Bihar Sharif and began to write as well as teach. Today attendants at his shrine insist that Sharaf ad-dīn wrote over 1,000 books. In his case, we may be glad that not all of them have survived: what we do have is a sufficient literary milestone. Not only did Sharaf ad-dīn write much but he wrote with a clarity and perception that has few parallels in the history of Indian Sufism.

The most famous of his writings is *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī* (*The Hundred Letters*). Throughout the Mughal period they were prescribed on the syllabus for advanced theological study.⁷⁷ Had he composed nothing other than these letters, Sharaf ad-dīn would be reckoned an able and innovative exponent of Sufi theory. The topics of the *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī* are inclusive of the range of mystical experience within Islam. They stress the polar dimension or dialectical byplay so essential to the interiorization of all spiritual values. The very first letter describes *tawhīd* (profession of faith in the Absolute Unity of God) as an inward journey. Subsequent letters delineate such concepts as inner repentance (2 and 63), inner polytheism (9 and 44), the inner and outer lights of God (equated with *jamāl* and *jalāl* in Letter 12), the inward journey of visions (14), inner sickness (19), inner purification (29 and 30) and inner

renunciation (61 and 62). Though it is the subtle, hidden dimension of the seeker which preoccupies ḥaraf ad-dīn, he is careful never to overlook the outer aspect of worship. All life for him is an endless struggle for perfection within the parameters of the outer and inner, conceived as contrasting but complementary dimensions of the human experience. The exegetical basis for this mystical logic is the *shahādah* itself. For instance, in Letter 26 on the relationship of Law (*sharī'ah*) to Truth (*ḥaqīqah*), he writes :⁷⁸

The Sufis use the term Law to connote the soundness of the outer condition; Truth, to connote the soundness of the inner condition. The outer is joined to the inner : they are inseparable. One cannot assent to God in the heart without a verbal profession of faith, nor can one profess belief in God without assenting in the heart. "There is no god but God" is the Truth; "and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God" is the Law. If one wants to have soundness of faith, he cannot separate the two.—Hence the Law is like the body and Truth is like the soul. Just as man cannot live without either body or soul, so he cannot believe unless he adheres to both the Law and the Truth.

And again, from Letter 65 :⁷⁹

O brother, God Almighty is One, and a true believer must profess the unity of God. Look for the proof of this in the *shahādah*, one half of which "There is no god" separates the believer from what is not God, while the second half "except God" unites him with God. In other words, one becomes united with God in proportion to one's renunciation of what is not God.

کو آتشی کہ بروے این خرقہ را بسوزم کین خرقہ در بز من زنار می نماید
Where is the fire in which I may burn my cloak ?

Even the clothes on my back have become a *zunnār*.

He who claims to have faith should look to his own heart. If his heart flees from what is not God, his claim is genuine, but if it runs after something other than God, then let him weep over his faith. Either he has already lost it, or is about to do so.

هنوز از کاف کفرت هیچ خبر نیست حقایق هائے ایمان را چه دانی
You who don't even know the first thing about your own heresy,

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How can you pretend to know about the Realities of Faith ?

In addition to the *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī*, three other *maktūbāt* collections are attributed to Makhdūm al-Mulk : *Rukn-i sawā'id*, *Maktūbāt-i dū ṣadī*, and *Maktūbāt-i bīst-o-hasht*. The first collection contains numerical exaggerations and hyperbolic assertions of the sort that are not found in the saint's other correspondence; they appear to be a later, supinely credulous fabrication. The *Maktūbāt-i-dū ṣadī* deal with many of the same topics as the *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī*, while *Maktūbāt-i bīst-o-hasht* seem like the faint glittering of an opaque gem. They are all that remain of the vast correspondence between Sharaf ad-dīn and his principal disciple and successor, Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī. The rest, said to number over 200, were buried with Muẓaffar at the direction of his *pīr*, apparently because Makhdūm al-Mulk felt it too dangerous to disclose all the divine secrets that had been revealed to him. There is a passion and fervor in the surviving 28 letters which the larger collection of "public" letters, despite their smooth exposition of complex doctrines, seem to lack. The poetry is especially simple, direct, and bold. For example, on separation from God :⁸⁰

هجران تو خوشتر ز رصال دیگران مگر شدنت به ز رضای دیگران

Separation from you is better than union with another.

To be denied by you is better than to be accepted by others.

and His incomprehensibility :

هر چه در خلق سوزی و سوزیت اندران مر خدای را رازیت

All creation is cast into the refiner's fire :

In this there lies a mystery known only to God.

and also on Hallāj :

ز نهار میگری بر سر جمع گر عاشق صادق تو اسرار
دیدنی که بسکر عشق رمزی حاج حاجت و رفت بر دار

Beware, do not utter a secret in public,

If you be truly a lover of secrets.

Have you not seen how in the flush of love

Hallāj spoke the secret and went to the gallows ?

The dialectical rhythm of *The 28 Letters* is consistently intense, as the following excerpt from Letter 2 reveals :⁸¹

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O brother, the son of Adam is a tiny ant. He languishes in the desert, hoping to arrive in Mecca at an auspicious time. It is utterly impossible.

دردا که غم کوه بکاه افتادست معشوق دل مور چه ماه افتادست
این واقعه طرقت برآه افتادست درریش بعشق بادشاه افتادست

Alas, the mountainous burden has fallen to the straw man,
And the ant has fallen in love with the moon.
But this miracle has occurred in the Way :
The dervish due to love has become a king.

O brother, the lover must accept with resignation everything which comes from the beloved. If it be a blessing, he acknowledges the beloved as its source; and if it be violence he also acknowledges the beloved. Whatever be the purpose of the beloved for the lover, it is all sufficient. The true lover is he who makes his purpose the sacrifice of his own purpose.

Beyond the *maktūbāt* collections, Sharaf ad-dīn composed several works that contained instructive guidelines (*ishārāt*) for his disciples. Numerous collections of invocatory prayers (*awrād*), too, have been attributed to him. But his great work is a commentary on *Ādāb al-murīdīn* of Abū Najīb Suhrawardī. Composed soon after his descent from the Rajgir Hills to Bihar Sharif, it is the basis for all his subsequent writings and speculations. In it he expands the pithy directives of Abū Najīb by relating them to his own interior quest for truth. Quotations and verses from earlier Sufis are also included, but chiefly *Sharḥ-i Ādāb al-murīdīn* represents the varied reflections of Sharf ad-dīn on the goals and methods of the mystic life.

No other saint of medieval India has inspired as many *malfūzāt* as Makhdūm al-Mulk. No less than nine are extant. They cover the entire period of the saint's life from the time he reappeared in Bihar Sharif in the early 14th century till the time of his death in 1379 A.D. The first is also the largest : *Ma'dan al-ma'ānī* was compiled by Zain ad-dīn Badr-i 'Arabī, the chief attendant of Sharaf ad-dīn, who lies buried near him in a grave marked only by a small deadstone. Zain ad-dīn compiled many of the other *malfūzāt* as well as the *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī* of his master, but *Ma'dan al-ma'ānī* represents his most comprehensive effort to record the memory of Makhdūm al-Mulk for future generations. It fills

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two lithographed volumes, and gives minute details of the saint's conversations with a wide cross-section of people. Other *malfūzāt* are: *Khwān-i pur ni'mat*, recording discourses between 1348-50; *Mukh al-ma'ānī*, also early, though no dates are given; *Maghz al-ma'ānī*, from mid-1356 to early 1358; *Kanz al-ma'ānī* (also known under the titles *Bahr al-ma'ānī* and *Tuḥfat al-ghaibi*), from 1358-1368; *Ganj-i lā yafnā*, from the same period; *Mulfūz as-safar*, from 1360-1361; *Munīs al-murīdīn*, the latter half of 1373; and *Rāḥat al-qulūb*, which provides the final legacies (*waṣīyatnāmah-hā*) of both Najīb ad-dīn Firdausī and Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yahyā Manerī.⁸² Though it has been suggested that the literary quality of these *malfūzāt* is not as high as that of the *maktūbāt*,⁸³ a careful study of their contents provides valuable insight into the daily habits, the spontaneous remarks, the mood and manner of this extra-ordinary Bihari shaykh.

Sharaf ad-dīn, like most medieval saints, has been credited with numerous *karāmāt*.⁸⁴ Yet one of his indisputable *karāmāt* has been omitted from the *malfūzāt* and later hagiographies: the ability to produce successors who were distinguished in their literary as well as spiritual attainments.

Muzaffar Shams Balkhī (d. 1400 A.D.) was his principal successor and the addressee of *The 28 Letters*. Muzaffar, it appears, never enjoyed India. He travelled extensively and finally settled in Arabia, where he died. His discontent fostered an extensive output of letters. In both subject matter and correspondents, the extant collection of his *maktūbāt*, numbering over 200, constitute an important, though seldom noted, source for the study of 14th century Indian Islam.⁸⁵ Muzaffar was fond of poetry. Many of his verses appear in manuscript copies of the *maktūbāt*, and it is not surprising that he has a small *dīwān* to his credit. Unfortunately, neither this *dīwān* nor two voluminous commentaries—*Sharḥ-i 'Aqā'id-i Hāfiẓī* and *Sharḥ-i Mashāriq al-anwār*—have survived. The loss of the *Sharḥ-i Mashāriq* is especially regrettable since this work on Tradition, so long a favorite among Indian Sufis, attracted the ablest commentators among pre-Mughal Indian saints. It would have been interesting, for instance, to compare Muzaffar's observations on *Mashāriq al-anwār* with those of the Chishtī Gesū Darāz and the Suhrawardī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān.

Muzaffar's nephew was also his frequent correspondent and eventual successor. Husain Mu'izz Balkhī "Naushah Tawḥīd" (d. 1440 A.D.), like his predecessors, was a talented author. He composed a number of invocatory prayers (*awrād*), wrote both instructional manuals (*Ishārāt*) and speculative treatises, and has to

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his credit a Persian *dīwān* as well as a copious *maktūbāt* collection. The *maktūbāt* have become famous due to their wide topical scope and unabashed frankness. In them Ḥusain exhibits a refreshing common touch while commending the rigorous asceticism of Sufism :

Keep your body free from sins both great and small [he writes to his son, Qāḍī Amjad]⁸⁶ and through renewal of repentance and faith day and night, keep your heart under surveillance. On these occasions you may use the special devotions (*awrād*) which you have learned from this humble servant. The basis of work is repentance.....Repentance is to the spiritual stations what earth is to plant life : whoever has no earth can have no plants. For us and for you alike, the task is to keep eyes and ears, hands and tongue, free from disobedience and opposition to God's will. Night and day we must be vigilant in questioning our selves : "Today is my tongue clean or not ?" In the same way, we should question all our members to determine whether they have remained clean or become polluted. Every one which may have been sullied you should rededicate to God with repentance and renewal of faith. If you busy yourself with this concern.....God will credit you with the devotions of the whole world. In these days if you manage to eat a morsel of acceptable food and to keep your body free from sin, you will be the Junayd of your time. Note well : the distillation of speech is this and the core of all work is this. The rest is like writing on water.

Ḥusain also inspired a collection of his *malfūzāt*, *Ganj-i lā yakhfā*. As its name makes clear, it was intended to be a companion volume to *Ganj-i lā yafnā*, one of the many *ma'fūzāt* of Sharaf-ad-dīn.

Extending to the third generation after Makhdūm al-mulk, we find the son and successor of Ḥusain Mu'izz Balkhī, Ḥasan Balkhī, writing Persian poetry sufficient to comprise a *dīwān*. He also wrote letters that have not survived, and to further the memory of Sharaf ad-dīn, he prepared a summary of Zain ad-dīn's *Ma'dan a'-na'ānī*, which he entitled *Laṭā'if al-ma'ānī*. His own son, Aḥmad Langar Daryā, inspired still another collection of *malfūzāt*, *Mūnis al-qulūb*, edited by Qāḍī Sayyid b. Khitāb Bihārī.⁸⁷

In sum, the Firdausī *silsilah* is remarkable as a regional Sufi order in medieval Bihar. Not only did it produce a succession of able saints but all of them wrote extensively and forcefully on almost every subject of interest to Indo-muslim mystics.

MISCELLANEOUS SAINTS

In addition to members of the Chishtī, Suhrawardī and Firdausī orders, there were other saints in pre-Mughal India who gained popularity and either themselves wrote or inspired others to write about them. Notable among such saints was Sharaf ad-dīn Pānīpatī, also known as Bū ‘Alī Shāh Qalandar (d. 1324 A.D.). Though sometimes linked to the Chishtī *silsilah*, he seems to have had no formal attachment to a *pir*; like other *qalandars*, he belonged to the Uwaysī tradition.⁸⁸ Some of his alleged works, such as *Hukmnāmah* and *Hikmatnāmah*, are almost certainly spurious, while others, specifically the famed *Mathnawī* and *Maktūbāt*, bear all the markings of authenticity. Both the latter works suggest that the scholar who came to disdain books, in much the same manner as his spiritual brother from Anatolia, Jalāl ad-dīn Rūmī, nonetheless learned much from them and imbibed their lessons before discarding them. In style, the *Mathnawī* and *Maktūbāt* are concise and direct, yet they retain a lyrical softness even when the saint’s mood becomes sardonic as in the following passage from the *Mathnawī* :⁸⁹

هست دنیا پیر زال ، پر فریب می کند پیر و جوان را ناشکیب

The world is an aged and deceitful hag;
She excites every man young and old.

عارفان دادند او را صد طلاق هر که عاشق شد بزر او گشت عاق

The men of God have divorced her a hundred times,
For to be her lover is to be faithless to God.

این سخن در گوش داری ای جوان مولوی گفته ز در امتحان

Keep this in mind, young man :
The great Maulvi (Jalal ad-din Rumi) spoke from experience (when he said) :

هم خدا خواهی و هم دنیا داری این خیالست و محالست و جنون

“If you want both God and this world,
That is foolishness, absurdity, lunacy !”

پیر دین دل کند از دنیا علی آن علی شد والی ملک نیر

For the sake of his faith, ‘Ali turned his heart from the world.

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That is why 'Ali was made heir to the kingdom of the Prophet.

آن وصی مصطفیٰ شیرو خدا آن علی زوج بتول پارسی

The right hand of Muhammad, that lion of God,
He became the noble husband of virtuous Fatima.

زال دنیا را چنان زد پش پا تا نیاید در نکاح اولیا

He kicked the world with such force
That she never entered into marriage with the saints.

بهر دنیا آن یزید تا خلف دین خود کرده برای او تلف

But that rascal Yazid married her;
He made this world his religion and for her sake plundered.

زال دنیا چون در آمد در نکاح کوه پر خرد خون آن سید مباح

Having married this old hag,
He justified shedding the blood of that Sayyid.

داد یاری همجو کسی را پیر زال کوه او در در عالم پائمال

Whomever this old hag befriended,
She destroyed him in both the worlds.

چون خوری پس خورده خوان یزید تلخ گردان کام از نان یزید

Why then do you eat the remnant from the table of Yazid
And make your throat bitter with the bread of Yazid ?

گر بر افتد پرده از روی مجاز نفرتی گیری ز زال حیلہ ساز

When the veil is lifted from the face of illusion,
Then will you hate this deceitful hag.

زشت روی او چو آید در نظر از خدا خواهی امان اے بے خیر

When her ugly face comes into view,
Then will you beg mercy from God, O foolish one.

آتشی از دور چون گلشن بود در حقیقت سر بسو گلشن بود

Fire from a distance may look like a rose garden
But close up it proves to be an oven.

نظرت آرد مر ترا مال و مثال گر نه داری از تهیدستی مثال

Wealth and status bring nought but pride,
So if you have nothing, don't feel empty-handed.

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The equation of this world or worldliness with an elderly woman of low taste is hardly novel in the history of Sufism or Persian poetry,⁹⁰ but the further suggestion that the meretricious spinster is the spouse of Yazīd and that the Sufi's struggle with the world is akin to that of 'Alī with Yazīd marks an advance over conventional imagery. Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar storms the world of literary conformity, just as his reclusive but chiding presence must have affronted the comfortable Muslim saints of the Punjab. He is fresh, outrageous, uncompromising.

In 1371 A.D., almost half a century after Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar breathed his last and was buried in Panipat or (according to a variant report) Kārnal, Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī (d. 1385 A.D.) appeared in Kashmir with perhaps as many as seven hundred followers. They had journeyed together from Central Asia to the northernmost region of the sub-continent. Were they also accompanied by Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī for part of this journey? The tradition may be baseless, but it highlights the fact that both Sayyids had been pupils, disciples and successors of 'Alā ad-daula Simnānī, even though they subsequently rejected his criticisms of Muḥyi'd-dīn Ibn 'Arabī. Like Sayyid Ashraf, Sayyid 'Alī taught the principles of *waḥdat al-wujūd* with contagious zeal; at the same time he, unlike his Kichhauchha contemporary, remained faithful to the Kubrawī order.

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī is said to have written 170 books. Probably that number did not exceed 50. Many of them are short instructional pamphlets (*ishārāt*) or essays explaining Sufi technical terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*) or collections of *awrād*. *Awrād al-faḥiyāt*, composed in lilting Arabic, became especially popular. Sayyid 'Alī also wrote numerous commentaries. Those on Ibn 'Arabī's works are among the first of their kind in the subcontinent.⁹¹ Since he was the founder of a new *silsilah* in an area where Islam itself was almost unknown, it is not surprising to find that he also wrote commentaries on both the *'Awārif al-mv'ārif* of Shihāb ad-dīn Suhrawardī and the *Ādāb al-murīdīn* of his uncle, Abū Najīb. Another famous work from his energetic hand was *Za'ḥīrat al-mulūk*, a kind of guidebook, with copious anecdotes, on the behaviour expected of a Muslim ruler. Like every medieval Sufi of note, he composed poetry, and a thin *dīwān* has also been attributed to him.⁹²

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī joined the host of Indian saints who inspired others to record their conversations, activities and character-

istic teachings. One of the earliest *tadhkirahs* about him was *Khulāṣat al-manāqib*, compiled by a disciple, Nūr ad-dīn Ja'far Badakhshī, within a year of the saint's death. Other popular, legendizing *tadhkirahs* abound, as one would expect of a saint who is regarded as the patron of Islam in Kashmir and about whom a learned Kashmiri once told me: It was a divine act that Sayyid 'Alī was not buried in Kashmir (his tomb is in Khatlan in presentday Transoxiana), or he would have been worshipped as God Himself."⁹³

Literarily less assertive than Sayyid 'Alī, Aḥmad Khattu (d. 1445 A.D.) is as important pre-Mughal Gujrati Sufism as Sayyid 'Alī was for Kashmiri Islam in the same period. He belonged to the Maghribi *silsilah*, principally a North African order with little influence in medieval India. Aḥmad Khattu's life, more than that of any other major Indian Shaykh, turns on a single *karāmat* incident: allegedly he produced bread from the Unknown which fed and kept alive a group of prisoners after they had fallen into Timur's hands during the Mongol chieftain's sack of Delhi in 1399 A.D. Timur came to learn of this extraordinary circumstance. He summoned the saint to his presence. In the ensuing interview Qirān as-sa'dain became convinced of Aḥmad Khattu's spiritual prowess. He did not punish the saint. Instead, he ordered the release not only of Aḥmad, but of the other citizens of Delhi who had survived the ordeal of make-shift Mongol prisoner-of-war camps. Subsequently, Aḥmad Khattu became very popular in Delhi. Yet fame failed to subvert his resolute humility or to diminish his wanderlust. Some time later, when a friend requested that he migrate from Delhi to Sarkhej in Gujrat, he complied. What words can express the influence he subsequently exerted; upon Gujrati Muslims, in spite of rival, often hostile claimants within his spiritual domain (*wilāyat*)? Princes as well as common people flocked to him. Aḥmad Khattu is said to have had a formative role in the very foundation of Ahmedabad, Gujrat's largest and most beautiful city.⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, the tomb eventually built to house his last remains is itself an imposing marble structure. Situated in Sarkhej, it bears testimony even today to the favor that Aḥmad Khattu found among the rulers and people of medieval Gujrat.

As a writer the Maghribi saints produced only one epistle of record: a brief paean addressed to Aḥmad Shah, the first ruler of Ahmedabad. But Aḥmad Khattu did prompt others to write. It was at his instance, for example, that Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī wrote two *ishārāt* or instructional treatises, *Fawā'id al-ashraf*

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and *Ashraf al-fawā'id*. And Aḥmad himself inspired two *malfūzāt*; *Tuhfat al-majālis*, compiled by a disciple, Maḥmud b. Sa'd Irijī and *Malfūzāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Maghribī*, compiled by another disciple, Muḥammad b. Abi 'l-Qāsim.⁹⁵ As always in such cases, one would like to have more information than is now available. Though few in number and lacking in eloquence, the *malfūzāt* of Aḥmad Khattu do allow us to reconstruct at least a partial picture of the foremost saint of medieval Gujarat.

CONCLUSION

Sufism is more than the writings of Sufis; it is more than their words. It is an intense preoccupation with God and an awareness of His closeness which is at the same time His distance. It can be broached in metaphors, radiated in a glance or diffused in music. It allures the mind and the senses, while remaining beyond rational, historical or even intuitive explanation.

Some of the most famous Sufis have affected the lives of others without writing a single word. They have embodied an experience of the Divine so intensely that their persons became a mirror of God for others. The effect of Shams Tabrīzī on Jalāl ad-dīn Rūmī is well known; less well known but no less dramatic was the effect of Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī on one 'Alī of Badā'ūn :⁹⁶

After Jalāl ad-dīn reached Badā'ūn [relates Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*], he was sitting on the threshold of his house one day and a (Hindu) curd-seller, carrying a pot of curds on his head, passed before the door. Now this curd-seller belonged to a band of robbers who were on the outskirts of Badā'ūn. When his eyes fell on the blessed face of Jalāl ad-dīn, at the very first glance he was completely changed. The Shaykh then looked at him intently and said : I am of the religion of Muḥammad, in which there are men like this (that is, who can convert a person by a single look).

This solitary incident may say more about the spiritual prowess of Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī than any book which he could have written but chose not to write.

If this essay has not accorded the same attention to Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī as it has to his contemporary Suhrawardī fellow saint, Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī, it is because, like all students of Sufi

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literature, we have dealt with what has been written by great saints or what others have written about them. Our focus of concern has also been our limitation : the written word. Even if all the extinct works to which we have made reference could be recovered, published, translated analyzed, the resulting picture of Pre-Mughal Indian Sufism would remain incomplete : it would provide the distilled recollection of the great Shaykhs—their stories, their teachings, their deeds,—but it could not recreate their living presence.

An historical reality confronts us : within a span of little more than three hundred years (ca. 1200-1526 A.D.), Sufism became immensely important in a part of the world where Islam had previously enjoyed only a marginal, sequestered existence. To understand the emergence of Indian Sufism we have to examine the literature of Indian Sufis. We must be humble about what we can claim to learn from written sources but we have no alternative except to rely on them.

And the literature does reveal much of interest. It shows, for instance, the preeminence of Persian among Sufi writers of pre-Mughal India. Though some authors like Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī, Fakhr ad-dīn Zarrādī, Sayyid Gesū Darāz, Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī and ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī, were adept in both Arabic and Persian, most of them relied on Persian for most of their literary efforts. In poetry especially, Persian was the unrivalled medium through which these saints expressed the subtle emotions of their spiritual states. There has been much discussion about the use of proto-Hindustani in some writings : for instance, *Kitāb-i Ashraf* and *Mi‘rāj al-‘āshiqīn* (attributed to Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī and Sayyid Gesū Darāz, respectively) are said to be among the earliest books in Urdu.⁹⁷ Other writings also contain numerous sayings or couplets in Indian dialects, but these are an incidental rather than dominant feature of the mystic literature of the period. It was Persian which flourished, inspiring nearly every Sufi prose writer of pre-Mughal India and occasionally producing poets of exceptional ability, such as ‘Irāqī, Khusrau, Husaynī and Nakhshabī.

The literature also reveals some oddities about the response of Indian Sufis to outside forces. Theologically, the period up to the end of the first five Chishtī *mashā’ikh* (ca. 1350 A.D.) was insulated. Writings dealt with basic concepts of *taṣawwuf*, correct modes of behavior, anecdotes from early Sufis and, above all, reverence for the Shaykh. They were not characterized by efforts to systematize either in the theological or in the mystical realm : if Ibn ‘Arabī’s influence

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was delayed, Īmām Ghazzālī's effect was also negligible, and even Jalāl ad-dīn Rūmī's verses were quoted less frequently than one would expect.⁹⁸ After the mid-fourteenth century, however, the climate of North Indian Sufism became imbued with intellectual and theoretical discussion, as is attested in the writings of Sayyid Gesū Darāz, Sayyid Ashraf, Jahāngīr Simnānī, Mas'ūd Bakk, Sharaf ad-dīn Manerī and Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī. *Waḥdat al-wujūd* became an issue, though one could argue that even in the later period questions concerning the authority of the Shaykh and the role of *samā'* preoccupied Indian Sufis to a greater extent than the subtleties of ontological or existential unity. Structurally, the most striking development was the influence of the Kubrawīya. In the persons of Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī and Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, that order produced two of the major figures in 14th century Indian Islam. If one further considers the connection of Sharaf ad-dīn Manerī and his spiritual predecessors with Najm ad-dīn Kubrā, then the impact of Kubrawī doctrine and practices on Indian Sufis becomes still greater. A study of Indian Kubrawīs in the light of their Central Asian origins would immensely broaden our still limited understanding of early Indian Sufism.

Suprisingly, the literature just reviewed provides sparse evidence of Sufi interaction with Hindus. Discourse with *yogins*, borrowing of their tenents or practices and efforts to convert them to Islam—all occur, but at irregular intervals and with no special emphasis. Though Farīd ad-dīn Ganj-i Shakar and Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā entertained Hindu ascetics in their *khānqāhs*,⁹⁹ only brief notices of conversations between them have been preserved. Naṣīr ad-dīn Chirāgh-i dehli once analogized the *yogin's* control of *siddhis* to the perfected Sufi's mastery of *anfās*; yet we find no reference to his exchanges with contemporary Hindus. We learn that Sayyid Gesū Darāz acquired sufficient knowledge of Sanskrit literature to dazzle a group of Brahmins; when he invited them to become Muslims, however, they declined.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī is reported to have prevailed upon a large number of Bengālī Hindus to embrace Islam, though only after having first subdued their wildest exorcists. Sayyid Ashraf allegedly performed the same feat in Kichhauchha. Yet the accounts of these mass conversions seem to exaggerate historical reality, as do reports in later *tadhkirahs* which ascribe to Mu'īn ad-dīn Chishtī similar mass conversions in 13th century Rajasthan.¹⁰¹ The authentic incidents of conversion are solitary and sporadic. They relate to rare individuals who were

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attracted to Islam by the exemplary conduct of saints. We have already mentioned the incident of Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī and 'Alī Badā'ūnī. In a similar manner, an elderly *yogin* was converted by Sharaf ad-dīn Manerī, and another by 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī.¹⁰² Most of the exchanges between pre-Mughal Sufis and their Hindu contemporaries were pleasant. Ḥamīd ad-dīn Suwalī, for instance, referred to a Hindu of Nagaur as his saintly brother and Nizām ad-dīn approvingly told his disciples the story of a Brahmin whose sacred thread meant more to him than all his lost possessions.¹⁰³ Rarely does one find an incident of extreme violence: Sayyid Ṣadr ad-dīn "Rājū Qattāl", the younger brother of Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān, acquired his nickname because he tried to convert a guileless Hindu who had eulogized Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān on his death bed. When the Hindu resisted efforts to redefine his spiritual allegiance, he was executed as a renegade Muslim.¹⁰⁴

What one misses in all these anecdotes is any indication of extensive theological dialogue between Sufis and Hindus. The only work that approaches a systematic integration of Hindu with Muslim mystical asceticism is the *Rushdnāmah* of 'Abd al-Quddūs, but it was written toward the end of the pre-Mughal period, and even here the references to *yogin* practices are more tacit than explicit.¹⁰⁵

The most significant aspect of pre-Mughal Sufi literature is its intimations about the primacy of the *pīr/murīd* relationship. To understand this aspect we must appreciate the intimate character of *khānqāh* life. The Shaykh became the cynosure of his disciples within the space which they commonly shared. Their program was organized to complement his daily routine (*dābi'ah*); and the assumption was that their spiritual progress was furthered by what they did for him. We have only to recall Nizām ad-dīn preparing *del* leaves for Farīd ad-dīn's *Iṣṭār*, or Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam cleaning the gutters of 'Ālā ad-dīn's quarters, to realize that no task was too menial for the *murīd* to perform at the direction of his *pīr*. Whatever the Shaykh did or said or thought or felt was full of meaning and value to those who served him.

Outside institutional Sufism the authority ascribed to the *pīr* has seldom been understood or accepted. In the pre-Mughal period, such authority was, of course, challenged by religious and political leaders alike: both felt threatened by the extraordinary power that lay beyond their domain. In the Mughal and British periods, it was labelled as non-Islamic by reform leaders such as Shāh Walī Allāh and philosophical poets such as Muḥammad Iqbal.¹⁰⁶ It has also

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been denigrated in various ways by modern Western scholars. Some, like J. S. Trimingham, feel annoyed that a saint conceals some of his insights: if they are beneficial, goes the argument, they should be shared with all mankind.¹⁰⁷ Others, like R. C. Zaehner, express outright disgust that so much authority has been invested in a mere man: after all, does Islam not ascribe all power to God and restrict even the veneration accorded the Prophet Muḥammad?¹⁰⁸ Still others have sought to minimize or secularize the institution of the *pīr* by showing how much his *khānqāh* resembles the royal court and his role within it, the *magisterium* of a ruler.¹⁰⁹

The institution of the *pīr* is not without its shortcomings and excesses, but when viewed in the context of medieval Indian Islam, it reveals a dynamic element that has escaped the attention of its critics—past and present. Living at a point in time within a community where Islam has been newly accepted, the *pīr* mediates the will of God; he makes alive the sanctity of the Qur'ān and reverence for Tradition; he transmits stories and recites poetry that reflect a right outlook and correct behavior, or sometimes merely provide relief from the tedium of spiritual discipline. He becomes the embodiment of piety, learning and hope. He prays and teaches; he teaches and prays.

In fact, the Shaykh is an effective writer only in so far as he is a good teacher, and he is a good teacher only in so far as he has a disciplined prayer life. It is with reference to his role as the head of an order of men who look to him for guidance in all matters that the resulting literature must be understood. If the *pīr* speaks and someone records, the *malfūz* is for the benefit of his disciples and the disciples of his successors. If he writes, either on his own initiative or in response to a request, and a copy of his letter is retained, the collection of several such copies comprise a volume of *maktūbāt* for the edification of his spiritual dependents. If he writes directives for one disciple, the *ishārat* (instructional treatise) is for the entire community of his followers. If he speculates on questions of metaphysical import or tries to justify a mystic practice or to explain technical terms with a mystic signification, he is writing for all those who have faced these same problems and not found a solution to the difficulties they posed. If he prays to God and the words which from on his lips express the intention of the servant before the Lord, those words constitute *awrād* (invocatory prayers) which he hopes will be efficacious for all his disciples.

In short, it is the *pīr* and his absolute primacy within the *khānqāh* which provide the soundest criterion for evaluating the

writings cited in this essay. To understand the variant levels at which this authority was assumed and exercised, however, requires further studies that have scarcely begun. In a sense, the most important writings are those that have been the least studied: the *awrād* or invocatory prayers. We have mentioned 10 such collections from pre-Mughal Indian saints; others undoubtedly also exist. As the most direct verbal link between the great Shaykhs and the Divine Presence, they deserve far more attention than they have so far received from students of Indian Islam. The dominant literary genre in this period was the *malfūzāt*. We have cited over 30 such collections of conversations. Those of the early Chishtī *mashā'ikh* are comparatively well known; others await the patient and thorough investigation they deserve. Of the 15 *maktūbāt* we have discussed, only one collection, *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī* of Sharaf ad-dīn Manerī, has become famous enough to attract a partial English translation. The other letters of Sharaf ad-dīn, the letters of his fellow Firdausīs and also of the later Chishtīs—all need to be examined and collated with the evidence of the *malfūzāt*. Some of the 11 *dīwāns* and 12 *ishārāt* have been occasionally mentioned in general surveys of Indo-Persian literature, but they too, demand more detailed study than they have received to date. Speculative treatises (8) and commentaries on Muslim scripture or Sufi classics (25) have been similarly neglected. A special *desideratum* for this period would be to compare the commentaries made by Chishtī and other saints on the '*Awārif al-ma'ārif*' and *Ādāb al-murīdīn*. Indeed, a score of similar textual studies is required before the literature of pre-Mughal Indian Sufism can be properly evaluated. Only Fakhr ad-dīn 'Irāqī, Amīr Khusrau and Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī can be said to have attracted the scholarship due them. It is fitting to conclude this introduction with a list of those saints whose writings warrant the further attention of future Indian, Pakistani, Iranian and perhaps a few Western scholars: Ḥamīd ad-dīn Suwalī Nāgaurī, Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī, Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, Fakhr ad-dīn Zarrādī, Rukn ad-dīn 'Imād, Ḍiyā ad-dīn Nakhshabī, Mas'ūd Bakk, Sayyid Gesū Darāz, Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam, Ḥusām ad-dīn Manikpūrī, 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī, Qāḍī Ḥamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī, Amīr Ḥusaynī Sādāt, Makhdūm-i Jāḥaniyān Jahāngasht, Jamāl ad-dīn Kanboh, Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yahyā Manerī, Muẓaffar Shams Balkhī, Ḥusain Mu'izz Balkhī and the redoubtable Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar. Clearly, much work remains to be done before we can speak confidently about early Indian Sufis and their literary achievements.

FOOTNOTES

1. There are numerous references to these martyr graves. In the Deccan, for instance, see M. Y. Kokan, "Language and Literature of the Deccan-Arabic", pp. 4-5 and K. A. Nizami, "Sufi Movements in the Deccan", p. 195 in H. K. Sherwani, ed., *History of Medieval Deccan*, vol. II (Hyderabad, 1974). Perhaps the most popular martyr grave is that of Salar Mas'ūd *aka* Ghāzī Miyān; see K. A. Nizami, "Ghāzī Miyān", *EI*², III, pp. 1047-8.
2. Thanks to the numerous studies of K. A. Nizami in both English and Urdu, much more is known about the Chishtiya than about any of the other early Indian *silsilahs*. Particularly notable are his monograph, *Ta'rikh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chishtī*. (Delhi, 1953) and his extensive article, "Chishtiya", *EI*², II, p.p. 50-56.
3. An adequate biography of Hamid ad-dīn is now available in Urdu. See Iḥsān al-Ḥaqq Fārūqī, *Sulṭān at-tārikīn*, Karachi, 1963. Concerning Quṭb ad-dīn, see K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, Delhi, 1974; pp. 188-90.
4. Amīr Khurd, *Siyar al-awliyā*, Delhi, 1302 A.H.; p. 158. Also, Nizami, *Religion and Politics*, p. 187.
5. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dihlawī, *Akḥbār al-akhyār fī asrār al-abrār*, Delhi, 1283 A.H.; p. 29.
6. Neither *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* (187-88) nor *Siyar al-awliyā* (72-3) adequately explain the complications posed by the untimely death of Quṭb ad-dīn. The fact is that he predeceased his *pīr*. Mu'īn ad-dīn died on 6 Rajab 633 (19 March 1236) while Quṭb ad-dīn expired in ecstasy on 14 Rabī' al-awwal 633 (15 November 1235). The awkwardness of this situation was, of course, "resolved" in the spurious *malfūzāt*: *Dalīl al-'ārifīn* describes the parting scene between Quṭb ad-dīn and Mu'īn ad-dīn before the former went to Delhi. Quṭb ad-dīn is given all the mystic regalia, along with the customary *khilāfat nāmah*. He had not been in Delhi forty days when 'a messenger came to tell me that twenty days after I had left Ajmer, the Khwāja had surrendered his soul to the

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mercy of God'. The explanation is, of course, absurd, but because the situation it purports to explain is so fraught with difficulty we find even a highly cautious scholar like 'Abd al-Ḥaqq including this quotation from *Dalīl al-ʿarīfīn* in his account of Quṭb ad-dīn. See *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 29.

7. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 58.
8. *Ibid*, p. 80.
9. Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, Lūcknow, 1302 A.H., p. 35. Sayf ad-dīn Bākharzī is often mentioned in the pages of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* (see especially pp. 221-2, 246-7, 252 & 254), and Niẓām ad-dīn at least once quotes a quatrain of the famous Kubrawī saint, though here as elsewhere the author of the verse is not mentioned. Compare *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, p. 86 with Sa'id Nafisī, "Saif ad-dīn Bākharzī", *Majalle Daneshkade Adabiyāt*, II/3 (1334 A. H.), p. 6.
10. *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* was not, however, the first Chishtī *malfūzāt* collection, as is sometimes supposed. Over 70 years before Amīr Ḥasan began to write down the conversations of Niẓām ad-dīn, a disciple of Quṭb ad-dīn, Khidr Mu'in, compiled *Miftāḥ at-ṭālibīn*. Two copies of this slim work are extant, one in the private collection of Professor K. A. Nizami, the other in Aligarh Muslim University Library. It chiefly extols the virtues of the famed tank of Iltutmish, Hauz Shamsī.
11. *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, p. 80.
12. *Ibid*, p. 113; and Ḥamīd Qalandar, *Khair al-majālis* (K. A. Nizami, ed.), Aligarh, 1959, pp. 70-1. The introduction to the latter work by Professor Nizami (pp. 1-67) is especially thorough and useful.
13. Amīr Khurd, *Siyar al-awliyā*, pp. 261-2; also cited in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, pp. 88-9.
14. Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusainī, *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, Hyderabad, 1356 A.H., p. 336; also cited in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 80.
15. Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusainī, *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, pp. 139-4.
16. On the marginal merit of *Afdal al-fawā'id* for assessing the mood of popular piety among fourteenth century Indian Muslims, see B. Lawrence, "Afdal al-fawā'id; a reassessment" in *Life, Times and Works of Amīr Khusrāu Dehlavi*, (Z. Ansari, ed.) New Delhi, 1976, pp. 119-31.
17. See Rukn ad-dīn 'Imād, *Shamā'il-i atqiyā*. This extremely important but heretofore neglected work of pre-Mughal Indian Sufism is discussed on p. 20, fn. 25.

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18. Farīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī, *Surūr aṣ-ṣudūr*; quoted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 36. *Uṣūl at-tariqat* is included as an essay within *Surūr aṣ-ṣudūr*, the *malfūzāt* of both Ḥamīd ad-dīn and his son Azīz ad-dīn, compiled by the latter's son, Farīd ad-dīn Chāk Parrān (ca. 1350 A.D.). The best extant manuscript of this rare work is in the Ḥabīb Ganj Collection, Maulāna Āzād Library, Aligarh Muslim University.
19. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 74.
20. Jamāl ad-dīn Hānsawī, *Mulhamāt*, Delhi, 1889; p. 5. For a description of Jamāl ad-dīn's *Dīwān*, together with select translations see *Islamic Research Association Miscellany I* (1948), pp. 167-74. On the quotation from K. A. Nizami, see *Religion and Politics*, p. 269.
21. Since the prose work, *Afdal al-fawā'id*, though attributed to Amīr Khusrau, is verifiably inauthentic, the sole burden of proving his stature as a Sufi rests with his vast poetic output. Numerous articles in the recent *Amīr Khusrau Commemorative Volume* (New Delhi, 1976) address the topic of Amīr Khusrau and Sufism, but none of them answer the central question; how does his poetry reflect Sufi values? It is the contention of the present author that a great poet can use Sufi imagery without being a Sufi and that Khusrau has, in fact, done just that.
22. Amīr Ḥasan Sijzi, *Mukḥ al-ma'ānī*, manuscript in Maulāna Āzād Library, Aligarh Muslim University, *farsi* 115/15, ff. 6-7. Also, see Mutasim A. Āzād, "Mukḥ al-ma'ānī of Ḥasan-i-Sijzi Dehlavi", *Islamic Culture* 44/3 (Oct. 1970), pp. 234-43.
23. An excerpted portion of the *Ḥasrat nāmāh* text has been preserved in Amīr Khurd, *Siyar al-awliyā*, pp. 346-7 and also quoted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akḥyār*, pp. 100-1.
24. Though not mentioned in M. G. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature* (repr., Lahore, 1968), Fakhr ad-dīn Zarrādī's work is a seminal contribution to the Chishtī apologetic writings on *samā'*. It was published in lithograph form, with an interlinear Urdu translation, from Jhajjar in 1311 A.H.
25. Manuscript copies of *Shamā'il-i atqiyā* exist in many libraries, and are acknowledged in several published catalogues, yet the work has never received any scholarly attention. It is said to have been lithographed once in Hyderabad ca. 1320 A.H., though the present writer has never found a copy even in the vast libraries of modern Hyderabad. Written in 1331 A.D., with a

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full listing of the sources Rukn ad-dīn consulted, it is a mine of information about the apocryphal as well as genuine writings in vogue among the early Chishtīs.

26. For a comprehensive review of Nakshabī's life and works, see K. A. Nizami, "Maulāna Ḍiya ad-dīn Nakshabī", *Burhan* (Nov. 1951), pp. 273-302. There also exists an excellent contemporary *tadhkirah* on the saints and scholars of Badaun, including Nakshabī: Muḥammad Rāzī ad-dīn Farshūrī, *Tadhkirah al-wāsilīn*, Badaun, 1945; on Nakshabī, see pp. 83-9.
27. *Tūḏīnāma* manuscript of the Cleveland Museum of Art, with an introduction by Sherman E. Lee and commentary by Pramod Chandra, Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria, July, 1974.
28. Nizami, in his article on Nakshabī (*Burhan* 277-8), raised some doubt about the accuracy of the tradition that links Nakshabī to Farīd ad-dīn Chāk Parrān, but he has recently informed me that there is in his possession a touching elegy that Nakshabī wrote on the death of his *pīr* that leaves no doubt about their intimate spiritual relationship.
29. Ḍiyā ad-dīn Nakshabī, *Silk as-sulūk*, Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1313 A.H.; pp. 55-6. Also, see 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-akhyār* p. 103.
30. See K. A. Nizami, "Shaykh Muḥyī ad-dīn Ibn 'Arabī aur Hindūstān", *Burhān* (Jan. 1950), pp. 9-25 for an overview of the first responses by Indian Muslims to the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.
31. In the introduction to his edition of *Dīwān-i Mas'ūd Bakk* (Nagpur University, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1972), Syed Abdul Shakoor Qadri makes the intriguing suggestion that Mas'ūd Bakk was identical with Aḥmad Bihārī, the follower of Sharf ad-dīn b. Yaḥyā Manerī, who was also reputed to have been executed in Delhi at the behest of Fīrūz Shāh Tughlūq. Though the pen-name Aḥmad does occur in the *Dīwān-i Mas'ūd Bakk*, the supporting evidence Qadri adduces is too circumstantial to be plausible.
32. *Rawa'ih* or *'Ishq-nāmah* of Mas'ūd Bakk is mentioned in none of the medieval *tadhkirahs* or published catalogues which the present writer has seen. It exists in a *unicum* manuscript of 98 *faṣla* (138 folios) copied by 'Abd al-Malik 'Abbāsī in 1004 A.H. and preserved in Maulāna Āzād Library, Aligarh Muslim University (University Collection 276, *farsi taṣawwuf*). The tone of the

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work and the poems, some of which contain Mas'ūd Bakk in the *maqā'a'*, leave little doubt about its authenticity. On the other hand, the authenticity of *Nikāt al-'āshiqīn* is open to question. Qadri describes it as the last work of Mas'ūd Bakk. It consists of 32 *nikāt* or subtle points, conveyed in the form of advice and followed by a *ghazal* from the pen of "Shaykh-i 'Āshiq", whom at the end of *nukta* 7 is identified as Shaykh Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yaḥyā Manerī. The work, unfortunately, is more tendentious than subtle, and it is hard to accept Qadri's surmise that this work is identical to *Umm an-naṣā'ih*, a work of Mas'ūd Bakk to which medieval hagiographers make mention but which does not appear in any of the published catalogues.

Nikāt al-'āshiqīn was published from Hyderabad in 1310 A.H./1891 A.D., the same year that *Mir'āt al-'ārifīn* was published from the same city. In 1316 A.H. 1898 A.D., *Dīwān-i Mas'ūd Bakk* also appeared from Hyderabad. All three works are extremely rare in their printed forms.

33. *Dīwān-i Mas'ūd Bakk*, p. 24.
34. Qadri (op. cit., p. 23) also notes that none of the *ghazals* and only a few of the couplets from the *Dīwān* appear in *Mir'āt al-'ārifīn*, supporting the hypothesis that Mas'ūd Bakk's great work was written in his last years.
35. See, for instance, Shaykh 'Alī Hujwirī, *Kashf al-mahjūb* (R. A. Nicholson, trans.) E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, London, 1911 (repr., 1976); pp. 413-6.
36. *Mir'āt al-'ārifīn*, pp. 181-2; excerpted in Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbar al-akhyar*, p. 165.
37. Sayyid Muḥammad Husainī Gesū Darāz, *Maktūbāt*, Hyderabad, 1362 A.H.; pp. 124-35.
38. For the full list of his numerous writings, see K. A. Nizami, "Gīsū Darāz", *EI*², III, p. 1115. For a thorough description of their content and estimated date of authorship, see S. S. Khusro Hussaini, "Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī-i Gīsūdarāz (721/1321-825/1422) on Sufism", McGill University M. A. thesis, August 1976; pp. 29-38 as well as appendix D—Sources on Gēsū Darāz.
39. *Asmār al-asrār* as quoted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-akhyār*, pp. 131-2.
40. *Tabṣirat al-iṣṭilāḥāt as-sūfiya* was published from Hyderabad in 1365 A.H. In addition to compiling *Jawāmi' al-kalim* and authoring this work, Sayyid Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusainī wrote

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an *ishārat* (instructional treatise), *Kitāb al-'aqā'id*, published from Gulbarga in 1367 A.H. .

41. *Mi'rāj al-'āshiqīn* is a work whose propadeutic value is beyond dispute but its authenticity remains in doubt, M. Mujeeb (*Indian Muslims*, Montreal, (1967, p. 166) does not question its ascription to Gesū Darāz and singles it out for praise among all the *ishārāt* of pre-Mughal Indian Sufism. K. A. Nizami (*op. cit.*, p. 1115), on the other hand, doubts its legitimacy, while nothing five different editions of *Mi'rāj al-'āshiqīn* that are published or about to be published.
42. For a full list of the successors to Gesū Darāz, see Nizami, *Tārīkh-i mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, pp. 207-8
43. There is much dispute about the death date of Sayyid Ashraf. In the introduction to "A Critical Edition of *Latā'if-i Ashrafī*, Part 1" (Aligarh Muslim University, Ph. D. dissertation, 1965), Wāḥid Ashraf reviews all the evidence and concludes that his esteemed ancestor died in 829 A.H./1425 A.D. Two letters from the *Maktūbāt-i Ashrafī* are crucial for his argument of a latter death date than the official death date of 808 A.H./1505 A.D. One is letter 45 to Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam referring to Raja Ganesh and the political situation in Bengal; the letter could not have been written before 1414-5 A.D. The second is letter 32, in which he mentions a *second* trip to the Deccan to see Sayyid Gesū Darāz. By the time Sayyid Ashraf arrived there, Gesū Darāz had already died, so his arrival must have been after 1422 A.D. Presuming that he lived long enough after that time to return home and attend to the question of his successor, we may accept Wāḥid Ashraf's date of 1425 A.D. as a reasonable revised death date for the Master of Kichhauchha.
44. Interestingly, Wāḥid Ashraf, after speculating with great skill on the death date of his ancestor, fails to suggest a precise time for the saint's arrival in India. He dismisses the testimony of *Latā'if-i Ashrafī* that Sayyid Ashraf performed funeral prayers for Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yaḥyā Manerī, the great Firdausī saint of Bihar (ca. 1380 A.D.), and argues, on the basis of internal evidence from *Latā'if* 22-24 (vol. II, pp. 101 f.), that the saint must have settled in Kichhauchha before 1350 A.D. Yet if it is true that he accompanied Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī part way on their mutual exodus from Central Asia to Hindustan, then he could not have left his homeland before 1365 A.D. Since he was accepted by 'Alā ad-dīn Lāhūrī, on his arrival in Bengal, as a man already

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proficient in spiritual discipline, it seems preferable to suggest a later arrival in Bengal, say, 1368 A.D., when Sayyid Ashraf would have been approximately 45 years of age. If he remained with 'Alā ad-dīn ten to twelve years before proceeding to Kichhauchha, then he would have arrived in Bihar en route to Kichhauchha in time to perform the funeral prayers for Makhdūm al-mulk.

45. On Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, see below pp. 53-4.
46. For a full listing of the works of Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, see Wāḥid Ashraf, Introduction, pp. 43-6. Of the sixteen or seventeen extinct works, especially valuable would have been the Sayyid's three copious commentaries: *Sharḥ-i Hidāyat* (of Marghinānī), which he presented to Qāḍī Shihāb ad-dīn Dawlatābādī, *Sharḥ-i 'Awārif al-ma'ārif* and *Sharḥ-i Fuṣuṣ al-hikam*. Also the *Fatāwā-yi Ashrafīya* and *Mir'āt al-ḥaqā'iq*, the latter explaining Sufi technical terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*), are frequently cited in *Latā'if-i Ashrafī* as pivotal writings from the prolix saint of Kichhauchha.
47. Niẓām ad-dīn Yemenī, *Latā'if-i Ashrafī*, Nuṣrat al-muṭaba', Delhi, 1295 A.H. The work also exists in numerous manuscript copies, and an Urdu translation was once published from Karachi.
48. See Wāḥid Ashraf, Introduction, pp. 61-70, which improves on the speculations of W. Ivanow set forth in "The Sources of Jāmi's *Nafaḥat*", *JASB. Nafaḥāt*, *JASB. New Series* 19 (1923), pp. 299-303.
49. Again, we are faced with the problem of a controversial death date for a major medieval saint of North-eastern India. The preferred date, in our opinion, is 9 Zil Qa'dah 818 A.H./1416 A.D., as reflected in the chronogram *nūr banūr shud* "Light merged into Light" and cited by A.A. Khan, *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*, Calcutta, 1924; p. 107 A.H. Dani, on the basis of patchy literary evidence, culled from a late *tadhkirah* and an ambiguous inscription, argues for 1459 A.D. (28 Zil Hijja 863 A.H.) as the death date of the saint. See A.H. Dani, "The House of Raja Ganesa of Bengal", *JASB. Letters* XVIII/2 (1952), pp. 139-40.
50. Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-8.
51. Nūr Quṭb-i 'Ālam Pandawī, *Maktūbāt*, defective manuscript in Subḥānullāh Collection, Maulāna Āzād Library, Aligarh Muslim

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- University, f. 14 B (Letter 9). Also quoted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 149.
52. *Anīs al-‘āshiqīn* and *Rafīq al-‘ārifīn* are extant in the form of rare manuscripts that can, with difficulty, be located in present-day Bihar (e.g., at the uncatalogued library of Phulwari Sharif on the outskirts of Patna). *Anīs al-‘āshiqīn* is said to have been once printed in a lithographed edition, but the present writer has never been able to find reference to this publication. S. H. Askari has provided a fine biographical introduction to the neglected Ḥusām ad-dīn Manikpūrī; see his "Hazrat Hesamaddīn, the 15th century Ghishtī saint of Manikpūr", *Current Studies* (Patna College) 1, May 1953, pp. 4-11 A.
53. Excerpted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 149.
54. This work has been extensively quoted 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, pp. 187-8 and also in 'Abdullāh Khweshgī Qasūrī *Ma'ārij al-wilāyat*, Part IV.
55. Compare 'Abd al-Quddūs' initiations by the resurrected presence of Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq (exaggerated though it may be; see S. Digby, "'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (1456-1537 A.D.): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi", *Medieval India-a Miscellany*, vol. 3, Aligarh, 1975, p. 6) with the illiterate Kharaqānī's initiation by the powerful spirit of Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī (A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, pp. 89-90).
56. S. Digby, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
57. For the complete spiritual genealogy or *shajrah* of Ḥājji Imdād Allāh, see K. A. Nizami, "Chishtiyya", p. 53. Too little scholarly attention has thus far been paid to this brilliant and eclectic Sufi leader. He is briefly cited by Nizami, "Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam (1763-1898)" in S. T. Lokhandwalla, ed., *India and Contemporary Islam*, Simla, 1971, p. 112, and his notable essays have been republished in *Kulliyāt-i Imdādīya*, Deoband, n. d.
58. Amir Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, pp. 240-1.
59. Excerpted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 42.
60. Qādī Hamīd ad-dīn Nāgaurī, *Risālah-i 'ishqīya*, Delhi, 1332 A.H., pp. 16-7.
61. The *Lawā'ih* of Qādī Hamīd ad-dīn is no longer extant, though it seems to have been a popular book among thirteenth century Indian Sufis (note, for instance, the references to it in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, pp. 128 & 162). The excerpt provided here is taken

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from the major seventeenth century *tadhkirah* by ‘Abdallāh Khweshgī Qasūrī, *Ma‘ārij al-wilāyat*, manuscript in the personal collection of Professor K. A. Nizami, f. 198.

62. Quoted in Amīr Hasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, p. 150.
63. *Shek subhodaya* was published by Babu Sukumar Sen of Calcutta in 1927 and, according to H. E. Stapleton, it was “probably prepared to establish a right to the Ba'is Hazari estates during the preparation of Todar Mall's rent-roll in Akbar's time” (A. A. Khan, *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandya*, p. 106, fn. 1).
64. For a spiritual genealogy or *shajrah* of the early Suhrawardī saints, see J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971, p. 270. Transposed, with minor changes, from Abul Fādl's 'Ā'in-i Akbarī, as the author himself acknowledges, the chart has many wrong death dates and also omits mention of Jalāl ad-dīn Tabrīzī.
65. Shaykh Hamīd ad-dīn Suwalī Nāgaurī was the most outspoken Chishtī critic of Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā. See M. N. Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India from 1200 A.D. to 1450 A.D.*, Aligarh, 1962, p. 29 for an English rendition of the dialogue between the two saints as cited in Jamali, *Siyar al-'ārifīn*. Some of their correspondence is also excerpted by ‘Abd al-Haqq in *Akḥbār al-akhyār*
66. Note especially the full often suggestive quotations in ‘Abd al-Haqq, *Akḥbār al-akhyār*, pp. 63-8.
67. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 352-4. For further details, consult Y. D. Ahuja, “Early Years of Shaykh ‘Irāqī's Life”, *Islamic Culture* 30 (1956), pp. 95-105 and *idem*, “Shaykh ‘Irāqī's Travels and His Stay in Rūm”, *Islamic Culture* 33 (1959), pp. 260-77.
68. See Maulavi ‘Abdul Muqtadir, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, Patna, 1908—, vol. XVI, pp. 165-6, where the author favours Rukn ad-dīn Abu'l-Fath (d. 1335 A.D.) as the *pīr* of the famous poet. However, K. A. Nizami, relying on information in *Laṭā'if-i Ashrafī*, declares him to be a disciple and son-in-law of Bahā ad-dīn Zakariyā (“Husaynī Sādāt, Amīr, *EI*² IV, p. 635).
69. They are described in Nizami, *op. cit.*, p. 635, except for *Rūḥ al-arwāḥ*, Husaynī's commentary on the 99 Beautiful Names of God, which Nizami believed to be extinct. Fortunately, it, too, has survived; see S. DeLaugier de Beaurecueil, *Manuscripts d'Afghanistan*, Cairo, 1964, p. 136.

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70. Note, for example, R. A. Nicholson's comment in *Catalogue of Oriental Mss. belonging to E. G. Browne*, Cambridge, 1932, p. 41.
71. Amīr Husaynī Sādāt, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, Delhi, 1912, pp. 96-7.
72. A brief recapitulation of *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* and *Sirāj al-hidāyat* is provided by 'Abdur Rashid, "The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Sufi Writings", in C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, p. 138. See also K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics*, p. 225, fn. 1 and *idem*, "The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics", *Medieval India Quarterly* III/1 & 2, Jul-Oct 1957, p. 5.
73. Aḥmad Chirāmpūsh is briefly mentioned by S. H. Askari, "Sufism in Medieval Bihar", *Current Studies* (Patna College) 7, 1957, pp. 33-4. He is also the subject of a further article by Professor Askari: Hazrat Aḥmad Chirāmpūsh, a 14th century Sufi Saint of Bihar", *Patna University Journal* VII, 1954, pp. 20-32.
74. See the almost too objective but brilliantly articulate assessment of Jamālī's *Siyar al-'ārifīn* by M. Habib: "Chishtī Mystics' Records of the Sultanate Period", reprinted in K. A. Nizami, ed., *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Mohammed Habib*, vol. 1, New Delhi, 1974; pp. 394-7.
75. Sayyid Husām ad-dīn Rashdī has written an excellent introduction to Jamālī's lifework and also provided a superlative edition to one of his most important poems. See S. H. Rashdī, *Masnawī Mehr-o-Māh of Jamālī Dehlavī*, published by the Iran/Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, Rawalpindi, 1974.
75. Quoted in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 113. The date of Sharaf ad-dīn's first visit to the capital of the Sultanate remains a subject of controversy. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, by suggesting that the young Bihari travelled to Delhi in order to become a disciple of Nizām ad-dīn only to find that the great Shaykh had already died, is advancing 1326-7 A.D. as the probable date of his visit. In the twelfth chapter of *Ma'dan al-ma'ānī*, however, Zain ad-dīn Badr-i 'Arabī, presumably on the authority of Sharaf ad-dīn himself, states that the saint visited Delhi during the lifetime of Nizām ad-dīn, met the resident *pīr* of Ghiyāspūr but preferred the Firdausī Najīb ad-dīn. Since the death date of Najīb ad-dīn is given as 1291 A.D. in *Munīs al-qulūb* (as

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compared with 1300 A.D. in *Ā'in-i Akbarī* and 1332 A.D. in *Khazīnat al-aṣfiyā*, the likelihood is that Sharaf ad-dīn did visit Delhi well before the death of Niẓām ad-dīn and, like several early Indo-Muslim saints, lived to be over 100 years of age, not surrendering his soul to God till 1379 A.D. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq must be reflecting an oral tradition of Delhi that obviously preserved the supremacy of Niẓām ad-dīn as the Pole of the Age at the same time that it acknowledged the ascending spiritual power of Sharaf ad-dīn. The testimony of the Firdausī sources seems preferable.

77. P. N. Chopra, *Society and Culture during the Mughal Age*, Agra, 1963, p. 173.
78. *Maktūbāt-i Ḥaẓrat Sharaf ad-dīn Yaḥyā Manerī*, Kanpur, 1329 A.H., pp. 73-4.
79. *Ibid*, pp. 183-4.
80. *Maktūbāt-i Jawābī-yi Ḥaẓrat Sharaf ad-dīn Yaḥyā Manerī*, Kanpur, 1910, pp. 4-5.
81. *Ibid*, p. 5.
82. These minor *malfūẓāt* of Makhdūm al-Mulk are briefly described in A. Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D.)*, Calcutta, 1969, pp. 168-9.
83. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, p. 113.
84. Many of these *karamat* are detailed in *Manāqib al-aṣfiyā*, a hagiographical extravaganza with modest factual content written after the death of Makhdūm al-Mulk by a relative. It has been lithographed from Calcutta in 1895. We also find unusual and extraordinary acts attributed to the saint in the vast corpus of *malfūẓāt* literature, but they are minor and rare in comparison to the unbridled imagination at work in *Manāqib al-aṣfiyā*.
85. The possibilities for future research are set forth by S. H. Askari in his seminal article, "The Correspondence of Two 14th Century Sufi Saints of Bihar with the Contemporary Sovereigns of Delhi and Bengal", *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* XLII/2, 1956, pp. 177-25.
86. Quoted by 'Abd al-Ḥaqq in *Akḥbār al-akḥyār*, pp. 119-20.
87. Information on Aḥmad Langar Daryā as well as his illustrious ancestors and their enormous literary output is available in Muḥammad Mu'īn ad-dīn Dardai, *Tārīkh-i silsilah-i Firdausīya*, Taj Press, Gaya, 1962, though the book has long been out of print.

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88. Many scholars have assumed that Bū 'Alī Qalandar was a member of the Chishtī *silsilah* (see, e.g., J. A. Subhan, *Sufism : its Saints and Shrines*, Lucknow, 1960, p. 323 and A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 350 as well as *Islamic Literatures of India*, Wiesbaden, 1973, p. 16). 'Abd al-Ḥaqq (*Akhbār al-akhyār*, pp. 124-5), however, is suspicious of the traditions that link the saint either to Quṭb ad-dīn or Niẓām ad-dīn. His namesake, Sharaf ad-dīn b. Yaḥyā Manerī, is said to have met him and been impressed with his spiritual powers during the visit to Delhi described above (fn. 76), but Makhdūm al-mulk does not link Bū 'Alī Qalandar to the Chishtī order; according to Sayyid Shāh Ibn 'Alī, *Wasilat-i sharf o-ẓarī'ah-i dawlat*, Daryapur, 1334 A.H.; repr. by M. Tayyib Abdālī, Bodhgaya, 1965 A.D., pp. 18-19 & fn. 2. A. Schimmel has mentioned to me a recent Ph. D. thesis on Bū 'Alī Qalandar from Karachi University by M. Tafhīmī. Though I have not seen it, I would imagine that the author answers the age-old question of Bū 'Alī Qalandar's affiliation or non-affiliation with the Chishtīya.
89. *Mathrawī-yi Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar*, Delhi, 1383 A.H., pp. 14-16.
90. Note especially A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 428-9.
91. K. A. Nizami, "Ḥaḍrat Shaykh-i Akbar Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī aur Hindūstān" *Burhān* XXIV (1950), p. 16.
92. Sayyid 'Alī Ḥamadānī has attracted a spate of superb scholars. For general bibliographic information, consult C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature : A Bio-Bibliographic Survey*, 1/2, repr. London, 1972, pp. 96-7, fn. 4. An analysis of his Shi'ite proclivities is put forth in M. Mole, "Les Kubrawīya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'hégire", *Revue des études Islamiques* 1961, pp. 110-18. On the role of dreams, important to all the Kubrawī saints, in the thought of Ḥamadānī, we have a lucid, informative study by F. Meir, "Die Welt der Urbilder bei 'Alī Ḥamadānī (d. 1385)", *Evanos Jahrbuch* 18 (1950), pp. 115-73. On his trip to Kashmir from Central Asia, there is A. A. Hekmat, "Les voyages d'un mystique persan de Ḥamadān au Kashmir", *Jourral asiatique* 240 (1952), pp. 53-66. And finally, the life and major writings of the saint have been examined in J. K. Teufel, *Eine Lebensbeschreibung des Scheichs 'Alī-i Ḥamadānī*, Leiden, 1962.
93. Quotation from Professor Shams ad-dīn Aḥmad, Department of Persian, University of Kashmir during a conversation in Salar Jung Library, Hyderabad, January 15, 1976. The learned

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professor was stating not merely his own personal view but a belief widely held among Kashmiris.

94. M. S. Commissariat. *History of Gujarat I*, Madras, 1938; pp. 131-3.
95. K. A. Nizami ("Shaikh Aḥmad Maghribī as a Great Historical Personality of Medieval Gujarat", *Medieval India—a Miscellany*, vol. 3, Aligarh, 1975, pp. 234-59) provides an excellent introduction to the uniqueness of this saint and the mediocre quality of the available sources on his life, teaching and influence.
96. Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, p. 132. The story also appears in *Khair al-majalis*, pp. 191-3 and *Akhbar al-akhbar* p. 75.
97. M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims*, pp. 166, & 171. Also, note the uncritical but still important work of Abdul Ḥaqq : *The Role of Sufis in the Development of Urdu*, Aurangabad, 1923.
98. Of the numerous fourteenth century saints of Northern India, only three, Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar, Mas'ūd Bakk and Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, regularly quoted the verses of the *Mathrawī-yi ma'rawī* or the *Diwān-i Shams-i Tabriz*.
99. Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, pp. 84-5 and p. 245.
100. Muḥammad Akbar Husainī, *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, pp. 118-20.
101. See, e.g., 'Abdullāh Khweshgī Qasūrī, *Ma'ārij al-wilāyat*, personal copy of Professor K. A. Nizami, ff. 174-8, which describes the conversion of Ajaipal Yogi and his followers. In an unpublished paper delivered at the School of Oriental and African Studies in January 1975, S. Digby identifies Ajaypal as 'the eponymous Cauhan founder of the city of Ajmer' for whom there was a 'cult celebrated locally with an annual festival in the Hindu year' ("Encounters with Jogis in Indian Sufi Hagiography", p. 15).
102. Quoted from *Manāqib al-aṣfiyā*, pp. 138-9 and *Iqtibās al-anwār*, p. 237 in A. Rashid, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
103. Amīr Ḥassn Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, pp. 70 and 56.
104. In "The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its Influence on Medieval Indian Politics", p. 26, K. A. Nizami aptly analyzes the Nawahun affair, as this incident came to be called. M. G. S. Hodgson, in his monumental but often baffling work, *The Venture of Islam* alludes to this same incident but without mentioning the name of Rāju Qattāl, whose words and actions he attributes to his saintly father! (*The Venture of Islam*, Chicago, 1974, vol. 2, p. 538).
105. A superb study of the *Ruḥdnāmah* is contained in the earlier cited article by S. Digby; *Medieval India—a Miscellany*, vol. 3, Aligarh 1975, pp. 38-51.

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106. Like Aḥmad Sirhindī before him, Shāh Walī Allāh chiefly criticized the traditional concept of the *pīr* by arrogating to himself a new title (*qa'im az-zaman*) that comprised wider connotations, corresponding to his broad efforts to bridge rifts in the Indian Muslim community of his time, than did the terms *pīr*, *quṭb* or *walī*; 'Aziz Aḥmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964, p. 203. Also, J. M. S. Baljon ("Prophet logy of Shāh Walī Allāh" *Islamic Studies* (Jan. 1970), pp. 69-80) explains his preference for the companions of the Prophet.

On Muḥammad Iqbāl, see A. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, Leiden, 1963, where the author deftly examines the many-faceted aspects of Iqbāl's writings on Sufism: while opposed to the abuses of traditional Sufism, especially those associated with 'pirism' and a restrictive interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (pp. 271-3, 362-9, & 385), Iqbāl nonetheless felt a deep veneration for numerous Sufis, including 'the generations of great practical mystics thanks to whom India had become partly islamized' (pp. 370-1).

107. Throughout *The Sufi Order's in Islam*, New York, 1971, J. Spencer Trimingham dwells on the so-called degeneracy of Sufism, attributing much of this decline to the veneration accorded the *pīr*, e.g., on pp. 144-5. He even goes so far as to claim that there was nothing ethical in the conduct of any of the saints (p. 158).
108. R. C. Zaehrer (*Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York, 1969, pp. 176-8) not only criticizes the boldness of Abū Sa'īd b. Abī'l-Khair but even berates those who have studied him: "Nicholson has devoted many pages to the doings of this far from lovable eccentric in his *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, and we will not attempt to cover again ground so little worth covering." (p. 177).
109. M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims*, pp. 149-50.

Supplement

What is Indian About Indian Sufism ?

by

Dr. Bruce B. Lawrence

(A Preliminary Answer with reference to the Contrasting Evidence from the Literature and Tomb Cults of Selected Indo-Muslim Shaikhs)

What is Indian about Indian Ṣūfism? The question is too broad to be answered with a single essay, however precise in focus, however well documented in detail. Instead, we will attempt to approach the question through examining three related queries:

(1) What is institutional Ṣūfism? Is it the natural outgrowth of ascetical speculation and poetic discourse as both become refined and canonized into alternate styles of piety differing from the public rituals of 'orthodox' Islam? Or were other factors at work?

(2) How did particular *silsilahs* accommodate to the Indian environment? Or, more concretely, is there a single Indian environment? Would it be preferable to address a variety of discrete historical and geographical circumstances, each with its own challenge to, opportunity for, and resolution of the Muslim presence personified by the Ṣūfī master and his followers?

(3) Do Ṣūfism and the *bhakti* movement interact with one another? Or would it be more accurate to view them as parallel channels within Islam and Hinduisim, respectively, for the expression of anti-formalist, anti-scripturalist modes of religious behaviour, modes which were also fervently personal, consistently poetic and institutionally fragmented?

None of the above sub-questions can be answered in isolation from the data of particular biographies and specific tomb cults of Indo-Muslim Shaikhs. The focus of the current essay will be on the biographies and saint cults of seven saints in three regions of South Asia: in Rajasthan, Mu^ʿin al-dīn Ajmerī (d. 1233) and Hamīd al-Dīn Nāgorī (d. 1274); in Gujarat, Aḥmad Khattū Maghribī (d. 1445), Burhān al-Dīn Quṭb-e ^ʿĀlam Bukhari (d. 1453) and Wajih al-Dīn ^ʿAlawi (d. 1589); and in Kashmir, Sayyid ^ʿAlī Hamadānī (d. 1385) and Nūr al-Dīn Rishī (d. 1439).

One hypothesis alone seems to make sense of the disparate evidence that will be marshalled in this essay. Our hypothesis is that the complex phenomenon of institutional *Ṣūfism* cannot be understood apart from an analysis of its two major component elements, doctrine and organization. Theologically, the latter should be an extension of the former, but in practise the two coexist in an uneasy tension, and there are even cases in which the operational structure of a tomb cult blatantly contraverts the ascetical tenets of *Ṣūfī* doctrine, often because territorial and economic considerations (read: power and greed) have shaped the tomb cults with little attention to the teachings of the revered, deceased founder.

Rajasthan begins and also typifies our seriatim case study of Indo-Muslim *Ṣhaikhs*. Ajmer and Nagor are the two urban pockets of medieval Rajasthan to which our attention is drawn. The former city had a commercial, military and social background, even before the advent of Islam in the subcontinent, which has influenced the shape of Muslim devotion there. In particular, the growth of an enormous *dargāh* complex at Ajmer during the Mughal period reflects the continuous strategic significance of Rajasthan as much as the rising popularity of the major saint and his devotees buried in that cool and mountainous locale.

The literary/biographical base of the major saint is, in fact, very slim. Even the factual data for a skeletal biography is hard to trace. It may be summarized as follows:

- Mu^ʿin al-Dīn Sijzī (1) was born and lived in Sijistan, hence he has the *nisbah* of Sijzi.
- (2) joined the discipline of the *Chishtī* *Ṣhaikh*, ^ʿUthman Hārwanī, and became his principal *khalfah* or successor.
- (3) travelled to Delhi, undoubtedly visiting some major centres of the Muslim world, but which, when and with what outcome is not clear.
- (4) arrived at Ajmer around the time of its conquest by *Ṣhīhāb* al-Dīn *Ghorī*.
- (5) had two major disciples, *Ḥamīd* al-Dīn *Sawālī* and *Qutb* al-Dīn *Bakhtiyār Kākī*. The latter became his principal disciple, although the means of exchange is uncertain.

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Yet the cult of Mu^ʿin al-Dīn Chishtī, even before the development of an enormous *dargah* complex during the Mughal period, far outstripped the above life sketch. Through a series of spurious works (*malfūzāt*, *tadhkirahs* and also poetic *diwāns*), Mu^ʿin al-Dīn became revered as:

- (1) God's appointed evangelist in Hindustan, who was instrumental in the victories of invading Muslim armies;
- (2) the embodiment of all values and virtues esteemed in Islam;
- (3) the performer of countless *Karāmats*;
- (4) the ready intermediary between God and man; and above all,
- (5) the vigilant custodian protecting the welfare—material and spiritual—of his devotees.¹

Obviously, the second stage of the biographical process for Mu^ʿin al-Dīn involved not only the inflation of factual data but also the addition of new data, viz., the staggering *Karāmats*, that had no evident connection to actual events of his lifetime.

Mu^ʿin al-Dīn seems to present a clearcut example of the disparity between doctrine and organization: a humble, poor, regional saint becomes the universal mediator whose tomb site is the prized real estate of North India's Muslim elite. At least part of his fame, however, is due to the twin facts: (a) that Rajasthan was vital to the non-religious, i.e., the ruling, interests of both Sultanate and Mughal India, and (b) that the network of saints from Mu^ʿin al-Dīn's *silsilah*, the Chishtiya, extended to most of the urban centres of Hindustan by the 16th century.

The literary/cultic pattern for Mu^ʿin al-Dīn was somewhat paralleled by his principal successor in Delhi: Quṭb al-dīn also wrote very little and inspired few to write in detail about the early period of his life, yet the latter became the object of a flourishing, though less successful, tomb cult than Mu^ʿin al-Dīn Chishtī.²

The case was different for Mu^ʿin al-Dīn's second major disciple, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sawālī Nāgorī. He settled in rural Rajasthan, where he worked for a living as a farmer Ṣūfī. He wrote letters, poems, essays, prayers. What he has left is a sizable, authentic literary legacy. It represents the truest vision of institutional Ṣūfism at the initial phase of its extension into Hindustan. Arguably, there is no Ṣūfī author prior to Sayyid Gīsu Darāz of Delhi and Gulbarga (d. 1422) who produced a series of writings that expressed the actual outlook of the early Chishtī masters as vividly as those of Ṣūfī Ḥamīd al-Dīn.

Yet the farmer saint from Nāgor is scarcely known among scholars of South Asia. His tomb cult, unlike that of Mu^ḥin al-Dīn, did not flourish in the Mughal period, though prominent members of the Mughal court, including Abu'l-Faḍl, were themselves former residents of Nāgor. The successors to Ḥamīd al-Dīn till the present day proudly maintain that they have honoured the Ṣūfī dictum '*al-faqr-o fakhrī* (my poverty is my pride). The saint who was humble, poor and regional remains buried in a tomb site that continues to mirror those same qualities. Its only splendour is an impressive gate that Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Tughluq insisted on building. The *sajjādah-nashīn* of Nāgor, corresponding to the *diwān* of Ajmer, is a *pān-wala*, with little wealth and no pretensions to power. The lines of succession from Ḥamīd al-Dīn are similarly limited to still smaller urban pockets in Rajasthan, although one does occasionally find overlapping spiritual pedigrees (*shajrahs*) with the main line from Quṭb al-dīn (Farīd al-Dīn, Nizām al-Dīn, Nāṣir al-Dīn, etc.) for instance in the shrine of the 16th century saint, Khwaja Khanū of Gwalior.

Gujarat is a region of South Asia second to none in its strategic importance for numerous ruling dynasts, Hindu and Muslim. The high commercial profile of Gujarat, especially the prominence of its port cities in overseas trade, has contributed to its distinct political and religious history. Under the Delhi Sulṭanate it was not easily or fully joined to the governing interests of the capital city. It also retained a measure of independence during the more effective military bureaucratization and centralization of the Mughal period.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that the pattern of institutional Ṣūfism in Gujarat differs from neighbouring Rajasthan. As in Ajmer and Nāgor, the most renowned saints are linked to the advent of Islam, but they are not associated with pan-Indian *silsilahs*. Instead, they are identified with regional orders of restricted popularity, e.g., the Maghribī and Shattārī, or with pan-Islamic orders important in the Arab world, e.g., the Suhrawardī.

The most famous of all pre-Mughal Gujarati Shaikhs is Aḥmad Khattū Maghribī (d. 1445). He has scarcely any literary corpus to his credit, yet he lies buried outside Ahmadabad in the formerly splendid resort city of Sarkhej. His mausoleum was constructed by Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, eldest son of Ahmadabad's founder, Aḥmad Shāh, in 1446. Unlike Ajmer and Nāgor, there is not only a *mazār* but an elaborate mosque and imposing *maḍrasah* all located within

the same compound. Dominating a pond that was cleared to highlight its location is the broad dome beneath which was built the glittering marbled canopy of Aḥmad Khaṭṭū. Gujarat's two most renowned sultāns lie buried just beyond this domed edifice, as it were, at the feet of Aḥmad Khaṭṭū, in far less imposing tombs: Sultān Maḥmūd Begada (1458-1511) and Sultān Muẓaffar II (1511-26).

The tomb cult of Aḥmad Khaṭṭū, to judge from recent attendance at the annual *ʿurs* (anniversary), is a regional affair of limited appeal. The shrine is maintained by *khuddām* (attendants) who faintheartedly claim to be latter-day relatives of the deceased saint.

The restricted scope of Aḥmad Khaṭṭū's cult is partly due to the fact that he was a member of the Maghribī *silsilah*, hardly known elsewhere in medieval Hindustan. Aḥmad Khaṭṭū's contemporary, on the other hand, was Sayyid Burhān al-dīn Quṭb-i ʿĀlam Bukhārī (d. 1453), a grandson of the famed Punjabi saint, Sayyid Jalāl al-dīn Bukhārī Maḥdūm-i Jahāniyan Jahāngasht (d. 1384), himself fourth in line of descent from the founder of the Suhrawardiya, Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar Suhrawardi (d. 1234). Burhān al-dīn's tomb, situated in Batva, illustrates a pattern of tacit accommodation to the Indian environment which could certainly be replicated elsewhere. Though the Suhrawardī *silsilah* has been described as doctrinally rigid (e.g., supporting every requirement of the *shariʿah*, outlawing *samaʿ* and rejecting Hindus as *mushrikīn*), and though the *khānqah-mazār* complex of Burhān al-Dīn at Batva, a suburb of Aḥmadabad, was initially endowed by the city's eponymous founder and its first Muslim ruler, Sultān Aḥmad Shāh (1411-1441), the present climate at Batva is markedly bi-creedal: Hindus, together with Muslims, congregate in large numbers at the monthly as well as annual celebrations held there. Part of the attraction is the rock of Batva, said to be a unique admixture of lead, iron and wood 'revealed' to Burhan al-Dīn as proof of his spiritual attainments.³ To the present day, Muslims and Hindus of all classes and backgrounds join in the shamanistic rituals that surround the sacred rock of Batva.

On a different tangent, illustrating the process of reification or non-accommodation to the Indian environment, is the *mazār-khānqah-madrasah* complex at Khānpūr in the centre of Aḥmadabad, but a short distance from the spacious and elegant Jamiʿ Masjid. Its patron figure is the leading Muslim scholar of pre-Mughal and early Mughal Ahmadabad, Shāh Wajih al-Dīn ʿAlavi (d. 1589). It is among the many ironies of contemporary scholarship on South Asian Islam that

Shāh Wajīh al-Dīn has never been the subject of a major monograph, is mentioned but once briefly in M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, and receives scant notice in Zubaid Aḥmad, *The Contribution of India to Arabic Literature*, even though over half of his forty odd major writings were in the Arabic language. The biography of Wajīh al-Dīn reads like a *madrasah adab* manual on how to be a perfect Muslim. It is far more factual and detailed, at least in form, than either Aḥmad Khattū's or Burhān al-Dīn's. A *ḥāfiẓ* and a *muqri'* at the age of seven, he also mastered *tafsir*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *naḥw*, *manṭiq*, *falsafah* and *kalām* by early adolescence. So comprehensive and prolific was his subsequent scholarship that Bada'uni could say of him:⁴

There was hardly a standard work from the treatises on the accidental property of light to books of law and medicine which he had not annotated and adorned with a commentary

Moreover, in daily dress and conduct, Wajīh al-Dīn was a true Ṣūfī, clothing himself in coarse garments made fashionable by ninth century Iraqi ascetics, at the same time that he held audience with all classes of people in sixteenth century Aḥmadabad.

Even the mystical affiliations of Shāh Wajīh al-Dīn should have endeared him to future generations of Hindus as well as Muslims. He was a major disciple of Muḥammad Ghawth Gwaliyari (d. 1563), author of *Jawāhir al-kḥamsa*, in the most syncretistic of all medieval Indian Ṣūfī orders, the Shattariya. Yet the *mazār-khānqāh-madrasah* complex of Wajīh al-Dīn, lauded in contemporary chronicles from Gujarat, suffered an eclipse even before the British stormed Aḥmadabad in 1780. At present only the scholar-saint's tomb at Khanpūr remains, a haunting reminder of better times, zealously maintained by Wajīh al-Dīn's very wealthy and conspicuously political descendants.

In short, a single judgment may apply to all the above tomb complexes of Aḥmadabad: though their denizens are among the most famous and, in the case of Wajīh al-Dīn, literarily active members of medieval Gujarati society, none of these tombs begins to echo the continuous acclaim as a pan-Indian or even regional pilgrimage centre that Ajmer is able to boast of to the present day.

The case is different with the saint cults of Kashmir. Like Gujarat and unlike Rajasthan, Kashmir is a region of the subcontinent that was not central to the emergence of a Muslim polity under the

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Delhi Sulṭanate, and also like Gujarat and unlike Rajasthan; it did not enter the Mughal fold except unwillingly and at a comparatively late date (1586).

But in a sense Kashmir is still more isolated than Gujarat from the centralized bureaucracy of either Sulṭanate or Mughal India. It is a valley, cut off from the military incursions and also the cultural influences of all but the most hardy predators. For the purposes of this essay, it has been included as part of South Asia, but many Kashmiris would resist even that broad rubric, arguing that Kashmir belongs to no larger territorial or cultural category than Kashmir.

The two saints from the Valley whom we have chosen to examine are, by an standard, the most renowned from the pre-Mughal period and perhaps the most renowned of any period, till Shaiḫ ʿAbdullah. The first, Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadani, was a fourteenth century Central Asian Muslim scholar-saint who had travelled widely in the Islamic world before coming to Kashmir in 1379. Though he lived in Srinagar for less than five years and died while on a trip to Kunar in the North-west (from whence he was removed to Khatlān in present-day Tajikistan for burial), he is revered today as the Shaiḫ who made possible the widescale spread of Islam among inhabitants of the Valley. The site of his khānqāh in Srinagar was transformed into a towering wooden framed mosque, which continues to serve jointly as a place of prayer and centre of pilgrimage for present-day Kashmiris. Sayyid ʿAlī belonged to the Kubrawi *silsilah*. No other saint from this *silsilah* gained renown in South Asia, though the Firdausi order, of major prominence in Bihar, was derived from the Kubrawiya and certain saints of other *silsilahs*, such as Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngir Simnani (d. 1428) had originally been Kubrawi. Within Kashmir minor centres for the dissemination of Sayyid ʿAlī's teachings and writings, e.g., at Rostabazar, Vachi and Pattan, were common, but neither the Sayyid nor his *silsilah* had more than a marginal impact beyond the Valley.

The other major saint cult in Kashmir focuses on Nūr al-din Riṣhī, the founder of the *Riṣhī* order. Unlike Sayyid ʿAlī, Nūr al-Dīn was born in Kashmir, and if the dates of his birth are correct, then he was but thirteen years old at the time of the Sayyid's death in 1385. Later hagiographers have tried to make a spiritual connection between the two, but the likelihood is that none existed. Instead, Nūr al-Dīn became famous for what he said rather than who he was or whom he knew: even the names of his parents, much less their credentials as

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of good Muslim stock, are uncertain. It is the verses of Nūr al-Dīn that give lustre to his name—if they are his. The same verses are common to the stock of Saivite devotional poetry from the period, much of it ascribed to a wandering woman ascetic named Lalla. It is Lalla rather than Sayyid ʿAlī or any anonymous Ṣūfī saint, who functioned as the true spiritual preceptor for Nūr al-Dīn; the very miracles associated with the legend of Nūr al-Dīn appear to derive more from the current lore of Saivite devotionalism than from Asian or Indian Ṣūfism.⁵ The resulting shrine cult also partakes of a thin Muslim veneer, and suggests an undiluted Hindu core. For instance, devotees who visit Charar Ṣharīf, where Nūr al-Dīn, together with many of his major followers, lie buried in simple splendour, call upon them as *devs*, embodiments of divinity, rather than intercessors before a still higher divinity—Allah. The mosque adjacent to Charar Ṣharīf was reportedly constructed by a pious Muslim noble of 17th century Kashmir, but it is scarcely frequented, in sharp contrast to the steady flow of pilgrims visiting the tombs of Nūr al-Dīn and other *Rishis*.

If one wanted to prove that Ṣūfism and *bhakti* interacted with one another and tried to draw evidence from their mutual growth and sustained popularity in Kashmir, it would be a weak case. In the Valley, Ṣūfīs and *Rishis* (as the followers of Nūr al-Dīn are called) parallel one another but they do not originate from a common source nor do they merge in a single socio-religious grouping.

Kashmir might be dismissed as a deviant tradition which does not at all relate to tomb cults and bona fide Ṣūfī saints, such as those mentioned above from Rajasthan and Gujarat. I think, however, that just the opposite point can and should be made: if we hope to isolate what is Indian about Indian Ṣūfism, Kashmir brings into sharp focus tendencies that recur elsewhere in the subcontinent on a more modest and discrete scale. The tombs are service centres, and the identity of their inhabitants (including the latter's literary legacy) is less important in the eyes of most pilgrims, Muslim and Hindu, than the function they provide as sources of aid for those in distress. The splendid edifices that house the presence of Sayyid ʿAlī and the body of Nūr al-Dīn in Kashmir are operated on the same principle as the *mazār* of Muʿīn al-Dīn in Ajmer. Mark Currie, in his rigorous depiction of the cult at Ajmer, has described the exchange process there as follows:⁶

The relationship between dead saint and living pilgrim is characterized by contractual obligations not dissimilar

from those between individuals in everyday life. Hence the wordliness of the shrine's community is fitting, since for most visitors the vision of the next world is patterned on the hierarchical structure of this world. Just as the saint is powerful in the divine hierarchy, so his representatives and attendants would be high in the earthly hierarchy. If they were not, it would be evidence of the saint's insignificance and lack of divine favour. The wealth and splendour of the shrine—despite the contradictions it poses to the saint's teachings and the concomitant corruption of the shrine's attendants—are an inevitable adjunct of a flourishing saint-cult.

The reverse is also true. As we have seen in the case of Gujarati shrine from the medieval period, the lack of a powerful *khuddām* population may be interpreted as evidence of diminishing or exhausted *barakah* on the part of the deceased saint in the contemporary period. Yet there are instances, such as the tomb of Ḥamid al-Dīn Fāgaori in Rajasthan, where poverty and a low ritual profile are conscious patternings sustained in loyalty to the deceased saint's teachings and example.

How Indian are the norms or the exceptions to them in the practise of institutional Ṣūfism throughout South Asia, but especially in the three regions considered in this essay? Only two instances, the rock of Batva linked to Burhān al-Dīn and the Saivite preceptor ascribed to Nūr al-Dīn, directly reflect Indian/Hindu influence, and yet the process of accommodation to the local needs of a local clientele, often through the re-possession of extraneous myths and miracles in a local idiom, is itself an aspect of Indianization within the *silsilahs* that merits further study.

NOTES

¹ For this summary list, as well as for other information presented about Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmeri, I am indebted to the exacting and comprehensive dissertation of P.M. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer* (D. Phil., Oxford), 1978.

² For further information on the fate of the Delhi shrine of Quṭb al-Dīn, see the exhaustive data assembled in S. Digby, 'Tabarrukat and Succession among the Great Chishti Shaykhs of the Delhi Sulṭanate', pp. 32 f. (draft copy), forthcoming in R. Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi Through the Ages: Studies in Urban Culture and Society*.

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- See ʿAbd al-Haqq Muḥaddith Dehlavi, *Akhbār al-akhyār*, Delhi: Matbaʿ-ī Muhammadi, 1283/1866, p. 156 for the first literary reference to this miracle.
- ʿAbd-al-Qādir Badaʿuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārikh*, (tr. T.W. Haig) Part III, Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1925, p. 70.
- The process is implicitly evident in A.Q. Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir (from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century)*, Bharatiya Publishing House: Varanasi, n.d., pp. 134 f., but it is never forthrightly discussed. Currie, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

(Source: *Studies in Islam*, October, 1982)

**The Maktubat of a
Sufi of Firdausi
order of Bihar**

by
Prof. S. H. Askari

The advent of Islam in India was followed by that of Sufism, the name given to the mystical, humanistic, speculative or rational and spiritual movement in the religion founded by the Prophet of Arabia. The suffix 'ism' suggests it to be a sect or creed, dogma or doctrine, definite and systematised; it is neither. Mysticism in Islam as in other religions, is less a doctrine than a certain mode of thinking feeling and acting. It is an art or way to find out and attain God. The term mystical signifies a doctrine concerning the way to God in perfections derived from inner experiences, and interpretations rather than from deduction or reasoning. The earliest Sufis were a sect of ascetics and quietists as well as those whose aim was to purify and spiritualise Islam from within and give it a deeper mystical interpretation' and infuse in it a spirit of love. Prof. Arberry defines Mysticism as a "constant and unvarying phenomena of the universal yearning of the human spirit for personal communion with God". Sufism was originally a practical system of religious beliefs and not a speculative system. It was a system of thought or action based on the noble ideals of human nature, holding that man is capable of self fulfilment and of ethical conduct. It absorbed the essence of Islamic teachings, the wisdom of the ancient Masters and the learning of the humanists. It assimilated many a divergent ingredient and presented them in a new dress. A time soon came when it broke with the formal, dogmatic theory by giving a new and fresh interpretation of the Creator and the Creation. It became Monistic rather than dualistic, believing in identity and fusion rather than separation like orthodox Islam. The theologians, jurists and traditionalists adhered to the letter of the law and detailed formulas and set rules of rituals and ceremonies which were fixed and were to be followed in daily life. There grew a new tendency of pantheistic mysticism which, according to Stobart, "developed itself chiefly in a search for metaphysical purity for illumination of the mind, for calmness of soul, and for subjugation of passions by the exercise of painful austerities and the adoption of ascetic life". The adherents of the system believed that the Divine nature pervaded all things and gave its very essence

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and being to the soul itself, which thus sought to gain a conformity to the Supreme Being, and more and more to sever itself from the things of earth, like a wearied traveller, seeking to terminate the period of exile from its original. The final object of the Sufi devotee is to attain the Light of Heaven, towards which he must press forward till perfect knowledge is reached in his Union with God, to be consummated, after death, in absorption into the Divine Being."

Islamic mysticism or the School of inner spirit, giving an inner and esoteric interpretation of the teachings of the Quran and the sayings and practices of the prophet, and challenging very often the power of the school of formal or externalist theologians, arose as a revitalising current in Islam between the 9th and 10th centuries and attained its fullest and classical form in the 12th and 13th centuries from the works of a group of intellectuals to whom the terminology of Mystics could be applied. They consisted of most educated men, emotional writers, and poets in Persia, Central Asia and throughout the East. By the time it came to India Muslim mystic thought and philosophy, regarded as embodying the vital flexible spirit of Islam, the core of the belief whereof was the relationship of 'I' and 'Thou' had already been well established outside our country. The great theorists were Abu Nasr Sarrāj, Qushairi, Muhāsibi, Junaid, Māruf Karkhi, Zunnun Misri, Abu Tālib Makki, Abu Yāzid Bustāmi, Shihābuddin Suhrawardi, Abdul Qādir Jilāni, Ibn Arabi, Al-Ghazzali and Ali Hujwiri etc; they had already set a pattern to the Sufi thought. Of these the last, popularly called Dātā Ganj Bakhsh of Ghazna, lies buried in a mausoleum built by Sultan Ibrahim Ghaznavi, a successor of Masud, son of Mahmud, outside the Bhatti Gate in Lahore; his death occurred in 1072 A.D. His book *Kashful-Mahjub* or *Revelation of the Hidden*, translated by Nicholson, is the earliest compendium containing the essentials of Sufi principles and practices in Persian as *al-Luma'* was the first of its kind on the subject in Arabic language. Khwaja Muinuddin Ajmeri (1142-1236), the pioneer of the Chishti Order in India, practised Chilla or 40 days meditation and austerities at his tomb before proceeding towards Delhi and thence to Ajmer. Some of the above great Sufi personalities were the founders of the Sufi Confraternities or Orders like the Chishti, Qādri, Suhrawardi. The earliest and the most celebrated Sufi of Suhrawardi Order in India was Sheikh Bahāuddin Zakariā of Multan. The Shuttāri and the Firdausi Orders were branches of the main Suhrawardi Order. Perhaps the most important phase of the development of Sufism next to the mystic

thought was the organisation of Sufis into Silsilas or Orders whose founders were those who were regarded as having travelled the farthest through virtue and practice of devotion, and were supposed to be nearest to God for their saintly virtues namely seclusion, service, love, knowledge, resignation; and it is they who offered spiritual guidance either in groups or alone to those who sought for it. Hujwiri has marked 12 such figures from whom new orders had emerged. Abul Fazl gives 16. Each Order was distinguished by some specific discipline which the founder and his successors called Sheikh, Pir, or Murshid had laid down for the novice and the disciple called Murid. Another category of confraternity—Sufi Brotherhood—mentioned was that of the Derveshes or Faquirs (poor in the sight of God rather than of Man) who were divided into two great classes; the Bā-Shara (with the Law), or those who governed their conduct according to the principles of Islam, and the Be-Shara (without the Law), or those who did not rule their lives according to the principles of orthodox Islamic creed and were sometimes designated as Malāmatis. These latter allowed themselves to be reproached by concealing their devotions; they made no parade of anything good and hid nothing bad.

Not only the Bā-Shara Order such as the Chistis, the Suhrawardis, the Qādris, and the Naqshbandis and also the Firdausis and the Shuttāris, flourished in Bihar, but also one of the best representatives of the Be-Shara Order rose in the person of Jaman or Jamal Jati, a saint of Hilsa, one of the chief disciples of Badiuddin Madrās, the saint of Makanpur. Bihar, however, was the chief centre of the activities of the Firdausia Order and here emerged the remarkable mystic personality of Hazrat Sharfuddin Yahyā Maneri, a spiritual disciple of Khwaja Najībuddin Firdausi. A long-lived (661-782 A. H.), erudite scholar and a prolific writer, whose numerous Malfuzāt and Maktubāt and the Magnum Opus, Sharh-i-Ādābul-Muridīn, popularised the principles of mysticism and the idea of the Unity in essence of the Creator and the created (Wahdat-ul-Wajud) of Ibn-i-Arabi (1165-1240) and of the Ishrāqian (illuminites) like Shihābuddin Maqtul and Ain-ul-Quzzāt Hamadāni in plain and simple language. Having completed his education at Sonārgaon (Bengal), under his namesake, Sharfuddin Tawwāma, one of the greatest savants of his time, he returned to Bihar, practised severe austerities and self-mortification in the hills and jungles of Rajgir for about 12 years, and then was persuaded to settle down at Biharsharif where a Do-Chapra, the place of his sermonization, was replaced by a Khānqah

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(a hospice) by the then military Governor, Muqti Zainuddin Majdul Mulk, at the order of Emperor Muhammad Tughluq. Courted by Kings and nobles, but keeping himself aloof from them, he continued till his death, in 1381, to expound his views on Wujudi or Unitarian Theory of Hama-üst (Everything is Him) as distinct from the Shuhudi doctrine of Hama as-üst (everything is from Him) and act as the religious preceptor of all and sundry. Deeply absorbed in thoughts of God he was also a practical mystic, quite alive to the reality of the situation and even ready to give correct guidance to the devotees for rendering service to the people as a part of mystic discipline. Though a Wujudi he followed in the wake of Junaid (d. 900) and Al-Ghazzāli (1057-1112) in reconciling Sufism with orthodox Islam and saying that the basis of Sufism was the Quran, the Shara or religious law, the tradition, and that God stands in the same relation to phenomenal objects as the spirit to the body. He used to say "he who knows more stands closer to Him than he who knows less" "In the stage of immediate vision.....a slave remains a slave and God remains God". His Maktūbāt-i-Sadi has been highly extolled by the learned posterity including Abul Fazl and was ever kept by his side by scholarly Aurangzeb.

But it is not his letters but those of his most learned spiritual disciple and his first and immediate successor, Maulana Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, which forms the main subject of this paper. He has been noticed briefly in Akhbār-ul-Akhyār, Akhbār-ul-Asfiā, Mirat-ul-Asrār, Ā'in-i-Akbari, and more particularly in Manāquib-ul-Asfiā, Munis-ul-Qulub, Ganj-i-Lā yakhfā, Kāshif-ul-Asrār, Risala-i-Bahram, Matlub-ul-Mubāarak and also in later published works like Khazinat-ul-Asfiā, Muqtabas-ul-Anwār, etc. He is said to have been born at Balkh and was ninth in direct descent from the famous mystic, Ibrahim bin Adham, and twenty-fourth from Ali and Fatima. Nothing definite is known about the date of his birth, education, teaching and learning and domestic life except that while his father, after the immigration of his family, settled down at Biharsharif and became a disciple of the Suhrawardi saint of Amber, Ahmad Chirmposh, he stayed at Delhi, and being an erudite scholar, was employed in the College of Firuz Shah and began to lead a married life. On the invitation of his father he gave up the Lecturer's job, came to Bihar, and turned a new leaf in his life by attaching himself to Chirmposh's first cousin, Sharfuddin Yahyā Maneri. The Spiritual Guide of his choice used always to address him as Maulana but in order to assuage his restless spirit and put down his overwea-

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ning pride in his scholarship subjected him to very strict austerities and severe discipline. After the purgative period he became a changed man. He married more than once, but when he found himself excessively attached to any, he divorced her and got her married with some one else. He would not allow any one to stand between him and God. Being without any issue of his own, he bestowed his utmost care and attention on his brother's son, Maulana Husain Muiz Balkhi. On several occasions he gave away in charity everything that he had in his house. As a true Sufi he believed in disinterested service, love and benevolence, abandonment of the world, and its vanities, and self mortification. He paid visits to the Arabian land more than once and at one time during his four years' stay in the sacred enclosure of the sanctuary of Mecca he imparted lessons on Hadis or Tradition. The one great desire that he had was to spend the last years of his life in the precincts of the sacred sanctuary of Kaaba, but in his last journey, undertaken via Chittagong through sea, he had not gone beyond Aden when he died and was buried there in 803/1400. One of his last acts was to grant a written authority and certificate for lecturing on Traditions (Sanad-i-Hadis) to Maulana Husain Muiz Balkhi, the original copy whereof has come down to us.

As regards the Maktubāt or Collection of Correspondence there are two manuscripts, the one in Futuha Khanquah library, and the other in Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public library, Patna, before us, giving in most cases the names of the addressees, and indicating what is exactly intended in each letter. Each of the volumes, one of 206 folios, the other of 213, embraces as many as 181 letters which vary in length, the shortest hardly exceeding a page and the longest spread over about 16 pages. The longer letter breaks into several sections, designated with the heading of 'Hadis' which perhaps means new or newly given.

And so far as concerns the contents of the letters which are the copies of the autographs of the writer's later years, it is difficult to fix any certain boundries between staggering variety of topics of mystical theosophy, dealing mostly with love, Repentance, contentment, retiring and solitude, or devotion, putting away worldly things, Musalmāni, Sheikhi, Darweshi, Qalandari, the way and definition of a Sufi etc. These are all concerned with mystic discipline, moral and religious ideals, and ritualistic observances. There is some overlapping in the treatment which may be accounted for by the need felt for emphasis and clarity demanded by the topics. The dominant

threads running through the book are matters spiritualistic and mystical of the usual pattern. To some the repetitive passages, and serried array of quotations from the Quran and Hadis may seem to be arid, tiresome and monotonous; but to others who have made special studies of Islamic mysticism there is much in these 'Lettre Familiarie' which are meaningful and illuminating. Many of the letters are self-explanatory but one comes across some obscure references due to the highly abstruse matters dealt with therein. Though the contents defy any effort at analytical summarization of the main drift and detailed exposition of views, comments and observations, a student of history and culture can break the components into some such categories as affairs of mystic discipline, personal references, and things descriptive and narrative. For him the charm and interest of the letter lies in numerous bits and flashes such as the personality and nobility of the character of the writer who seems to have been an ideal spokesman of his age, and there are occasionally some new and original information, which the letters provide. Of special interest to a student of history is the body of dozen letters, including one which is the longest in volume, which was addressed by the saintly writer to Sultan Ghayāsuddin A'zam Shah, the son of Sultan Sikandar, and the third of the Ilyās Shahi Kings of Bengal. A very valuable and original tid³bid is furnished by the reference to the letters which the celebrated Firdausi saint of Bihar, Sharfuddin Maneri, wrote to Ghayāsuddin's father, Sultan Sikandar, who used to be in correspondence with him and had become his favourite. Another original, though very laconic reference, is found in letter No. 162 on the subject of the Diwānagān or inspired and distracted ones, mostly antinomian in practice. Such a venerable personage was Sheikh Sharfuddin Bu-Ali-Qalandar of Panipat who is alleged to have abstained from cooked food for about three decades. He had a great hold on the masses, and Sultan Alāuddin Khalji managed to employ Amir Khusrau to convey a letter to the saint of Panipat to get some word from him for himself. After writing that the saint had referred in his reply to the Sultan as "Alā-e-Khalj, Khūta-e-Dehli" he stops short with the remark "this story is quite well-known and is widely spread in our land". He quotes the Persian verses of the Panipat's saintly Qalandar and explains the real hidden meaning of the verses spoken extemporaneously; but he does not give the dialogue in the Panjabi emanating from the saint "Khusrau Pheri Kotrā" and "Munda Hunh Bujhanda Hunh". But the Balkhi saint of Bihar compensates for this, as we shall see hereafter, by giving us as many as seven

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Hindi *Dohras* including one which was sung and played upon by an itinerant fiddler at which his spiritual guide had been moved with tears trickling down his cheek. A student of linguistics cannot but feel attracted towards the language of the Hindavi *Dohras*, and a student of history cannot but feel interested in the new information supplied by the saintly writer about Firuz Shah Tughlaq in letter 167.

Thus a close and careful study of the letters can enable one to dig up many things which are quite new and real discoveries of historical and cultural import. Turning from general to particular, we may consider the passages which contain personal references, his agitated mood and movements and from which the personality of the writer comes into view. Fettered by traditional views and mainly concerned with things of mystical and ethical standard, the Sufis are generally reticent and noncommunicative about themselves; but the present *Maktūbāt* enable us to piece together something about the life and conditions of the writer. That his family had not only the odour of sanctity but also the royal blood in the veins of its members is evident from letter 30 wherein he refers to his ancestor, Ibrāhim Adham, the Abu bin Adhem of the poem of Leigh Hunt. That he had forsaken his throne and kingship along with his wife, sons, territory and land has been referred to. Again, in letter 73 on the theme of recall and bestowal he writes, "whoever parts with one dirham in the way of God which is all that belongs to him", that dirham is on a level with that which the King of Balkh, Ibrāhim Adham, abandoned in the land of Balkh the whole of which belonged to him". He also refers to himself in that very letter "I, the helpless one, dedicated to the Darweshes, felt so much agitated and distracted in the head that I abandoned" the means of subsistence, some cultivable land, left nothing in that country, made a good bye to the ancient home and habitation, came out with a certain motive and made an entry into this city". I, the remediless one, have no wife or son, brother or family, nor have I with me money nor materials. I want neither spiritual leadership or discipleship, nor asceticism or renunciation for devotion. What I want is to do away with the infidel ego which makes one an enemy of God..... It has taken me, helpless one, twenty years to be straying as a vagabond, night and day, in such a quest. There are four veils between the Creatures and the Almighty God, namely world, creations, satan or ego and carnal desires, and these constituting as great idols remove repose and tranquillity from those who are distracted in the path of

God..... I am an humble poor fellow having no son or family, am seeking not the world, rank or position, and have in this world no work, concern or commendation. I, the slave of God, keep my madness concealed under the Dastār (turban) and Bārāni (cloak for keeping off rains) and have taken vow before my God that I would not come out of my seclusion except for three places—congregational assembly, Friday prayer, and grave. I have settled that the grave would be my place of residence and I am moving and measuring my steps in such a way as to die before death.....” To an addressee in Bengal he wrote, “In my seclusion I pray for your Lordship (Khidmat Malik) but am reluctant to render you any open service. I hope you would excuse and exempt me from your invitation and assembly”.

In a letter to Qāzi Alam in Bihar (83) he writes from Bengal, “I, the poor man, came to this side, having made up my mind to undertake the journey towards the Qibla (the sanctuary of Mecca). My relatives and friends stood in my way and I had to postpone it and stay on for sometime waiting for the suitable opportunity, and also for some words through my brother from my Sheikh (spiritual guide) who is there in his Āstāna (saintly threshold)....though you had written that many friends there had become displeased with me for leaving that place, I myself feel displeased with myself; they need not feel angered against me; what should I do; there is no rest or stability in my mind; but I want that this restlessness and instability should increase further.”

To one, brother Rājan, he writes in letter 79, “your letter has been received and its content has been learnt. There was much of eagerness to meet and affliction at separation which was, however, destined by fate. Much as you, my brother, endeavoured that I, the resourceless, wandering one, should have rest and repose, and stay somewhere there, and I, whose affairs are in a bad train, also made much effort, but it could not happen... Now there should not be some such suspicion that if this helpless one did not settle down there he would have some stability here. Far be the day when such a thing should happen. It has come as alms from the Sheikh and the Godly persons that there lies no thought in my mind for staying quietly in any place; there is nothing but perplexity and distraction”. The letter No. 107 on Tajrid and Tafrid says, “It has taken me a long time to write any letter to you; some find fault with me for I am ill-fortuned (badroz) as all my life I have been measuring the air (acted as a traveller); I have had no specific work nor any

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matter of significance anywhere; I resemble the drum which is empty from within and without but fills the world with its sound.... I wished that I should have this town spared from my malignancy and arrive at that land. But I feel broken-hearted at the thought that even after such troubles and vagrancy from town to town if I die here what would be my condition”.

Khāspur appears to have been an important place at the time in Bengal for it has been mentioned in several letters. The distinguished Balkhi letter-writer must have paid a visit to it, and he had several friends there. In a recommendatory letter (92), addressed to Khawaja Bahrām, we get this—“There is in Khāspur Khwaja Sirāj, an old, abstemeous man of probity and honour who is popularly known as Saudāgar (merchant), but is really a Darwesh in the true sense of the word, as his house is a virtual hospice for poor and indigent travellers and way-farers. His ‘Kurar’ land (a plot of ground with a raised border for sowing vegetables) had been subjected to a tax by an innovator against what is prescribed by law and the officers of the Diwāni began to realise it. The writer had brought him out of this plight, and the agents of Government (Kārkunān) after entering into some argument had at last granted him an exemption. Now it is being reported that this affair has been entrusted to you. I request you to exempt the aforesaid Khwaja Sirāj, his men and dependents, as they were excused by others. A man should be judged not by his external appearance but by his inward qualities.”

Amidst the plethora of such themes as theological devotional, mystical and spiritual experiences, abstruse matters of esoteric Islam requiring knowledge of hidden and the manifest meaning of words and expressions of the Quran and apostolic traditions as well as lofty moral ideas of self-sacrifice, dedication to, and love of, God, there are many revealing passages in several letters indicating that the writer lived in but was outside the world. The letter addressed to ‘dear son’, Maulana Karimuddin (114) on the subject of rendering assistance in the affairs of Musalmans begin with the verse “with every breath the emperian heaven, liable to be stricken, changes its hues—every mean arranger of words (loose-talker) becomes more despicable for his vile words”. Then he writes, “From continual apprehension that such and so may happen, the heart in the bosom of a wise man bleeds; oh friend and fellow-wearer of patched habits! know for certain that I, the ill-fortuned one, obscure, ignorant, unemployed, idle and inactive, have had no business to approach

Khāns and Maliks with something written to them. Why should I, a contaminated dog, make myself known, and why should I set my steps near them and at their lofty vestibule so as to recall something to their mind? But what can I do? My excuse lies with two verses cited above. It would have been a better sign if Almighty God had enabled me to become unmindful of them, and them to give up all thoughts about me, so that this should not have occurred. But it so happens that I had to write something and send it to persons of worldly positions. But I know not how to write with propriety and politeness in soft worded, appropriate and deserving terms of reproof. This much is, however, certain. I have no desire or covetousness of any kind from them. It was on the request of a dear friendly person who was going towards that side that I had to write something.

In the preceding (113) letter, on seeking the will of God, he writes, "Even the path or Suluk which a man pursues without any greed and desire for worldly recompense, is 'Sabilul-lāh', such as exertions made in the affairs of the poor and distressed ones, providing food for the hungry, placing water on the roads for the thirsty, founding mosques, running about to acquire the necessary means of supporting the life of his family and children so as to discharge his duty, and so on and so forth. The saintly writer gave a letter for a Malik to Qāzi Sadr Sharaf who had suffered from an accident and recommended him to the addressee's notice so that he might not be put to blush among his relations (32). Similarly, in letter 171 he recommended the case of a man named Kabiruddin Naqib who carried the letter to an addressee and was described as a good and pious person, dedicated to devotion and service to God who had at that time become so dispirited and tired of the affairs of the world that he had given up his job and was on his travels with a view to paying a visit to the mausoleum of the Sheikh (in Bihar Sharif). This was his main object. The addressee was requested to help him in his affairs.

Now let us see what the saintly writer with all his self-effacing other-worldly attitude thought and said on the question of 'Kasb' (avocation, earning, and acquisition). In his very first letter on true faith and trust in God he distinguishes between the habit of the common folk who are deeply concerned with those things which are necessary for the support of life, such as good clothes, lodging for the family and children, those who take to trade or cultivation and earn their bread by serving as learners or teachers or in civil administration

(Divan) and on the other hand those who tread the path pursued by religious mendicants. The seeker of a livelihood takes to business and brings all his deeds and knowledge to bear upon acquisition and earning. But the Faqirs (Darweshes) entrust themselves, their wives and children to God. There are many infidels who have dedicated and devoted themselves entirely to their idols but God gives them livelihood without work or earning. Three things were inevitable, resurrection day, death and support or subsistence. A much more explicit observation occurs in letter 132 wherein we get a reference to Khwaja Hisāmuddin (a cloth merchant: Bazzāz), "Oh brother! do look well at this. If your apprehensions are set on the next world most of your deeds would be for that other invisible world; and if you are more concerned with the thoughts of trade and professions of this world and in regard to the food that you are to take and the garments that you are to wear and the profession that you have to pursue then you are to be said as one of concourse and a man of the world...But If anyone labours to earn with the motive that he should acquire the necessary expenses of living for his family and children and does not throw his own burden and needs upon others and his labour or earning provides and supplies what is needed and suffices for his worldly necessities so that his faith and action should be pure and be a responsibility of God, then such an earning with such intention, I hope, would be conjoined with the recorded deeds of the other world. Such a toiling acquirer would be reckoned upon as other-worldly not worldly". The writer gives in letter 177 some details about the three prophets of the past, David, Solomon and Joseph who were kings but ate what they earned by their hands. As regards the Prophet of Islam, wedded to poverty as he was, he swept the house with broom, helped a slave-girl in grinding corns, lit the fire under the cauldron, slept on a mat, put on clothes which were short of the body, and the Izār (trouser) quite above the ankle, covering only about half of the leg. He used to go to the market to have what was absolutely necessary for the living of his family and carried the things himself.

The self-restrained, dedicated, religious zealot was also a practical person, who was quite conscious of the promptings of sex and did not advise total abstinence in such matters. Giving his advice to a young disciple, he writes (130)—"You, my son, are in the prime of your youthful life, and it behoves you not to keep yourself off from the slave-girl that has been taken. I am glad that you have had her; and you have my approval. So long as the age of adolescence

lasts this might be a necessity and in this there is no blemish either in this world or the next". In this letter he also writes—"I'tikāf (seclusion in house for devoting) does not mean that you should refuse to meet persons who come to you; you should appologize for the delay, if any, and even put up with it if there is anything unpalatable". To Qāzi Zainuddin, "the dearest son", he writes (125)—I have heard that you have been vexed much by sexual urge and the ascendancy of youthful passion, and consequently you are highly discomposed, disturbed in mind. May it be known to you that Taqi, son of Sirāj, had also fallen in such a condition, and my spiritual guide, the Sheikh, had directed him to observe the 'Tai' (continuous) fasts. He did so but felt hopelessly exhausted. The matter was again put before the venerable Sheikh, and he directed him to fulfill the great need and purchase a slave-girl so that he might escape from this evil (affliction). Subsequently he might give her up. This he did not do; had he done that he would have been spared from what you are now experiencing; he suffered for not heeding the advice. Now I have to say some similar things to you. It behoves you to purchase a slave-girl. Beware; otherwise when you are in the anguish of soul and gasping in agonies of death the austerities of years would become fruitless and would be blown away by the wind of lust; then you would have to bewail and face a misfortune; what would you gain? Your mother and friends do not take cognizance of your condition and you are helpless; be sober and sensible".

Again, dealing with the point that wives and sons are not necessarily to be taken as a veil or curtain he writes in letter 169 to a disciple, Khwaja Hamid—"It has been reported to me that you have performed a good action; you sent letters about it to your friends, but perhaps felt shy and did not write to me anything concerning it. Why should you be bashful? One should feel ashamed in doing something contrary to the law (religion; but you, my son, have done what is necessary to be performed, according to tradition. Nikāh or lawful matrimony is in accord with the apostolic traditions. Many pious religious men of probity and honour have been householders, possessing a numerous family (Ma'ilān) and some remained celibate and unmarried. Family or household can be no screen covering God from Man.

Emphasizing upon the need of having trust in God and resignation to the Divine Will he inculcated on his disciple, Qāzi Zainuddin, the need of thrift and avoidance of extravagance (129)

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“But you must keep in mind this one word. In regard to the garment for your self and your family members you should shun exhuberance. If you can get the wearing clothes of Khadi (coarse cloth) worth 3 Jitals (a small coin, 25 of which make a Dām), the same should be put on your body and those of your wife and children; more if more be necessary; less if less be needed. In the matter of costume you should abstain from the ways and habits of other people so that you may be at rest and contented”.

“Two things count in the life of a man”, says a passage in letter 47 on poverty, “and they are either advantageous or harmful. One finds life to be profitable who had delicious food and had enough of it for full satisfaction, enjoys a sound sleep for long hours, and possesses good wearing garments, a spacious house, lovely women, gardens, orchards to walk in, cultivated agricultural land, trades and business, from all of which they derive comfort and satisfaction. As regards the harms received, these arise from destitution, frustration, infamy, disparagement by God’s creatures of tattered clothes, hunger, starvation and from all these they fear and refrain”.

There are also many revealing references such as the clapping of the hands (Dastaki zadan) and inducing men to rotate on their legs (raqs) in audience assemblies (74). Sama (117) with and without musician (Mutrib), was forbidden to the worshipper of lust and ego and was counted dangerous (makhtur) in law. It was, however, permissible under certain condition to men of piety given to solitude. Then there is the question of auspiciousness or omens of days and times which has come from astronomers and astrologers. In orthodox Islam there is no day or week which is auspicious or inauspicious. Another thing of importance is the reference to the accumulation of the works of Hadis on Traditions with the spiritual guide of the writer. He wanted on loan the copy of Sahih Muslim and some other books on Hadis which had been brought to his Pir by Maulana Zainuddin of Dewa and also permission to take some notes therefrom (139). We are also told (154) that the Jāma (garment) sent by the Sultan of Bengal was worn by the writer who, however, sent probably as a return (151) a valuable present in the form of the mirror which once the barber while dressing the hair of H. Sharfuddin Maneri used to show him (151).

We have no means of information to fix a chronological order for the letters in the present volume, nor do we know the places of their origin as to whence they were despatched from. Neither the writer nor the compiler of the religious correspondence vexed him-

self with questions of date and location. Therefore, it is difficult to say exactly as to when the letter 21 saying "for twenty and some years that I pursued this one way track" letter 42 telling "this was the confounding twentieth year of this luckless fellow"; and letter 71 indicating "I, the helpless one, had been straying and felt stupefied, night and day, for 20 years in this very pursuit", were written. The letter 118 also says, "for years in the past I had heard from my spiritual Master, the Sheikh, may God sanctify his grave, that these were times bubbling (overflowing) with mischiefs and calamities, and the latest that I heard such a thing would be about twenty years". How are all these to be reconciled with what we get in letter 85, which appears to have been addressed to his Pir or Murshid obviously before his death in 782/1381, "for about 30 years I stirred about and struggled, sometimes in all sincerity, and sometimes under false pretences; but I, your attendant, by sitting at your feet and following your ways, was in a position to realise and ascertain it as a truth and as a verified verity that whosoever, either outwardly or inwardly, showed any clinging, even in the least, to things other than of Allah, he would remain attached to and hanging upon that to the last, and would be farthest from God". There are, however, some letters shedding light on time and location. In letter 2 the writer refers to "Haft-Sadiyān" or men of the 7th century, and says "Mā Hi-sadyān aim" i.e. we are men of the eighth century; and also that "the people of Delhi are nearer than us, the people of Bihar, to the sanctuary of Kaaba". Letter 23, addressed to one Prince Khizr, says, "the period of repose and rest of mind is over; O my brother ! today is the end of the eighth century (hi-sadi); that Qarn (ten Qarns generally identified with a sadi) is over; and the people of that age are gone away". This proves conclusively that the commonly accepted date of death of the Balkhi saint, 782 or 785 is without any basis.

Letter 80, addressed to somebody in Bihar on the commotion of love says "You have asked as to what made me come to this side without bidding farewell to the friends—verse; my ill-luck did not spare me to remain in your lane; otherwise I would have continued my stay longer in your threshold". Letter 82 indicates that for some time after the death of his Pir he kept on rendering spiritual service at the place of his eternal rest, for he says, "I was bodily close to and devoutly employed as an attendant (Mujāwir) at the shrine, but really and in my heart I was at a distance of thousand farsakhs (each a league—1800 ft.), and, therefore, I lessened my troubles in the

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'Āstāna' and carried the contamination of myself from that place". The question arises as to when and where he went. In an important letter (132) he acknowledges the addressee's letter along with a present in the form of an Egyptian prayer-carpet (Musalla-i-Misri) through Khwaja Hisāmuddin Bazzāz (a dealer in clothes) and says "It is about five months that I came here and have occupied a place in old Delhi (Dehli-i-Kuhna) under the conviction and in expectation of pursuing the paths of the mendicants". It is difficult to say as to when this happened. In letter 101 he practically invited a disciple to Delhi, "what measure of distance lies between him and Dehli? Let him fasten the girdle, come and stay there for sometime and gain something from associations with religious Divines who are mendicants". The author of *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* says that his Pir had advised him to leave Bihar for his old place; this time to acquire spiritual learning for he was already a past master in worldly learning. We get also some details of the journey. But we get nowhere any reference to this in the letter.

But this letter was written when the eighth century was about to end for among many other things it says "Hi-Sadi Tamām Mi-Shawad", the day of resurrection is near; death lies in ambush; and provisions for support in the journey is lacking". It appears that after he suddenly left Bihar he first travelled towards the West and then turned towards the East. He writes in letter 138, "I, the helpless one, by reason of ill-luck had been held captive in this land of Hindustan amidst creatures with Satanic, ignoble, and lustful desires. However much as I wanted to come out of this country and land in Arabia, such a fortune did not come to my hands". The letter 78 addressed to Maulana Alam says, "your letter contained a friendly reproof for abandoning the Pir's ground (Qadam) and settling down here in Awadh. Oh my simple friend! You are keeping your pace below the foot of the Pir; but does this imply mere presence in front of the doors and walls or in the neighbourhood of the Pir's shrine? Know it for certain that had I really found the track or trace of effects under the feet of the Pir I would never have abandoned that place. As I was thousands of farsakh distant from the feet of my spiritual guide I decided to cast away at a distance from that holy vicinity of the pious personage my own contaminated and impure self. As regards what you have hinted about my firmly staying in Awadh, you should know that for one so luckless and distracted person as me there is no firm or chief place of stay. You take 'Qadam-i-Pir' to mean that one should remain constantly in

Bihar near the Rauza (shrine) so as to make frequent religious visitations. Such a thing is open and is being resorted to by both Musalmans and Hindus". Thus this refers to his visit of some places in Oudh. In letter 42 he tells us about his wanderings, "I flee from a city to city, from a village to village, from one wilderness to another". In letter 115 he refers to a 'Kunj' (a corner or confined place) in which he, "a resourceless, totally destitute, without domicile, had kept himself confined for some years", and he had no such body of men for whose "necessary expenses for living (Nafaqa) he might be responsible according to the religious law (Shara)"; and as for those who were around him, "they were as helpless and unprovided for as he himself". By the blessing of the Sheikh, may his grave be hallowed, he had, however, no worldly attachments.

This 'Kunj' must have been somewhere in Bengal. In letter 152, addressed to Sultan Ghayāsuddin Āzam Shāh he writes, "I, the helpless one, have already bid adieu to you, exalted of God, at Gangura. Now the season is near at hand. You may do the favour of sending a farman to the agents or directors (Kārkunān) of Chatgāon to the effect that this poor man, along with a few Darveshes, is intent upon undertaking a journey to Ka'ba; that all the Faqirs have been assembled; and all should be put into the ship of the first season". Addressing the same Sultan in letter 148, he writes, "the four months of the ship season are ahead of us; there are eight months still left; during all this while I have spent my life as a guest in the auspicious threshold of your majesty; may not your exaltation lessen! I have revived from my illness after four months; it is for God Himself to afford cure and give illness". In letter No. 167 which deals mainly with the question of Zainab, a wife of the Prophet there is an important personal reference. "This house where the King, may God the most high preserve him! has made me halt is outside this city. It is an airy solitary place a pleasant corner of retirement without hinderances whatsoever. Was it in the vicinity of Chittagang? In letter 180 we get a more definite information. "This poor man arrived at Muzzamabad by the grace of God. A further march forward of the bridle of design lies in the hands of impelling destiny as in the past".

Reference here is to the earlier journey to Arabia and the first visit to the holy sanctuary at Mecca. Letter 81 says, "It has been the ardent desire of this helpless man that he should again undertake a journey towards the Qibla (Ka'ba in Mecca towards which the Muslims turn their face when in prayer). Perhaps I may fall into

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the saltish shore and thus come out purified of all my contamination. But my black (vicious) sins followed my steps. I do not know when such a thing would happen. Ah. Alas ! I know not whether I would achieve my object through the will of God or in the desire I would die....one thing is certain. If God so wills, and I proceed towards that place for a second time I would go there to die". There is a cryptic reference to the first visit in letter 140, "this poor man has always had blessings and prayers of friends from the land of Arabia to this land". There is a reference in letter 165 also to his having bid adiu to the Sultan and left for the house of God to be devoutly employed (Mujāwarat) there. In letter 165 the writer refers to a dream in which the Prophet appeared to have invited him to the Arabian land. These dreams, as he writes. "have brought me upto this place in this far off kingdom and placed me in the auspicious royal threshold during the past two years. Now I request for leave so that by way of charity the king may give me a send off towards Chatgaon, and to this effect a farman may kindly be issued. All the hairs of this helpless one have become completely white; the teeth have left off their roots; the old age has brought blindness very near"

Apart from the theological, moral and mystical essences which form the central theme and are the heart of the work, there are thus certain biographical touches and incidental references which shed some light on the practical aspects of social life which attract one's attention. But more important to a student of history and culture are the dozen letters addressed to the third Sultan of the Ilyās Shāhi dynasty of Bengal, containing matters which show the Sufism of the writer in its historical form. In two or three letters there is no clear mention of the addressee's name but the context establishes his identity. The letters are numbered 148, 163, 165-167, 179, the last being the longest. They reveal that Sultan Ghayāsuddīn Shah was a religious-minded ruler, deeply interested in Islamic mysticism, and he was also a man of literary tastes who could compose good and meaningful verses in Persian. He was frequently in correspondence with the Balkhi saint, the distinguished and prolific writer of mystic letters, as his father, Sultan Sikandar, had been allowed by H. Sharfuddin Maneri to be in communication with him on religious and mystical subjects. The saint of Bihar loved Bengal and there was frequent exchange of letters, written and received by the Bengal ruler. Unfortunately, all traces of such written dialogues between the two are now lost and the various volumes of the Maktubāt of the Maneri saint give no clue to such a thing.

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We, however, get an interesting reference to Sultan Firuz Tughlaq which is confirmatory as well as supplementary. Not the least in importance is the opinion expressed and the advice offered to the royal addressee, on the perusal of which it is likely for one to question as to whether catholicity of views, broad-mindedness and the spirit of toleration had as strong a hold on this Firdausi saint of Bihar as on most of the Sufis of major orders, with possibly a single exception of Abdul Quddus Gangohi of the Sabiria section of the Chishti order, as is revealed from the gratuitous counsel he offered to Emperor Babar. Considering the time and condition under which the two wrote about not appointing Hindus to high places in administration and the need of preventing them from domineering over the Musalmans much can be said by way of allowances and explanations.

It is not possible to deal with even the important extracts of all the letters and, therefore, we would confine our attention to two. The moving references in the following passages in letter 151 speak for themselves. "The auspicious farman has been received. It is beyond the writer to couch the reply with words and expressions which are polite, suitable and affable. For both the hand and the pen are weak and infirm and the love-sick heart is in anguish". The farman of the King was charged and replete with pearls and jewels of significations. It included a quatrain which is this "Ai-mast-i-Sharāb i-Zauq-i-bātin—Sarkhush ba madām shauq-i-bātin—Yak jur'a ba kām-i-īn gadā rez--Ai Khusraw-i-jooq jooq bātin" (i.e. "oh you who are intoxicated with the wine of esoteric tastes (flavour)—you who are merry-headed having a perennial yearning for the inward parts of things; Pour a drop on the palate of this beggar—Oh kingly soul fully imbued with secret (mystic) thought which come to you in lots (groups)". Although I was sober and sensible, the quatrain threw me into a state of inebriation. How and by whom can the drop be offered and to whom—the cups and the goblets are bound to come close to the goers (travellers : Sāliks) who set aside ego and self-conceit and traverse the road of the dictum "Die before death comes". I can bear witness to the fact that the sacred and the Almighty God has granted to the King plentiful dozes of tastes and pleasures in mystical and spiritual matters, and has endowed him with an increasing share in understanding the import of apparently enigmatical discourses of the Darweshes. In the farman you have referred to your affection for me and your eagerness to see me, the poor fellow..... By God it is the love of God and yearning to meet God which really counts, with this poor man. So far as you are

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concerned this is just the beginning and serves as a preamble of love; and God willing, the fruit would one day ripen and you may some day partake of it”.

Leaving aside the numerous allusions in other letters which are not absolutely devoid of interest and are pregnant with observations and instructions on matters mostly spiritual and mystical, we may proceed to letter 163 which was sent in reply to one received from the Sultan. It contains many statements not necessarily linked on to one another in a consecutive chain; and statement is complete in itself. “In the previous letter something has been written about the path of God pursued by goers (Sabil-ul-Lāh) By God the great... this kind of attention and favours which the King has displayed and the affection and yearning for meeting me that you have evinced has been expressed repeatedly in all the Farmans, specially the one just in hand, which deals with pangs of separation in lyrical poems, bidding farewell, give indication of maturity of composition. This would have influenced me, had the matter lain in my hands, and I would not have passed out of the King’s threshold. But God’s will overcomes all other affairs. Ill-circumstanced and afflicted in mind as I am I, nevertheless, know that such sonnets are not to be taken as merely metaphorical or superficial, but are the outcome of genuine and real feeling. The tone of the farewell poem is like a heart-piercing arrow; but what can this slave of God do; the reins of action and decision lie elsewhere. You did a great thing in that you did not give me a place very close to yourself, but have found a place in me, a madman; because of me you have become a beloved of my friends.....

“In my opinion, by the gifts of God, the cherisher of mankind, you have developed a capacity of looking at the inside of things of the pure faith and the understanding of things of manifold signification. It appears that my heart would be opened out to you. A pious inspired man, Abdul Malik, has been a recipient of my letters which might form a volume: It may be at Pandua or at Muazzamabad, but I don’t remember where it exactly is. Oh my son, get the permission and go through its contents. Something of my inward part may be opened out to you. You are the second person on whom I have poured out my secret (mystic) thoughts. It behoves you not to disclose my discourses to anyone else. Everytime that you go through my writings you will have fresh and new pickings and you may think that you had not correctly comprehended the real import on the earlier-reading.

“One or two important affairs (Muhim) which you had to face due to your obvious position in the state were really momentous, and they may be taken to be affairs of Islam. The Darvesh is with you and is a virtual sharer with you, and physical separation does not count. By the grace of God you will accomplish your purpose. Whenever any important affair confronts you, you may send the information about that to me at Mecca either through letter or through individual messenger. After achieving success you should occupy yourself with the uprooting of heresies (bida’āt) and suppression of all innovations not prescribed by Law (Muhaddasāt-i-nā-mashru); you should enforce the payment of the prescribed alms (Zakāt). Oh my son ! you should keep in mind the counsels offered by this humble poor man, Muzaffar Shams, who is your well-wisher from the earliest time upto this day. It has been a tradition that such men as were learned, worthy of company and love had nearness for spiritual secrets and opinion, in the eyes of the Prophets, saints, and Sultans have been God-fearing, pious and just people and they have wished well for the slaves of God, and not every self-centred, haughty and avaricious persons... In my opinion among the rulers of the earth, these gifts have been bestowed by the Almighty God upon you, for your good deeds have been met with approbation. Those wretched people who take pride in the apparent dominion they have and that has been given by God even to infidels are totally destitute of all good things of great signification. The fitting robe of learning, liberality, munificence, intrepidity and a heart of lion have been gifts of God to you.

“Sultan Firoz (Tughlaq), may God pardon his sins, had been very much devoted to Mashā’ikhs (saintly personages). For a few days His Holiness Saiyid Jalāluddin (Bukhāri), may God keep the place of his eternal repose cool ! had come to him. He was associated with him and derived many (spiritual) things from him, and he constantly acted upon the same. He had developed a habit that when he was in a furious mood he talked about punishment by killing and retribution. But before the order could be put into execution he hastened to admit that his words should not be construed as his orders, for what he had said might be taken as wrong accusations (Qazaf). On this occasion in such matters he sought the Decrees of judges and the expositions of laws by their expounders, and he pressed them for precedents, and then issued his orders. He would exclaim “Oh God, it is not your slave, Firuz, who gives orders; it is the religious law (Shara) which so orders. At the time the Saiyid had

come he had become very old, aged about ninety. The sultan caused a proclamation to be issued at Delhi to the effect that who-soever had any grievance against him, he should come, catch hold of his shirt, and put forward his claim, and he would be too glad to satisfy him.

“The extent of affection which the poor fellow bears for you is best known to you. He is your well-wisher. Correct affection and well-wishing lie in speaking the truth and disclosing prudent measures : otherwise it would be a betrayal of just claims. The eighth century has passed out and the signs of the coming Resurrection are increasingly visible. An Empire like that of Delhi with all its expanse and abundance, spiritual and physical comfort, peace and tranquillity has turned upside down (is in a topsy-turvy condition). Infidelity has now come to hold the field; the condition of other countries is no better. Now is the time, and this is the opportunity. I, the slave of God, used to see that Sheikh-ul-Islam Sheikh Sharful Haq, may God sanctify his secrets in his grave ! had ever been favourably inclined towards this land and this country had also been favoured by God. He had kept Sheikh Sharfuddin, the advance guard (of spirituality) in this land. Howsoever much Sultan Firoz (Tughlaq) and others on his side wished that he should write something specially for them so that they might keep these as a memento he never wrote anything specially for or sent that to them. On the other hand, he felt hearty pleasures in writing letters to the martyred Sultan (Sikandar, father of the addressee). You have had the effects and legacy of those blessings on yourself.”

The long letter concludes with the following important observation and counsel. “God the great and Almighty has said ‘Oh believers, don’t catch hold of the lining of the garment of those who are low and vile’. The substance of what has come in the tradition and commentaries is this : Oh believers, don’t make strangers, that is infidels, your confidential favourites and ministers of state. They say that they don’t allow any to approach or come near to them and become favourite courtiers; but it was done evidently and for expediency and worldly exigency of the Sultanate that they are entrusted with some affairs”. To this the reply is this that according to God it is neither expediency nor exigency but the reverse of it; that is an evil and pernicious thing (tending to disturb or corrupt). Therefore it was incumbent on us that in this matter we should listen to what God has said and keep our flimsy pleas aside. He says ‘Wadoo mā ‘anittum’, i.e. they would choose for you that by which you

would fall into misfortune and difficulty (from which you cannot extricate yourself). When you admit them in your nearness they would like to involve you in sin. Don't entrust a work into the hands of the infidels by reason of which they would become a wāli (Governor—ruler or superior) over the Musalmans, exercise their authority in their affairs, and impose their command over them. As God says in the Qurān, 'It is not proper for a believer to trust an infidel as his friend and wāli, and those who do so have no place in the estimation of God'. Hear God and be devout and pious; very severe warnings have come in the Kitāb (holy book) and traditions against the appointment of infidels as a ruler over the believers. For the pious and the abstinent God opens out such a path of support and subsistence as can scarcely be thought about".

Historically, the mention of the end of the eighth century (Hisad tamām shud) and the warnings given to the Sultan by the writer, who claimed to speak under divine guidance, against elevating a Hindu official to the highest place and nearest to himself, are of capital importance. There is some controversy about the date and manner of the death of Sultan Ghayāsuddin Azam Shah. His coins have been found with dates as late as 813-1411. As his reign in Sonargaon and Satgaon ran parallel to that of his father during the last four years of the latter who died resisting his rebel son in 795, the references in the letter to the timing and to the martyrdom of Sultan Sikandar are in accord with what is given in recorded history. The last farewell letter described as Widā'ī or valedictory, must have been written in or just after 800 for he soon left for Aden where he died in 803. Sultan Ghayāsuddin is said to have been succeeded by his son, Saifuddin, who was followed by two other non-entities, the last of whom was dethroned after an ephemeral reign of barely a year by the dominating Hindu Wazir, Kans or Raja Ganesh of Bhatuarah. If the author of Riyāz-us-Salatin is to be believed, this powerful Hindu chief had risen to great height, even under Sultan Ghayāsuddin, and after causing his death by his machination and treating his sons and successors as mere puppets on the throne, usurped the regal position. The pretender had, however, to give way before the joint pressure of Nur Qutb Alam, the saint of Pandua, and his supporter, Sultan Ibrāhim Sharqi of Jaunpur; and he handed over power to his twelve years old son, a Muslim convert, who founded a new dynasty of rulers in Bengal. The saintly writer cannot be credited with predicting the future events in any way, but there was probably much in the then exciting situation which might have

led him to foreshadow the coming debacle of the Ilyās Shāhi dynasty. The history of this period of Bengal history is very confused and controversial.

We may conclude this paper which has already become too long, with a very important feature of this collection of correspondence, and that is the occurrence of more than half a dozen of Hindi Dohras, in three or four letters, 121, 172, 173 and 63. It is difficult to determine the exact or correct reading of these Dohras specially the first of the series though they appear to be much like the same in the two manuscripts which have been consulted and collated. Nor is it possible to say anything about their authorship. What can be said at best is that both the writer and his Pir who have been mentioned in connection with the first verse, despite their orthodoxy, were quite familiar with, and even appreciative of, the indigenous language whatever it might be, which was current in their environment. It is for the Hindi scholars, specialists in linguistics, to give them a correct reading and also rendering, and to see if they are or are not specimens of old Brijbhasha with some sprinklings of the two of the triple Behari dialects, Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi. They read as follows :

1. Aikat Kandi Bedhiya Bahutar Bhar ke Gā'in; Jatā (Chintā) Heen Man Ranjhiyā (Ichcha) Maran Tetahi Nahāin, i.e. Strictly collecting one's self (gathering together of ideas) in various ways, and to his heart's content, he sang (glories of the Lord). Being free from anxieties and attachments, and abandoning his desires he became submerged in the great mysterious unknown.

2. Bāt Bhalī Par Sānkari, Nagar Bhalā Par Dūr; Nānh Bhalā Par Pātlā, Māri Kar Har Chūr i.e. The path is good, but it is narrow and difficult. (The road to infinity is glorious but shrunken); the town (other world) is good, but it is at a distance. The Lord is good and benign, but He is subtle, one has to break one's self into pieces to reach Him.

3. Sānkar Ku'e Patāl Pāni, Lākhanh Bund Bikā'e; Bajar Paro Teh Mathura Nagari, Kānhā Piyāsā Jā'e i.e. The well is narrow; the water is deep down the earth; and drops are well over lakhs. May lightning fall on the town of Mathura from which Krishna has to go thirsty.

4. Kahā Yon (Kahā Pavana) Āpan Ghar Thatthar, Kahā yon (Kahā pavana) Nisat Tuhār (bahtar); Beech Balandya Ghar Chuve, Bund pare Ratanhār i.e. To such a degree is my thatched house (frail frame of my body) tottering that it cannot withstand the terrific

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by
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Sufism or Islamic Mysticism in its early stages was very simple, a sort of asceticism consisting mainly of puritanical abstention from worldly pleasures and enjoyments. It was later that the theosophical and pantheistic stage came to the forefront. Sufism started as a reaction against the formalism of the theologians, intellectualism of the sceptic rationalism, and as a protest against the ungodly ways of the ruling classes. In course of time it became a practical system of religious beliefs and practices and a system of simple thoughts and actions based on the noble ideals of human nature, holding that man is capable of self-fulfilment and ethical conduct. It absorbed the essence of Islamic teachings and the wisdom of the old masters and gave an esoteric interpretation of the teachings of the Qur'an and the sayings and practices of the Prophet. It assimilated later divergent ingredients of thoughts and practices of the humanists or men of other religions and presented them in a new dress of its own. For a time there was a cleavage threatened between formal externalists and those who claimed to be the true seekers of Truth or God. A challenge was held out to the power of the school of formal theologians who looked askance at the mystical peoples who were considered as heretics. The former, comparatively more rigid, broke with the latter who were sufficiently liberal in their outlook. The mystics gave a new and fresh interpretation of the relationship of the Creator and the Creation becoming monistic rather than dualistic and believing in identity and fusion in place of separation which the formal theologians insisted upon. But thanks to the efforts of men like al-Junaid and al-Ghazzālī the pattern of subsequent Sufi thought and the whole future development of the Sufi movement was given a new turn, and a reconciliation was effected between Sufism and orthodox Islam. These saintly philosopher-theologians made Islamic theology mystical. The central idea of Sufis was the doctrine of *Tauhīd*, the ascription of all existences, all actions, all incidents etc. to One First-Being, but in this view the first of the four stages of mystic life, and an absolute necessity was *Shari'at* or the observance of the law. 'Everything is Him' was now to be not very different from 'Everything is from Him'.

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By the time Islamic mysticism came to have a firm footing in India it had attained its fullest development and had acquired its classical form in outside regions. It had already become a revitalising force and a flowing current of socio-religious and religio-ethical progress as a result of the teachings of a group of intellectuals. Authoritative works including, among others, of *as-Sarrāj* (988 AD.), *Qushairī* (1162 A.D.), *Shihābuddin Suhrawardī* (1236 A.D.) as also *Zuhda* and *Tamhidat* of 'Ain-ul-Quḍāt Hamadānī (Killed 525 A.H.) in Arabic and *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* of Ali Hujw'irī (1072AD.) in Persian on principles and practices of *Taşawwuf*, stabilising the mystic thoughts and ideologies for purifying the inward spirit, had, already been compiled. The organization of the Sufis into *Silsilas* or orders which meant a confraternity of Sufi Brotherhood, each distinguished by some specific discipline, had been set up and the system of *Khānqāhs*, *Takias*, *Jamā'at-Khānās* and *Zāwiyās* which were a sort of monastic establishments or hospices serving the needs of travellers and wayfarers and also as centres of spiritual and secular training and instructions had been built in all important places largely inhabited by the Muslims.

The respective pioneers of the **Chishti** and the **Suhrawardi** orders in India were Khwājah Mu'īnuddin of Ajmer and Bahā'uddin Zakariyyā of Multan, and their disciples and followers came in large number to the eastern regions of Bihar and Bengal also. We are told by Amīr Khurd that H. Niẓāmuddin Auliā had once thought seriously in his early life to come to Bihar and lead a quiet life of devotion and teaching and instruction in the *Khānqāh* which one, Khidr Pāra Doz, had set up in Bihar. Bihar, however, became the chief centre of the **Firdausia** and the **Shuttaria** sub-orders of the **Suhrawardia Silsilah**. The **Qadiri** and the **Naqshbandi** were among other **Ba-shar'** orders which came later to be represented in Bihar. Bihar was not devoid of the people of *Be-shar'* orders also, for we have here the Hilsa saint, Jamāluddīn Jatī, one of the four chief disciples of Badī'uddin Madār, the saint of Makanpur. None of the members of all these orders except those of the **Firdausia** and **Shuttaria** has left behind their sacred writings, religious, sociological, biographical, or expository or explanatory of mystic idealogy. Here emerged the remarkable mystic personality of H. Sharafuddin Ahmad son of Yahya Maneri, the spiritual disciple of Khwājah Najībuddīn Firdausī of Delhi. A long-lived (661-782 A.H.) saintly personage, one of the finest and the greatest of the medieval Indian saints, he was also a distinguished scholar and a prolific writer. Though all that he wrote or what was written about him by his disciples has not unfortunately come down

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to us, yet some has survived; besides *Sharh-i-Ādāb-ul-Murīdīn*, his magnum opus, some big and small tracts and treatises, two or three volumes of his *Maktūbāt*, and numerous *Malfūzāt* which are very valuable as they give us considerable insight into the spirit of the age, and what may be called the Sufi way. They tell us of the mystic's intuitive experiences and the approach of the Sufi *Shaikhs* towards life and its problems.

The numerous types of literature produced in India, largely in Persian, those concerned with Islam as a dogmatic and social creed and as a system of practical religion followed in a mystic way may be divided into three or four distinct categories. In the first come dogmatical ethico-mystical works, largely commentative, interpretative and expository rather than original. Then there are *Tadhkiras* containing the biographical accounts of the saintly personages, some of whom have also been noticed by political chroniclers who drew upon traditional versions and some times acquired information from contemporary persons. Another category is that of the hagiological works or collections containing lives and legends of saints compiled by devoted disciples prone towards idealising their subjects and glorifying their spiritual masters; and ascribing to them much that was marvellous and miraculous. As regards a more reliable and authentic type of religio-mystic literature we have first to turn to the epistolography consisting of letters despatched to distantly-placed persons, answering their queries and questionings and satisfying their doubts and misgivings. These were the writings of the eminent saints themselves and are of genuine authenticity. The letters indicate the basic frame-works & mystic thoughts and the spirit of Sufism and reveal the mind of the writers on particular subjects of religious interest.

The *Malfūzāt* give greater details of such things and shed light on the prevailing conditions and on a variety of subjects, exegetical, ethical, ritualistic, sociological and cultural. Bihar made its contribution to the vast Sufi literature produced in India and of them those still preserved are the *Maktūbāt* and *Malfūzāt* of the Firdausī saints.

A peep into the pages of such *Malfūzāt* of H. Sharafuddin, as *Ma'din-ul-Ma'ānī* (compiled in 746 A. H.), *Khawān-i Pur-Ni'nat* (749-51), *Mukh-ul-Ma'ānī*, *Ganj-i-Lā-Yafnā* (760-77) *Mūnis-ul-Murīdīn* (774-775), *Malfūz-us-Safar* (762), *Tuhfah-i-Ghaibī* and *Rā'at-ul-Qulūb* gives us glimpses of the socio-religious atmosphere that prevailed in Bihar in the 14th century. Even the less known *Malfūzāt* like *Mir'āt-ul-Muhaqqiqīn*, *Irshād-ul-Tālibīn*, (also called *Burhān-ul-*

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Ārifīn), *Irshād-us-Sālikīn*, *Kanz-ul-Ma'ānī*, *Asbāb-un-Nijāt*, and *Ṣawā'id-i-Ruknī*, all of Makhdum Sharafuddin, as also *Malfūz* of Maulana Amun and *Risālah-i-Bahrām Bihārī* contain incidental references which give us a glimpse into the social conditions of the time. *Malfūz* means words, sayings, utterances, discourses, which the European orientalists call table-talks of the saints. They are a sort of dialogical compendiums indicative of the interchange and decisions on a variety of subjects, of course, not treated necessarily in all their fulness. They are discursive rather than compact; some of them are arranged chronologically. In sheer number the collections of discourses and also of letters emanating from H. Sharafuddin exceed those of others in India and elsewhere and most of them are still in Mss. or photocopies procured for Khuda Bakhsb Library Patna.

The technique followed in compiling the *Malfūzāt* genre, a form of literature on the subject of religions and society which had had an important place in Persian literature in India for about seven centuries and was largely cultivated from the 14th century onward in India, has been indicated by Zain Badr Ārabī in the introduction of *Ma'dīn-ul-Ma'ānī*, "In every *Majlis* devoted disciples would, each of them according to his own states and work, put forward questions on Sufi way and religious law and divine mysteries, and the *Shaikh* would enlighten the questioner with satisfactory replies, couched in pleasing language. I collected them as far as I could and did not leave out even a single word. If perchance I did not recollect any expression exactly and remembered only the sense and the gist I put that in appropriate words. I made no change at all in the sense and even left some pages as blank to be filled up later. That particular thing was submitted to the *Shaikh*. He carefully read the whole thing from the beginning to the end and was gracious enough to make some corrections. At times while revising the content he would relate some anecdote and quote some passages, couplets or quatrains; these also were incorporated by me". Zain Badr 'Arabī was the compiler of most of the *Malfūzāt*. Others also who took note of everything which fell from the lips of the Master in reply to questions on a variety of topics by people, big or small, specially by those who were receiving lessons on classical works of *Ḥadīth Tafsīr* and *Taşawwuf*, compiled them into a book form after they had been submitted and approved. There was much in the *Malfūzāt* and many points of interest about the affairs of everyday life which were held realistically. There is naturally some overlapping and repetitions in the various *Malfūzāt*. The style of the reproduced language of the *Shaikh* was conversational

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and simple, interspersed with numerous apt verses of great mystic poets.

Ma'din-ul-Ma'ānī, the first and the biggest of the *Malfūzāt* printed in Bihar Sharif in 1884, consists of 63 chapters which are spread over 500 pages. *Khwān-i Pur-Ni'mat*, virtually a supplement to the *Ma'din*, both in contents and chronology, and *Mukh ul-Ma'ānī* by the same compiler, are also printed; and so is the case with *Mūnis-ul-Murīdīn* compiled by Salahuddin Dā'ūd Khānī, while the rest are still in manuscript. Then there are *Ḍiyā-ul-Qulūb* containing the sayings of H. Ahmad Chirmposh of the **Suhrawardi** order and the works of the *Balkhi Saints* of the **Firdausi** order, specially *Ganj-i-Lā-Yakhfā* (not *La-Yafnā*) of H. Husain Nausha-i-Tauhid and *Mūnis-ul-Qulūb* of Ahmad Langar Daryā. We may also consider some of the social contents of two other *Malfūzāt*, *Ma'din-ul-Asrār* of H. Qāḍin 'O Ulā Shuṭṭārī, compiled by his son-in-law, Khwāja 'Alī Rājgīrī, and *Malfūz-i-Rukni* of H. 'Ainuddin 'Abdul Bārī, the Shuttari saint of Jandāha, compiled by H. Imāmuddin Rājgīrī, the author of *Manāhij-ush-Shuṭṭār*. They are rare and still in manuscript. In the latter we get a very interesting reference to a correct copy of the former, a precious copy of '*Abdur Raḥīm Sūr* of Bihar whose victor, Raja Man Singh Kachchawaha, captured it amongst the booties and made a gift of it to the Jandāha saint.

Qāḍin 'Olā who died in 901=1496 and buried in Bania Basārḥ near Vaishālī has, among other things, given a satirical but true pen-picture of Sufis of his time. Before we proceed to glean the tid-bits and gather valuable threads of information concerning the social conditions of the time from his *Malfūzāt*, it is worth while to quote the relevant extract. "They have their eyes on the people and wish that they should not be found fault with, for without wearing the '*Dopatta*' of humility, a small *Dastār* (turban), with or without a *Kulāh* (cap), and a *Pairāhan* (loose vest or shirt) they would not go to the market place. It should not be that the professional tailor, weaver, shoe-maker, maker of boots and stockings, and others like them might believe in what they heard about them and hesitate in paying visits to them as a man of high devotion (*Tarīqat*) in religion. The self-conceited (*Khud-parastān*) persons are quite different from true worshippers of God. Such a man sits in a retired place (*Zāwīyah*) to acquire a good name as a *Shaikh* and a religious leader. Referring to a few pages or a certain portion of a book which he has read he talks of big things like divorce, *I'tikāf* (prayers in seclusion) and problems of sale and

purchase. He delivers his speech in slow tones so that the people should think that the Shaikh, due to his over-exertions, abstemious habits, and abstinence from food, finds it difficult to speak. When the food is served in the assembly he eats little and takes very small morsels to his mouth. In thousands of ways of such subterfuges his self assumes false pretences. In days and nights he is seen counting his beads, having the holy book on the stand near the prayer carpet, and the attendants are standing by. He has got a sort of idol-house on the space of a *Chabutra* (terrace) where he sits on a tiger skin or a prayer carpet, wearing the mystic cloths consisting of a shirt with long sleeves or a *Muraqqa'* (patched and ragged garment) with *Hazār Mekhī* (a *Dervesh's* habit closely stitched), a blanket, and a big *Dastār* (a long head-dress wrapped round the turban). People, gentle folk and commons, come and kiss the hands and the feet of the *Shaikh*. Taking this recourse and reverence of the people as his highest ascent (*Mi'rāj*) he begins to consider himself as one of the true or perfect saints. May God keep us off from such persons!" The Firdausi saint, Husain Mu'izz Balkhī, has also denounced the pseudo sufis who being seated on the *Sajjādah* (prayer-carpet) talked much, did little to keep themselves off from sinful acts, and failed to practise self introspection so as to become a true Musalman.

In the works of the Sufis we get very little about their personal life, activities and achievements for they deal mainly with mystic beliefs and practices. But in the sayings of the Shaikh, we get many biographical details about other saintly personages and some times they are made to say something about themselves. Shaikh Qāḍin bin 'Olā bin 'Ālam Tirhuti, the 15th century Shuṭṭārī saint of Bania Basarh, a direct descendant of Shaikh Ismā'il, brother of S. Isrā'il, grandfather of H. Sharafuddin Aḥmad Manerī, gave a detailed account of his Pīr, Shaikh 'Abdullah bin Husain of Mandu, the pioneer of the **Shuttarī Silsilah** in India, his relations with Sultan Ghayāsuddin Khalji and latter's Wazir, Mushīr-ul-Mulk; and what is more important, an interesting account of his own journey to Mandu, indifference of the Pīr in initial stage, the test prescribed of '*Ṭai*' fast for three continuous days, subsisting only on water, the severe illness of his companion, Ahmad Muhammad Abul Hakim, the ordeal he had to undergo in attending on him and carrying him back home-ward, and his eventual initiation on 4th *Dhī'l Hijjah* 880 = 1476 A. D. and so forth.

Ma'din-ul-Asrār has also other flashes. Emphasising upon the kind of earning lawful living and having nourishment necessary

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enough to keep body and soul together the saint writes that one way of having lawfully-earned food in an honest way was to take grain from non-believers on credit and get out of that dry bread or dry rice (*Bhāt-Khushk*) and rice gruel (*Āshām-i-Birinj*) so as to have strength enough for performing *Dhikr* (recital of God's name), *Fikr* (contemplation) and *Tasbīh* (saying prayer on rosary). The loan taken may be repaid from what came from 'Futūh' (money received gratuitously), proceeds of villages, income derived from trade or cultivations of land. There is no semblance of doubts or uncertainty about borrowed money or grain so acquired, and the saintly personages had resorted to that. For illustration one may cite the instance of Makhdūm Sharafuddin, the inmates of whose *Khānqāh* always subsisted on the daily allowance of food grain supplied on credit by a Hindu grocer who had his shop near the door of his residence. When the total amount of the value of 'Rātib' (rations) reached one thousand *Tanka* he sent the information to the Makhdūm. As soon as the gratuitous offers came from different quarters the loan was repaid. At times the Makhdūm felt the need of borrowing ten maunds or even a double of the quantity of grain and afterwards when the grain produced in the agricultural field came or something was received from elsewhere the grain given on loan was returned.

This fact has been mentioned in *Manāqib-ul-Aṣfiyā* and also in *Ganj-i Lā Yakhfā*. **Firdausi** saints of Bihar were very cautious about the lawfulness or otherwise of the means whereby they got their diet and raiment and enjoined this upon the people of the time. Food stuff provisions taken from the neighbouring Hindu *Baqqāl* (grain merchant) on loan for the *Khānqāh* establishment, and the personal needs of the family members of the great Shaikh were deemed to be free from forbidden taint of iniquity. The Shaikh's personal needs were slight and few. He ate a simple food once in day and night, and he was very strict about the cooking of food in his house only once during the day. Once he saw smoke coming out of his house and enquired from the attendant, *Chulhā'ī*, as to what it was about. When he was informed that some near relation had arrived from Maner as a guest and his aged mother whom he addressed as 'Māmun' was preparing something for him, he ran to her and respectfully reminded her of the prescribed restriction. She immediately sent out the half cooked stuff to a neighbour and promised not to break the rule in future. As regards his garment it consisted ordinarily of a *Pairākan* (a white vest or shirt), a *Mirzā'ī* (an under-jacket with long loose sleeves and open cuff), a *Lungī* or *Tahnad* (a

cloth worn round the loins and passed between the legs), a *Ridā* (a cloak or mantle) and a *Dotā'i* (a double or folded wrapper) and a turban. References are found in the Malfūzāt to *Dastār*, *Pairāhan Darrā'ah* (an upper garment of cotton or coarse wool, a tunic), *Izār* (a drawer) *Jubbah* (surtout) *Kafsh* (shoe) and *Na'lain* (shoe with wooden soles). When a Hindu aged eighty came to the *Khānqāh* and voluntarily accepted Islām he was offered *Shīrīnī* (sweetmeats) and *Kāk* (dry or baked bread) and was made to take that uttering 'Bismillah' (in the name of God) on the first morsel. He had to undergo the sanctification ceremony (*Taḥīr*) and was clad in *Pairāhan* of mystic type with long loose sleeves and *Lungī* (cloth worn between legs). The 'Imāmah, a head dress of seven yards cloth, was a *Sarband*, rather than a *Dastār*, and mystics had a simple *Dastārchah* or handkerchief or towel to purify hands and mouth with.

There was something about the great saint of Bihar which even in his lifetime had become a myth and there were people even among his close companions who felt inclined to believe the irrational accounts that had become current specially in regard to his period of long wandering for more than three decades in the jungle of Behea and the hills of Rājgīr from which latter place he was discovered and brought to Bihar town by Nizāmuddin Maukā, a disciple of the celebrated Nizāmuddin Auliā of Delhi. As H. Shu'aib and Husain Mu'izz Balkhī write in their respective works, *Manāqib-ul-Aṣfiyā* and *Ganj-i-Lā Yakhfā* he continued to come down from the hills every Friday, led the congregational prayer at Bihar, and returned to his hill resorts infested by wild animals. For him a *Do Chhapri* had been set up out of the lawful money (*Māl-i-Muzakkā*) by his discoverer at the place where a *Khānqāh* was built later in the forties at the orders of Muhammad Tughlaq, by the then military governor of Bihar and Rājgīr, Zainuddin Majdul Mulk. When owing to his growing infirmity he could not cover the distance between Rājgīr and Bihar on foot he was persuaded to settle down at the latter place where he eventually died and was buried.

One of his close associates, Qādī Zāhid, once asked him as to whether it was true that he had not taken food for thirty or forty years. He replied that it was not true. He had not taken any cereal or cooked food for a long time and subsisted exclusively on whatever he could get in the form of fruits and leaves or any nourishing grass at the time of need from the jungle and felt refreshed. This served as a little bar or blocking of the way for human excretions; but he had night pollutions. The author of *Ganj-i-Rashīdī* tells us that once

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in severe winter the great saint of Bihar with very scanty clothes on his body descended from the hills and entered into a large stack or pile of straw which he found at the skirt of a village. That night a fire broke out in the village which was wrongly ascribed to him by some cowherds who detected him from the leg which was visible, and they dragged him out and were about to belabour him when someone identified the wandering *Faqīr*. He uttered something in Hindavi in self defence. (*Manho Tarak channo na bhati* i.e. leave me; I do not like to be vexed).

Once when pressed to say something about his experiences during the course of his wanderings on the hills he said that once despite an earnest search he found nothing to eat and pangs of hunger made him so wretched that he had to descend from the hills. He found at its foot a person apparently of high status sitting in the midst of his men, two of whom were blowing *Morchhal* (fan) on him to drive away flies from the food that had been served before him. He could not help drawing nearer and muttering something. He was invited to partake of the food and he sat down and began to lift up the morsels. The attendants looked down upon and began even to openly criticise and reproach their master for taking his food with him. Such sort of wrangling sent the saint into an ecstatic state. He immediately got up on the high hill but the ecstasy lasted more or less for three days. This instance shows how untouchability was still a force to reckon with; but high class *Brahmans* or *Rājput*s were liberal enough to rise above it, specially when the question of hospitability to a poor *Darvesh* was involved.

The *Malfūzāt* refers frequently to the *Siddhas* (the *Yogīs*, given to ascetic severities who had subjected their will to the eight *Siddhis* and were supposed to have acquired supernatural powers of flying in the air, walking on water, and so on and so forth). In a *Majlis* (42 of *M. M.*) Qādī Ashrafuddin asked the saint as to whether the *Yogīs* could actually perform "*Ṭairān*" (flying on the air) and the saint replied in the affirmative about such change of places (*Naql*). He said there was nothing specific or special about the *Yogīs* for others could have such acquirements by cultivating the mind and the body. What was needed was the removal of load or gravity of the human nature (*Thiqal-i-Bashariyat*) so as to gain lightness of weight and agility.

Speaking on '*Ishq* (love) in *Majlis* 33 the saint said "There is an idol temple on the hills of Rājgīr near a spring. Those of the infidel

faith who are transported with love and have abandoned the world (*‘Āshiq-wa-Tārik*) are kept in that temple after their death. As has been laid down in their faith they carve an idol image out of stones, and keep that constantly in their left hand as long as they live. The nails of their fingers become so big that they have to be folded up all around. Night and day they keep that in their view and discharge urine and excrement standing on their legs. Such a man had arrived in Rājgīr and had a stone idol in his left hand. His nails had grown so long that they could be folded up all around. One day it happened that that stone image fell down from his hands. Ill-circumstanced and frustrated he began to lament and said, “For so many years I kept you constantly before my eyes and out of love for you I abandoned everything in the world. Had you taken me to be your true lover you would not have separated yourself from me. Now it does not behove me to remain alive”. So saying he took up a dagger with which he cut his throat. At this the saint observed “A Hindu is capable of doing such a thing for the sake of a piece of stone. If a believer who considers his faith to be true does something like this there should be nothing surprising”. The author of *Dabistān-i-Madhāhib* has also referred to the “*Sannayāsīs* who remained twelve years standing upon one leg. They called *Thavesar* (Satrataras) II, 148.

The Makhdūm proceeded to give another anecdote. “In this land of high elevation the Hindus have built idol temples, which have small cells all around them. Women, who are inamorato in relation to idols and whose husbands are dead, keep themselves in the cells before the idol, having abandoned everything for the sake thereof. When they are transported with their emotional love for the idol they utter the names of *Barma* (Bramha) and *Shankar* and in a place abrajist that of the idol cell they dig up the stony ground and make a hollow where they retire to die. So long as they live they keep themselves standing opposite to the idol. All around that hilly areas they plant thorny plants and brambles so as to prevent people from bringing for them bread and water. As persons of good breeding do, they reverently keep up standing with their both hands folded. In this way they pass two days, some twelve days, and yet others a *Chillā* (40 days) until they are completely dried up in their bodies and die. They are burnt in the same place and the ashes or their burnt bodies are taken by the Hindus who distribute the same in small quantities among themselves. They consider the same as sacred relics (*Tabarruk*) saying that the woman was an ideal one and a true lover. Some of them are thrown

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in such an ecstatic condition because of the excessive love they bear for the idols that soaking their garments with naphtha oil and twisting and coiling that on their body from head to foot they ask those who are standing by to set fire to it and thus they allow themselves to be burnt down. The people who are present keep their eyes fixed on them to see whether the hairs on their bodies are agitated or moved or not. If no movement is available in the hair they take the person to be true; but if the hairs are seen agitated they say that he or she was not a true lover." Again, the saint observed. "Praise be to God, the most Holy ! A Hindu reduces himself to such a condition out of his love for a chip of stone."

Elsewhere, in the same *Malfūz* (*Majlis* 34) we get another story concerning the Hindus which was related to him by a wandering fellow. He said that a person who had travelled a good deal on hills came to him and said that he had arrived in a mountainous country where lofty temple and hermitages had been set up and were occupied by devout religious ascetics and infidel idolators. Near that there was a populous city where he arrived at a time when famine situation had arisen owing to the failure of rains. He was sitting in the market place when he saw the *Rājā* of the city and a large concourse of people coming out of their places and proceeding in a certain direction laden with gifts and presents. He asked some one as to where the *Rājā* with so many people was going and was told that the rains had failed and they were going to the devout men of their faith to pray for rains. He joined them as a spectator. When the temple and the monastic establishments on the hill became visible the *Rājā* got down from his horse, ascended the hills, and reverently advanced towards the temples. He dared not enter the area without express permission, and with all the gifts and presents he stood under the blazing sun in a place opposite to the hermitage. The worshipping hermits were all old men, seventy to ninety years in age, and every one was sitting near an idol. Suddenly one of the devout persons came out and raising his hands asked by hints as to what they had come for. The *Rājā* pointing his fingers towards the sky said that they wanted rains. At this every one of them began to look at the other. After some time a very old man emerged from their midst, came to the open courtyard of the temple, and standing under the sun lifted both his eyes towards the sky and muttered something in his own language. When questioned the traveller was told by a Hindu that the hermit said that he would not budge from the place under the blazing sun till, it did not rain. After a long time streaks

of clouds became visible and there was a shower of rains. After saying all this the saint said that the whole of the inward part (mind and heart) of the traveller had been affected and he was about to apostatize and confess belief in their faith. He told him that he should on no account put faith in such things for they were false and misleading. He then told him two or three similar things which have been expounded in books and brought him round and he repeated the sacred formula (But we are not told what those things were).

The Sufi mystics believe in and emphasise upon an adage "*Mūtū Qabla an Tamūtū*" i. e. die before your death. Something like that was ascribed to the Hindu *Yogīs*. *Mukh-ul-Ma'ānī* says that Qādī Ashrafuddin put the question about *Yogīs* who say that "If you want to live you should know how to die". The saint said, "Yes, indeed they say so, but they do not realise its true significance. If you ask them about its mystic meaning they would show their ignorance. Somebody who may have laid the foundation of their faith must have realised the true nature and significance of this problem; but foolish and ignorant transmitters inverted the sense." 'Ain-ul-Quḍāt says that in his estimation all the religions, or most of them, had true basis but the ignorant followers being unable to understand the real significance of the original teachings turned their meaning. Even in these times there is no dearth of ignorant and unwise ones. It is not an easy affair to understand the true position of a religion and then accept it. As regards the Islamic faith it came in all its perfection; but its commands are not observed and there has been deviation from its original ideology. People blindly follow the faiths of their ancestors and have been conventional in their beliefs and practices. Is it strange if in these times I ask a Hindu a thousand times to embrace Islam and abjure his wrong faith he will not do so?"

Ganj-i-Lā-Yakhfā, a *Malfūz* of Husain Mu'izz Balkhī (d. 844), also tells us about the *Yogīs* and the Hindus of the time. One had become a *Chelā* (disciple) of a *Yogī* (a Hindu ascetic) for *Siddhī* which, according to them, meant accomplishment of an object (*Ma'lūb*). To test his spiritual capability the *Yogī* asked him to pick out one of the oxen which were grazing in the field, fix it up in his heart, and concentrate his mind on the thought of its image. The *Chelā* did as directed. In the meanwhile, the *Yogī* died and much as others insisted upon him to enter into the discipleship of another he refused and continued his austerities already prescribed. After sometime a projection like two horns began to emerge near his neck and who

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knows if he had not died soon after he might have become more like an ox. At this the Balkhi saint observed that the Almighty God has endowed men with unimaginable powers and capacity. Whatever becomes fixed and well-established in one's heart as a result of a continuous practice and disciplining of the mind, he himself becomes that. This is the reason why one should not allow sordid things to enter into one's mind.

The *Malfūz* contains a reference to an ordinary Hindu not necessarily a *Yogī* ascetic showing the liberal outlook and latitudinarian attitude of Sufis. Among others who attended the 18th *Majlis* there was Malik Badh Kotwal and Sayyid-us-Sādāt, *Kātib* (Secretary). Addressing them H. Husain said that one infidel had come and complained that the authorities of the *Dīwānī* were demanding from him *Rusūm* (customs or taxes) which he had not been called upon to pay at any time. He asked them to give him their protection and get him exemption from the demand. He observed that infidelity and faith, orthodoxy and heresy were technical matters (relative terms) among men of religion and sects and they did not come against care and consideration, amity and friendship for all. There should be concord and harmony in everything. There is no real enmity in anything. The profane or superficial enmity is occasioned by selfish desires and interests. He cited the case of Moses, the Prophet, who was hauled up by God for not responding for help to a repentent and drowning Pharaoh, and also of the Prophet Abraham for denying shelter in a stormy raining night to a creature of God who was a non-believer.

Hinduism and Islam have two different types of social order with varying outlook and behaviour in life and each has its own way of regulating human energy. They differ in certain ideals, credal, social and religious. Unlike Hinduism, Islam is not hierarchical requiring a priest or clergy to preside over rites and rituals. The *Malfūzāt* tell us about all that happened to a person from birth to death without the need of offices or services of a priestly authority. The *Firdausi* saint of Bihar, an orthodox *Sunni*, was very particular about the observance of obligatory duties and the congregational prayers which were a great binding force. There are references to a little simple ceremony of *Bāng-i-Adhān* (cry of *Allāh-o-Akbar*) delivered to the ears of the new-born babies, and the crier is a near relative. The prayers could be led by any person. We get references to such social functions as '*Aqīqah* (shaving the hair), formal naming and clothing of a child, *Tathīr* or circumcision, *Maktab* or *Bismillāh* and *Fātihah*, marriage, fixation of dowry, divorce, *Ṭalāq* or *Khula'* (separation of the couple).

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death and burial, and the 'Siyum' and the Sixth day birth ceremony, etc. which did not require any ordained priest. In the teaching of the Firdausi saint of Bihar, there was a judicious admixture of form and spirit, *Sharī'at* and *Tarīqat*. True, they could not help being influenced by their Indian environment. They had allowed themselves to be Indianized to some extent but not at the expense of Islam. They emphasised upon the inward but did not ignore the outside of things.

The *Malfūzāt* give little or no indication of the social and political life of the Muslims as affected by the characteristic caste discipline and caste system of the Hindus. There were racial groups of Arabs, Turks, Persians, Pathans, men of higher and lower level and status, and those of men of differing sectarian and juristic schools. But there was no rigidity or principle of heredity in respect of birth and avocation. On the whole, the Muslims formed a single homogenous community and one social unity. In the assemblies and the *Khānqāhs* of the Bihari Sufi saints, apart from the regular inmates, we read about the coming and participating in discussion of *Maliks* and *Malikzādās*, *Muftīs*, *Wālīs*, *Hākims*, *Mutaṣarrifs*, *Sipahsālār* and *Kotwāl* who were almost exclusively Turks; *Qāṭīs*, *Muftīs*, *Ṣadrs*, *Maulānās*, *Hāfiz*, who were mostly *Sayyids* or *Shaikhs* of Arab and Persian extraction; *Qalandars*, poor and indigent (*Mūflis-o-Benawā*) like a Zahiruddin Gharīb, and a Shaikh Bukhāri who served for 30 years and died without leaving anything which he had not given in charity. Mention has been made of the *Qalandars*, followers of Jamāluddin Sāujī, itinerant monks with shaven heads and beards who had abandoned everything and even omitted the obligatory duties prescribed by *Sharī'at*; of *Mulāhiān* and *Majdhūb*, men distracted with love, drawn and attracted by Divine Grace who had renounced all worldly concerns and had given themselves entirely to piety and contemplation; of a Shaikh Langoti who, when asked as to why amidst cold and hot season he had nothing on his body except a small piece of cloth round his loins, said that he was to end his life as he began it without any equipment; of professional weavers (*Nūrbāf* or *Julāhā*) and cotton dresser (*Naddāf*); of cloth merchants (*Bazzāz*), *Kafsh-gar* (shoe-maker) and artisans; of female slaves or slave girls (*Kanīzgān*) who had to soil their hands and feet with dirt and mud when they thronged round a well to draw water and could not afford a complete purifatory wash before sitting down to cook and take their food; of workers in the field and labourers (*Kāmkarān*) who like some companions of the Prophet came bare-footed to offer their prayers in mosques. Such men were allowed to enter the

mosque on the ground that impurity did not lie in the dust trodden by their foot and a *Fatwā* (religious decree) about the dirt and nastiness would be oppressive to so many people.

Occasions arose when the topic of what was lawful or unlawful came under discussion. In Sonārgāon, a hue and cry was raised by the students about the legality of the use of oyster bones as limes (*Chūnā*) and the situation became so tense that rulers had to intervene and call a band of *Ulamā* and *Muftīs*. They, however, decided that when a great multitude of people had become addicted and habituated to the use of such a kind of lime it was not advisable to give a positive decision about its illegality.

The *Khwān-i-Pur Ni'mat* tells us that the great saint once referred to many things which had become current and were believed in by people in Bihar, specially women. They refrained from burning the crusts of garlic and onions in their houses; would not sit at the door or the threshold, or sweep their houses with brooms during night; and they did not take curd (*Jughrāt: Dahī*) at night, for these, as they said, led to penury.

According to the great Shaikh, it was obligatory not to fall victim to habits (*Ādat parastī but parastī ast*); but he advised people neither to resort to such things themselves nor to condemn or prohibit all of them which were sincerely believed in by a large number of people.

The Sufis could not claim themselves to be completely free from some superstitious views. The people believed in good and bad omens, if not in auspicious or inauspicious hours, days and times. But the great *Firdausi* Shaikh and his disciple, Maulānā Muẓaffar, had a better and healthier view. Dreams were considered as very significant. The great *Firdausi* saint was an specialist in *Ta'bīr-i-Rū'yā* or interpretation of dreams. He frequently quotes Ibn-i-Sīrīn in this connection. Qāḍī Ashrafuddin asked the great saint as to whether there was any propriety or connection with regard to the implied prediction that the use of broken comb caused penury, and that if a handkerchief or one comb was used by more than one person, it led to separation. He observed that none knew about the mysteries of the Divine Law. Prayers offered at certain times proved effective; others had no response even about the sick and the ailing. Knowledge and wisdom get stupified at the wonders wrought by the omnipotence of the Almighty. For instance if a diagram like this (it is given in the text of *Ma'din ul-Ma'ānī* p. 426) is drawn and

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filled in with letters of *Jumal* (*Abjad*, an arrangement of the Arabic alphabets) and this is inscribed on two earthen wares which are still unaffected by water and it is placed in the hands of a pregnant woman at the time of delivery so that she should keep her both eyes fixed up there, then it is placed at the feet; and when pressed with full force, it renders it easy for the child to come forth. The diagram consisted of nine squares or partitions, each with a letter of *Jumal*.

Again references are found to the beliefs in enchantment (*Sihr*), averting the effects of evil eyes; in doctoring and healing through the distribution of charms and amulets (*Ta'wīdh* and *Naqsh* with magic squares). They said "*As-Sihru Haqqun*" (enchantment is true). Some believed in *Āsīb* (the misfortune due to the shadow of demons. Ḥasan Sijzi in *Fawā'id-al-Fuwād* and Ḥamīd Qalandar refer to this. Attempts have been made to trace the antiquities of *Sihr* to the time of the Prophet who is said to have been himself subjected to it. Whether true or false they could not be oblivious of the effects of *Sihr*. Apparently the great saint did not rise above such beliefs in charms. He told the audience of one of his own experiences. During the course of his wanderings he arrived at a spot where cows and calves were grazing. He gazed at one. In the mean while some women came to collect the dung. One of them was a *Kaftār* or witch at whose incantation the poor calf died. The cowherds came and saw the saint standing by and they were about to belabour him. He ran to the witch and induced her to make amends for the mischief. He himself prescribed certain verses of *Qur'ān* for curing a snake bite. He refers to a thief catching process by divination and making use of a *Padhni-i-āb* (water pot). Somebody said people resorted to a test by throwing down a suspected *Kaftār* thief in water. If he or she came up the theft was proved. For finding out theft they uttered certain verses from the *Sūrah* of *Yāsīn* of the *Qur'ān*, on a water pot placed on some rice, and if the pot moved they took it as a disclosure of theft. The saint said "where does the Shar' come in? The devil causes so many things to revolve".

Perhaps Indian ideas were responsible for the superstitious practices and also for austerities as the restraint of breath (*Pās-i-Anfās* or *Habs-i-Dam*) and the recital of the *Qur'ān* while placing the crown of the head over the ground and raising the legs above in the air, without taking the help of a wall or leaning against something. This and some other things possibly came to the Sufis from *Yogā* of Hinduism. The saint said to a questioner that it would be preferable if one had

things common between us and the infidels in respect of food and garments and the very air we breathe and water we drink.

Somebody suggested that the Hindus once a year at a certain time resorted to the ceremony of sprinkling *Shangarf* (cinnabar: 'Abir, a kind of powder used at the *Saturnalia* of *Holi*) on the body of all and sundry. The Saint said that if they did that as a matter of their faith the Muslims must abstain themselves from participating in that (*Mūnis-ul-Murīdīn*).

The Sufis had a greater hold on the masses and the public than the scholastic theologians and the formal jurists. The *Malfūzāt* reveal how strong religion had its bearing on the social life of the Muslims from birth to death. Islam does not recognise monasticism (*Ruhbāniyat*) or any intermediary priesthood or canonised clergy between God and man, renunciation of the world (*Tark-i-Dunyā*), dissociation (*'Uzlat*) from people or from other works. The veneration of saints and Shaikhs did not mean any special sanctity due to birth or mastery in ritualistic practices, but for the spiritual solace they provided and the spiritual and moral uplift of society which they looked after. In the *Malfūzāt* we find references to *Kasb*, i. e. earning for living. The Sufi mystics had substituted for the old ascetic ideal of renunciation of the world the conception of vocation or earning, that is, of doing manfully the work ready to each man's hands for the improvement of life. They did distrust wealth as a snare of the soul, but by this they meant hoarding and having more than was necessary for existence. They were householders, lived a married life, accepted invitation to feasts, recommended genuine career for meeting their wants. There is ample evidence of all this in the *Malfūzāt* in Chapter 44 of the *Ma'din-ul-Ma'ānī* which is devoted to the question, '*Su'āl*'. Begging in itself is unlawful (*Su'āl bi-nafsihi ḥarām ast*) except when it becomes a necessity such as medicine in illness. Example of the Prophets of the past and the first Companions were cited to show that they worked for their livelihood. These unasked gifts and present (*Nudhūr wa Futūḥ*) to the religious establishments, *Khānqāhs* or hospices were intended for others. Even a poor student was advised elsewhere to set a part of his day to earn for his paper and books, and only in dire case he could get assistance out of public money. We have numerous instances of saintly mystics discharging the duty of teaching. In short, the Sufi saints lived on the world but were out of it.

Ma'din-ul-Ma'ānī gives the picture of a ceremony in the initial stage of medieval Islamic education as a basic religious feature.

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Qāḍī Ashrafuddin brought his sister's son and requested the great saint to instruct him to learn and commence something on the writing board (*Takhtah-i-Ta'limi*) with his own blessed hands. The saint wrote the first four letters of the alphabet and instructed the boy about that. Then he made him pronounce *Bismillāh* which the boy did, and afterwards he was asked to repeat the four letters uttering or speaking as they came from the saint's lips. Then the saint gave him his blessings. Some eatables consisting of cake (*Kāk*) and a little of sweetmeats which had been brought were distributed among others after a little of that had been put by the Saint by his own hands into the mouth of the boy. *Ta'lim-i-Qur'ān* was the next stage. As regards the subject of the curriculum taught at the earliest or the elementary stage, the saint said about himself that in his youthful age he had been made to learn a few books about all of which he had a faint recollection. But he did include works on *Maṣādir* (sources or grammar). *Miftāh ul-Lughāi* (key to vocabulary or a lexicon) of which the whole of the first volume he had to fix up in his memory. Every now and then they made him repeat what he had committed to memory. How he wished that they would have made him memorize the *Qur'ān* instead of all that.

That the *Khānqāh*, provided opportunities for acquiring further instructions beyond the elementary stage of studies is revealed by numerous references in this and other *Malfūzāt* to lessons imparted in such works as *Sirāj-ul-Ārifīn*, *Āwārif ul-Ma'ārif*, *Ādāb-ul-Murīdīn*, *Mu'awwal*, *Sharḥ-i-Taarruf*, *Mulakhkhaṣ-i-Iḥyā-ul-'Ulūm*, *'Aqā'id-i-Nasafī*, *Maktūbāt-i-'Ain-ul-Qudāt* etc. Once the great saint made his observation on the distinction between *'Ilm-i-Shar'* (knowledge of law) which covered *'Ilm-i-Mu'āmalāt* (dealings and transactions) and *'Ilm-i-Tariqat* (mystic or contemplative sciences) and also *'Ilm-i-Ghaib* (divination) and *'Ilm-i-Firāsāt* (physiognomies i. e. judging of the character from external appearances). In one of his very informative biographical sketches he referred to a great scholar, Shaikh 'Alā'uddin Jeury under whom his own great teacher Shaikh Sharafuddin Tawwāma, had studied *Tafsīr* (commentary on the *Qur'ān*) and *Aḥādīth* (traditions). He said that Maulanā 'Alā'uddin was a Sayyid of pure lineage and a great scholar. He had commanding knowledge of various kinds of subjects, speculative and practical. He was a gifted and born expositor and interpreter of all the varieties of subjects. It was his habit to set a part of the day for *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and he occupied himself on other days in imparting

lessons on the science of *Naḥv* (syntax), *Manṭiq* (logic), and *Ma'ānī* (rhetoric and theory of literary style). Next he delivered lessons on *Uṣūl* (principles of laws) and *Kalām* (scholastic theology). Other days were devoted to *Tafsīr* (commentary) and *Ḥadīth* (tradition). In this manner he gave lessons on separate subjects on different days. All the 'Ulamā, *Masha'ikh*, saints and sages of Delhi went to the king but he alone never did that.

Though, like the **Chishtis** and the **Qadiris**, the **Firdausi** saints of Bihar preferred to lead a life far from din and bustle of the materialistic world and avoided the company of kings and nobility, they were not unaware of what was going around them as is evident from the observation of H. Sharfuddin recorded in *Mukh-ul-Ma'ānī* concerning the capricious policy and cruelty of Muhammad Tughlaq which is largely in accord with what we get in Barani's chronicle. Though the mystics realised the enormities of the situation they did not champion any public cause, take a stand on any public issue, or raise their voice against injustice and maladministration. The Sufis kept before them the Quranic verse, "Obey Allah, obey the Prophet, and obey those who are in command on you". They did not want to disturb the established order by countenancing use of or resort to force against even oppressive rulers. The great Saint, however, approached men of power and authority not for himself but for others. He cited approvingly the case of a **Chishti** saint who despite a rebuff that he received at first repeated the request on behalf of an oppressed person. In fact, he himself had to undergo such an ordeal at first. He unwillingly accepted the Bulgarian prayer carpet which Muhammad Tughlaq had sent to him with a paper conferring a *Jāgīr* in Rājzīr for the upkeep of the *Khānqāh* that was ordered to be built in Bihar for the saint. But this paper was returned 15 years after to Firuz Shah when he passed through Bihar in 754 A.H. We get an indication of the attitude of the **Firdausi** saint from the reply given to the repeated *Parwārah*s of Malik Rafī' Amīrul 'Asākir, which H. Husain Mū'izz Balkhī sent "The *Faqīr* has God with him and he has everything. There is nothing dearer to his heart than a blanket, a torn and patched frock (*Khirqah*) and a day's morsel" (*Maktūbāt*). Elsewhere he observes, "This poverty and starvation is much better than the disgrace and indignities which are being heaped upon the *Dastār* and the *Khirqah*s of those 'Ulamā and the *Masha'ikh* who have established some relations with the rulers and nobles (*Gā'ij-i-Lā-Yakhfā*).

The **Firdausi** saints of Bihar like the **Chishti** Sufis were fond

of Musical concerts or *Samā'*, though as orthodox they were not oblivious of the Islamic injunction against it, "*Ar-raḡṡ wa'l ghinā ḡarāmūn*" (dancing and music are forbidden). They laid down conditions of time, place and men (*Zamān, Makān, Ikhwān*). There is no reference anywhere that any of them took recourse to mystic rotation on legs (*Raḡṡ*) even when they were transported with ecstasy. But they mentioned the *Raḡṡ* or ecstatic dances of the *Chishtīs* like Bābā Farīd Shakarganj, and explained it away. None of them could be dubbed as *Pīr-i-Raḡḡāṡ* as 'Abdul Quddus Gangohī was called by some. In *Ma'din-ul-Ma'āni* there is a detailed discourse on *Samā'* and the question of its lawfulness under certain conditions and restrictions. In *Ganj-i-lā-Yakhfā* H. Husain Mu'izz describes how *Samā'* was practised in the Bihar *Khānḡāh*, "First there was a recital of the *Qur'ān* and then *Samā'* (listening to music) was resorted to. There were *Qārīs* (readers of the Holy Book) and *Khushkhwān* (sweet voiced minstrels). First '*Askarī* (ten verses) were recited which moved the great saint to tears; then the *Muṡrib* (singer) sang a couplet or a *Ghazal* at which the saint was seen absorbed and overwhelmed; the verses had been tuned on an instrument. Even when the *Samā'* was going on he came back to his previous state and uttered "*Astaghfirū'llāh*" (I ask pardon of God or may God forbid) twice and sometime renewed his ablution (*Wuḡū*). The great saint had no control on himself on occasions of *Samā'*. If a *Goyandah* (singer) himself began or somebody brought the *Qawwāl* (mystic singer) he sometime told the audience to go and enjoy the *Samā'*. He said *Samā'* was forbidden for men of evil possession (*Sā'hib-i-Nafs*) and not for good men who were suddenly distracted and got transported, for such men it was permissible (*Mubāḡh*); but it was not so for all. Once there was a *Samā'*; when the sound died away he addressed the audience, "I am going to bring to your ears something from the tongue of *Samā'*" and he quoted verses.

The *Firdausi* saints did not permit the use of *Mazāmīr* or musical instruments i. e. flute, psaltries, organs etc. as an accompaniment of the singer, *Goyandagān* or *Qawwāl* excited *ḡaiwānīyat* as opposed to '*Insānīyat*'.

Illustrating an observation that the sweet and melodious voice in the recital of prayers and of the Holy Book incurred neither praise nor blame but it became bad and even sinful when too much importance was attached to it and order and arrangements were disturbed; he said, "Maulana Zainuddin Hāfiḡ (memorizer of *Qur'ān*) the brother of Maulana Kākā (Sharafuddin Tawwāma, his teacher) was very

proficient in the art of music, knew all about the *Pardas* (musical tones or melodies), shook even walls and doors when he recited a verse or *Ghazal*, and he very often sent Maulana Taqiuddin Mahsavi into such ecstatic raptures that he became oblivious of his *Durrā'ah*, *Dastār*, *Kafsh*, *Na'lain* etc. He, too, at times, fell in the rot. Sultān Shamsuddin (Firuz) had separate *Imāms* and *Mu'adhdhins* in different places and stations, and wherever he went, when the time of prayer came he offered his prayer under the *Imān* of the place. But if Maulana Zainuddin happened to be there none else dared to act as the leader of the prayer for the Sultān. When Sultān Shamsuddin died, Qutlugh Khan, the 'Shāhjadā' (prince) made the same Maulana his *Imām*, saying "You have been the *Imām* of Sultān Shamsuddin, and now I shall not leave you; act as my *Imām*" and the Maulana did act as the *Imām* of 'Qutlugh Shah'. One day Qutlugh Khān called upon the *Qāḍī* who asked Qutlugh Khan as to behind whom he offered his prayers. Maulana Zainuddin was mentioned. "For how many times or years" was the question. "For so many times" was the answer; whereupon the *Qāḍī* Shangarfī exclaimed, "It behoves you to turn back and say all your prayers again". This implied that the prayers already offered were of no use in the eyes of the puritanical *Qāḍī*.

There are many referēces to the assembly of *Samā'* held in Bihar *Khānqāh* and also outside in garden and other closed places. Once when the *Goyandagān* (minstrels) made the whole audience enraptured and ecstatic the great saint suddenly ordered the assembly to disperse. When questioned by his chief attendant, Sikandar, the saint said that when the *Qawwāl* switched on the Hindī *Jakri* or *Chakri* songs which were usually sung by women and were liable to excite passions he scented mischiefs. He said that youngmen had managed to join the assembly and they were incapable of understanding and appreciating the true import or purposes of mystic music (*Ganj-i Lā Yafnā*). On 1st Šafar, Wednesday, 760 Našrullah Malikzādah who had came to Bihar along with Malik Mu'izzuddin Ghaurī, the deceased Mufti of Bihar asked the great saint about the ecstatic dancing (*Rāqş*) of Shaikh Farīduddin (Farid Shakarganj) on hearing the sound of the '*Duhal*' (drum or taboor) which was *Nā-mashrū'* (not prescribed by law or unlawfully), he replied "All sorts of pleasantries (*Hazaliyāt*) which reach the ears of such people get transformed into seriousness or gravity (*Jadd*) and things that are blameable become virtuous acts. The transformation may not appear to be rational. Even in things droll and playful which come

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to their ears they find something meaningful in regard to sayings and actions of the Prophet (*Hadīth*). There is no fixed rule of *Samā'* for all; for some it is the worst of the thing. (*Ganj-i Lā Yafnā*).

The *Qawwāli* (singing) was accompanied with *Dastakī* which meant clapping of hands and beating time in music. Generally *Samā'* with *Mazāmīr* (musical instruments) and melodious tone and trill was taboo. Recalling the days of Iltutmish the saint once said that the Sultān had a minstrel named Hājī Rabābī; his *Rabāb* or rebeck (a four-stinged instrument in the form of a short naked guitar) was slightly damaged; and he was asked to give up the practice which he did. Similarly Chajjoo *Gawā'i* was called upon by the great saint to turn towards God after having been so long immersed in his musical performances and he became an ascetic. The *Shuṭṭārī* Sufis of Bihar did not indulge in *Samā'* and were interested like the *Qādirīs* in *Dhikr-i-Jalī* and *Dhikr-i-Khafī*.

The *Ma'fūzāt* shed light on certain aspects of social and religious life which appear to have suffered little change in their essential points. H. Sharfuddin referred to and commented on some practices as are still current among Muslims. These relate to '*Haft Dānā*' or cooking and using *Satanjā* food out of seven cereals on '*Āshūrah*' or the 10th Muḥarram; *Bibi Maryam Kā Rozah* on the 15th of Rajab; the fixing of 40,000 *Tankas* (rupees) as dower money; throwing rose water on the shrouds and flowers on the corpse and the graves; reading of the *Qur'ān* near the tombs, visits paid to tombs especially on '*Urs*' days or anniversary of saints' deaths, attended by women; assemblage of men and women on occasions of marriage; the death ceremony called '*Siyum*' on the third day when friends and relations gathered, recited the *Qur'ān*, and distributed betel leaves and *Argaja* perfume; *Sajdah* or placing the head on the ground before and kissing the hands and feet of the Shaikh or *Pīr*. On the 10th of Muḥarram ('*Āshūrah*') a large number of people came to the great saint and he himself used to go to some persons, Sayyids, to offer *Tahiyat* i. e. prayer and benediction. For example when Shaikh Laddū, the disciple of Shaikh Ruknuddin of Multān, arrived in Bihar he went to him on '*Āshūrah*' for *Tahiyat* (N. F.). In the 27th *Majlis* according to *Khvān-i pur Ni'mat* something was said about the origin of *Haft dānah* but there is a slight variation in Shi'ite version. In the same book and other *Malfūz* the origin of fast of Maryam which in Bihar is known as *Kūndā* has been explained. In *Ganj-i-Lā Yafnā* we find that on 16th *Dhī'l Hijjah* Sipahsālār 'Ali 'Uthmān, a disciple of the H. Sharafuddin, came and was asked

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about the marriage gift that was settled upon his son's wife, and he mentioned the amount of 40,000 *Tankas*. The saint remained silent for sometime and then cited the case of the *Mahr* (a dower money) of the daughter of the caliph Hārūn-ar-Rashīd who ordered it to be settled at 300 Dirham, that is 100 less than that of Prophet's daughter, Fátimah. The Saint smilingly asked the General as to what would happen if his son had a daughter born to him. As regards *Siyum* the details of this ceremony have been given in *Malfūz-i-Ruknī* also. About prostration before the saint, and kissing his hands the saint said that it could amount to infidelity if it was done for worship and devotion but it might be *Mubāh* or permissible if done for showing reverence and devotion.

Even apparently trivial matters did not escape the notice of the great saint. From *Ma'din ul-Ma'anī* we get that once he saw that some people while performing prayer-ablution (*Wuḍū*) poured water from the elbow and brought that down to the tips of the fingers. This was declared to be forbidden (*Manāhī*). He then showed the true way by himself pouring the water first on the tips of the fingers and then bringing that down to the elbow. On certain occasion he said that *Murāqabah* (contemplation or meditation) should be performed by placing the head on the knees. He also referred to the practice of the Muslims of the time that immediately on hearing the words "I bear witness to Muḥammad, the apostle of God" in the *Bāng-i-Namāz* (called *Ādhān*) they raised two fingers, kissed them and placed them on their eyes. Amīr Khusrau has also referred to this practice more than once in *I'jāz-i-Khus'awī*. More important is the reference to the self-deception of some people. When in times of difficulties they took a vow that if they obtained relief or got what they wanted to do this and that, when their purpose was served they backed out from their words. Some people had devised strange methods for escaping from the obligation of paying the *Zakāt* (a portion of Muslim property given in charity, agreeable to the rules of the *Qur'ān*). According to him their recourse to *Hilah-i-Shar'ī* (Legal finesse) becomes *Hilah-ba-Harām* (forbidden fraud). They put the *Zakāt* money (*Seem* or silver) on a small plate or tray and got it enveloped by a quantity of grain and this they gave to an indigent person. When the *Faqīr* was about to take it away they would persuade him to give the tray back to them for a few '*Dirams*', thus getting back the *Zakāt* money. Another way of the evasion practised centred in what was called '*Haulān-i-Haul*' (vicissitudes or round of one whole year). At the end of the month before the

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needed expiry of the year, they sold the goods or properties which were liable to the levy of *Zakāt* to their wives which gave them the plea that the things did not belong to them. Thereafter, they made show of purchasing the same from their wives. The saint virtually condemned such trickery.

Let me conclude this paper with an interesting tid-bit furnished by a *Malfūz* of a *Shuṭṭārī* saint of Bihar of late 17th century. The compiler, H. Imāmuddīn Rājgīrī reminded H. Ruknuddin of Jandāhā (Hājīpūr Subdivision of Muzaffarpur district) the *Majlis* of 1 *Rabī'* II, 1104 (1693) that people were waiting for *Ta'wīdh* (amulet) and it was given. The question of *Shaghl-i-Ā'īnah* (recital of Qur'ānic verses and repeating the names, attributes and praises of God by fixing the gaze on the mirror) came up. The saint said that a looking glass was not an absolute necessity, and a poor helpless *Sūfī* may not have a mirror. H. Maudūd Chishtī prescribed to his disciple such an exercise on a tray filled with water. The saint said further that Emperor Humayun practised the *Dhikr* called *Shaghl-i-Ā'īnah* and he composed the quatrain. Although there may be self-displaying of one's image in the mirror—it always remained apart (isolated) from one's self. It is strange to see oneself as some one else. The wonderful thing may be the work of God. At this the tablecloth was laid for serving the food. While taking his meal the saint remarked that Sultān Fīrūz Shāh was a strange type of a king. He had a soft corner in his heart for the men of high extraction (*Ashrāf*) and he had deputed his people to different quarters of the kingdom to search and investigate into the presence of the sayyids of pure lineage. After a thorough verification they submitted a list of ten such families. According to the saint they must have been grandees—(of the state) and of well known families. There might be many more leading solitary life as poor Sayyids and at any rate, the number must have been very many. Then the talk switched on to the advent of Sultān Fīrūz Shāh in Bihar. At first he called upon H. Ahmad Chirmposh who failed to pay him the respect due to him. But when he wanted to see H. Sharfuddin Ahmad he came out to receive him. The Sultān took the saint's hands in his own and hinted that he should precede him while walking. The master saint out of humility kept himself behind the Sultan persuading him to allow him to do so. At that the Sultān recited a verse—“When I walk in front, it would be the way of a chamberlain, if I placed myself behind, that would be a duty.” His holiness replied with similar verse—“If you proceed in front, you would be a lamp

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showing the path;—and even when you keep yourself behind, you are the refuge of the world.”

In the end we may take a passing notice of what we get in the Malfūzāt about the acquaintance of the great saints of Bihar, whether of the Firdausī or the Shuṭṭarī orders, of the Sultanate period, with the regional dialects. There are many single and compound words such as *Khat*, *Dhakkā*, *Ḥal*, *Langotī*, *Kāchak*, *Kiyārī*, *Shaikh Laddhu*, *Do-Chapri*, *Padhra-i-Āb* etc.; and also full sentences and expressions. We shall quote only two specimens from the first Malfūz of the great Makhdum of Bihar. On page 45 of the printed text referring to the religiosity of Sultan Shamsuddin (Firoz) of Bengal, the saint said that the Sultan would always prefer Maulana Zainuddin, the brother of Maulana Shamsuddin Tawwāma, who was not only a Ḥāfiẓ (memoriser of the Qur’ān) but also a very sweet-voiced and eloquent sermonizer, well-versed in the arts of music. He was preferred by the Sultan as the leader of the prayers to others. He would say, “*Maulanā Zainuddīn tū pesh āwa*”, *Maulanā Zainuddīn Ke deh*”. We read on page 202-3 that at a stage *Khawajah Jalāluddin Ḥāfiẓ Multānī* said that a Hindavi poet has also said something like this. When asked he said, “*Bāt bhalī par sānkri*”. To this the great saint of Bihar added, “*Des bhalā par dūr*”.

The Maner Ms. of *Ma’din-ul-Asrār* has also one complete sentence in *Hindi*. The 15th Century Qāzīn ‘Olā Shuṭṭarī of Bihar refers to a reply given to the question of one of his devotees by the 14th Century *Subrawardī Sūfī* Saint of Uchch, near Multān, Makhdūm Jahāniān Sayyid Jalāl Bukhārī; and his utterance, “*Khandā Hai Phandā Kahān*”. Besides, being one of the earliest specimens of conversational sentences in *Hindūstānī* or *Kharī Bolī*, this piece is important for the occurrence in it and the auxiliary verb ‘*Hai*’ which is not to be found in any early “*Hindi*” literature.

**Malfuz Literature
As a Source of Political, Social & Cultural History
of
Gujarat & Rajasthan in 15th Century**

by :
Dr. Z. A. Desai

It is rather paradoxical that while there has been in the past couple of decades a welcome spurt in historical studies including that of medieval India relating practically to all ruling dynasties and regions, the corresponding exercise of utilizing unpublished sources, leave alone tracing new or unknown ones, one can say without much fear of contradiction, has not kept pace with it. On the contrary, just reverse is the case: the publication of known original sources and search for unknown ones has been greatly on the wane if not totally stopped. One need not tender any apology to say that no serious or concerted efforts have been made to publish either in original or in translation, the vast historical material that lies awaiting the diligent search and extensive research in private collections as well as public libraries, after the efforts made in this direction by Sir H. M. Elliot of the Indian Civil Service, who first published the first volume of his *Bibliographical Index to the historians of Muhammadan India* and who later on collected and compiled in English extracts from original Arabic and Persian mostly Persian of course, historical works covering the history of Muslim India excluding the provincial kingdoms. This monumental work was edited by Professor John Dowson in 8 volumes under the title *The History of India as told by its own historians* from London between 1867 and 1877. Almost simultaneously, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, published about a dozen and a half works and English translation of quite a few of them relating to the history of the Sultanate and the Mughals with the exception of one or two. About this period, the efforts of the British Civilian officers and those of the members of the Asiatic Society seem to have set in motion this process as a result of which we find quite a few historical works published by Indian publishing houses like Munshi Naval Kishore

and a few others, who brought out historical works like, to name only a few, *Babur Nama*, Persian translation of Babur's Turkish memoirs (Bombay, 1890), *Akbar Nama* of Abul-Fadi (more than once 1867, 1881-83, etc.), *A'in-i-Akbari* also by Abul Fadi (1855, 1869, etc.), *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad (1870, 1875), *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh* of Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni (1868), *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* or *Tarikh-i-Firishta* of Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah (more than once, also with Urdu translation, 1864, 1874, 1884, etc.; --very few of us are aware of its fine printed edition in large size in two volumes, edited by Major General J. Briggs and Mir Khairat Ali Khan which was published at Poona, in 1831-2) *Siyarul Muta'akhkhirin* of Jawab Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai (1866, 1897), *Imadus Su'adat* of Ghulam Ali Khan Naqvi (1864, 1897), *Fathiya-i-'Ibriya* of Shihab-ud-Din Ahmad Talish under the title *Tarikh-i-Asham* 1847), etc.

During a couple of decades before and after independence, we do find growing awareness of the need of publishing original historical works for the increasing number of researchers, as they or their translations were absolutely necessary for the proper indepth study of the entire second millennium of the country's past. Some efforts were made to publish original Persian works dealing with the history of the provincial Kingdoms which, with some exceptions like the *Basatinus Salatin*, a history of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur (1891-92) and the *Mir'at-i-Sikandari* (1831, 1890), a history of the Gujarat sultanate, were by and large neglected till then. To name some, the Baroda State in its Gaekwar Oriental Series had published during 1928-30, the celebrated history of Gujarat, the *Mir'at-i-Ahmadi* and its *Khatima*, with the English translation of the *Khatima* or supplement, the Manuscripts Society of Hyderabad published the *Burhan-i-Ma'athir*, a history of the Bahmanis and one of their five successors the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar (1936), the Madras University had published in 1937 the *Futuhus Salatin* a history of India from the Ghaznavid period to the foundation of the independent Deccan Sultanate in 1349-50, a lithograph edition of the same in the following year by Professor Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain who also published its annotated English translation under the title *Futuhus Salatin* or *Shah Nama-i-Hind* (1966 onwards). The Bhandarkar Research Institute Poona had in 1938 published the

Tarikh-i-Sind of Mir Muhammad Masum Nami, edited by Dr. U. M. Da'udpota, the Baroda University published in 1961, a new critical edition of *Mir'at-i-Sikandari*; a history of Gujarat Sultanate. edited by Dr. S. C. Misra and Prof. M. F. Rahman, Professor Dr. A. N. M. Khalidi of Hyderabad published in the 1960's. Nurullah Husain's *Tarikh-i-Ali Shahi*, the Delhi University in recent years too, published in 1969, an abridged edition of Shihab Hakim's *Ma'athir-i-Mahmud Shahi* prepared by Dr. Nurul Hasan Ansari, etc. In recent years too, an original text is published once in a while. For example, *Ma'athir-i-Jahangiri* of Khwaja Karngar Khan edited by Dr. Azra Alavi (nee, Nizami) was published from Aligarh a few years ago.

A major contribution in the field of easy accessibility of original material was made in the early 1950's, under the auspices of the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, at the initiative of Prof. Dr. S. Nurul Hasan, then Head of the Department, and with the whole-hearted support of Dr. Zakir Husain, then Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University. A series under the title 'Source Book of Medieval Indian History in Hindi', containing extracts of translations in Hindi original historical works, on the lines of but greater in scope than Elliot and Dowson's *The History of India* was planned under the editorship of Prof. Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi—it may be recalled that an Urdu series on Elliot and Dowson's model under the title *Tarikh-i-Hindustan* by Maulavi Zakaullah was published almost a century ago. Unfortunately, the series remained incomplete, though it did cover the history of the period upto Akbar and provincial kingdoms except the Deccan ones. Dr. Rizvi did tap more unpublished material not confined to purely historical works and also utilised a few political works. The last volume in Dr. Rizvi's series was published in 1962 or so.

Apart from the original texts, English translations of a few historical works have also appeared, one of the last, or perhaps the last in the series, being *Shah Nama-i-Minawwar Kalam* of Shiv Das translated into English by our venerable friend Prof. Dr. S. H. Askari.

Even so, it will be easily agreed that the work done so far in the field over more than a century past is not commensurate

with the abundance of historical literature – a rough idea of which can be had from C. L. Storey's section on History in his *Persian Literature-A Bio-bibliographical Survey* which lists, it may be remembered, only listed or known works. Moreover, apart from historical works or works of history proper by which we mean chronicles or works describing the political history of a ruler, a dynasty or a region, there is a plethora of historical source-material stored in the various libraries and private collections in India and abroad, which has remained by and large untapped. This source-material provides great scope for historical research, containing as it does valuable data on and useful information about various aspects of human activities at different levels of society at different periods in different regions. Albeit, unlike historical works where the information about political events or the achievements of a ruler or his subordinates in the political field or their conquests are described in a single volume or place, which thus provide easy and convenient means of research calling for less arduous task or not very strenuous effort on the part of the researcher, the source-material in question exists in the form of manuscripts of works of diverse subjects, archival papers, etc. by a thorough perusal of which only, the requisite information can be had.

This material concerns such diverse subjects as pure literature including works of poets, tales, anecdotes, etc. biographies of eminent people like poets, learned men, ruling elite, saints, etc. hagiological works on religious thoughts and disciplines, saints' table-talks or proceedings of their regular periodic meetings and assemblies and audiences given to disciples and admirers popularly called *malfuz* literature, travelogues and geographical works and the like. Needless to say, for the proper understanding of the human life and behaviour of a region, a country, a community, a nation in its true historical perspective, it is essential to search for, examine, assess, study and utilise this varied, though scattered, material. Unless this is done, unless this multifarious source-material is brought to light and properly utilised, the history of the people, the working of the human mind and spirit, the various factors that weave the multi-faceted fabric of the society, in short, the social, cultural and religious milieu of any specified time and space cannot be

properly understood.

The fourteenth century is an important period in religious history. There was an effulgence of mystical activities from Multan in the west to Bengal in the east where Sufi savants and learned mystics and Shaikhs were busy spreading the message of love and universal peace. The first half of the fifteenth century saw the extension of the sphere of sufistic activities to Gujarat and Deccan. The Sufi establishments, their *Khanqahs* and the *Jam'at Khanas* served as hospices for travellers and wayfarers and also as training centres for the novices, resounding with lessons and discussions on theology, mysticism, scholastic philosophy, ethics, morality, etc., at which the saint was the principal speaker. The utterances of the saint were most covetously taken down by devoted disciples with the express or tacit approval of the saint.

In this way, a considerable number of works came to be compiled in different parts of the country truthfully recording these discourses and proceedings at these meetings or assemblies which were open to all sections of society. This Malfuz literature by its very nature constitutes an important non-political history source material on one hand and one of the most important literary achievements of medieval India, on the other. In no other Islamic country, perhaps, to my knowledge — I am subject to correction of course, — this branch of hagiological compilation has been systematically and methodically cultivated as it has been in our country, specially during the pre-Mughal period in Bihar, Gujarat and the Deccan. Primarily intended to serve as a book of guidance for people at large, in general, and manual of spiritual instruction and code of exemplary conduct to disciples, in particular, the theme of these works revolved round the personality and spiritual achievement of the saint and his place in contemporary society. They thus came to encompass almost every aspect of the life of society at all levels and in all matters, temporal or spiritual. Nowhere else in any branch of medieval literature we come across such a vivid picture of contemporary society portrayed as in these table-talks. They furnish an intimate peep into the life of the laity as well as the elite and bring into

sharp focus the varied and intensely human qualities of the spiritual mentor.

Contrary to general belief, the saintly persons, who were the cream of the society, as revealed through their recorded utterances and sayings, appear extremely human and simple in their every day life and dealings with their fellow-beings, shorn of the supernatural aura that has been allowed to hallow their normal wordly existence. From the pages of these Malfuz, we get a fairly good idea of the daily routine of the saintly household and the savants and people frequenting them. A perusal of these works shows that the life the saints used to lead was not very different from that of the other members of the society in many respects. Except for the supernatural powers they reportedly possessed not of their own free-will but on behalf of the ultimate master the *Allah* or their undoubted spiritual attainment and pure mind unalloyed with baser instincts of human nature, they lived like any other fellow-member of the community whose spiritual and temporal well-being they sought, not uncommonly doing daily chores like tilling the field, visiting the land they owned or held in subsistence grant, looking after their cows and like herd and seeing that they were properly fed and tended to, participating in social functions of birth, marriage and death, communicating or corresponding with people, transcribing and copying books—*kitab* was considered in saintly circles as a desirable means of livelihood—going to for a stroll in the garden, or having an outing, going to see a river in spate, etc. They appear to us in these pages behaving for the greater part of the day like normal human beings even having their moments of human weaknesses. They reportedly took part in innocent frolics and pleasure-games like indulging in play with a fellow bather saint in a pond throwing water against each other, one running after the other, taking part at a certain age in pigeon-play or maintaining pigeon-houses in saintly abode or taking part in marriage ceremonies where, permissible at the moment and on the occasion but unprintable, vulgar expressions were exchanged between the bridal and bridegroom parties—as is the practice, I believe, even today in middle class families of Indian communities. We have even references to dissensions as in an ordinary family in a saintly

household too—in regard to partition of landed property or income of the saint.

The Malfuz works, in short, help us conjure up medieval society in its fulness with the moods, aspirations and varied problems of its members, their customs and manners and likes and dislikes. What strikes us most while going through these Malfuz works is that certain aspects of social life and behaviour of medieval society have undergone, at least until very recent days, but little change in essential parts.

Along with topics dealing with religious, theological and spiritual matters and discourses on ethical themes, interspersed with appropriate anecdotes from the lives of prominent saintly personalities of the past, these works are replete with mention, overt and covert, of manners and usages, beliefs and creeds, prejudices and predilections, modes of behaviour, food, dress, games, pastimes and the like, generally not met with in historical works and chronicles, some of which have survived, with little modification till our days. These works also refer, however, indirectly, to the educational system and curriculum followed in educational institutions.

Even in the field of political history, the information supplied by them in respect of the imperial government and some department of the state administration is found to be at times quite valuable. But they are a very important source for local history, providing as they do much needed material for the history of outlying regions and mofussil towns and villages which is generally relegated to the background and even overlooked in historical works. Then these works contain topographical data that provide material for students of historical geography and archaeology of a region as also on roads and communications. They are helpful for the topographical study of towns and identification of their sites, gardens and monuments, extant or non-extant, etc.

Another field in which this literature can prove useful—this has also not been systematically tapped I believe—is history of language and literature. Being faithful records of utterances, these memoirs provide important data on the form of language spoken at various periods and in different regions and as such are of substantial help in tracing the history and development of

Hindi or Proto-Urdu. They also mention poets and authors, quoting verses in Arabic, Persian and local dialect—Hindi or Proto-Urdu, names of treatises and works, which one might look for in vain in other sources.

It is true, the importance of such an extremely useful source for the social, cultural, religious and literary history has been recognised and also stressed upon from time to time by our historians. At the same time, it is equally true that this vast source-material has not been adequately traced or, if traced, utilised.

A few such not widely known Malfuz may be mentioned here. I shall confine myself to some of the Malfuz-works from Gujarat, Khandesh and Deccan only : *Shamailul Atqiya wa Radhailul Ashqiya* and *Nafaisul Anfas* by Khwaja Rukn-ud-Din son of Imad-ud-Din Kashani (printed, Hyderabad, A. H. 1347), *Husulul Wusul* and *Ahsanul Aqwal* by Khwaja Hammad Kashani, *Gharaijul Karamat* and *Baqiyyatul Gharaijul*, both by Khwaja Majd-ud-Din son of Imad-ud-Din Kashani, all being the Malfuz of Khwaja Burhan-ud-Din Gharib, the disciple and Khalifa of Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Auliya and *Shawamiul Jumal fi-Shumaili Kumal* of Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz and *Maqsudul Murad* (Shah Hashim Alvi of Bijapur), all from Deccan. The Malfuz of Burhanpur saints include *Fathul Yaqin* (Shah Nizam-ud-Din Bhikari), *Dalilus Salihin* (Shah Hamid-ud-Din), *Manaqib-i-Sharifi* (Shah Shahbaz), *Futuhu Auliya* (more than one saint) *Khazana-i-Rahmat* (Shaikh Azizullah Mutawakkil and his son Shaikh Rahmatullah by the famous Gujari poet Baha-ud-Din Ba'an), *Malfuzat-i-Shah Lashkar Muhammad Arif*, *Kashful Haqiq* (Shah Isa Jundullah) and *Thamaratul Hayat* and half a dozen more of Shah Burhan Raz-i-Ilahi. The Gujarat malfuz include *Juma'at-i-Shahiya* (based on the contemporary *Kunuz-i-Muhammadi*, now not traceable) of Sayyid Siraj-ud Din Muhammad Shah Alam Bukhari, *Miftahul Qulub* and *Tuhfatul Qari* (Qazi Mahmud Daryai), *Bahrul Haqiq* (Shah Wajih-ud-Din Alvi), etc.

These works may not be unknown to most of our scholars of Indian mystical studies or of Persian language and literature. But as it happens, few or hardly a couple of our historians of medieval period of Indian history have

paid attention to it. The pioneer in this field and in a sense a lone crusader in this task is a well-known and well-respected Professor Sayyid Hasan Askari, who was the first to draw attention, through a number of his articles spread over years to the importance of literature as a valuable source of history. Professor Askari has thrown much light not only on the social, cultural and religious but also political history of medieval eastern India through his in-depth detailed studies of the memoirs of the Sufi saints of eastern India, particularly Bihar. Though a historian by education, training and profession, Professor Askari is among the top historians of India and among the very few of them who can claim profound knowledge of Persian as well as of mysticism. The other medieval Indian historian to highlight the importance and usefulness of this much neglected source is Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami who possesses a very good collection, in original as well as copies, of Malfuz works. But regrettably, he has not been able to devote more attention to them though he has at times introduced a few of them to students of Indo-Muslim history.

The fact, it cannot be gainsaid, remains that despite their laudable efforts, these two stalwarts have touched only a few more well know and somewhat easily accessible works and there is still need of utilising fully all known and unknown material not merely pointing out in general terms their importance or significance of some trend, behaviour or thought of the saints having a bearing on the political, intellectual or religious history of their times—this is, I must hasten to add, not less an important contribution to historical investigations—but what is perhaps very necessary is to compile in one place all the revelant extracts from the Malfuz literature of the Indo-Pak-Bangladesh sub-continent having the slightest bearing on any aspect of history and publish them in original as well as in translation on the lines of Elliot and Dowson's or Dr Rizvi's series mentioned earlier. This may on the face of it appear too stupendous a task, but it is nevertheless manageable. It can be undertaken as team-work under a project by some research institution or Centre like the Centre of Advance study in History of Aligarh Muslim University or rather it could be done more practically at research institutes

n different regions where the geographical, social, historical and like information contained in the works could be better and properly understood.

Speaking of regions, while the Malfuz-works from Bihar and Deccan have received attention of scholars and historians, they have more or less completely overlooked the copious Malfuz literature of Gujarat, where the Chishti, the Suhrawardi, the Maghribi, the Qadiri and the Shattari orders flourished side by side and played an important role in the various spheres of its life and where a number of treatises and works on mystical subjects and collections of sayings and utterances of saints and accounts of their assemblies are to be found. The Suhrawardi saintly family of Ahmadabad descended from the celebrated saint Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din Husain popularly called Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan Jahangasht whose grandson Sayyid Burhan-ud-Din popularly called Qutb-i-Alam was the first to come to Gujarat and settle there and the Chishti family of the same place claiming descent from Shaikh Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dihli through his sister's son Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, very few people outside Gujarat and not many even in Gujarat know, have the distinction perhaps unique in the annals of saintly families of India, of having produced almost successive six-seven generations of spiritual leaders-savants-literateurs-authors, whose contributions to learning and literature are yet to be properly evaluated.

So far, the only field in which a systematic but a very limited use of the Malfuz literature of Gujarat is made, is that of the origin and development of Urdu literature. Baba-i-Urdu Maulavi Abdul Haqq in his *Urdu ke Irtiqa men Sufiyai kiram ka hissa* had utilized one of the seven volumes of the *Jumat-i-Shahiya*, comprising the Friday assembly reminiscences of the celebrated saint Shah Alam, to give example of the proto-Urdu or Gujarati language spoken at that period. A few years back Maulana Abdur Rahman Parwaz Islahi who was working on a biography of the sixteenth century famous Gujarat savant and teacher Shah Wajih-ud-Din Alvi of Ahmadabad, which could not be completed due to his sudden and untimely death, had published an article on one of the Shah's Malfuz works mainly with a view, again, to investigate

the same problem. Professor Muhammad Aslam of the History Department of the Panjab University, Lahore had also published an article describing the contents of the same Malfuz of Shah Wajih-ud-Din entitled *bahrul Haqaiq*. Another Malfuz-work which has been somewhat extensively used in an article entitled "Shaikh Ahmad Maghribi as a great historical personality of medieval Gujarat" by Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami is the *Tuhfatul Majalis*, a collection of assembly-discourses of Shaikh Ahmad Khattu of Sarkhej compiled by Shaikh Mahmud Iraj. The article was published a little more than a decade back, in 1970 to be exact. However it was more than four and a half decade back that the late Maulavi Sayyid Abu Zafar Nadvi of Bihar had published a full Urdu translation of the *Tuhfatul Majalis* which failed to attract the attention of historians for so long a period. Maulavi Sayyid Abu Zafar Nadvi, it may come as a news to all here—even in Gujarat, very few people are aware, such is the state of our interest in historial research—had also published in 1945 the Urdu translation, under the title *Sirat-i-Ahmadiya*, of another malfuz of the same saint called *Mirqatul Wasul ilallah-i-war-Rasul* (the Ladder facilitating Union to Allah and the Prophet) compiled in A. H. 861 (1457 A. D.) or some 12 years after the saint's death by one of his disciples and leaders-of-prayers (*pish imam*), Maulana Muhammad son of Abul Qasim who was in constant attendance on him for full three decades. Maulavi Sahib had in the exhaustive introductions of these two translated works, written at length about the life and achievements of Shaikh Ahmad on the basis of both the *Tuhfatul Majalis* and the *Mirqat*.

It is this Malfuz the *Miqrat*, about which I propose to speak at length with particular reference to its importance as historical source material. The work also, by its very nature, contains matter on theological and spiritual matters and practices; but not being competent to do justice to that, I have only chosen to deal with its historical aspect only.

Not many manuscripts of this work are known. The only copy the existence of which was known to us from printed catalogues of manuscripts is the one in the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In the printed catalogue, the work is mentioned

under the general title, perhaps copied from the fly-leaf, *Malfuzat-i-Ahmad Maghribi* and not by its actual name given explicitly in the introductory portion of the work. The Library of the Dargah of Pir Muhammad Shah at Ahmadabad possesses a modern copy made from a manuscript copy transcribed in A. H. 1128 (1715 A. D.), the present whereabouts of which are not known. However, Maulavi Sayyid Abu Zafar Nadvi in the preface of his Urdu translation the *Sirat-i-Ahmadiya* informs that since the time he translated the *Tuhfatul Majalis* and published it in 1939, he was on the look out for the *Mirqat*. At about that time he came to know that a complete copy thereof was in the possession of Sayyid Manzur Hasain Alavi, popularly known as Husaini Pir, a descendent of Shah Wajihud-Din Alavi and father of the famous Urdu critic and writer Professor Varis Hussain Alavi of Ahmabad, who promised to make it available to him. In the meantime the said Dargah Library obtained an incomplete manuscript-copy of the work through the well known scholar, writer and poet Qadi Mian Ahmad Akhtar of Junagadh. Maulavi Abu Zafar Sahib started perusing it when Pir Husaini gave him a complete pencil-copy with the help of which the former completed the incomplete copy and started his translation from the newly made copy. His translation based on this modern copy was prefaced by a long introduction running into about forty pages which contained an account of the life and work of the author gleaned from the book itself and a detailed life-sketch of the saint from his early childhood to his death compiled from the information mainly from the *Mirqat* and supplemented if necessary by that from the *Tuhfatul Majalis*.

The compiler of the *Mirqat*, Maulana Mohammad bin Abul Qasim was in all probability a fellow-townsmen of the saint, that is to say he hailed from Khatu or from Didwana or Nagaur, but he came in contact with the saint much later after the latter's permanent departure from Rajasthan. He was very probably a lad when the saint lived in Rajasthan. In any case, he seems to have come to Gujarat with his maternal grandfather and other relatives in consequence of the unsettled conditions in Nagaur region due to Rao Chonda of Mewar's depredations there. This was in about A. H. 802 (1399 A.D.), when about that time the

saint had also finally settled down at Sarkhej. Maulana Muhammed was well-versed in religious and rational sciences and on his arrival to Sarkhej he joined the Shaikh's establishment as leader-of-prayer (*imam*) before the latter admitted him to the circle of his disciples on the last Thursday of the month of Sha'ban A. H. 819 (22 October 1416 A. D.). For the next three decades that is to say until the saint's death in A. H. 849 (1445 A.D.), he was in constant attendance on the saint, exclusive of the period, unfortunately not specified, of his pre-discipleship association with the saint. It was only twelve years after the death of his master, that is to say in A. H. 861 (1457 A. D.) that after much hesitation he undertook the task to commit to writing the *malfuzat* of the Shaikh at the persistent requests of the military and civil officials of the Gujarat Sultan, though earlier he had successfully resisted the suggestion in the same regard made by a host of people, companion and friends.

Another book purported to be *Malfuz* of the Shaikh is the *Tuhfatul Majalis* referred to more than once earlier. Its compiler is Shaikh Mahmud bin Said Irajī who claims to have put to writing the utterances of the saint which he heard in the saintly assemblies with the easily obtained permission of the saint. Once the saint was in an expensive mood and asked him to express any wish to which he replied that he had only one wish and that was to commit to writing and compile the utterances and sayings of the saint. The saint told him to proceed with it if that was what he wanted. Thus whatever he heard in the assemblies from the mouth of the saint he wrote down and compiled it in the form of a book which he named *Tuhfatul Majalis*.

Incidentally this so-called Malfuz-Compilation has got wider currency than the *Mirqat*. Prof. Khaliq Ahmed Nizami-describes it as the earliest and by far the most important source of information on account of the value of information it contains about the life of the Shaikh, though he himself considered it to be of an inferior quality as a Malfuz. Professor Nizami was aware of the existence of the Asiatic Society copy of the *Mirqat* but he does not seem to have seen it nor does he seem to be aware of its Urdu translation, the *Sirat-i-Ahmadiya*. If he had, he would certainly have revised his opinion about the *Tuhfatul Majalis* being

a primary source for an account of the saint's life and achievements. As a matter of fact, the value of that work in that regard is doubtful. The contents of the *Mirqat* are not more or less the same as covered by the other work as claimed by Professor Nizami who probably was led to think so on the basis of Vladimir Ivanow's notice of Maulana Muhammad bin Abul Qasim's work in his catalogue of the collection of the Asiatic Society. I for one certainly wish Professor Nizami had consulted the *Mirqat*, for had he done so, we would have had the benefit of a learned exposition of its contents in a more erudite and profitable manner than I shall be able to do. Personally I have strong reasons to believe that Shaikh Mahmud's work is not an original work compiled in the life-time of the saint but perhaps a later one, definitely later than the *Mirqat*. Time does not permit me to go into details here, but a comparison of what I am to describe here in regard to the account of the life and various activities of Shaikh Ahmad on the basis of the *Mirqat* with that gathered by Professor Nizami from the *Tuhfatul Majalis* and detailed in his article suffices to show that the contents of the account of the seventyfive or so assemblies of this work has precious little original about them and is nothing but a hash-up of the information taken from Maulana Muhammad's work with a few bits of information then current in Ahmadabad and Sarkhej thrown in between here and there. It may also be pointed out in this connection that not only are the assemblies described without specifying the date and month and year, but even the date of commencement or the completion of the compilation is not given. Moreover, and this is quite significant the utterances of these assemblies are devoid of a single reference by the saint to his more colourful life and formative years of his youth passed under the vigilant eyes of Babu Ishaq whom he never ceased to mention in his utterances.

On the other hand the *Mirqat* is a store-house of information on various matters ranging from political history to everyday minor affairs of contemporary society of medieval Rajasthan and Gujarat. It also is by far the main and earliest source that furnishes such varied and useful information about the life and entire career of the saint - from his early childhood, his education, his spiritual training, ascetic exercises, his travels on various counts, his pilgrimage to the holy places, his journey to

Samarqand and role in the cessation of the Delhi plunder and the release of prisoners held by Timur's army, and his fully active advanced life at Sarkhej where he enjoyed utmost consideration of five successful sovereigns. The importance even only in this regard is obvious to all serious students of history who are aware that no biographical accounts of the saints, individually or collectively, are by and large attempted by contemporary or later writers until the Mughal period.

I shall, therefore, begin with the description of the contents of the *Mirqat* and their evaluation with the information contained therein about the life of the saint. The biographical sketch drawn up from the references to his own chequered career by the saint in his discourses from time to time recorded by the compiler of the *Mirqat* is like this : Shaikh Ahmad, whose original name was Nasirud-Din was born in a princely elite family of Delhi in about A. H. 717 (1336-37 A. D.) or so, during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq Shah. While yet a child, he got separated in unusual but not wholly improbable circumstances. A furious dusty whirlwind overtook him when he was one evening taken out for his usual outing in the garden by his nurse who lost her way and found herself and the lad Nasirud-Din, apparently after the storm had subsided, in the midst of a caravan of merchants from the Gangetic plain who had camped at Delhi on their way to Rajasthan. Both the nurse and the child found refuge with one of the merchants and accompanied him when the caravan left Delhi next morning for Didwana in Nagaur district of Rajasthan on its usual business visit to purchase salt. At Didwana, the child was adopted by a childless weaver Najib by name. Babu Ishaq, a prominent celebrant saint of the Maghribi order, having been told of the boy in a spiritual communion and being in need of a boy-disciple after the untimely death of his young disciple Shaikh Qasimud-Din, prevailed upon Najib through one of his disciples and a leading citizen of Didwana, Maulana Sadrud Din to part with him and send him to Khatu. Professor Nizami in his account makes Babu Ishaq find the young boy in a village and live with him at Delhi before moving with him to Khatu. But this is not correct. In fact, Babu Ishaq, who no doubt originally hailed from and resided at Delhi, had long before the boy came into his life settled at Khatu after his constant travels in the course of which

when at Ajmer, he received a spiritual call from Khwaja Muinud-Din Chishti to go and live at Khatu. It was at Didwana that the Delhi boy was living with Najib when the Babu got him to come and stay with him.

Babu Ishaq gave the name Ahmad to him and always addressed him as Baba Ahmad. He brought up the four or odd years old Shaikh Ahmad with greatest possible affection and utmost care. In his very early days, it seems, the boy was not much attracted or devoted to studies but was more fond of manly arts and games like horsemanship, archery, wrestling, stick-and-ball, etc. Even as a young man he had gained fame as a wrestler and a skilled archer, and later on he used to often narrate his exploits in these fields. An expert archer of Didwana, Shaikh Ali Qairwani, is reported to have come to Khatu to impart him training in archery and had brought for him a pair of clay-shoe-mould, which he said were put on by trainees. His skill in archery was put to a successful test when a local official, a Malik, had set up a target and invited the people of Khatu, who failed to hit it despite repeated attempts, while the young Shaikh Ahmad arriving on the scene later, hit it in the first attempt. The author of the *Mirqat* has noted that the saint used to wear the archer's outfit at Sarkhej too, that is to say when he was past sixty. The saint also describes his wrestling bout in youth with a Hindu cobbler boy in Khatu, at the latter's persistent challenge. The saint was physically very strong. He recalls how once he rescued a young woman of Khatu who was going to the village-well to fetch water from being molested by an official designated as *Muharrir* i. e. an accountant-clerk.

However, Babu Ishaq wanted him to take to studies in all seriousness. The same advice was given to him by the accountant-clerk whom he had earlier in the day prevented by using physical force from molesting a woman. Babu Ishaq took him to the Madrasa at Nagaur named after Qadi Hamidud-Din Nagauri and asked the teachers there and the learned men of the town who had come to meet him to impart learning to Shaikh Ahmad. The primary books for the beginner's course like *Mizan*, *Hazar-Alfaz*, *Masadir*, *Panj-Ganj*, etc. were procured. Shaikh Ahmad, out of his pocket-money got a copy of *Tafsir-i-Imam Zahid* made for him by Qadi Imam Shah Jalal who charged the cost of paper only.

At Hisar, he studied under Maulana Shams-ud-Din the famous works *Bazdavi*, *Husami*, *Shashi*, *Mufassal* etc. At Hisar he was told that Maulana Majd-ud-Din, a great *Muhaddith*—the phrase used in the original is *Muhaddith-i-'Azim*—imparted instruction in Hadith (Tradition) in the *Kushk-i-Hazarsutun* at Delhi. Consequently he came to Delhi and would during day-time attend the Maulana's classes and at night study *Bazdavi* without its gloss and learn it by heart. Afterwards he studied *Aqida-i-Hafiziyya* which he committed to memory. He then turned to scholastic philosophy. He is also reported to have learnt three-fourths of the Quran by heart. Incidentally, this gives an idea of the curricula for instruction in religious sciences in vogue in the *maktabs* and *madrasas* of the day. Among other books which the saint mentions as having been under study or discussion during his time are *Dhakhira*, *Hidaya*, *Tawali*, *Masabih* and its gloss *Dau*, *Surah* of Jauhari, *al Muttafaq*, *Kanz*, etc. The last-mentioned seems to have been a popular item in the syllabus and the saint reports that Maulana Sufyan, an extremely learned man of Multan, used to teach it without a *hashiya*—this and other references by the saint show that normally difficult text books were taught or self-taught with the help of glosses. Maulana Sufyan also had by heart all the variant readings of *Kanz*. It was after the death of Babu Ishaq in A. H. 776 (1375 A. D.) that Shaikh Ahmad most seriously engaged himself in studies and went from place to place in the pursuit of knowledge.

By the time he started on his pilgrimage to the holy cities, Shaikh Ahmad had become well versed in religious sciences which, as well as the ascetic practices and spiritual exercises which he took under the spiritual guidance and training of Babu Ishaq at Delhi and elsewhere, stood in good in his meetings with saints and savants in India and abroad. The saint had, during his sojourn at Sarkhej, written a religious treatise called *Risala-i-Maghribiy*. The saint also seems to have built up a well-equipped library from which he would send for books to support his views expressed or contentions made from memory. Qadi Badh Abdur Razzaq Walwalji was the librarian-cum-scribe (*Kitabdar-wa-Katib*) of the library of the saint at Sarkhej. Manuscript copies of important works were transcribed for him by disciples or admirers. For example, one Maulana Abdur Rahman had transcribed a copy of

the *Dau*, a commentary on *Masabih*, for him. There seem to have been regular inflow of books from abroad, particularly Khurasan and Samarqand

Shaikh Ahmad possessed a poetic bent of mind. Like Babu, he had a large number of Persian and Hindi verses at heart, which he would frequently recite or quote on appropriate occasions in the assemblies and meetings with people. His assemblies were attended by poets too, who would present poem composed in his praise which he generally discouraged. He himself used to compose verses in Arabic and Persian as well as Hindi, though he did not like to be called a poet. The *Mirqat* quotes quite a few Arabic and Persian verses and Hindi *dohras* composed by him. An incident of the royal assembly, narrated by the saint, apart from giving a glimpse into the literary pursuits of Sultan Muhammad son of Firuz Shah Tughluq himself, indicates the saint's poetical acumen and insight. Once, we are told, the Sultan had composed a Persian verse which he gave to the court poets to compose *ghazals* by way of *tadmin* thereon. None of the poems submitted by them came up to the Sultan's liking. Somebody brought to the saint's notice the couplet as well as the poems of the poets incorporating that couplet, a persual of which made it clear to him that the poets were unable to incorporate the couplet befittingly as they had given preference and priority to the Sultan's couplet in their poems while in fact the couplet should have been brought at the end in a befitting context. The saint himself composed a *ghazal* on this line, which was duly appreciated by the king. Once Sayyid Mahmud son of Rukn Dihlawi, who was the teacher of the compiler and a grandson of Sayyid Kamalud-Din *Rusul-i-dar* recited a quatrain

gar jafA kAr az jafA bUd rAndam az shakhs pust
man na ha oo An kunam kIn fi'l-i-man An fi'l-i-oost
man makAfA-i jAfA bA oo kunam chandAn wafA
kU khajil gardad bigUyad kIn nikU kardan nikUst

The saint liked the verses and after thinking over it for a while he said that the height of toleration is only perfectly illustrated if the word *khajil* is not used. Sayyid Rukun immediately changed the hemistich this :

kU hajAn-o-dil bigUyad kIn niko kardan nikUst

The saint praised him. The Sayyid said that he had recited this quatrain in the assemblies of poets and learned men, but none had pointed this out.

Shaikh Ahmad was fond of music from his very childhood. He liked to hear melodious songs and music and himself possessed a fine voice. Once in his young days, on a summer afternoon he was sitting enjoying the coolness on the bank of the well of a step-well. When a woman who came to fetch water sang the *Sohla* (perhaps *Sohaila*, a kind of song which used to be sung while drawing water—it is mentioned in the *Fawaidul-Fuad* of Hazrat Nizamud-Din Auliya also). It moved him so much that falling in a trance, he fell into water whence he was pulled out by that woman. Likewise, whenever at Khatu he heard anyone singing a song or a *ghazal* at the door of Babu Ishaq, he would come out to listen. He describes how when the Babu had once taken him with him to Didwana where they had put up in the Burhan mosque, he was enthralled by the *Samiri*-like voice of a person singing outside the mosque and how, when he praised the singer for his fine voice, the Babu mildly reprimanded him for his exaggerated love for music. It would appear that listening to music—*Sama*^o type music—was a popular pastime, since the saint refers to the music sessions held at the marriage and other dinner-parties. Musicians occasionally attended his assemblies. Minstrels accompanied by instruments (*Mazamir*) performed at the gate of his Sarkhej residence, which was, as the saint relates in one of his discourses, one of the two points about whose permissibility, a learned and pious man, *Katib Ibrahim*, a candidate for the saint's discipleship, wanted to be satisfied before enrolment.

The saint emerges from his narratives as a man endowed with a compassionate nature and extremely affable manners. His catholicity of approach, humanitarian behaviour and compassionate nature are reflected in a number of incidents related by him. He was kind and responsive to the need of the poor and the indigent. The income of the saintly establishment out of the produce

of the village endowed for the expenses of the *Khanqah*, the sizeable *futuh* (unsolicited voluntary donations) from a number of his admirers, which included kings, princes, *maliks* and others, besides meeting the day-to-day expenses of the hospice, were spent to help the poor and the needy in various ways. Not only that everyone who came for help left empty-handed as far as it was within his power to give him something, but he had made it a point to send aid in cash and kind to the deserving families to their homes. Some women would come to the hospice at night after 'Isha prayers for help. But of such of them who would not come out of their houses and widows and the like, he had asked the local village headman to prepare a list, as per which he would give to him for handing over to them gold and silver, dresses and *doshalas*, etc., presumably for the marriage of their grown-up daughters. Once near Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, he was accosted by an old man in dire need of a meal; not having any cash with him, he tore his turban into two and gave one of it to him to enable him to procure a meal or two by selling it. Once a blind man who had come to him at Sarkhej got four *jitals*. When he left, somebody told the saint that he deserved more, whereupon the saint immediately gave more money to the compiler of the *Mirqat* asking him to find him and give it to him without telling him who had sent it or who he was. At the Sarkhej establishment, every or every alternate month, whatever surplus would be there would be given away to the poor, the needy, the *Sadat*, the *jogis* the wayfarers, the neighbours, the *Kolis*, each of whom received some cash or cloth or like item. The saint, as was wont with others of his fraternity, would as far as possible return the presents or gifts made to him by matching gifts or presents of equal or more value, particularly in case or types of people like officials or *maliks* who had become rich recently—*qaribul-ahd*—neo-rich in modern parlance.

The saint's compassion was not confined to human beings; it extended to birds and animals also. The *Mirqat* has it that sparrows used to come and perch on his head or knees: He had given standing instructions to the servants that they should see that young ones of the sparrows were not harmed by the crows. He himself would keep a rod in front of him and frighten away

the crows with it as and when necessary. Once he saw a kite lying wounded, he brought her home, lodged it under a basket and had fed her daily with meat until its wound healed and it was strong enough to fly away. Once a person came to him with a pelican whose wings were pulled out. The saint paid him for it, kept it in the guest-cell and arranged with the fishermen to feed it with its daily quota of fish till it grew its wings and then it was released in the jungle. As and when a huntsman would catch some animal, the saint would pay him for its release. On another occasion when a visiting soldier who had come to Sarkhej with his dog, left him behind as it would not go back with the master. That dog would regularly come and set up a watch at the saint's threshold. When the saint came to know about it, he assigned daily ration for it and asked a woman to cook loaf daily for it. The dog would act as an escort to the daily visitors of the *Khanqah*, like Qadi Mansur and the accountant (*muhāsib*) Ibrahim when they returned home after 'Isha prayers. Subsequently, when the accountant was going to the saint's village, he was asked to take it with him there. At the village, it would act as a watch-dog for the herd of animals and cows at home as well as in the grazing-ground. It is also related that once an admirer made an offering of a fat cow to the Shaikh in the month of *Sacrifice* ostensibly for sacrifice. The saint gave it to one Shaikh Tajud-Din to use it for milk and like requirements. Instead, the latter sold it to a butcher from whose custody the cow somehow broke loose and came bellowing to the *Khanqah*. Even while the saint was inquiring about the commotion, the butcher came running after it to take it away. The saint paid the butcher from his pocket and set it loose in the animal herd. Once he saw a dove grazing in the courtyard of the *Jama'at Khana*. He told the attendants to put grain there daily. That dove and other doves would then daily come and eat the grains. He was so tender-hearted, the *Mirqat* has it, that he would not slaughter the sacrificial animal with his own hand or see it done, as a result of which he used to discharge this obligatory duty by paying the animal's price in cash, for which he had found some justification. Only in the last three four years of his life, the ceremony of *Id* sacrifice was observed through the compiler of *Mirqat*.

Not surprisingly, therefore, his discussions would show the saint as a man of great patience and humility. He was always courteous to his visitors and restrained in his behaviour even towards those who would be vehement in their discussion or argument with him on religious or academic matters. He would patiently answer their arguments or at the most would tell them to be reasonable. He would be introspective whenever he tendered advice to anybody; he would address his soul on such occasions and recite a Hindi hemistich, the reading of which cannot be determined but which ran something to this effect that you are doing the same thing but are advising others not to do it.

Despite his greatness as a saint and the respect he commanded of as many as eight Tughluq and Gujarat kings, Shaikh Ahmad was humility itself. Nowhere in his memoirs he appears to have lost his temper even in unfavourable circumstances and adverse conditions. Once a grandson of Maulana Kamalud-Din-Samani, who was serving in the army of the Delhi Sultan Muhammad bin Firuz Shah Tughluq, came to see him and was discussing academic matters. When he was somewhat cornered, he told the saint that he was the grandson of Maulana Kamalud-Din Samani, whereupon the saint told him, "O man of God! Why did you not tell me before? There is no use arguing with you—you who are an ocean of learning and whose house is the very fountain-head of learning". On another occasion, when he came across Maulana Thanasari (whose name is not given in the work) who was being taken captive by a Timur's soldier at Samarqand, he not only got him released as he had many more, but when at that time a bowl of broth was brought to him by the men of Amir Pir Muhammad, he asked them to give it to the Maulana saying, "he deserves it more, since in learning he is above me". Despite the influence, he wielded with Sultan Muzzafar of Gujarat, the saint not only did not feel offended by but graciously listened to the advice the king gave to him. When once the king came to see him, the saint interceded on behalf of a personage who was imprisoned by the former. The king spoke of that person's treachery and promised the saint that he would release him on his return in deference to his wish, but he told the saint that he would also like him to listen to a piece of his advice namely that a man should not be left unpunished and one should not be

complacent about him, for a man is a man of moods. The saint used to recall this advice whenever some body did something that he did not like.

The Saint's narrative also reveals one more facet of his character and that is his practical approach. Once, he says, Alp Khan, the ruler of Malwa, sent by way of offering 40 gold and 40 silver tankas with a merchant named Bahlul, but the saint declined the offering on the ground, made known to the emissary, that its acceptance might annoy the Gujarat king Sultan Ahmad which he would not like to happen as he was residing in his dominions. Likewise, on another occasion, the Jam of Thatta sent through Sayyid Abu to the saint a certain amount of gold coins in fulfilment of a vow made for the recovery of his wife from an illness and also requested discipleship for his two sons. But while he prayed for the wife and the sons, he declined to accept the money saying that since he was living in the domains of Sultan Ahmad, with three generations of whom he had very cordial relations, it would not behove him to do anything against his wish. Similarly, once when Prince Tatar Khan, later on Muhammad Shah I of Gujarat, sent word to the saint seeking his permission to pay a visit to him, the saint's reply was that he could come only after getting permission from his father Zafar Khan, later on Muzaffar Shah I

Apart from these, the saint's memoirs depict how cautious and circumspect he was in his dealings with men in authority, particularly at the lower level, like the officials and village headmen of the village Uteliya endowed for his *khanqah* or of those of Sarkhej where he had settled down. He would always maintain that one should not exceed the bounds of righteous behaviour with petty officials of the village or district, on behalf of his own servants, as it was not worth the consequences thereof. He once quoted the instance of Maulana Ibrahim Kaithali, a learned man and a favourite of Sultan Muhammad bin Firuz Tughluq, who ultimately lost his own life in addition to those of his two sons and had his holdings plundered in consequence of the cudgels he took up on behalf of his nurse's son who had picked up quarrel

with the governor's men on the question of the boundary of tilled land—fields. On the contrary, the saint always overlooked the harassment caused every now and then to his men by the local officials. He always restrained his men or would not allow even some of the king's noblemen, *maliks*, who were his disciples and who, coming to know of the matter, would like to take action on their own. He once prevented a *malik* who was sending his men to the saint's village to take to task its headman who never paid the dues in time to the saint and was recalcitrant.

The saint had cordial relations with successive kings as well as with contemporary saints and savants.

The *Mirqat* supplies considerable information on political history of the late *Tughluq* and Gujarat Sultanate periods. A brief reference to this may be made here. Among the political events of which the saint had first-hand information are Rao Chonda's seige of Nagaur, and the migration as a result thereof, of the Muslim population of that region to Gujarat, seige of Mandor, the old capital of Jodhpur Rathod rulers—and not Mandu as has been printed in some historical works and accepted by modern historians—by the Gujarat ruler, the rebellion of the chiefs of Nadot and Idar and the Gujarat Sultan's campaigns to deal with them, two invasions of Malwa king and the battles fought, not very far from Ahmadabad, Sultan Ahmad's Deccan engagement, imprisonment of Zafar Khan later on Muzaffar I of Gujarat by his son and his subsequent release, insurgence of the local chief of a thana the name of which is not clear from the manuscript, but which reads like Chadh of Chara, the menace of the *mala'in*—accursed ones, by which either the Portuguese or the Deccan pirates are meant—on the southern coast of Gujarat, at Mahim, now part of metropolitan Bombay, at the turn of the fifteenth century, etc. Some of these events like those connected with Idar and Malwa affairs have been described in details and a proper appraisal and study of these accounts is likely to throw new light on certain aspects of the history of Gujarat and neighbouring regions. Time does not permit me to attempt this here, but I may also draw attention to one matter mentioned in the

book. Zafar Khan, later on Muzaffar I of Gujarat, who had known the saint from the latter's Khan Jahan's mosque days at Delhi, requested his presence in his army in his expedition to quell the rebellion of the chief of Nadot. The saint who had accordingly joined him asked the Sultan why he did not go to the succour of the Delhi Sultan at the time of and after the invasion of Timur despite that much army, resources and elephants. It may be recalled that Sultan Mahmud Tughluq, who had fled Delhi, had come to Nahrwala Patan in A. H. 801 (1398-99 A.D.), then Gujarat's capital, in an unsuccessful bid to muster the Gujarat governor's support. According to the saint's own narrative, Zafar Khan in reply to the saint's query told him that the boy Bijli Khan (Mithe Khan?—perhaps prince Mithe Khan, one of his sons, is meant) was engaged in battle with Rao Chonda of Mewar, the province of Nagaur was under constant attack, the roads were perilous, the army was occupied with the siege of Mandor—incidentally the printed historical works have Mandu which has misled modern historians to Gujarat's Mandor siege with that of Mandu in totally opposite direction—and the infidels were being properly held at bay, when all of a sudden Bijli Khan (or Prince Mithe Khan) withdrew without even informing him as a result of which he himself was compelled to return to Patan and not leave it lest the province of Gujarat was lost. This information is not given in any historical work of the period. Also, it is only through the saint's narrative that we know that Zafar Khan had personally led the Nadot expedition to suppress the rebellion of its refractory chief.

The saint's reminiscences also support the general belief recorded by the author of the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* that Zafar Khan's son Tatar Khan, who was pressing for declaring independence, had placed his father in confinement when the latter did not agree to the proposal and assumed kingship under the name Muhammad Shah. But while the place of internment of Zafar Khan is generally stated in historical works to be Asawal, on the site of which modern Ahmadabad was founded a few years later, the saint had learnt from the mouth of the new Sultan himself that his father was confined in Bharuch or Broach, a fact which

was again corroborated by Zafar Khan himself when he referred to his confinement to the saint after his release. This even, seems to have taken place immediately after Nadot expedition for after imprisoning his father and declaring his independence Muhammad Shah himself went to Nadot to bring to book the recalcitrant local chiefs and then proceed to Delhi, when he suddenly died. It may be noted that the saint does not refer to the generally accepted cause of the new Sultan's death through poison administered to him at the instance of his imprisoned father. He merely says that Sultan Muhammad went to Nadot, punished the rebellious chiefs and there laid down his life.

But it is more in the field of local history, particularly of the 14th century—second-half- Rajasthan and fifteenth century—first-half Gujarat that the saint's memoir supplies ample material. The saint mentions a number of high and low officials and noble-men posted in provincial or district towns and villages in different situations and contexts to most of which the saint was himself a party. These supply welcome bits of information about their postings and private and official life. We come to know of a vast majority of them, almost all of them, for the first time, through the saint's reminiscences. The historicity of this information has stood the test of authenticity in a number of instances where it has helped identification of certain persons summarily or inadequately mentioned in other sources and supplied more details about their career and manner of government. One such information has helped clear up the uncertainty about the period of the conversion of the Mohil branch of Chauhana Rajputs to Islam, as will be narrated a little later.

Even about officials known from some other sources, the *Mirqat* supplies more information. Among the Tughluqian officials known from the saint's narrative for the first time who held charge of village, district or provincial administration in Rajasthan are Sayyid Kamalud-Din, *Rasul-i-dar*, Malik Haji son of Radiul Mulk, a Firuzian nobleman and governor of Didwana, Malik Ahmad Kath, a Tughluqian grandee, Malik Kamalud-Din, *Muqta'* of Hisar-i-Firuz, i.e. Hisar, now a district headquarters in

Haryana, and his father, Malik 'Umar, the *Sahib-i-'Ard-iBandagan*, Malik Mughith, the *Hajib*, Chamberlain of the Gujarat governor Darya Khan, Sayyid Radi the *Hajib*, Malik Kamal Gakkar, Malik Ikram, *Jamdar*, Malik Zain Wala, the governor of Didwana, Malik Nasir, son of Ahmad, a *Muqta'* of Khatu, a *Malik* of Nagaur, whose name is spelt in the manuscripts as Konan or Gonan, Shihabud-Din Domak or Dolak, Headman of Khatu, Sher Malik, Malik Muzaffar, the Kalal, Islam Khan, a nobleman, Malik Muhammad son of Haji Daud, the Chaudhary, Amir Nathu or Nanhu, son of Mu'in of Khatu, Malik Ismail, Kala Khwaja and his Agent (*Karkun*), Bhupat, Dev Raj, the Headman of a village in Rajasthan, Qutb Khwajagi, the Superintendent-in-Charge (*Shahna-i-'imarat*) of the Khan Jahan's mosque at Delhi, Qadi Nasrullah, the religious judge (*Hakim*) of Delhi, Qadi Fakhrud-Din, religious judge of Khatu, Qadi Turk, religious judge of Ladnun and the like. But for the *Mirqatul-Wasul*, these noblemen and officials, some of them of quite high rank, their jurisdiction, etc., would have remained unknown to us.

Among the noblemen who find mention in Shaikh Ahmad's reminiscences and are not entirely unknown—only their names and time are known—from some source or the other are Malik Kamal-i-Khurram, Malik Chopan, Malik Qutb-i-Najm, all of the ranks of governor and Malik 'Alaud-Din, the Neo-Muslim (*Nau-Msalman*). While they are totally ignored by contemporary or later historians their name is perpetuated by inscriptions which also give their date. Malik Kamalud-Din Ahmad i-Khurram is mentioned in a bilingual record from Sambhar in Rajasthan, dated A. H. 765 (1363 A. D.), in which he is referred to as the governor of that region. The *Mirqat* reference to him is in connection with his routine visit to Khatu which took place well before this date, even before Shaikh Ahmad entered the life of Babu Ishaq sometime in the early 1340's. The saint relates that when the governor came to Khatu, he paid a visit to Babu Ishaq with whom he had earlier acquaintance or relations, and complained to him about his not having paid visit to him in accordance with the Tradition (one who is a new-comer is paid a visit).

Malik Chopan is another nobleman also known only from an inscription from Ladnun in Nagaur district of Rajasthan which finds frequent mention in the saint's reminiscences. This epigraph recording the construction of a mosque in A. H. 780 (1378 A. D.) refers to his governorship and tells us nothing further about him beyond, fortunately, mentioning his title *Malik-ush-Sharq* Ikhtiyarud-Din. His name is also absent from the list of leading noblemen and officials of the period given in the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Diyauddin Barani or of *Shams-i-Siraj-i-Arif*; nor does he find mention in other historical works. The Sarkhej saint's malfuz mentions him on more than one occasion. Shaikh Ahmed, a frequent visitor to Nagaur, Didwana and Ladnun during his younger days sojourn in Khatu with Babu Ishaq had personally met Malik Chopan in one of his visits to Nagaur where he had gone for some work during Babu's life-time that is before A. H. 776 (1374 A. D.). Recalling this visit, the saint once said that the Malik had obtained considerable booty in some expedition (*tAkht*)—the time and place of the expedition are unfortunately left out in the narrative—out of which he gave a share comprising four choice cows to Shaikh Ahmad who sold them to one Malik Konan or Gonan at 20 tankas each—it must be silver tankas. This may be reasonably taken to mean that Nagaur was the headquarters of the *iqta'* of Malik Chopan, independent from that of Ajmer of which earlier it formed part for some time. The Malikush-Sharq seems to have built a *sarai* at Nagaur called or known after him as Sarai-i Malik Chopan. The saint refers to it as the place where he had stayed in about A. H. 791 (1388-89 A. D.) when he passed through the town on his way to the two holy cities on pilgrimage.

A third nobleman of substantial rank, who is totally ignored by Persian historians but is known to us from epigraphic as well as bardic sources, is Malik 'Alaud-Din, who constructed a mosque at Ladnun during the governorship of Malik-ush-Sharq Malik Ikhtiyarud-Din Chopan in A. H. 780 (1378 A.D.) according to the epigraph which I have just mentioned. However, the mention of his name in the inscription as also his account in bardic lore were full of confusion. For example, the inscription called him 'Alaud-Din Mubarak 'urf. (*alias*) Jai Singh Bhoja

Mohel which was somewhat intriguing. The mention of two sets of son-and-father's Muslim and Hindu names was enigmatic—the mention of the father's Muslim name presented the problem since from bardic accounts, it was known that Jai Singh was the first among the descendants of Mohel Chauhan who embraced Islam. It could not be said for certain if his own name was 'Alaud-Din or 'Alaud-Din Mubarak. Also, the epigraph and the barding accounts were at great variance in the matter of his period. While the barding accounts spoke of him as having flourished some time in the middle of the fifteenth century, the epigraph referred to his having built a mosque almost three quarters of a century earlier. This confusion was set at rest by the malfuz of the saint. In his account of one of his visits to Ladnun which he made in the company of Babu Ishaq - obviously before A.H, 776 (1374. A.D.) when the latter died, the saint refers to Malik 'Alaud-Din, a *Nau-Muslim* (Neo-Muslim) the *Muqaddim* of the town and an admirer of the Babu, who received them with honour and made some offering, out of which Babu got *malida* prepared and invited local Muslims to partake of it with him. The *Mirqat* thus helped solve the mystery of the nomenclature. Since the saint call him only 'Alaud-Din, the Islamic name of Jai Singh was only 'Alaud-Din and therefore Mubarak in the epigraphic text was intended to represent the father's name; this would be the only reasonable inference, namely that as the Hindu set of names comprised that of the son followed by the father's, so should be the Islamic nomenclature. It would so appear that 'Alaud-Din had chosen to invest his father also with a Muslim name. Shaikh Ahmad also furnishes an interesting piece of information that this Malik 'Alaud-Din was a disciple of Sayyid Jalalud-Din Husain—by whom evidently the well known saint popularly called Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangasht is meant. It may be reasonably surmised that Jai Singh who is mentioned in bardic accounts as the local Chauhan chief had embraced Islam at the hands, if not instance, of this famous *Suhrawardi* saint.

The mist that had till now surrounded the age of conversion of the Mohel community of Muslims of Rajasthan concentrated in the Mohelwati region—Ladnun region—is cleared up by this

explicit mention of Jai Singh being the first to embrace Islam while Babu Ishaq was alive, that is some years before 1374 A.D. As discussed by me in detail in my study of the Ladnun inscription, bardic accounts spin a romantic story round Jai Singh, the Hindu Raja of Ladnun's conversion to Islam. They place the event some time in the middle of the fifteenth century, while not only does the epigraph record 1378 A.D. as the date of the mosque built by him at Ladnun but Shaikh Ahmad reports his entertaining Babu Ishaq which must have been some time before the latter's death in 1374 A.D. From the account of the *Mirqat*, it would follow that Jai Singh was converted to Islam quite some time before Ishaq's reported visit. Thus, the conversion of Jai Singh must have taken place around 1370 if not still earlier. In other words, the conversion of the Mohel branch of the Chauhanas took place not in the middle of the 15th century as is generally believed by Rajasthan's historians of medieval history, but some time in the middle of the 14th century or at least well before the last quarter of that century began. The significance of this event has not been taken due note of by our political and social historians. It is evidently part of an important but generally overlooked phenomenon in the social history of this part of the country's western sector in the fourteenth century. The second part of this century is conspicuous in the history of Rajasthan in that it witnessed during the rule of Firuz Tughluq at least two conversions of members of the two ruling families namely the Khanzadas of Mewat and the Mohels of Mohelwati, not to mention the Khanzadas of Nagaur and the Sultans of Gujarat who are reported to have originally belonged to a place adjoining Rajasthan. No attempt has so far been made to determine the reasons or factors other than purely political, if there were any, for this development.

Yet one more Tughluqian nobleman of governor's rank about whom welcome information is available in the saint's personal reminiscences, is Malik Qutbudd-Din Najm. From his epitaph discovered more than a decade ago at Nagaur, it was of course known that this 'magnificent' *malik*, the mine of generosity and magnanimity, lord of the sword and the pen, Malik Qutbud-Din Najm, the deputy in the *shiq* of Nagaur and

Jalor attained martyrdom in the army of the Muslims in A. H. 791' (1389 A. D.). Nothing more was known about him beyond this. Historical works dealing with the Tughluq period, contemporary or later, completely ignore this official of such a high status. But it is again in the memoirs of the saint —and this is the test of authenticity of the memoirs which I just referred to—that we get some more details about his family background, career and personality. The saint while speaking of him on more than one occasion says that he was the son-in-law of Malik Radiul-Mulk, a Tughluqian grandee of Muhammad bin Tughluq Shah and Firuz Tughluq and that he was working as the deputy at Didwana of Radiul-Mulk's son and his own wife's brother Malik Muhammad Haji, that is to say he was the deputy governor of the province during the life time of Babu Ishaq that is before 1374 A. D. The saint while referring to his visit to Didwana in the company of Babu Ishaq, relates how the Malik had misbehaved with or harassed a pious man—*darwish*—from Chanderi who complained about it to the Babu and how the latter, after the Friday prayers were over, refused to shake hands with the Malik whom he scolded calling him a betel-nut-seller's lad. (*Supari farosh bachcha*) On another occasion, Shaikh Ahmad relates, he had gone to Didwana from Khatu on some errand when Babu requiring his presence urgently at Khatu, sent some one to the Malik with a message to look for him and despatch him immediately to Khatu. Once when Shaikh Ahmad had called on a local savant, Maulana Abul-Faraj Radiud-Din, at the latter's Didwana house, the Malik also chanced to come there. It being a year of drought, the Malik was distributing ten to twenty measures of corn to the Muslims present at the Maulana's house. Shaikh Ahmad not wishing to receive it, left before his turn came, whereupon the Malik who on inquiry found out that he had put up at the house of Sayyid Abu Talib, ordered the latter under threat of dire consequences to bring Shaikh Ahmad to his house. The Shaikh went to spare his host any reprisal on his account. The Malik received him with utmost respect and asked him to take with him one cart-load of corn which he had set apart for Babu Ishaq. The Malik also seems to have owed at one time some

four hundred tankas to Shaikh Ahmad. The latter narrates the entire episode of his demand of payment, the Malik's initial refusal to own the debt and finally making the payment on being told by Babu Ishaq in a dream. The Malik seems to have later on moved to Nagaur, for we are told by Shaikh Ahmad that when some time after Babu Ishaq's demise, he halted at Nagaur on his way to the holy cities for *Hajj*, in the company of the learned and holy men of Delhi, some of whom he names, Malik Najm was its *Muqta'*. The Malik having come to know from Shaikh's companions who during this brief sojourn had gone to visit him, that Shaikh Ahmad was also their fellow-traveller, called him and tried to dissuade him from undertaking the hazardous journey for which the Malik thought he was not physically fit. The Sarkhej saint always spoke of Malik Qutbud-Din Najm as a very generous person.

This *malfuz* of the saint also furnishes eye-witness accounts of events in the history of Gujarat of the first half of the fifteenth century, the period coinciding with the long years of his stay in Gujarat at Sarkhej. In these narratives mention is made of a number of officials and nobleman, quite a few of whom are known, from the saint's reference only, though Gujarat is quite rich in historical works. Then, even in the case of those known from historical or other sources, the saint's memoir has as usual more information to give. The officials known for the first time from the *Mirqat* are : Malik Burhanud-Din Tatar Khani, Sikandar Khan, an official of Muzaffar I, Malik Mubarak Butahari of Cambay—incidentally, this is an important piece of information, showing that the Butahari family, some members of which were prominent officials under Ghiyathud-Din Tughluq and his son Muhammad bin Tughluq and one of whom had constructed the *Jami'* mosque of Cambay in 1325 A. D., belonged to Cambay and lived there in official capacity—Malik Fathul Mulk father of Rasti Khan, Malik 'Umdatul-Mulk, Malik Shaikh Malik Fakhr, a grandee of Ahmad Shah I, Malik Kbidr, Malik Nizam Chhaju and Malik Jalal Shah, officials of the same Sultan, Adbaran Tak or Tank, the *Muqta'* of Dholka under Muzaffar I, Ibrahim Muhasib (Accountant), Khwaja Badh, the *Muqaddam* (Chief Revenue Official) of Sarkhej, Qadi Kamalud-Din and Qadi Tajud-Din

'Abbasi, the religious Judges of Cambay, and the like, who find mention in the saint's memoirs in connection, mostly, with incidents relating to him or the affairs of his Sarkhej Khanqah. The names of two princes of the founder of the city of Ahmadabad, Sultan Ahmad I, namely Shadi Khan and Shakar Khan are also only known from the saint's reference to them. This new piece of information furnishes a good circumstantial and fairly corroborative evidence for settling the time of the construction of a mosque called Shakar Khan's mosque in Ahmadabad; it could be assigned to the very early period of the Gujarat Sultanate to which it can be attributed on architectural grounds as well, though competent scholars like James Burgess assign it to the middle of the 16th century—end of Ahmad Shah I's reign.

Coming to the nobles known from other sources, to whom the *Mirqat* also refers, mention may be made of Badr son of 'Ala who figures in the history of Gujarat as having been the moving figure behind the rebellion of Maudud against his cousin Sultan Ahmad I in the very first year of his reign. The motive or the *raison d'etre* of Badr's behaviour is as usual not mentioned in historical works, but the *Mirqat* supplies the very useful and significant piece of information that Badr-i-'Ala was the son-in-law of Muzaffar Shah I, that is to say, the husband of the sister of the fathers of both Ahmad Shah I and the arch-rebel Maudud.

The other member of the royal family who is ignored by historical works but is otherwise known from one epigraph found at Patan, then capital of Gujarat, is Khwaja Khassa brother of Muzaffar Shah I. The epigraph designates him as Royal Chamberlain (*Hajib-i-Khas*) and records the construction of a noble edifice by him in A.H. 813 (1410-11 A.D.). Beyond this nothing is known about him or his career. In the *Mirqat* Khwaja Khassa's mission as an emissary of his brother to the saint, during his pre-kingship period, is mentioned at some length: being somewhat dissatisfied with the non-cooperative attitude of the local officials in the matter of the income of the village granted to him, the saint had sent Khwaja Badh, *Muqaddim* of Sarkhej, to the Khan, but not to much avail. At this the saint purchased two

horses, a fact brought to the notice of the Khan as implying that he wanted to leave Gujarat and go to Deccan. The Khan immediately ordered inquiry into the matter and ordered the concerned officials to deposit the dues with the saint. He further sent his chamberlain Khwaja Khassa to take 500 tankas from the treasury and offer it to the saint. The Khawaja came to Sarkhej and perhaps exceeding his brief told the saint that he should first give an account of one hundred thousand tankas received in all by him till date from the Khan before he left for Deccan. The saint said he would render account of not one but two thousand tankas, but he would not remain in Khan's territory. Khwaja Khassa told the saint that what he had said was on his own behalf for restraining the saint from leaving Gujarat but he told the saint that the Khan had sent him with the specific object to plead on his behalf in case the saint insisted on his departure that he should not forsake him. At this the saint's anger subsided and Khwaja Khassa presented the money as also the fresh deed of the village-grant made out to the satisfaction of the saint.

A nobleman of first rank who finds detailed mention in the saint's reminiscences is Malik Shaikhan son of Musa. This nobleman does not find mention in historical works like the *Mir'at-i-Sikandari*, but an Inscription from Wadhwan in Surendranagar district of Gujarat refers to him as having constructed a mosque there in A.H. 842 (1439 A.D.) during the reign of Ahmad Shah I. From the frequent reference made to him by the saint, he appears to have been a regular visitor to the saintly establishment. The Saint furnishes the information that he was a descendant of the celebrated Hadrat Khalid bin Walid. The saintly reminiscences supplemented by the compiler give a detailed account of Malik Shaikhan's role in Gujarat Sultans, Muhammad Shah II and Ahmad Shah II's battles with Sultans Mahmud Khalji of Malwa as also of his nearness to the kings. The memoir also refers to the appointment of the Malik to a difficult thana, Chadh or Chara by name, which he was hesitating to accept on account of its notoriously mischievous *Muqaddam*. Approaching the saint with his dilemma, he was

advised by him not to worry and accept the charge which he did. Through the blessings of the saint, we are informed, he enforced order in the thana which greatly prospered. One more nobleman in whose respect the *Mirqat* supplies more details is Malik Uthman Sarkheji whose name figures only once in historical works in connection with the rebellion of some noblemen, he being one, against Sultan Ahmad in A. H. 816 (1413-14 A. D.). He also seems to have been a frequent visitor to the saint's hospice. On one occasion, he made an offering of a jewel-studded ring in lieu of which the saint made a returning gift of matching value. On another occasion, when he presented a costly garment, the saint sent four gold tankas through Qadi Mansur. According to the saint, it was this nobleman who was fetched to summon the saint to Sultan Ahmad I's sick-bed when he had fallen seriously ill in the early years of his reign. The *Mirqat* also reports a meeting in which the said nobleman had discussions with the saint on the nature of Soul.

The historicity of the saint's narratives has already been indicated by some of the instances referred by me earlier. Before ending this section concerning Gujarat noblemen, I may make mention one more instance. I mentioned Malik Shaikh (son of Malik Fakhr) among the noblemen. While he is not known from any other source, we know from an epigraph that this nobleman had a daughter Bibi Daulat by name who had constructed a mosque at Ahmadabad in A. H. 883 (1478 A. D.) in the reign of Mahmud I of Gujarat. She was married to Malik Adil Khan.

The *Mirqat* also contains references to political history of Central Asia under Timur in a full chapter devoted to the saint's own account of his role during and after Timur's invasion and devastation of Delhi, in retrieving Delhi and its inhabitants from capture, loot and plunder by the Timurid soldiers, as also his travel to Samarqand along with Timur's army and return journey to Khatu via Thatta. The saint in his narrative speaks of the impact, his piety and religiosity had made on all and sundry including Timur, some ladies of his seraglio, his ministers and

officials like Alaud-Din Samnani, Amirzada Pir Muhammad, Amir Jan, Sultan Muhammad Bahadur, Amir Saiful-Mulk and Ilyas Khwaja and learned men of Samarqand like the grandson of the author of *Hidaya*, Khwaja Abdul-Awwal, and his nephew Malikul-Ulama Husamud-Din, Shaikh Abu Sa'id Lughavi, etc. This narrative not only provides an Indian saint's experience of social and political life in Central Asia, but also mentions a political event or two that occurred while he was there. For example, we are told that while he was having an audience with Timur, a courtier arrived from Tabriz with the news that Yusuf Qara had attacked and plundered Tabriz putting to death its governor, a son-in-law of Timur.

Incidentally, Shaikh Ahmad's role in the entire affair and his journey to Samarqand does not appear to have been mentioned in pre-Mughal historical works and have not received any serious attention of our historians. As a matter of fact, while Maulana Sayyid Abu Zafar's description of the role in his Urdu introduction to the saint's malfuz-works referred by me earlier was probably completely overlooked, Professor Nizami has only recently brought it to the notice of a wider circle by his article in English. It should be critically examined by students of Central Asian Timurid history both in India and abroad.

From the account of the saint's life in his self-imposed temporary exile in Central Asia, it would appear that his time was mostly spent in meetings with learned men and academic discussions with them. The account is not entirely without its touch of humour. Describing his visit to a *hammam* in Samarqand, the saint says, "Once I went to a *hammam* in Samarqand with an attendant named 'Arif who had 'flower' in one eye. Some ladies also came there. 'Arif had a book of verses in his hand. Seeing this one of the women said to him, "O blind fellow! What is that book in your hand?" 'Arif replied, "The Quran". He was asked, "Why Quran here?" 'Arif said, "You who have come here to take bath will have to declare on oath whether it is a legal bath or otherwise and that is why it is here with me". The ladies were greatly embarrassed and

said to one another that had they not called him blind, they would have been spared this retort.

The *Mirqat* also helps determine the period of a saint of Cambay, Shaikh Ali al-Jaulaqi locally called Pir Parwaz.

According to a note encased in a glass-frame and put up at his tomb situated to the north-east of the town, Shaikh 'Ali al-Jaulaqi flourished in the twelfth century A. D. However, according to the account of Shaikh Ahmad's visit to Cambay, as narrated in the *Mirqat*, the Cambay saint also called therein "Pir Parwaz, whose name was 'Ali had come to see the former and, therefore, being a contemporary, lived in the late 14th-early 15th century. The saint's malfuz thus contains the earliest contemporary reference to saint as well as to his *alias* Pir Parwaz. Incidentally, the Tomb of Pir Parwaz, a modern rectangular hall, situated in what must have been once an extensive graveyard is the repository of more than two dozen epitaphic marble tablets belonging to the graves of persons who lived in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which, lying loose, must have been removed there to save them from disappearance or destruction.

Apart from political personages or events, the malfuz contains material which supplies some information on the administrative machinery of the state. Among the administrative divisions mentioned therein are *Shiq*, *Pargana*, *Khitta*, *Thanas* and *Qasba*. The posts and designations that find mention therein are *Diwan* or *Diwan-i-Shahi* for the king or his court, *Naib i-Ghaibat* or King's Deputy-in-absence, a designation for the governor of a province currently in use in the 15-16th century Deccan but rarely in the north or the west of the country, *Hajib*, *Sahib-i-Ard-i-Bandagan*, *Muqta'*, *Wajahdar*, *Jamdar*, *Pardadar*, *Dabir*, *Fotedar*, (Cashier), *Muhasib* (Accountant) *Kotwal*, *Sarkhail*, *Muqaddam Khot Desai*—perhaps the earliest mention of this word in Pre-Mughal Persian works, though it is known from ancient Indian inscriptions—etc. Of these, the term *Wajahdar* appears to have been in vogue in Gujarat only, where it is found employed in contemporary and later inscriptions. The term meaning the land-holder, the

holder of crop-share of the land owned by him but farmed out to cultivators on crop-share or cash-payment basis, more or less synonymous with the *jagirdar* of the Mughal period is even now used in Gujarat for the non-cultivating agricultural land-owners. A Superintendent of the building of the Khan Jahan mosque of Delhi is also mentioned more than once. While the functions of these officials only come in for indirect or casual mention, we do have some useful bits of information. For example, from an incident narrated of the expedition of the payment of the regular stipend (*muqarrar-dasht*) of two Sayyids of Didwana who had gone to Delhi for presenting their case, it would appear that the duties of a *Jamdar* was not confined only to be incharge of royal wardrobe and keep it fully furnished but he was also the final authority of implementing the royal order of grant of royal dress, robes of honour, etc. to officials and non-officials. It was found that Qadi Nasrullah the Hakim (religious judge) of Delhi, on some pretext or the other, was delaying the sanction of the payment. The intentional delay by the royal *Jamdar*, a disciple of Shaikh Ahmad in the execution of the royal order bestowing dresses on Qadi Nasrullah expedited the sanction of payment of the stipend of Didwana Sayyids.

The duties of the *Sahib-i-Ard-i-Bandagan* or *Arid*, the Pay Master, it would appear from the Saint's narrative, included physical verification of the mounts of recruits and non-regular soldiers at camps specially arranged for the purpose at different places. For example, a camp for such verification of personnel from the towns of Naraina, Khatu and Nagaur was held at Naraina by Malik Umar the Pay-Master. The royal farmans received at a place were required to be read out in public from the mosque pulpit by the leader of Friday prayers or by the *Khatib*. A somewhat unusual instance of the voluntary surrender of a farman of land-grant by the donee to the king under protest is also mentioned in the *Mirqat* on the authority of Shaikh Ahmad, who was present at that time. The latter who, then quite young, had gone from Khatu to Delhi, was enlisted among those to be presented to Sultan Firuz Tughluq by the *Sayyidul-Hujjab*. Preceding him was a Shaikh from Ajmer who in reply

to the query by the Sultan on the purpose of his visit, took out the farman of the grant of a village to the attendants of the Tomb of Khwaja Muinud-Din Chishti, which he said he wanted to return to the Diwan as the *Shiq* officials were making undue great demands on the village. Incidentally, this is one of the very few, hardly two three, references to the tomb of the Ajmer saint to be found in a pre-Mughal work.

The personnel appointed to public institutions like mosques, madrasas, etc., leadars-of-prayers, teachers and the like, were maintained by the state or by saintly establishments and in the case of the former, they were required to collect their monthly stipends from the Cashier after proper identification. Payments were made either on cash or in kind or in both. The village *Muqaddim*, an official of the status of the present day Patel or Patil in a village who did not receive a regular salary, would at times take contract of a village as had happened in the case of the saint's village. According to this, he would pay the grantee of the village a certain agreed amount in cash in lieu of the produce of the village. This amount was called *Wajah* and the grantee of the village, *Wajahdar*, referred to a little while ago. The crop-share amount in cash of the saint's village Utelia was 2000 tankas in the case of its previous *Wajahdar*, Bubu Badi—Badi Bubu or Badi Bibi of our days. In the alternative the grantee was free to cultivate the village-land through his agents or hired personnel. This posed a number of problems, the foremost being strained relations between different parties and harassment of the *ryot* by local officials, even the Sarkhej saint's men being no exception.

The saintly and like visitors to the court were given 'journey-money.' In some cases when it was ensured that the person concerned actually left the place—for example in the case of one asked to leave having incurred royal displeasure or so—the amount was paid after the party had actually left the first stage on way. Spoils of war or booty obtained in military excursions were shared with people or with some groups of people like pious and saintly ones. Shaikh Ahmad's own version of his share of loot from Malik Chopan has already been mentioned

The officials, among others, tended to avoid payment of state dues or recovery, even if they were in possession of money. Malik Zaina, the *Muqta'* of Hisar Firuza who was imprisoned for non-payment of dues was later found to have buried 80,000 tankas in the earth at some safe place.

The Sarkhej saint's memoir also supplies considerable material for political geography as also topography of towns and regions. The saint had travelled widely undertaking frequent trips from Khatu to Nagaur, Didwana, Ladnun and even Delhi and Hisar Firuza in Rajasthan and adjoining parts, to Gujarat on way to the two holy places, Mecca and Madina, and to Samarqand along with Timur's army, and his narrative covers a number of villages and towns of these regions and also furnishes some idea of the means of communications, routes, halting places, etc. The places from Rajasthan mentioned in his various discourses which were visited by the saint are : Chhoti Khatu, Ajmer, Naraina, Nagaur, Didwana, Ladnun, Kuchera, Kathoti, among well-known or familiar ones and Mahoya also known as Talwara, Laudara or Laudarwa stated to be on the bank of a river, Tartav or Tartar, Satehla or Sathela, Ahwad, Rahol (which may perhaps be what is now called Rohal Sharif), Banathri, Koliwa, Devri, etc., among unfamiliar ones. In the case of some of these, direction and distances from well known places are also given, facilitating the task of their identification. For example, it is mentioned that Kathori was two *kroh* from Khatu, Koliwa was three *kroh* from Didwana, etc. We are also told that the village Ahwad was given in subsistence grant to the Sayyids of Didwana.

Of the Gujarat villages and towns, the familiar and identifiable towns and villages are Birpur, Sanand, Khambhayat that is Cambay, Dholka, Dhandhuka, Bharauch, Navsari, Palanpur, spelt as Palhanpur, Nahrwala, Mahaim (i. e. Mahim, now part of metropolitan Bombay), Baroda, Utelia, Asawal, Rander, Sarkhej, Kapadwanj, etc. We also get the names of places like Godhal, Santij, Choramli, Chara or Chadh, Barli stated to be near Patan, Pandarwara stated to be thirty *kroh* east of Kapadwanj, etc. which can perhaps be identified with some effort. The famous

ravines of the Gujarat river Mahi are also mentioned in the saint's narratives. The road to Navsari in south Gujarat is reported to have passed through jungles. Kochrab, now part of the city of Ahmadabad was in the fifteenth century, and apparently till the turn of the century, a village considered to be the first stage towards Nahrwala-Patan from the capital city.

The various means of conveyance that find mention in the saint's narrative are horse, camel, Dola (i. e. palanquin), bullock-cart (*gardun*, perhaps for bag and baggage) and special carts called Bahel (Gujarati Vahel) or Bahni (form of Vahan) (for passengers), ships, etc. The routes followed by the saint in his travels as narrated by him are : the route to Gujarat from Delhi passed through Didwana, that from Khatu to Mecca and Madina through Tartav or Tartar, Ladnun, Nagaur, Mahoya *alias* Talwara, Laudara or Laudarwa, Nahrwala-Patan, Cambay or Mahim, Aden, Jeddah, Mecca and Madina. The ships also used to ply between Aden and Thatta in Sind. The saint's return journey was from Aden to Thatta, to Tartav or Tartar and to Khatu. The route from Samarqand to Khatu taken by Shaikh Ahmad, according to his narrative, was Samarqand to Herat, Qandahar, Uchch, Malik Wahan, Jaisalmer and Khatu. The route from Nahrwala-Patan to Khambhat was through Dholka.

More interesting, however, is the information furnished by the saint's discourses about the topography of cities and towns like Delhi, Nagaur, Didwana, Khatu, Cambay, Sarkhej, Ahmadabad, Uchch, etc. The only building of Uchch to which the celebrated saint Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangasht belonged is the Burj-i-Mamun, where Shaikh Ahmad had stayed at the time of his visit to that town. The localities or monuments of Delhi that find mention in the saint's narrative or discussions include the Tomb of Prince Fath Khan (Now in Nabi Karim locality) which is stated to be situated near the Bhilsa gate, and the mosque of Khan Jahan stated to be situated in the Mohalla Jainagar of Firozabad. This reference to Jainagar-Mohalla of Firozabad in which the Khan Jahan mosque is stated to have been situated is quite important as it helps to indicate the limits

of Firozabad founded by Firoz Tughluq. According to this statement, the newly founded capital extended to north, north-west of Firoz Shah Kotla, the citadel for royal residence, to a distance of a couple of kilometres and must have included the Khan Jahan mosque that is the modern Kalan or Kali Masjid within the Turkman gate of the walled city of old Delhi. Firozabad is also stated in the saint's narrative to be at a distance of five *kroh* from the then Delhi, by which pre-Firozabad Delhi is evidently meant. The narrative of Shaikh Ahmad also refers to the market (*Bazar*) near Khan Jahan's mosque. The saint also mentions the *Kushk-i-Hazar Sutun* which appears to have ceased to be the royal residence and housed members of the public, it was in this once royal palace that Maulana Majdud-Din, the *Muhaddith*, was imparting instruction in the science of Tradition, as mentioned earlier.

Another landmark of Delhi of that period mentioned by the saint is Hauz-i Khas, on the bank of which was a grand mausoleum of pre-1374 A. D. date. It is unfortunate that no further information about this tomb or the year of visit is given. Hauz-i Khas was a place of, in modern parlance, tourist resort as of our days for the saint refers to have been taken there in his young days for recreation and sightseeing. Another important reference to a Delhi locality is Bagh-Jor, or Jor-Bagh, the location and the designation of which have been a matter of speculation until recently. The name is misspelt in Persian historical works as *Bagh-i-Jud*. The saint's memoir spells it as Bagh-Jor and not *Bagh-Jud* or *Bagh-i-Jud*.

Of the buildings of Nagaur mentioned by the saint are the Madrasa of Qadi Hamidud-Din Nagauri founded or named after the savant who flourished more than a century earlier, the caravansarai of Malik Chopan and the Tank. At Didwana were, the saint reports, two tanks one on the east of the town and the other on the west. The fortification or Qala of Didwana was in existence before 1374 A. D. and one of the mosques of the town was called Masjid-i-Burhani in the saint's time. Outside the town, on the west, was the mosque of Malik Daud where Shaikh Ahmad had once stayed when he visited the town. Incidentally

we come across frequent mention in the saint's narrative, of tanks and reservoirs in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. For example, the only place of note of Khatu that finds mention in the saint's memoirs is the tank called Haud-i-Khan. It is difficult to say which of the extant two tanks of Khatu, the tank at the foot of the hill locally called Muluk-Talab or the stepped rectangular tank to the north-west of the town this Khan-tank represents. Also the connotation of the name *Khan* is also not very clear. If the name is correctly spelt in the manuscripts, it might mean the tank carved out or mined out from the hill. The saint's malfuz also refers to the tank of Naraina which is evidently different from the one called Mustafasar excavated on the site of the royal camping ground, in 1437 A.D by Mujahid Khan, the Nagaur ruler and a nephew, of Muzaffar I. Other tanks mentioned are the one at Dholka and the one called Nera (even now it is so called) at Cambay, both in Gujarat. A location of cultivable land called Chah-i-Khabadja, the Khabadja-well, near Sarkhej is also mentioned by the saint. It was a wheat-growing land. Other places which find casual mention in the saint's narrative are Vasna and Kochrab, which are now parts of the Ahmadabad city.

A significant, even if negative, evidence of the saint's narrative is in regard to the foundation of Ahmadabad. No direct or indirect reference to it either by the saint or by the compiler is found to the great event, though the founder Sultan's differential relations with the saint are frequently mentioned. As is well known, the foundation of the city is believed to have been laid at the suggestion and initiative of Shaikh Ahmad himself with the active participation in the foundation ceremony by four Ahmads who had never missed *Sunnat* prayers in their life. This tradition, widely current in the works of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century like the *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, is first met with in the *Tuhfatul-Majalis*, the so called other malfuz of the saint, which I have already mentioned. The absence of any mention of the saint's direct or indirect role in the foundation of the capital city, in close proximity to Sarkhej where the saint was already living, creates doubt about the authenticity of this

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tradition even if we give credence to all the four participating Ahmads of which the Sultan was also one as having never missed the *Sunnat*-prayers in their entire life-time. Want of time does not permit me to detail the reasons in support of this doubt but the most forceful argument repudiating this tradition is that even Hulvi Shirazi (wrongly spelt Hulwai by Professor Nazami and others), the extract of whose poetical history describing the foundation of Ahmadabad and its edifices is quoted in full by the author of *Mirat-i-Sikandari* himself, is totally silent on this.

It is rather unfortunate, but understandable, that not much specific data is available in the *Mirqat* on monuments. It does refer to the practice of Babu Ishaq and Shaikh Ahmad himself of visiting places of the resting-places of saints and other places of interest whenever they visited Delhi, Nagaur, Didwana and like places. But beyond naming a few of them, no information about the identification, date or description of the building is available in the discourses. The only specific information we get is about the construction of the Sarkhej '*Jami*' mosque by the saint. Though important in itself, this information still does not enable us to say for certain if the mosque referred to is the simple but chaste, fine and extremely graceful large mosque situated near his tomb at Sarkhej. The construction of two tanks at Khatu mentioned by him has already been referred to. A reference to the *muluk-khana* portion of the Khan Jahan's mosque may also be noted in this context. Most of the large or even moderate mosques of architectural character of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries have a cornered off area usually in the upper story in the north-western or northern part of the prayer-hall with a separate entry from the northern wall. The exact purport of this part of the prayer-hall is a matter of difference of opinion among scholars, according to some it was meant for the saintly and like people for their *chilla* vigils, according to others, it was meant for kings and governors, while it is also called ladies' gallery by some. This fifteenth century designation *muluk-khana* should prove beyond doubt that the secluded portion with a separate entry was meant for the ruler or the

governor and their body-guards from security point of view. Their use for other purposes, if at all, was secondary and later.

The information gleaned from the *Mirqat* on numismatics is likewise not detailed nor specific. But it does name the coins of various denominations current in the saint's time in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. The currency mentioned is: *Alai* gold tanka, gold and silver tankas, *Jital*, *kani*, *chaharkani*, *Panjani*, *Shashkani*, *Dahkani*, and *Bistkani*, *Fadiya* and *Fadia-i-Fiuz Shahi*. One more coin is mentioned but I have not been able to determine its reading. The word is transcribed as *juni*, which Maulana Sayyid Abu Zafar Nadvi takes to be a coin so designated after Prince Juna Khan, later on Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq Shah. But this is rather far-fetched. The word can be read as *chauni* which one might be tempted to think might stand for *Chawanni*, but it is difficult to say if the usage of the word *ana* is not so old.

The measures of weight and length that find mention in the *Mirqat* are *seer*, *man* and *tolcha* and *bigha*. There is also reference to the village-method of measuring depth by lengths of some standard objects. For example, the sand-filling clearance was measured as so many *chhajja*-measures, the exact connotation of which cannot be determined

From the saintly narratives in the *Mirqat*, it would appear that the routine life in a medieval mofussil society was not very different from that of the present day one, at least of until a couple of decades ago. People at large used to live the same hard but leisurely and honest life and their vocations during non-work seasons or leisure hours were not very different. Village houses had as of now thorn-hedged backyards and the doors of the houses at least of the Muslims were covered with straw-curtains—*tattis* as they are also called in the book. Some of the village or town houses had more than one storey. The main item of domestic furniture was the stringed bed as well as stringed chair—*kursi-i-raisman baftah*. Human failings of those days also remind us of those of our days. The butcher selling the meat of stolen animal was not unknown. We have already

mentioned the saint's account of how Shaikh Tajud-Din, whom he had given a fat cow, presented to him by an official, sold it to a butcher when it was given to him for the specific purpose of utilising its milk. The cows, given in *dakshinas* to Brahmins, it is widely known, find way to slaughter-houses in our days too. The saint also reports how an Indian borrowed his brand new shoes in the *haram* premises at Mecca promising him to return it shortly, which is never did. The ship-owners used to charge exorbitantly on out-of-season sailings. For example, when Shaikh Ahmad reached Cambay on his way to Jeddah, the Hajj season had ended and the ships had already left. There was only one ship available, the owner of which, approached by the emissaries of the local official, quoted far more fare. On being told that he should charge less from the "Shaikh" who is a saintly person, the ship-owner characteristically replied, "*agar ishan Shaikh and man murid-i-malam*" (If he is a Shaikh, I am the disciple of money). There is here a pun on the word *malam* which also means the captain of a ship.

There existed local rivalries in different spheres. The saint relates one such incident that took place in the life-time of Babu Ishaq. Once he had gone to Delhi from Khatu and on being presented to the king was granted 2,000 tankas by the latter, which is accepted with great difficulty and that too with the express purpose of getting the Khatu tank desilted of sand. On return to Khatu, when the work of desilting was to be started, the local Qadi went to the tank with his sons and after a trial digging of two-finger depth here and there told his sons that the filling was not much and it could be removed with little effort and in no time, and, therefore, they would earn name and fame by accomplishing the task before Shaikh Ahmad got it done. Shaikh Ahmad withdrew on coming to know of it. But, on being told by a well-meaning leading man of the town, Sayyid Akram, that the clearance work was not as easy as he thought and could not be done by a few people, the Qadi seeing the validity of the Sayyid's point, gave up the idea. Sayyid then went to Shaikh Ahmad and persuaded him to take up the clearance work as originally planned. As soon as the people of Khatu

came to know that Shaikh Ahmad had proceeded towards the tank, they all hurried to the site to lend a helping hand. Shaikh Ahmad had asked the butcher to slaughter animals for meat, out of which were roasted *sikh* and *Kabab* and the grocer was asked to supply twenty maunds of flour, of which bread was baked. And people were asked to bring pick-axe, shovel, etc. from their homes. People were eating bread and meat and were digging out the sand. As a result, on the first day, two *chhajja* deep sand was removed and the entire tank was cleared within a few days with the help of some hired labour. The head of the labour-team, the memoirs say, over-charged the Saint to the tune of one hundred and forty tankas by manipulating measure, which was pointed out by some one and money taken back and given to the poor.

After this was done, Shaikh Ahmad, presumably with the balance left, excavated another tank. A local grocer, out of rivalry, started excavating one more tank. Both got ready. When rains came, and tanks started getting filled the grocer announced a gift of cloth, sweets and coconut for every one who visited his tank. Shaikh Ahmad, then young, shut himself up out of disdain that people would go in large numbers to the grocer's tank while none would care to go to see his tank. Babu Ishaq, having come to know of it, consoled his charge and asked him not to worry. Then it so happened that during the night it rained very heavily filling the tanks to their brim, but the grocer's tank burst and water flew out. People went to see Shaikh Ahmad's tank which was full.

In the *Mirqat*, reference is also made to petty village feuds between the owners of the two adjacent fields over the boundaries of their respective holdings, as for example, the quarrel between Maulana Ibrahim Kaithali's nurse's son and the employees of the *Muqta'* which has been already mentioned earlier.

Apart from this, from the saintly reminiscences, it appears that friendly contests or game-competitions were held on group or class basis, as is being done now on caste, community or regional basis. The saint recalling his younger days physical exploits, says that once the *Muqta'* of Khatu had fixed up a target

which was to be hit with an arrow. The official kinsmen, the Khatu public, the Shiranis and the like tried but none from amongst their groups could hit the mark till noon. By that time, Shaikh Ahmad, then a young skilled archer, reached the spot; the Khatu public claimed him to be one of them and the official group, theirs. The saint says, he hit the mark in the first attempt. It may be pointed out that this perhaps one of the earliest references, if not the earliest one, to Shiranis a branch of Pathans and also, this reference to Shiranis of Khatu points to the antiquity of the settlement of the Shiranis at the place called *Shirani-yon-ki Dhani*, nearby, to which Professor Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shirani, the great Persian and Urdu scholar, critic and writer and his equally or rather more famed son, but in a different field, namely Urdu poetry, Akhtar Shirani, belonged.

Another interesting and amusing episode related in the *Mirqat*, which is typical of a facet of Indian village life is that of Maulana Faridud-Din whom the saint had appointed as a teacher in a local *madarsa*, probably, at Delhi, at one tanka a day. Once he came to see the saint with a high official and entered into discussion on an academic matter. The Maulana who, not able to make his point go home, was getting excited, was restrained by the official making a sign to him to keep quiet. The maulana then demanded his salary dues of 360 tankas which he had not received that year. Shaikh Ahmad had only with him a prayer-carpet and a *mushaf* which he offered to the maulana, promising to make the payment later, to which the latter would not agree. At this, a clerk-accountant (*muharrir*) who had also come to pay his respects obtained the saint's permission to settle the matter. He told the Maulana, "You are paid one tanka per day for taking classes. You sit in *chillas* for 80 days in a year, which should be deducted; then you observe Fridays and Tuesdays as holidays in a week, which makes again 100 tankas less in a year. This leaves only 180 tankas as your legitimate dues. Now in the preceding year you had received 360 tankas, which means that you were overpaid last year by 180 tankas. That means you have already been paid your dues for two years. How can you a deeply religious man, make a demand which is not just?" Being

outwitted, Maulana said, "The Makhdum (i.e. the saint) was giving me a prayer-carpet and the *mushaf*, but you are depriving me of that even!" The saint says he gave him the *mushaf*.

Another facet of the village life portrayed in the reminiscences of the saint is the village beliefs, superstitions and innocent pastimes and games like strength-testing, making bets, etc. We are told by the saint that there was in Khatu a heavy round stone with a big hole in the centre, like a flour-mill grinding-stone, which the wrestlers and champions of physical strength used to lift for demonstrating their physical prowess. Shaikh Ahmad who was, as already mentioned earlier, a skilled amateur wrestler and strong man, once being challenged by companions put his head into the hole, lifted the stone and walked with it round his neck taking a few rounds. Likewise, he recalls, how on another occasion, at the dead of one pitch dark night—it must be *Kali Chaudas* or *amavasya* preceding the Diwali when even to-day in rural areas such bets are made—a local grocer's son dared Shaikh Ahmad to go and tie the turban on a certain tree in the forest. Shaikh Ahmad says he went and tied the turban and returned safely.

The village-folk particularly the non-Muslims and perhaps quite a few of the urban population entertained belief in omens and like rituals. The *Mirqat* describes the story related by the saint of the wife of a Muslim village headman who had entertained him when he was passing through her village in the absence of her husband. When he was leaving, she requested him to take a few steps in her field as the good omen of the saint's stepping in the field bring plentiful harvest. This lady, the saint also related, told him that she was the disciple (*murid*) of a *Pir* with a *Shajara* (pedigree-tree) and *Sajjada*. Wanting the saint to meet him, she called him. The *Pir* came with an *ijaza-nama* of Makhdum Jahaniyan Sayyid Jalal Bukhari and, though himself illiterate, tried to overawe the saint but fearing exposure before his disciple soon left on some pretext.

The saint also relates how in his younger days he had like many of his agemates and other people went to see elephants

—till that day the village-folk of Khatu had not seen an elephant—which were part of the retinue of the governor going to Delhi from Gujarat.

The saint's memoirs also present vivid pictures—witnessed even today—of viliage young men of tender age taking bath on a well of the village or how men-folk after taking a bath in the pond or a step-well would sit on a stone or stone-bench in the open to dry their hair at times to the resentment of women going there to fetch water.

Another custom of the feudal days known from the saint's narrative, which has survived more or less in the same form till our days, is that of gathering the students and taking them to accord a welcome to a governor or a ruler whenever he visited or passed through the village. Such students would be paid some money by way of travel expense.

The saint also refers to the custom in vogue in saintly establishments of reciting *takbir* or *fatiha* for the merit of saints and prophets after meals and also to the usual practice of reciting a *fatiha* at the actual commencement of journey. It was also customary, we are told, among the saints that they would have their graves made ready and fill them with wheat or corn, and the quantity of grain thus determined would be given in charity every year. Babu Ishaq, Shaikh Ahmad avers, got bis grave made ready, but spurned the suggestion made by the Khatu Qadi to follow this practice.

The *Mirqat* also refers on the authority of the saint to a practice followed in some parts of the Islamic countries—perhaps North Africa—under which whenever an affluent person visited a grave, laid some offerings there. This may be compared with the modern practice of offerings in cash and kind at the graves of saints by all sections of people, rich or poor. The practice of holding music parties or *sama'* at the *Walima* dinners also finds mention more than once in the saint's memoirs.

The customary practice of the visitor taking something by way of present to the person to whom a visit is paid or the offerings of kings, ministers and high dignitaries to saints and

vice versa finds repeated mention in the Shaikh's discourses. The list of items of presentation makes an interesting study. These were in cash or kind and usually both. The cash would comprise coins in gold or silver or copper of different denominations while the kind would comprise such diverse things as *Laddu*, sugar-candy, *shir-biranj* (i.e. *Khir*), dates, apricots, flour, *ghee*, mutton and *ghee*, cows, cloth of different varieties, costly dress, pair of fine knife, fine mat, fine candle-stand, lamp, beggar's bowl (*kachkol*), golden-hilted dagger, jewel-studded ring, etc. The coconut also was an item of gift.

It may be of interest to know that the female-slaves were given fancy-names in those days. One such young female servant assigned to the service of the saint was named *Shak i-Zar*, literally meaning a branch of gold. In two early-sixteenth century inscriptions from Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh recording the construction of a step-well, the builders, two, *umm-walads* of a saint Qutbul-Aqtab Burhan son of 'Alaul-Haq are named Sabah-Khair and Gul-Bihisht.

The malfuz under reference, like other similar as well as biographical works of Indian Muslim Sufi saints, furnishes refreshing evidence of their precept-and-practice of the tenets of universal brotherhood and love. Shaikh Ahmad in his narratives relates quite a few incidents of Hindu *jogis* and Hindu families with whom he had come into direct contact in different circumstances. He never speaks of them with a dislike, leave alone contempt. He would be drawn into religious discussions with *jogis* or Brahmins and bring them round to his view and even to conversion to Islam. The picture presented by these references is of a society in which the Hindus and Muslims lived in perfect peace and in an atmosphere of brotherliness. Shaikh Ahmad's wrestling bout with a Hindu cobbler's boy shows lack of any feeling of untouchability. The saints Babu Ishaq and Shaikh Ahmad did not differentiate between a Hindu and a Muslim in his time of need. For example, Popa Baqqal, i.e. the Hindu grocer named Popa owed his release from the custody of the officials for non-payment of government dues through Babu Ishaq's

intercession and good offices, a favour the grocer always remembered and tried and even insisted to repay, at least to the extent of being allowed to give grocery items to Shaikh Ahmad's household, after the Babu's death, on credit. He was all excuses and full of entreaties when he found that his minor son had in his absence from the town one day refused this credit facility to the saint's men. He came running to the saint with two *seers* of apricots and one lamp as a present with profuse excuses which the saint refused, ultimately being persuaded to accept credit as usual.

The Hindus held Muslim saints in high esteem and respect. Shaikh Ahmad relates that when after the Babu's death, he left Khatu for *Haji*, he was on the way lodged with great affection and hospitality by Hindus, high or low. He also mentions a Hindu lady having given him lodging in the absence of the menfolk of the house. When he once reached a village, its headmen called Rai Mandlik on hearing of his arrival came and invited him to his house where he stayed enjoying lavish treatment and hospitality for three days. At the next halt, he put up with a poor Hindu lady whose house was situated on the bank of the river. Her neighbours started reproaching her for lodging a Muslim in her house and expressed fear of reprisal from the village headmen on that account. The Hindus, particularly the trading community, had their day-to-day dealings with their Muslim fellow-townsmen in normal course. The Shaikh relates that when a certain official who had set apart a calf for Babu Ishaq requested the latter to collect it when it grew into a fat cow, a Hindu *banya* was sent by the saint to collect it. But far more interesting is the story which illustrates how Hindus received due recognition for their piety or righteous conduct even from orthodox Muslim circles. The episode was related in a letter sent by Maulana Abul-Faraj Radiud-Din of Didwana to Shaikh Ahmad, refuting a statement ascribed to him, alleging with reference to Shaikh Ahmad, that no saint could aspire union with God by simply performing ascetic exercises at home and without undertaking tours. The Maulana mentioned the example of a Hindu bride of Ladnun, who in her first visit to the husband's home did not eat

anything for a few days out of shyness—the husband thought she had eaten along with his mother and the latter was under the impression that she ate with her husband. One day while giving water to the plants or birds, out of sheer hunger, she put some grain lying there in her mouth. The moment she did, she was gifted with the power of clairvoyance whereby she saw at a far off distance a group of marauders coming to loot the village and receiving timely warning from her, the people of the village snifted their valuables. The Maulana wrote to the saint that if even a Hindu lady who had no sense of compulsory bath or ablution could develop such power only with a few days starving out of shyness, then “how is it possible for him to say that a religious-minded righteous Muslim Unitarian Faithful *momin-i-muwahhid* who has given up worldly pleasures, who fulfills religious obligations and who undertakes perpetual religious fasts cannot attain union with God” ?

As mentioned a little while ago, there are frequent references in the saint's reminiscences to his meetings with *Jogis* and Brahmins. One of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's high official Malik Muzaffar, whose caste was *Kalal* is reported by the saint to have been a great admirer of *Jogis*. The *Jogis* Shaikh Ahmad met would always confront him with their power of possessing the knowledge of alchemy—turning any metal into gold—and their offer to teach it to him, but the saint always encountered it either by saying that for a *darwish* contentment and lack of worldly desire itself was gold or by demonstrating, as a last resort, similar powers.

The so-called miracle of walking-on-fire was also claimed and practised. The saint relates that once he came to the village of a Hindu *Rai* who received him with respect. Some *darwishes* who had come earlier and were also hospitably received by the *Rai* challenged the Shaikh to say if he knew what the *halwa* of smoke (*halwa-i-dud*) was and would eat it. This phrase was a code word for walk-on-fire. The saint said, it was like this a big raging fire would be lighted and whom ready with bright red embers, the *darwishes* would tread on them reciting the great Names of God (*asma-i-a'zam*) which they had learnt from their

Pir and extinguish it by rolling it under their feet till it turned into ashes without any harm coming to their feet. Needless to say, the saint and his companions successfully met the challenge.

Mention may also be made here to the fact, more or less established by the saint's memoirs, that a large number of people from Rajasthan came and settled down in Gujarat as much in the wake of the saint's decision to settle down at Sarkhej as to other socio-politico-religious factors. The author of the *Mirgat*, who was one of them, mentions quite a few of his own relatives and fellow townsmen or contemporaries from Rajasthan who had settled in different parts of Gujarat. Having considerable socio-cultural life in common and having no rigid political boundaries between medieval Gujarat and Rajasthan, this migration of people was natural. But with the establishment of the Muslim rule in the Nagaur region by the brother of Muzaffar I of Gujarat, the regions came closer together and people from Marwad—Nagaur region—came to settle down here. The process was accentuated with the uncertain political conditions caused by the Mewar chief, Rao Chonda's siege of Nagaur referred to by the saint in his discourses, as a result of which many people came away to Gujarat. The economic and agricultural prosperity of Gujarat and its inland and foreign trade also must have encouraged migration of the Rajasthani enterprising community in its quest of economic betterment which waterless sandy area of Marwad denied them. In any case, the saint's narrative mentions a number of persons from Rajasthan who had settled down in Ahmadabad and elsewhere like Sayyid Qasim Nagauri, Sayyid, Rahmatullah Nagauri, Maulana Khatirud-Din, Qadi Muinud-Din and the like. This would explain the sizeable community of Nagauri Hindus and Muslims in various parts of Gujarat and even Nagauri Mohallas in cities like Ahmadabad and elsewhere. There is also a Nagauri-Sarai locality in Ahmadabad, where evidently a caravan sarai of that name originally existed.

From the *Mirgat*, some idea can be gathered about the food and dress habits of the people of these two regions. *Khichdi* and *ghee* appear to have been the most common and favourite

item The *Khichdi* of *Bajra* (millet corn) was also taken. Liberal helping of *ghee* (as was the case not until long ago and is even now) is frequently mentioned. Bread of wheat and mutton-curry was another common dish at least in well-to-do circles. Fish and chicken were also served to guests as also to unscheduled visitors. *Biryani* is another item mentioned in the saint's memoirs. The breakfast course seems to have consisted of butter, buffalo-milk and curds. *Malida* (a dish made out of flour, milk, purified butter i.e. *ghee* and sugar or bread-crusts, *ghee* and sugar) also appears to have been a favourite item of quick-food. The saint also mentions oil-cake—sesame sediment from which oil has been extracted—as having been his only meal on certain occasions for days together. The rice-broth (*Kanji*) and *Khir* (*shir-biranj*) were also taken. Among the vegetables, the only mention is of bitter gourd (*Karela*) and mustard-leaves (*sarson ka-sag*). The saint also mentions some sect or community of *darwishes* who did not take meat. The sweet-dish items usually consisted of sweet-meat balls (*laddu*), sugar-candy and dates. Sesame oil was the medium of cooking and was also used as lamp-oil.

The fruits that find mention in the *Shaikh's* discourses are *Kharbuzas* (of Rajasthan) and pomegranates and mangoes (of Gujarat) and berry (*ber*). One more fruit is mentioned, the name of which cannot be determined, it reads something like *chhartali* or *jahrtali*. The *Kharbuzas* of Rahol, a village near Nagaur which was held in subsistence grant by Burhanud-Din *Qadi* and *Khatib* of Nagaur, were famous in the entire region for their sweetness, as are those of Tonk in our days. The said *Khatib* used to entertain his guests including Shaikh Ahmad at *Kharbuza*-parties in the village. The only item of intoxicating drink we came across in the *Mirqat* is *Bhang*, which was a favourite drink of the *Qalandars*.

In flowers, the white *champa* of Nagaur is stated by the saint to be famous in the entire region for its sweet scent and beauty and basket-full of them used to be offered to prominent personalities as Shaikh Ahmad had once done when he had called on the *Muqta'* of Nagaur.

In the matter of dress, the most common item of wear, as gathered from the saint's narratives, appears to have been overalls or cloaks—*labala* and *barani*—of different materials or cloaks of woolen exterior and broad cloth interior. Some other items were turbans and mini-turbans, caps and handkerchiefs. The turban used to be usually of 20 *gaz* in length. *Khirqā* and *Tagla* caps were normal Sufi apparels. The Shaikh describes himself as having been dressed in a *fota*, *pishwaz* and a cap in Samarqand. The waistband (*kamarband*) had daggers or like weapons tucked in them. The archer's outfit with the quiver was donned by non-military personnel also. As already mentioned, the saint wore it in his advanced age at Sarkbej.

The varieties of textile in vogue as it is known from the *Mirqat* are *Bheram*, or *Bherun*, *Salu*, *Sharbati*, *Baftl*, *Kanbhal* (?), *Saqarlat*, *Firangi*, etc.

From the casual but occasional mention in the discourses of the saint, it would appear that in this part of the country, diseases like gripes or belly-ache, scrofula (glandular swelling in the neck—mumps), Guineaworm, Thread, eye-disease called locally *Gul-dar-chashm* (*phool*) were prevalent. Serpent-bite also was not uncommon. While expert physicians were there, the public at large resorted to homely medicine or quack-treatment. The saint refers to his having dissuaded one of his disciples from giving quack-treatment to his brother who was affected with mumps. The remedy consisted of applying the powder of a human-skull bone to the affected part, which the saint disapproved saying that it was not proper to mutilate a dead man's limbs.

In view of its drought and famine conditions, the agricultural yield of Rajasthan desert lands was limited both in quantity and variety. However, the saint's discourses give us some idea of the grown corn and like items. Lobiya, a kind of bean, is stated by the saint to be the main crop of Khatu and the staple-food item of its people in the saint's time. During the crop-season, its offering was made to saints and cooked Lobiya, with or without *ghee*, was served to visitors including governors. *Moong* pulse also appears to have been grown. Salt was the

main non-agricultural product of the province, which was the major source of supply to the rest of the country. The saint mentions caravans of merchants from Gangetic plains coming to Didwana for this merchandise. The region between Sambhar and Didwana was a vast salt-producing area.

Water in this arid desert land was scarce. The saint describes how once when he had come to a village in the course of his travels, he had sent his attendant to the house of a village headman for some water and the headman's wife told him to get her a bundle of fuel-sticks before she gave him water. During days of drought, grain was distributed to people on loan or by way of aid by the state machinery as well as individuals. The saint refers to a grocer of Khatu who had distributed grain on credit to people, on such an occasion.

In the field of trade and commerce, the information gathered from the discourses of the saint, though not much and direct, is nevertheless useful. The salt-trade and caravans of salt-merchants have been just mentioned. No other information is available except through the mention of petty traders like village grocer, usually a non-Muslim. Popa the local grocer at Khatu used to carry on trade in groceries. He supplied commodities of daily use to the saint on credit as has been mentioned. This credit transaction seems to have involved some sort of security also. Shaikh Ahmad in one of his discourses has mentioned that Babu Ishaq had a silver-plate which was pledged with the grocer against the supply of articles or loan of cash. Whenever the saint received money, he would redeem the plate. Shaikh Ahmad says that the plate was named *girvi* (mortgage). At times, the grocer would advance articles to respectable persons like Shaikh Ahmad, the cost to be recovered direct from the state revenue department's grants to saintly establishments. For example, we are told that when Shaikh Ahmad declined to accept the renewed offer of credit by Popa Baqqal who enlisted the support of one of the well-wishers of the saint Sayyid Akram, saying from where he would make payment, the grocer said that he would have it adjusted in the revenue department. The local grocer would also keep deposits

of money and would invest them in trade on their behalf. During his stay with Babu Ishaq at Khatu, the Sarkhej saint had deposited one hundred tankas with a grocer of acquaintance. One of those days, the *moong* prices fell whereupon the grocer sought Shaikh Ahmad's consent to purchase the commodity with the deposited money. Shaikh Ahmad was initially hesitant as the money actually belonged to Babu Ishaq, who might ask for it any time. The grocer assuring him that in such a contingency, he would return the money and consider the commodity to be his. The deal was made when somebody carried the tale to the Babu that Shaikh Ahmad had invested money in trade. The Babu asked for the money to verify the matter and Shaikh Ahmad got the money from the grocer as arranged and gave it to the Babu who being satisfied returned it and Shaikh Ahmad also returned it to the grocer. The price of *Moong* rose by one hundred percent and the profit thus made was distributed by Shaikh Ahmad among the needy people. A reference to the presence of the Indian Muslim traders in Aden is also made by Shaikh Ahmad who names a couple of them originally belonging to Nagaur. The saint's discourses also refer to what seems to have been a general practice, also observed today, that people undertaking a journey to any place would carry with them some goods which might have a good market at the place of their arrival for sale, the proceeds of which would come handy as travel expenses or given to the needy in charity. This was also done by people going on *Hajj*. Shaikh Ahmad also carried some such commodity with him in lieu of cash when he went for *Hajj*.

The professional people whose casual mention is met with in the saint's memoirs are oil-presser, butcher, mason (*gilkar*), betel-nut-seller, etc. Transcript of manuscripts was also practised as a profession. One Qadi Raja of Dholka is mentioned by the saint as being a scribe (*katib*) by profession. By the way, Makhdum Jahaniyan Sayyid Husain is also reported to transcribe books for certain length of time every day. Spinning by women-folk as well as by men was also practised.

From the saint's memoirs, it would appear that Nagaur was quite an important town even before it became the capital of the

newly founded kingdom of the Khanzadas. It was the marketing-centre for the region around, where all types of commodities and fancy goods catering to all tastes were available. Shaikh Ahmad says that Babu Ishaq used to specially order fine shoes, cloth good arrows, etc., from Nagaur for him,

I now propose to conclude the lecture to the relief of all present here including myself by examining if the saint's *Memoirs* furnish any worthwhile information about an important aspect of religious and cultural life of the medieval society, that is to say about language, literature and general state of learning of the period in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The saint in his talks mentions a large number of such learned men and savants and teachers most of whom he knew or had met as are not known from other sources, like Maulana Majdud-Din *Muhaddith* of Delhi, Maulana Shamsud-Din of Hisar Firuza, Maulana Sayyid Mahmud Rukn of Delhi, the teacher of the compiler of the *Mirqat*, Maulana Nizamud-Din Surkha Maulana Kamalud-Din Samana, Maulana, Qadi Sufyan of Multan, Malik Badh bin Malik Sher of Nagaur, Maulana Ahmad Achh or Uchh (probably Achchhe) spoken of as *Ustad-i-Gujarat*, Maulana Abul-Faraj Raddud-Din of Didwana, Maulana Khatirud-Din of Nagaur, a maternal uncle of the compiler, Maulana Kaddu Diblawi, Maulana Daud Mantiqi, Maulana Ibrahim *Mudarris* of Nahrwala-Patan, Maulana Qasim of Sambhar, who had the entire *Bazdavi* by heart, Maulana Hafiz Husain Shihab of Nahrwala-Patan, Qadi Mansur of Sarkhej, Maulana Mansur Kazeruni, Maulana Kamalud-Din *Muhagiq* the learned Imam of Khan Jahan's mosque, Maulana Shaikh, the *Sajjada* of the saint Khidr of Hauzi Khas, Maulana Ahmad, the attendant (*Khadim*) of Shaikh Nasirud-Din Mahmud, and the like. Among others, Maulana Diyad-Din Sunnami of Delbi and Maulana Sadrud-Din Bimbani and his son Maulana Siraj Bimbani are mentioned.

As to the languages in vogue, Arabic and Persian were generally understood and also spoken by the comparatively well educated people. Persian was more widely understood. The masses including the trading class, particularly Hindu grocers, seem to have conversed in the local dialects of respective regions

only designated by the term Hindi or Hindawī in the saint's discourses, which was also widely known and spoken by the learned. The saint from his discourses appears to have been at ease in Persian and Hindi and also in Arabic as is clear from the *verbatim* quotations of his conversation in that language with local people at Aden, Jedda, Mecca and Madina. Conversation with or between common man was in the local dialect. The saint's narrative of the meeting at which the *Muqta* of Nagaur was distributing grain to people at the time of drought, quotes a short phrase in the local dialect used by a local man, which appears to be Rajasthani or Marwadi. Unfortunately, the reading in the manuscripts is too corrupt to admit of satisfactory decipherment; it reads like *Laharjah Jhakanji*¹ the meaning of which given is: 'he is talking non-sense'. A similar phrase, widely current in Khatu, evidently a Rajasthani proverb, which also cannot be satisfactorily made out reads something like *Kahtu Jhura wa Jahu*². One more phrase in local dialect which is reported from a village near Nagaur is, *Laddu kadhu*³ that is "from where are there *Laddus*" and *adhu*⁴ that is "from there". This is the specimen of a middle 14th century Rajasthani dialect. A similar specimen is provided by a saying current in Khatu region which according to the saint's own version was quoted by some people when he decided to leave Khatu after Babu Ishaq's death. It is *Kadmui, kadwain hui*⁵ meaning "when he died and when he became a grave-splitter" recalling to mind a similar Urdu saying quoted by the Gujarat Sultan almost a century after when Bahadur Khan later Sultan Bahadur Shah left Gujarat after the death of his Pir, namely *Pir mua Murid jogi hua*⁶.

The saint conversed with the *Jogis* in the local dialect. With a Hindu resident of Delhi who was taken captive to Semarqand and converted to Islam, the saint says he conversed in Hindi dissuading him from testifying that in Delhi wine was openly sold and acts prohibited by religion were committed in public to provide justification of Timur's invasion of Delhi. The compiler of the *Mirqat* testifies to the saint's expert knowledge of Hindi

بیر خواں پید جوگی ہوا 5 ادھو 4 کدو کدھو 3 کتھو چورا دھوا 2 بہر جہ جہنی 1

کدھو کدھو ہونی 6

arithmetic and illustrates an incident in which the saint outsmarted the professional accountants in calculations in that system.

Apart from a number of Hindi words occurring in the saint's narratives like *Lakhugia, Katori, Chhajja, Khabadya, Karahra, Baitala, Gunakar* and *Bhagakar*, etc. and purely Indian names and sobriquets or surnames like *Bada, Bubu, Kaddu, Khattuwal, Kath, Nawait* etc., the *Mirqat* quotes a number of Persian verses composed by the saint as well as others like Sayyid Mahmud Rukh referred to earlier. The saint also refers to the mystical Persian verses which its composer Maulana Shihabud-Din Ahmad Surkhani had sent to him and which unlike his Tract on Spiritual Path which also was sent with the verses, were proclaimed by the saint to be of a high quality.

The Hindawi *Dohras* mostly composed by the saint as also by others were frequently recited in the assemblies and these have been reproduced in the *Mirqat*. Unfortunately, due to the scribe's unfamiliarity with that language, the correct readings of these cannot be determined unless some good correctly written copy of the *Mirqat* is found. These are quoted below .

بہ بکساہ بدہ چون تہورہ تہورہ آہ _____ آگیں ہاتھ نیا نیاں بسا مرا گواہ
توں جانہ کرتا راجی منجہ سا جن بیپرہ _____ سائیں سرسی سار کردن تمہاری بلیا
توں جانہ کرتا راجی منجہ سا جن بیپرہ _____ سائیں کیہے سار پانچرمانہ جو بن بے
رد کہا کا جل جی کردن تو سو کن دکھ دیہ _____ نہ پو دیکھن دید منجہ نہ آپ دیکھ سکئیہ
بہولی بوجہوں پندتا دودن کیتی ماس _____ دیا بچہری ایک تل جانوں برس پچاس
مئی بندہ کنٹہری جو دھن او جھل ہوی _____ موکہ درکھی نین دودن کہ رکھی کوی
سو پنتہر اد کہاں منجہ جس ہو پوتوں _____ دندا کہیرا نکر بکھیا بانگ جلوں
اری منیں مناؤ مان سر منیں کھیا ہوی _____ ایتیاں بھیراں منیا سر کہہ بخادہ کوی

دیکھی جی کن دیکھہ دیس کی برس انت نہ باس

اب تبادی ساہری لوکتہ کو بدہ دیو

Interfaith Dialogue :
As Historical Challenge & As Religious Experience

by
Dr. A. Roest Crollius S. J.

Dialogue among people of different faiths seems to be fashionable today. Fashions come and go. Is this dialogue also such a passing fashion? Or does it correspond to something deep in man, in his historical existence and his religious being? It might be worth-while to seek an answer to this question. Life is too short for investing much energy and time in things that are only passing and evanescent. Religious faith stimulates us to seek those values which are lasting and imperishable.

Before we set out to explore the historical and religious dimensions of interfaith dialogue, it is good to renew our awareness of the fact that this dialogue has not been invented in the 20th century. This is already an indication that we have to do here not with a mere fashion of the moment. Often, when people of different religions lived in each other's vicinity, there have been among them men of courageous and noble mind who went beyond the battle fronts of mere polemics, in search of a deeper understanding of the truth about God and man. Unwavering in the fidelity to their own faith and vocation, they knew that God's truth is greater than any human understanding, and that no genuine human understanding is without an element of divine truth. They sought to know others in their own understanding of this truth, in view of a communion, the full realisation of which belongs to God. This attitude could be seen described in the following words of the Qur'an :

God is our Lord and your Lord;
Unto us our works and unto you your works;
There is no argument between us and you;
God will bring us together :
Unto Him is the course of events. (42 : 15)

Two regions of the earth have been especially privileged as scenes of this endeavour of dialogue : the Mediterranean area and India. In India, the ancient Hindu ideal of the

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sarva dharmā sambhav has inspired great rulers as Ashoka and Akbar, who, each in his own way, has tried to give a form to this ideal. Countless are the believers of various traditions who have not ceased to search for the one Truth beyond all diversity. Among the posterity of Akbar stands out the figure of Dara Shikoh. A fine example of interfaith dialogue is the conversation he had with the Kabirpanthi Baba Lal Das on religious experience.¹ In his work 'Majma-ul-Bahrayn' he spoke of Hindus and Muslims as "two Truth-knowing groups."²

In the Mediterranean borderlands, the meeting of the two religions of Islam and Christianity has not only been marked by conquests and crusades, but amidst an intense culture-contact there has also been a constant tradition of dialogue on the religious level. One of the very first texts that has been transmitted to us is the dialogue between the Nestorian Catholicos Timothy I (780-823) and the Abbaside Caliph al-Mahdi (158/775-169/785).³ "Dialogue" became even a literary genre, as can be seen from the works of Abelard and Nicholas of Kues.⁴ Even if it is not always easy to draw a line between apology and dialogue, it cannot be denied that there existed often a sincere desire to understand the other as he understood himself.⁵ In the following, we will mainly refer to contemporary experiences of dialogue in the Mediterranean area. Though our perspective will be limited, it will be more precise, as is desirable for such a short communication.

1. The Historical Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue.

With 'historical challenge' is meant a challenge which results from an actual situation in history. In such a situation, the endeavour of interfaith dialogue does not present itself as an ineluctable necessity, but as a task and a call to which people can respond, and which they can also reject. Given both the arduous characters of this task and the freedom of man in responding to this call, we speak of a 'challenge.'

(a) **Religious Pluralism and the Challenge of Peace and Justice.** The present situation of human history is characterised by a new awareness of the cultural and religious plurality of mankind. Various factors have brought people closer together

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and, at the same time, have made them more alive to what is different among them. What is called our 'global village' is not a state of monotonous uniformity but rather a conflict-loaded convergence of a rich pluriformity.

Among the factors that have brought about this situation should be mentioned, in the first place, the development of the means of communication. Also in matters of religion, they have brought people in contact with each other. Migrations, whether of a temporary character, as tourism and the travel for the sake of work and meetings, or those of a more durable kind, have produced situations in which people of different faiths live and work together also in regions where religious pluralism did not exist before. The case of Western Europe is typical: even if Gibbon may have exaggerated in saying that, had not Charles Martel won the battle at Poitiers, there would have been in Paris and London mosques where cathedrals now stand,⁶ it remains a fact that 732 was a turning-point in the course of the Islamic expansion in the West, and that today there is no major city in Western Europe which does not have its mosque. Also the mass-media, press, radio and television, mean that people everywhere are confronted with the religions of their fellow men.

Another cluster of factors is found in the new political and economic relations between the various nations. Peoples who lived in a situation of submission or marginality have now a determinant role on the international scene. The development of a new self-consciousness of nations has also its effect on the various religious cultures. They have to re-define their role and to find ways of working together.

The spreading of atheism, especially in its more aggressive forms, has also created a situation in which representatives of various religions occasionally come together in order to seek means to defend the values of religion. This attitude was particularly evident at the Seminar of Islamo-Christian Dialogue at Tripoli (February 1-6, 1976). The first of the Resolutions adopted at this meeting was: "Both parties affirm their faith in the one and only God; they recommend that common action be taken to deepen religious and moral values." The same preoccupation underlies Resolution no. 10, where it is said that "science

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'As Historical Challenge & As Religious Experience must always remain at the service of religion. In this way, science becomes a protection against atheism.'⁷ In a similar way, the Communique issued after the visit of a Vatican Delegation to al-Azhar University (April 11-14, 1978) declared: "Between Christians and Muslims exist common values which are to protect society from corruption and atheism."⁸

We thus witness a progressive diversification of society in matters of religion. This situation of diversity results in two contrary tendencies: on the one hand there is a growing indifference in religious affairs, and, on the other, one can observe various attempts to reaffirm religious values. This new affirmation has necessarily to take into account this situation of pluralism. A self-affirmation in which the right of existence of other religious groups is curtailed or denied would lead inevitably to conflicts, which are contrary to the message of peace that is at the heart of every religion. The fact that in many political conflicts today religion can be exploited as a factor of division (e. g. Northern Ireland, Southern Philippines, West Asia, East Africa) should be a matter of concern for all who believe in God. Thus, for the sake of world peace, and for the sake of religion itself, it is an imperative of the present moment that people of different faiths find the way to each other and, in fraternal dialogue, make a common cause of the promotion of peace among men.

If peace is to be established, the primary requisite is to eradicate the causes of dissension between men. Wars thrive on these, especially on injustice. Many of these causes stem from excessive economic inequalities and from excessive slowness in applying the needed remedies. Other causes spring from a quest for power and from contempt for personal rights. If we are looking for deeper explanations we can find them in human jealousy, distrust, pride and other egotistic passions."⁹ This analysis of the causes of war, as it is found in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, emphasises another aspect of the present situation of history. Social justice and Human Rights are two areas which are of decisive importance for the life of human society. Religions can not remain aloof from these issues. Not only has each religion its own contri-

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bution to make,¹⁰ but in our pluralistic world, they also should work together. This challenge has been heard by those who participated in the Symposium on "The Changing World Economic Order: Challenge to the five World Faiths" (Lisbon, November 7-11, 1977).¹¹ The desire to work together in the service of God and man united also the 150 participants in the Islamo-Christian Congress at Modling-Vienna (May 31-June 5, 1977).¹² In the preceding year, Muslims and Christians had met in the same place, to study the social and cultural integration of the five million Muslim immigrant workers in Western Europe.¹³ And since the promotion of social justice and Human Rights presupposes moral integrity, the theme of the third Islamo-Christian Congress in Cordoba seems well chosen.¹⁴ In 1980 is planned a meeting at which Muslims and Christians will study the modern social values as taught by their respective religions. Similarly an Islamo-Christian Congress is being prepared in Iran, at which the Human Rights will be studied in the light of Revelation. Due to the changed circumstances the meet could not be held.*

These examples could be multiplied. On a national or regional level, in North-West Africa, in France and in several other countries, there are frequent encounters between believers of both religions who, in a spirit of faith and friendship, "make a common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom."¹⁵ These encounters, and the attitudes and activities inspired and promoted by them, are a sign of hope in the present moment of history.

(b) **Interfaith Dialogue and the Challenge of Truth.** The history of humanity is not a mere succession of moral decisions and political events. There is an other dimension of history, which the Germans call "Geistesgeschichte," the history of the spirit. The mind of man, at every epoch of history, has been confronted with the question of the meaning of existence, and has searched for an answer beyond the changing causes of events, for a truth expressive of a lasting reality. From the depth of the Vedic times, this question wells up in the words of the *Rg-Veda*: "I do not understand what it is that I am; I wander about, innerly bound by my thinking."¹⁶ This wandering of man is not just a wandering about, but a pilgrimage in search

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of the hidden treasure, the origin and light of all that is in this world. This pilgrimage we can call the history of the spirit. It is not the same as "history of religions." It is true, man has often experienced his quest of ultimate truth as a prayer, and the encounter with intimations of this truth as a grace. But "Geistesgeschichte" is rather an anthropological category. It does not so much consider this truth as it has taken shape in various religions, but rather considers man, how in the past he has sought to come at terms with the problem of his existence.

All of us, we stand not only in different traditions of faith in a divine revelation, but also in diverse traditions of a quest of truth. And as there can exist a sharing of religious values that are common between various faiths, so is there also a communion in the quest of truth. This latter communion is not to be neglected. It permits us to enter in dialogue with all men. Interfaith dialogue is not an affair between an elite of mankind. It is not just a matter of comparing notes between those who have some notes to show. This dialogue rather is open to the profound questions with which all human beings become confronted when they search for a sense and direction in their life. Sometimes it seems that we, believers, know all the answers but have no knowledge of the questions. Are we ready, do we dare to expose ourselves to the questioning of man in history, in his pilgrimage in search for meaning? It would seem that the obscurity, in which so many people, who do not know the one and only God, are groping for light, and even the outright rejection of faith in atheism, is not only a challenge for interfaith dialogue, but constitute actually a dimension of it. Who among us can say that he never experiences darkness and uncertainty in his heart? The light God gives us in the faith, *nur-ala-nur*, is compared with a little lamp in the night.¹⁷ Precisely because, "amidst the obscurities of the land and the sea" (Q 27,63), we have seen this light as from afar, we are urged and enabled to pray with greater earnestness:

From the unreal lead me to the real!
From darkness lead me to the light!
From death lead me to immortality!¹⁸
This openness for man's quest of truth has very practical

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implications for the interfaith dialogue. Instead of eagerly offering remedies against unbelief, it would be good to study together the reasons for its existence in present-day society. Instead of immediately presenting our religious norms as a solution to all shortcomings and evils in the modern world, we would do well to earnestly search for all that is good in the traditions of the various nations. Much of what they acknowledge as good and reject as evil - their *ma 'ruf* and *munkar* - could offer a common ground for promoting moral values and even religion itself in our world today.¹⁹ I would hold it for desirable, therefore, that at meetings of interfaith dialogue, some who do not profess a religion should also take part in the discussions. Their presence would prevent us from taking an attitude of smug complacency. Our efforts in seeking a deeper mutual understanding in the truth would also be a service to them. In this attitude of service towards our fellow men and of humility before a truth which is greater than we are, we have the conviction of our faith that 'satyam eva jayate.'

2. The Religious Experience in Interfaith Dialogue.

After having considered the historical dimension of the dialogue between believers of different faiths, we should also say some words about its specifically religious implications. Interfaith dialogue is not a discussion among specialists in religious rites and doctrines, but is a meeting of believers. Faith is not the mere intellectual acceptance of a creed, but over and above this, it is the surrender of the entire person. This surrender means a "turning toward God" of all one's intentions and energies. The accomplishment of one's vocation in the history of human society, on which we have reflected in the first part of this paper, is certainly an important part of this life in the obedience of faith. But there are also some aspects where the relation to God is more immediately at the centre of man's endeavour. Such endeavour could be called "religious experience," inasfar as it occurs within and by virtue of this relation to God of which religion is the expression. In considering this religious experience, we, again, do not make abstraction of the situation of the believer in a pluralistic society, but will try to bring out precisely those aspects of it which influence man's behaviour towards his fellow men. Two of these aspects, espe-

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cially, will retain our attention: the witnessing to one's faith before others, and the meeting with others in prayer and praise.

(a) **Interfaith Dialogue and the Witness to Faith**: The light of the faith has not been given unto us to be hidden under a bushel, but that it may shine before men (cfr. Mt. 5, 15-16). Islam and Christianity both are "communicative" religions. Every believer is called to bear witness to his faith. The very title with which we designate those who have fulfilled this vocation till the very end, is "witness": "martyr" in Greek and "shahid" in Arabic. This *shahada*, this *martyrion*, is the task of every faithful, in life and death.

It is this call to bear witness to the revealed truth that makes of Christianity and Islam missionary religions *par excellence*.²⁰ In either religion, there are no limits to this missionary endeavour. No living person can a-priori be excluded from the message to which the believer is bearing witness, and which he hopes to share with others.

Here is a serious problem for interfaith dialogue. How can representatives of both religions meet with each other in sincerity and freedom, when at the back of their minds there is the hope to win the other for his own religion? And neither could we undertake a dialogue on the basis of an attitude of "I don't mind what you believe, but let us come together." In that case, there would be the dilemma of either forsaking the implications of our own faith or being insincere. How could we cease to wish for our friends what we hold for the most precious treasure in our own lives? Any dialogue, which would not take into account this innermost tendency of our faith, by which it is meant to be shared with others, would be superficial and untrue.

In June 1976, a Christian-Muslim Conference was held in Switzerland, where precisely this question was discussed: "Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah."²¹ It was, as could be expected, a difficult meeting. But the courage of those who took the initiative of this meeting and lived through those days of dialogue has to be admired. The Statement of this Conference both manifests the difficulties inherent to this vital issue, and the promises of a growth in understanding.

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At the earlier, Tripoli meeting, there was a paragraph in the Final Statement which may give a clue to the solution of our dilemma : "In order to promote the true co-operation between the Muslim world and the Christian world, both parties recommend that an end be put to all attempts aimed by Christians at turning Muslims away from their beliefs, or by Muslim at turning Christians away from their beliefs."²² In rendering the witness we are all bound to give to our faith, we should avoid turning away the other from his own faith. Because, we cannot turn others to God and guide them to the truth. Conversion is a privilege of God, Who turns unto Himself whom He wants and Who guides unto His light whom He wills. And we ourselves, as long as we live, are still in a process of conversion, of growth in faith and faithfulness. To this faith in God's guidance, we have to give witness before each other. In receiving this witness, not as we want it to be, but as each one experiences the divine guidance in his life and expresses God's truth in his religion, we may discover many elements which we have in common. With gratitude we receive these precious elements of a common heritage, and humbly we accept also what separates us. Only in this mutual acceptance, and not through high-handed attempts to change each other, we may grow together in faith and faithfulness on our different paths of conversion. In a way we cannot foresee, this growth in the truth of our own faith, while accepting each other as we are, will then be a true convergence, through the grace of Him who alone can bring us all together unto Himself.

With this, naturally, not all our present problems are solved. We do not meet only as individual believers, but also as members of religious traditions, with their history, their institutions and their institutionalised forms of belief and worship. Much of the weight of history and institution seems rather made to separate and oppose us than to bring us together. We cannot undo history nor can we dissociate ourselves from the institutional aspects of our religions. But what we can do is, conscious of the relative importance of all this, to concentrate on the spiritual values of our own traditions. Not institution and ritual, but faith, love and sincerity²³ are the forces that can change the course of history and enliven our institutions so as to become

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instruments of peace and understanding. This emphasis on the spiritual sources of our religious traditions will enable us to live and to present our faith not as a human enterprise but as God's religion, as a call to obey Him in bearing witness to our faith and giving praise to Him alone.

(b) **Prayer and Praise in Interfaith Dialogue**: This brings us to another dimension of the religious experience which is indicated here as "prayer and praise." With this we mean all those states of mind and their corresponding expressions in which the human person is aware of and lives his being in explicit relation to God. For Muslims and Christians this is, in diverse ways, the experience in faith of the transcendent God Who reveals Himself to man in His Word and Who, in a mysterious concurrence of divine initiative and human answer, moves man to a response of which He alone is the Source. The innermost region of this experience is a sanctuary "where Angels fear to tread." Saints and mystics of our various traditions have attempted to express what cannot be put into words. Through the eloquence of their silence more than through the stammering of their sayings they rendered testimony to a transforming experience too deep for words. For many among them, the area of this inner experience has been also a meeting place with believers from other traditions. The history of the Bhakti and Sufi movements in India is an impressive monument of this form of interfaith dialogue.

When we speak of prayer and praise, we do not mean in the first place this experience in its more extraordinary forms, as it is given to some privileged persons, but rather its manifestations as they are common to the ordinary faithful. In our various traditions, the rituals of cultic worship are different. But in every tradition there exists the awareness of a dimension of this prayer and praise which transcends the actual cultic community and encompasses the universe. Among the many expressions of this cosmic dimension of prayer and praise, we may recall the words of the Qur'an :

"Have you not seen, how unto God prostrate those who are in the heavens and those who are in the earth : the

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sun and the moon and the stars, the mountains and the trees and the animals, and many from among men?" (22,18) Sharing actually in the rites of the cultic prayer of each other's communities may not be possible. At various dialogue meetings, in Cairo and Vienna, in Tripoli and Tunis, Christians and Muslims held each their own ritual worship in the presence of all participants. A silent communion existed—expression of mutual respect and also of an expectation and hope to become united in one single praise of the one God. This communion was perhaps nowhere so impressive as in the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba, where the very structure of the place of worship tells its tale of the destructive and constructive forces at work in our history. On the place of a Pagan temple, which the Christians had transformed into a church in honour of St. Vincent, Abdal-Rahman I built a mosque, which was completed at his death in 788. His successors enlarged and embellished this mosque, till it became the second largest one of the Islamic world and, according to many, its first in beauty. When in 1236 Cordoba was recaptured by the Christians, the mosque became a place of Christian worship. In the 16th century, plans were made to build a cathedral in its place, but the Emperor, Charles V, opposed the destruction of so much splendour. Nevertheless, in a part of the old building a cathedral was erected, while the rest of it remained as a historical monument. Since the beginning of the Cordoba Congresses, the mosque has come to life again. At the *mihrab*, Muslims gather for prayer, under the same roof as the Christians who worship God.

If rites divide, no one, however, can be excluded from the universal dimensions of our prayer and praise. If trees and animals take part in it, how should we then shut out our fellow men? In silence, in attitudes and words, we can stand together in this worship. There exist various collections of Muslim and Christian prayers, which are signs of this real communion.²⁴ More than many lectures and discussions, this meeting in prayer and praise is instrument and realisation already of a deeper communion between our different faiths. According to the possibilities of the moment, we may give expression to this communion. But, in the measure our prayer and praise is genuine, this dimension is always present in our mind and intentions; because

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we stand then before Him Who is the source and consummation
of our unity. The following verse of the Bhagavad Gita can be
seen as an intimation of this truth :

The same I am to all beings :
I do not love the one and hate the other;
Those who worship Me with devotion,
They abide in Me and I in them (BhG 9,29)

I have presented these simple reflexions on a personal
experience of dialogue, restricted mainly to the Mediterranean
area, not only as a sharing of information on past events and
present efforts, but also as an expression of a deep conviction
that this arduous venture of interfaith dialogue is not a transient
fashion, but corresponds to the challenge of history and the truth
of our faith. It is not by forsaking our history, our traditions
and institutions, that this dialogue is made possible, but by
living to the full our own religious identity, as individuals and
as communities, amidst the pluralist society of today. In the
humble conviction of the actuality of our faith, we thus are
brought to discern, together, the signs of the times. Am I wrong
when I see on the horizon the first rays of hope that what divi-
des us will bring us together and what we have in common will
unite us in the service of our fellow men and in the adoration
of Him Who is greater than the praise of the entire universe ?

NOTES :

1. Cfr Cl. Huart and L. Massignon, "Les Entretiens de Lahore." *Journal Asiatique* 209 (1906) 283-334.
2. M. Mahfuzul-Haq (ed.), *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*—by Prince Muhammad Dara Shikuh. Calcutta 1929.
3. See edition of this Dialogue in H. Putman, S. J., *L' Eglise et l' Islam sous Timothee I*. Beyrouth 1975. Also R. Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le Catholicos Timothee I et le Calife al-Mahdi." *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977) 107-175.
4. Petrus Abaelardus, *Dialogues inter Philosophum, Iudaeum et Christianum*. (R. Thomas ed.) Stuttgart 1970. Nicolaus de Cusa, *De Pace Fidei*. (R. Klibansky et H. Bascour, O. S. B., edd.) London 1956.
5. Cfr G. C. Anawati, O. P., "Polemique, apologie et dialogie Islamo-Chretiens. Positions classiques medievales et positions contemporaines." *ED* 22 (1969) 375-451.
6. E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London 1898. Vol. VI, pp 15 ff.
7. Since no official publication as yet has been made of the papers of this meeting, we quote here a translation made from the Arabic text read at the final Session.
8. The French version of this Communique can be found in *Bulletin* (Secretariatus pro non Christianis) 13 (1978) 157-160.
9. Second Vatican Council (1963-65), "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," n. 83. *The Documents of Vatican II*. (W. M. Abbott, S. J. ed.) London/Dublin 1966. p 297 f.
10. E.g. the International Conference on "The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order," organised by the Islamic Council of Europe (London, July 4-9, 1977).
11. This meeting of representatives from Christian Churches, Islam, Jewish Communities, Hinduism and Buddhism was organised by the Interreligious Peace Colloquium.
12. Cfr *Bulletin* (Secretariatus pro non Christianis) 12 (197) 191-193.

- 13 This meeting took place in Vienna, November 19-21, 1976. Cfr **Bulletin** (Secretariatus pro non Christianis) 11 (1976) 337-340.
- 14 The Cordoba Congresses are organised by the Asocicion para la Amistad Islamo-Christiana. This is an independent organisation, the members of which belong to either of the two religions. The first Congress took place in September 1974, and dealt with faith in the modern world. (Cfr **Actas d l Primer Congreso Internacional Islamo-Christiana de Cordoba Madrid 1977.**) The second meeting was in March 1977. This time the delicate matter of the positive appreciation of Muhammad and Jesus in Christianity and Islam was treated (Cfr E. Galindo Aguilar, "The Second International Muslim-Christian Congress of Cordoba, March 21-27 1977" **Islam-Christiana** 3 (1977) 207-228.
15. Cfr Second Vatican Council, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," n. 3. **The Documents of Vatican II.** (W. M. Abbott, S. J. ed.) London/Dublin 1966. p. 663.
- 16 RV 1,164,37
17. Cfr **Suratal-nur** (24), 35-36, and 2 Peter 1, 19
18. BAU 1,3,28.
- 19 An attempt has been made to bring out the dialogal potentialities of the concepts **ma'ruf** and **munkar** in our study "Mission and Morality. **Al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf** as expression of the communitarian and missionary dimensions of Qur'anic ethics." **Studia Missionalia** 27 (1978) 257-283.
- Cfr Isma'il R. al-Faruqi, "The Muslim-Christian Dialogue : A Constructionist View" **Islam and the Modern Age.** 8 (1977) p. 16.
21. A full report of this meeting is given in the **International Review of Mission** 65 (1976) 365-460.
22. Final Statement, n 17. See above, note 7.
23. These are values stressed by our various Messages. Cfr Q 2, 477 and Mt 5,21-48, where they are distinguished from mere ritual observance.
- 24 Such as K. Cragg, **Alive to God. Muslim and Christian Prayer.** London etc. 1970. And, A. Schimmel, **Denn Dein ist das Reich. Gebete aus dem Islam.** Freiburg usw. 1978.

Middle Eastern Studies

by

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THE term "Middle East" is often considered objectionable, first, because it reminds us of the days of European military domination; secondly, because it is inexact, and thirdly because our own Ministry of External Affairs has dropped it in favour of "West Asia." For our purposes, however, it is a convenient expression of such common use in books and periodicals of all European and Oriental languages that a departure from common usage would seem to be pedantic. And I am fortified in my view by what Professor Bernard Lewis (University of London), that brilliant historian of Modern Turkey and the Near East, says:

"The term Middle East was invented in 1902 by the American Naval Historian, Alfred Thayer Mahan, to designate the area between Arabia and India, with the centre - from the point of view of the naval strategist—in the Persian Gulf. This new geographical expression was taken up by *The Times* and later by the British Government, and together with the slightly earlier term "Near East", soon passed into general use. Both names are recent but not modern, both are relics of a world with Western Europe in the centre, and other regions grouped around it. Yet in spite of their obsolete origin and parochial outlook both terms, the "Middle East" in particular, have won universal acceptance, and are now used to designate this region even by the Russians, Africans and Indians - for whom it lies south, north or west - even strangest of all, by the peoples of the Middle East themselves (the author has in mind the phrase commonly used in Arabic literature, *al-sharq al-awsat*). So useful has the term been found that the area of its application, as well as its use, has been vastly extended—from the original coastlands of the Persian Gulf to a broad region stretching from the Black Sea to Equatorial Africa and from India to the Atlantic"⁽¹⁾.

(1) Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1963/4), 1.

To the Muslim historian the term suggests no impropriety whatever. It is convenient for him to distinguish the region from the *maghrib* of the medieval authors – Maghreb, in French usage – an area comprising North Africa from Libya to Morocco.

A word may here be said about the term 'Middle' as distinguished from the "Near" East. The strict geographical rule has been to distinguish between the *Near East*, comprising Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, the Levant and Egypt, and the *Middle East*, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan⁽²⁾.

This for our purposes is an artificial division, since it divides a region which is a compact unit of political life, economic effort and religious outlook in the world today. It has also a common history, largely. We are, therefore, using the term in its larger sense, comprising both the "Near" and the "Middle" East of the older authors.

The Middle East is the meeting ground of the civilizations of the East and the West. To its inhabitants, it was for long the *whole* of the civilized world. Of the twenty-one known civilizations described by Toynbee, twelve either originated in or are descended from others which flourished in the region. These are the Egyptian, Ninoan, Sumeric, Hittite, Syriac, Babylonian, Iranian, Arabic, Hellenic and Western civilizations. Of the surviving world religions, three, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, have their geographical roots in the Middle East. And it is abundantly proved that modern Western civilization is the fruit of a tree grown in the area comprised in the countries of the Middle East⁽³⁾.

To be specific, by the term "Middle East", I imply, speaking broadly, a region covering the following independent states :

Africa : Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan.

Asia : Turkey ; Arabia Proper, that is Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Hadramawt, Trucial States, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran and Afghanistan⁽⁴⁾.

There are three chief characteristics of this wide region :

- A) The predominance of the religion of Islam ;
- B) the prevalence of the Arab race ;
- C) the wide use of the Arabic language.

(2) *Middle East, A Survey* (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1951), 1.

(3) Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *Introducing the Middle East* (Mysore, 1967), 2-5.

(4) For a historical account, see C. G. Smith, "The Emergence of the Middle East", in *Jl. of Contemporary History*, Vol. III (1965), No. 3, 3-4.

Islam is common to all countries. The Arabs number, roughly speaking, 100 millions ; while the Turks and Iranians are about 30 million, each. Now there are three kinds of Muslims in the area. The North African Muslims are mainly Maliki, one of the subschools of the Sunnite school ; in Egypt and the Sudan, the Hanafi and the Shafi'i rites are mixed together ; and in Saudi Arabia the predominant school is the Hanbali. The Turks are mainly Hanafi, but their laws are secular, for, they have successfully separated religion and law. These communities, therefore, represent the orthodox and the modern Sunnite forms of religion.

The Persians represent another tradition. Nominally at least they retain their *Ithna Ashari Shiite* tradition ; but modern observers note that a great deal of free thinking and Marxist doctrine are gradually entering the portals of the younger minds. The elder generation, however, cling tenaciously to their ancient faith, particularly in such areas as Najaf and Kerbala. In Afghanistan, the strict Hanafi rite prevails, as in India and Pakistan. Thus the three kinds of approach to religion are all found in the Middle East ; the Orthodox Sunnite ; the Modern Western Sunnite ; and the Persian Shiite.

There are many reasons why we should cultivate an adequate acquaintance with the Middle Eastern countries ; they are historical political and economic.

Indo-Arab relations date back almost a pre-historic times. Objects found in Sumeria and Egypt indicate a traffic between the Middle East as far back as 3000 B. C. Indian ships with modest sails and innumerable cars carried Indian products such as spices and pearls, cotton and silk, shawls and muslins and precious stones to Arabia and Mesopotamia. And from Arabia, which was then known as *Vanayu* and its environs, we obtained coral, quicksilver, vermilion, lead, gold, rose-water and saffron. The people of the Indus valley — Mohenjo Daro — had intimate contacts with the people of Sumer, and trade relations existed between Indians and Egyptians and the Cretians. The Arab steeds in the camp of King Harsha were as popular as the swords made of Indian steel, well known in Arabo-Persian literature as *hindwani* and *al-muhannad*. Indian cotton was in great demand ; it was called *qutn* in Arabic and was later anglicised as 'cotton'. The frequent visits of Indian traders led to the establishment of an Indian colony on the upper Euphrates in the second century B. C. This trade has continued till today. I met an Arab merchant on the seaface at Cochin two

years ago, and speaking with him in Arabic, found that the sea-faring trade had declined. He mistook my poor lingo for the Egyptian dialect, and thought that I was from Egypt!

The Syrian writer Zenob says that the Indians built two temples and installed in them images of their own particular gods. There is also a beautiful legend about a brave Indian sailor who lost all his companions in search of Egypt and was found half-dead, very close to his destination. This shipwrecked sailor inspired the famous explorer, Eudoxus, to make a voyage to India and to change the course of maritime history. Whatever the historical value of the legend, it is established beyond any possibility of doubt that it was an Arab navigator who helped Vasco da Gama to discover the route to India via the Cape of Good Hope. It was the Arab seaman Ahmad b. Majid who guided Vasco da Gama from Malindi (East Africa) to Calicut in the year 1498.

In religion too India had its emissaries. It is now certain that Buddhism prevailed in Western Asia in early times. Al-Biruni (d. 1048) substantiates the claims of Emperor Asoka that in former times Khorasan, Persia, Iraq and Mosul up to the frontiers of Syria came under the influence of Buddhism, and, to some extent, Indian culture had entered very early the heartland of the Middle East.

The Arabs in Abbasid times began to take an interest in Indian scientific literature, as they had done so well earlier in transplanting Greek literature on Asian soil. The well known collection of Indian stories known as the *Panchatantra* was translated into Arabic and introduced into Europe. Similarly the *Hitopadesa*. Some scholars are of opinion that the *One thousand and One Nights* (properly, *Alf Laila wa Laila*) contains Indian tales as well. But in fact it is a work of such infinite variety that the influence of the whole of the then known world can be found in it.

Another tradition relating to Christianity may also be mentioned. It is confidently asserted that the Apostle Thomas came to South India in the first century A.D. Although satisfactory historical evidence is lacking for this assumption, the tradition is accepted by such well known historians as Prof. G. M. Moraes, in his *History of Christianity in India*.

In the field of medicine the evidence is more cogent, and the give and take was mutual. In the Persian University of Jundeshapur, Indian physicians worked with their Arab and Persian colleagues. The most famous of the early Arab physicians such as Hunayn b. Ishaq were Christians, and there is, later, evidence of Indian books being translated

into Arabic. To complete the story *Tibb*, or the ancient Greek system of medicine, took firm root in India and the Canon of Avicenna became a regular textbook of medicine in our country. This system, known as Unani, was established both in Persia and in India. The Hamdard Dawakhana in Delhi is a magnificent modern example of the Unani system of healing. Both in the excellence of its products and the ability of its physicians for certain ailments, it bears comparison with the best of clinics in the modern world. And, if in addition, the modest expenditure involved in treatment is taken into consideration, it is certainly worthy of the highest commendation. The Hamdard Nursing Home and Clinic in Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi, is a fine example of the combination of modern architecture and instrumentation coupled with the principles of an ancient but efficacious system of medicine (5).

The question is often asked, "What did the Arabs actually give to India?" And my answer is that the greatest contribution of the Graeco-Arab world to India is the message of democracy and socialism: democracy in insisting upon the rights of the common man to take a share on the country's destiny and not be content with the divine right of kings; and socialism, in the relentless logic of the law of inheritance in Islam, which made short work of primogeniture and of coparcenary property, and gave to each of the children of the deceased a definite share of inheritance, two shares to the male, and one share to the female. This has been expressed in words of gold by the late Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad in the Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Congress, 1940:

"We (that is, the Indian Muslims as representing the Graeco-Islamic Culture) brought with us a great treasure, and this land was also overladen with its own untold wealth. We entrusted our wealth to this country; and India opened the floodgates of its treasurers to us. We gave to this country the most precious of our possessions and one which was greatly needed by it - we gave to it the message of democracy and equality" (6).

We now come to politics and diplomacy. The Arab countries generally are most favourable to India in the political sphere. When the question of Israel arose, and in the recent Arab-Israeli war, India has

(5) See the recent article by M. A. Siddiqi in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XLII, No. 3 July, 1968), pp. 161-172.

(6) Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *A Modern Approach to Islam* (Asia, 1963), 113.

consistently supported the claims of the Arab people. Ever since the times of Gandhi, India has never given support to the Zionist expansion of Israel in the heart of the Arab world. As regards Kashmir, the Arabs have repaid this debt to us. Following the lead given by Nasser, and despite their natural sympathy with their co-religionists in Pakistan, they have mostly taken a strictly neutral attitude, and declared this question to be a quarrel between two neighbours and brotherly states, with common ties of blood and economic welfare. It is also well known that the majority of Arabs have such a great regard for Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru that they consider India to be a great country, wedded to secular and democratic ideals. Many of them approve the policy of non-alignment which India has consistently followed. It may also be noted that despite the problem of Pakhtoonistan, in which India has never forced the hands of Afghanistan, that country has always been more favourable to us than to Pakistan, and this both for political and for economic reasons. The only two countries of the Middle East which are not very favourable to us are Turkey and Iran. The reason is that we follow the policy of non-alignment, whereas both of them are the satellites of the United States, and have defence and other pacts with them.

It is, therefore, highly desirable that India should understand the cultural, historical and political problems of the friendly countries of the Middle East (7).

There is another diplomatic problem before us. We have representatives in the shape of Ambassadors, Ministers, or Consuls in most of the countries of the Middle East. It is absolutely necessary that our envoys be aided by men who speak the three different languages of the area, namely Arabic, Iranian, and Turkish. Classical Arabic is known to but few amongst us; and our knowledge of Modern Turkish and Modern Persian is negligible. It is of no use to repeat the language of the Koran or the *Mu'allaqat* in the bazars of Cairo or Damascus; we must train up a sufficient number of diplomats and their aides in the use of the modern languages spoken in the area, namely colloquial Arabic, Modern Turkish and Modern Iranian. This is one of the most urgent tasks that faces us in the present century. Without such facility in the spoken dialects of the Middle East, our diplomatic efforts can at most be described as second best.

(7) For recent events see Toynbee's "Aspects of Arab History", *Listener* (London), 5 September 1968, p. 293; and "The Arab World", in *The Times* (London), two reports on March 7 and 8, 1968.

We now come to the economic aspects of the question.

By far the best account of the economic history of the Middle East is by Charles Issawi (Ragnar Nurske Professor of Economics, Columbia University), *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914* (Chicago/London, 1966, 543 pages). The history of the region is an example of the inexorable cycle of history — birth, growth, decay. Till the 12th century there was a rise under Islamic domination ; from the 12th to the 19th there was a sharp decline ; and, in the last two centuries, with the emergence of European trade, exploitation and aid, a sharp recovery and steady growth till the present day. The Middle East is a region in flux : it has grown, is growing and there is every likelihood of its continuing to grow. Thus, this volume contains clear ardence for Indians to make steady efforts to draw our country closer to the Middle East and strengthen the economic bonds.

So far as India is concerned the picture is fairly clear. We are an under-developed country, and have taken up industrialization as our national policy. It is, therefore, to our interest to export our manufactured goods and to import cheap foreign goods. We are getting Western aid in respect of know-how and capital. We must also develop our export trade in such goods as we can produce cheaply. For this purpose, the Middle East is a great potential market which can be easily developed still further. In 1962 I took the trouble to ascertain from the Ministries of Finance and Commerce at New Delhi, what the position of trade was with the Middle East, and I was shocked to find that, during the five years 1957-62, both our exports and imports had declined by about 20-30 per cent per annum.

One fact is beyond question. There is no institute or agency in the whole of India where the figures of trade are easily available. We must write to the ministries in Delhi or the Planning Commission for any information that we have ; while in England, the two reports in *The Times* already cited by me above, give details of all the Arab countries, and the rest of the information is easily available. It is time that this sad story should end, and I suggest that we must take up the study of the Middle East in right earnest. The Arab countries are not interested in studying India and their relations with us : thus, a two-way tunnel of darkness unites us with the Middle East. This, however, is no reason why we should not make a beginning.

The study I advocate is, first of all, the languages of the region : secondly, the modern history of the region ; thirdly, the economic

conditions and the exploitation of oil ; and lastly, cultural, scientific, archaeological, and other studies as time and our means permit.

Language : The three languages of the region, Arabic, Persian, Turkish as often called "The three languages of Islam", will be the first topic I propose to deal with. Of these, Arabic is the most important. It is the language of Islam, its *shariat*, its law, its history, its ideals. It is in Arabic that the moment of history called 'Islam' is clearly to be envisaged. It is the official language of 18 states ; it is the language of 100 million ; it is the fifth language of interpretation in the counsels of the world organisation called United Nations - coming after English, French, Spanish and Russian. It was the *lingua franca* of medieval culture for some five hundred years and more ; it was from Arabic that the modern western culture derives its science, its philosophy, its spirit. The Arabic language was the bridge between Roman-Greek Culture and the modern West. Therefore — and this is hardly realised in our country — it is a most important *modern* language, spread over from Morocco in North Africa to the confines of Southern Arabia and Iraq in the hinterland of Asia.

Arabic, as known today, has three well known forms : *Classical Arabic*, *Standard Arabic*, *Colloquial Arabic*.

Classical Arabic is taught widely in our country, and I do not propose to deal with it. By *Standard Arabic* is meant the language of the radio and the press, the language of legislation and the University, the formal language of the literate people, wherever they may be living. It cannot be denied that this language has been greatly influenced by classical usage on the one hand, and the need to be understood over a large area, principally as the language of radio communication and of political debate on the other. Broadly speaking, it maintains the grammatical structure of classical speech, makes a few concessions to modernism, and imports a wide variety of words from European languages, and idioms chiefly from the French.

The intrusion of European influence in the Arab world begins with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798. This may well be said to mark the beginning of the modern period of Arabic Literature. It is the importance of this form of Arabic, and the introduction of new ideas in the body of Arabic literature, that I wish to emphasize in these lectures. Mohamed Aly's programme of modernization in Egypt included an emphasis on France and its modes of thought and culture.

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Missions of study were sent to that country ; schools based on French principles of teaching were founded in Egypt ; lawyers went for higher studies to France ; French became to the cultivated, Egyptian or Lebanese, what English was and is for the Indian elite. Even in 1949 just before Nasser's revolution, the French language, retreating gradually before the invasion of English (and even, American English), was predominantly the language of discussion and study with intellectuals like Taha Hussein, the author and orator, and Sanhoury, the jurist. They were trained in France ; some of them had French wives, and their minds, although rooted in Islam and Arabic, took on a French cultural hue.

The translations from western languages brought in a number of neologisms to express western concepts. The excessive use of foreign words and concepts brought in a reaction, and outstanding literateurs and critics opposed this tendency. Technical terms caused special difficulties and specialized works on terminology were written by various scholars. The first scientific Academy of Arabic, somewhat on French lines, was founded in Damascus in 1919 (*al-majma al-'ilmi al-'arabi*), and this was followed by the Royal Egyptian Academy of the Arabic language in 1932 (now known as *Majma al-Lughat al-'arabiyya*, Cairo). The infiltration of French and English influences in the language is striking. In song and drama, music and painting, the twin influences of Europe and of the life actually lived by the people, and the language actually spoken in the bazaars, are more than evident.

It is however the radio that emphasizes the fact that there exists a basically uniform *standard Arabic* written in all Arab countries from Morocco to Iraq. The classical language, although it differs considerably from the written and the colloquial forms of standard Arabic, is still of great value. The modern language cannot be understood without its classical sinews of grammar. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the student who knows the Koran and *Mutanabbi* will necessarily understand Taha Hussein, Khalil Jubran Khalil, or Twefik el-Hakim, perfectly. The subtle processes of change have affected the nuances of Arabic as a mode of expression in the twentieth century, and both disciplines seem to be necessary : mastery of the classical for understanding the modern standard Arabic, and mastery of the modern standard Arabic in its subtle adoption of French and Western ideas, both in grammar and elegance. Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh mastered French at the age of 44, and wrote : "No one can claim any knowledge

enabling him to serve his country...unless he knows a European language" (8),

A few words are now necessary about the language of ordinary speech among the common people, colloquial Arabic. The language in daily use differs considerably from state to state, and even from district to district. It can never conform to such a difficult pattern of grammar as classical Arabic. And Arabic in its spoken form differs radically from Iraq to Morocco, and from the Yemen to Northern Syria. It seems obvious that we cannot in Greece speak the language of Homer today, as did Gladstone on a notable occasion. So also we must to some extent forget the *Mu'allaqat* and the Koran and Mutanabbi in the bazaars of Cairo. We must descend to the level of the people.

The study of Arabic dialects has advanced greatly during the last ten years both in Europe and the Middle East. The philologists have classified the various dialects of Arabic into as many as twenty different forms. For ordinary Indians however three dialects are of practical importance; of Cairo, of Damascus, and of Mecca. We must for instance realize that the letter *qaf* in the classical become *a* in Egypt (*ahwa*, not *qahwa*); in the Persian Gulf it becomes *j*, as in *Jasim*, not *Qasim*; and in the Sudan, it may be *gasim*. The President of the United Arab Republic is Gamal, not Jamal; and the newspaper *al-Muqattam* was 'al-Mu'atam' on the pier of Port Said in 1922, as I had the pleasure of learning by experience.

In addition, therefore, to the classical and the standard forms of the language, some attention to the spoken dialect is essential, if we wish to converse with the people as equals. To take a personal example, although I was familiar to some extent with classical Arabic, while I was serving in Egypt, I took lessons at the Berlitz School of Modern Languages in Cairo, to pick up a smattering of colloquial Arabic, so necessary for daily use. And yet I was always dubbed a *nahwi* a derogatory terms — as I could never master the lingo to their satisfaction, the classical element always intruding into and polluting the 'pure' bazaar dialect!

(8) Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform, The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad Abdush and Rashid Rida* (University of California at Los Angeles, 1966), 154.

See also a learned article on "Arabic: Problems and Proposals for Reform" by Anwar G. Chejne, *Studies in Islam* (New Delhi, 1965), Vol. II, pp. 195-227.

Persian is the second language of Islam. It used to be widely cultivated in India, and very few observations are necessary to introduce it to your attention today. Persian is an Aryan language, or, as it is now designated, belongs to Indo-European group of languages. Philologically there is no connection whatever between Arabic, which is a Semitic language allied to Hebrew, Syriac, and Ethopic, and Persian which is allied to Sanskrit and Greek. Darius the King was called, "a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, of Aryan race." And the followers of Zoroaster call themselves "of the Aryan race." Modern scholars classify the language in its three historical phases :

I, Old Iranian (*Altpersische*) :

II, Middle Iranian (*Mittelpersische*) ;

III, New Iranian (*Neupersische*).

The ancient Iranian languages known to us are Avestan and Old Persian. The secret books of the Zoroastrian — the Gathas — are in the most ancient Iranian language. The age of this language and of the Vedic is the same, and they are closely related. Modern Persian (*Farsi*), as distinct from Middle Persian (*Pahlavi*), is the language in which the literature we call "Persian" is written. Historically this consists of all the literature written from the Arab conquest onwards. But Persian literature is not confined exclusively to Persia ; the Persian language has travelled to three other centres, namely Central Asia, Afghanistan and India. Until the 17th century the literature produced in the three different regions followed generally identical standards, but, during the last two centuries, the social and political changes in the three regions have affected considerably the kind of prose and poetry that is now being written. In India the tradition of speaking and writing in Persian is almost dead ; a few thousand Irani Zoroastrians residing in Bombay are probably the only group still using some form of Persian. Composition, as a fine art, is also almost dead ; and the language is now studied in school, college or university, as an easy substitute for the grammatically more complex second languages, Sanskrit or Arabic. But in Afghanistan, it is still the language of Administration, although I personally have no knowledge of the extent or value of the polite literature produced in that country. We are, therefore, relegated to the parent country, Iran, to see whether any advance on the classical plane has taken place.

The usual and, if I may say so, completely unrealistic study undertaken in this country of the Persian language stops at what is called

the classical period, roughly the period from Firdawsi to Jami (10th to the 15th century A. D.). A considerable number of books are available on this period, both in English and French, and in Persian, and I propose to omit for the present discussion. What to me is most significant is the modern period in which there is great revival in all forms of prose and poetry. For, let me repeat my main thesis. The past is certainly a great legacy : but we must move on, we must *speak, read and write* like the modern Persian, and not merely recite dead thoughts and bygone classics. We must think with the modern Iranian ; we must speak with him ; we must understand the springs of his action in his own chosen form of expression as it has developed throughout the ages.

As time is short and I have still to deal with Turkish, I would refer the reader to the works of the Russian scholar Berthels and a modern Iranian scholar (9) for further material on this very fascinating subject. It would be a great mistake to close up our books with Jami ; it is like finishing English literature with the Elizabethans, or the Arabic Literature with the Umayyads, or French Literature with Racine. Any artificial barriers across the stream of literature seem so inane ; the river of human thought, flows on, seeking ever newer forms for the expression of its innermost spirit. Today in Iran, I understand, there is a great deal of nationalist and Marxist poetry ; just as newer trends are to be found also in Urdu (namely, the *taraqqi-pasand*).

The third language of Islam is Turkish, Although for long it was written in a modified Arabic script, it has nothing to do either with Arabic or with Persian, linguistically. It belongs to a Central Asian group of languages, which contains a number of languages, sub-languages and dialects. Although it was the mother tongue of the Moghul emperors, it never took root in India. The language of the Delhi Court was Persian, and it was Persian that held the field in India. Even today, Turkish studies are negligible in our country, and hardly any university in India has a well developed school of Turkish. This would justify a slightly longer treatment of the subject.

The word *turk* (Chinese, Tu-Kue) first appears as the name of a nomad people in the fifth century A.D. During that century a powerful

(9) Berthels in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III. 1058 ; and H. Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (Cambridge, 1966).

empire was founded by the Turks which stretched from Mongolia and the northern frontier of China to the Black Sea. The history of the Turkish people has been fully investigated by Russian, Turkish and German scholars, but it is impossible to deal with it here, even in the merest outline. Before coming to the Ottomans, a remarkable fact must be mentioned. The conquest of Turkish territory by the Muslims had nothing to do with conversion. The principle was, "Leave them in peace, so long they leave you in peace", as the Prophet is reported to have said. The Turks, according to Barthold, were a strong and unconquered people who adopted Islam by their own free will⁽¹⁰⁾. There are according to the same high authority, some 16 million Turks in Soviet Russia, out of the 30 million in all.

The original alphabet of the Turkish people during the 8-9th century A.D. was the Uighur alphabet, derived from one of the North Semitic scripts. Around the 10-11th century, following the conversion of the Turks to Islam, the Arabic alphabet was adopted. This continued till the 20th century when following the Kemalist reforms, a modified form of the Roman alphabet was adopted.

Leaving aside the early history of the language, we come to what is known as Ottoman Turkish. The language of the Ottomans, known *Othmanli*, has, since the end of the 15th century, been the language of history, science and literature. Its evolution runs parallel to the rise and growth of the Ottoman Empire. During the last four centuries, it has become one of the three languages of Islam, the others being Arabic and Persian. And even today, after the adoption of the Roman alphabet, it has retained its importance for the study of modern Islam in the environment of the 20th century.

Ottoman Turkish is a branch of the Turkoman (not *chaghatai*) group of languages. The standard set was the idiom and pronunciation of the capital, Constantinople (as it used to be) or Istanbul (as it now is). Words were rounded off and made melodious, e.g. *khanum* became *hanem*; *Muhammad*, *Mehmet*, and so forth.

It is, therefore, clear that for any proper appreciation of history of the language both scripts and both languages will have to be studied in a proper school of Middle Eastern Studies. We shall leave alone the earlier centuries, in which the influence, especially in poetry, of the Persian

(10) *Ency. of Islam*, IV, 905 b.

language was supreme, and come to the post-Kemalist period. With the reforms introduced by Kemal Ataturk, a revolution equal to the capture of Constantinople by Muhammad II has taken place. The Latin alphabet has been adopted for all purposes. Koprulu — Zade Fuad, a noted critic, has demonstrated in his numerous scholarly works that the national movement has expressed itself in literature, poetry, science and art. The language has been appreciably simplified, and instead of "art for art's sake," the rule is expressed by "art for life." Philology, science, history and modern literary subjects have made a great advance. The publications of the Ankara University, to take but one example, both in their extent and variety, compare favourably with any European universities of a like dimension.

It was said that Shaykh al-Islam Husam al-din Abul-Mahamid Hamid al-Asimi al-Barjinlighi composed works on theology in Arabic. He also wrote verses in the *three languages* of Islam. His verses in Arabic were *fasiha* (eloquent); in Persian they were *malihā* (sweet); and in Turkish they were *sahiha* (chaste) ⁽¹¹⁾. In my own experience, my teacher, the incomparable Edward G. Browne of Cambridge, could speak at ease in Arabic, Persian or Turkish. And it is my hope that we in India will be able sooner or later to produce scholars to emulate these great names in the world of scholarship.

In view of what I have stated in the earlier part of my lecture, it is unnecessary to enlarge upon the importance of historical and economic studies for any proper appreciation of the Middle East. Text books containing a substantially accurate picture of the region are now available in many European languages, including English. The Middle East is full of oil fields and other minerals; the western powers are exploiting the oil wells and pouring untold wealth in a comparatively poor and undeveloped area; this wealth is being used by the states concerned for developing their education, health and engineering projects. Teachers, doctors, technologists and engineers are required in large numbers. If they know the language spoken in the area, and possess a fair knowledge of the condition of the people, the task of regeneration will be facilitated. A knowledge of the area, together with facility in the current languages will give new avenues of employment to our youth and help the people of the Middle East in their efforts to modernize their countries.

(11) V. V. Barthold in Ency. of Islam, IV, 915.

Modern Eastern Studies

Annexure—1

A Proposal For Institute of Middle Eastern Studies.

The University of Mysore is celebrating the Golden Jubilee of its foundation during 1966-67. In connection with this, it is proposed to start an Institute of Middle Eastern Studies on an entirely original basis. A brief and tentative scheme for the proposed Institute was drafted by me and is as follows :

Name : The Mysore Institute of Middle Eastern Studies—
(MIMES would be an excellent acronym)

- Purposes :**
- (1) The thorough study of modern Arabic, modern Persian, modern Turkish and later, Pushtu, Kurdish, Armenian, Georgian and other languages, in their modern, colloquial, spoken and literary forms.
 - (2) The elementary knowledge of classical Arabic, Classical Persian and classical Turkish.
 - (3) The modern history of the Middle East commencing with the 18th century till the present times.
 - (4) Trade, Commerce and Economic studies, including Oil resources, their distribution and sale.
 - (5) Agriculture, desert reclamation, afforestation and related matters.
 - (6) Cultural studies, including sociology, law reforms, anthropology, archaeology, etc.
 - (7) And, when the Institute is fully developed. Philosophy, Comparative Religion of the Semitic faiths, Art, Architecture, Music, Science and any other subjects.

Degrees : (1) The teaching will provide for the awarding of a Certificate for non-Matriculates in the spoken languages. The course will be of one year's duration and will consist of an *elementary* knowledge of spoken and written Arabic Persian/Turkish or other languages.

- (2) *Diploma in one of the languages, consisting of a two-year course open to PUC (Intermediate) Arts/Science students. The course will comprise a thorough knowledge of one of the languages, an elementary knowledge of a second language, and an elementary knowledge of political history since the 18th century.*
- (3) *The Degree course will be of three years' duration. The syllabus will be as follows :*

Compulsory :

- (a) *A fair knowledge of Classical Arabic (up to the PUC Standard) ;*
- (b) *A competent knowledge of one of the following languages : Arabic, Persian, Turkish, etc.*
- (c) *Political history of 19th century and 20th century in English, and preferably in the French, sources also.*

Optionals :

- (d) **SPECIALIZED** knowledge of one of the following subjects :
- (i) *Trade relations, commerce, exploitation of oil.*
- (ii) *Agriculture, desert reclamation, afforestation.*
- (iii) *Geographical distribution of the Semitic races. Knowledge of different sects of Islam such as Druzes, Alawis, the Ali-Allahis and other sects of the Middle East. Demography and Race Relations.*
- (iv) *Law reform, social development, the concept of Arab nationalism (*Uruba*).*
- (v) *A mastery of modern Arabic literature, and such authors as Taha Hussain, Manfaluti, Aqqad, Tewfik El Hakim, and others, including Modern Poetry. Good facility in writing articles, speeches and Essays in the modern, standard, literary Arabic, followed by similar provision for other languages.*

Later on, other subjects such as Philosophy. Law, Art, Music, Architecture may be added, as the staff for teaching the subjects become available.

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Buildings : They need not be grandiose, but it is necessary that housing for staff, research workers, lecture theatres and a library should be provided. Servants' quarters are usually forgotten. These are even more necessary than for the better paid officers.

Library : This is a most important item. In addition to books in modern Arabic, Modern Persian and Modern Turkish, a large number of books and journals in French, English, Spanish and Russian will have to be purchased. A competent Librarian on an All-India scale is an absolute necessity.

Staff : Terms : Competent persons with knowledge of modern Arabic, modern Persian and modern Turkish are comparatively rare. No teacher should be appointed to the staff on a permanent scale unless he possesses, in addition, a competent knowledge of French, and preferably one of the followings : Spanish, Russian or German.

The staff will be expected to do teaching as well as research.

As Middle East Institutes are growing both in the United States and in the African Universities, persons with such qualifications are in demand, and unless the scales are generous, the Institute will not be able to make any headway. There are 28 M. E. Institutes in the United States, alone.

I refrain from giving any details because when the principles enunciated above are accepted and practical implementation required, these matters will assume importance.

The University of Mysore has taken the lead in putting forward one of the most important schemes for the development of the resources and man power of India, and it is hoped that all classes of persons having contacts with the Middle East, manufacturing firms, commercial houses and others, will see the importance of this practical approach and help in financing and implementing these proposals.

For Further Reading :

Good bibliographies will be found on all topics connected with the Middle East in the following among other books :

- (1) *The Middle East : a Political and Economic Survey.*
Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. 1950, reprinted, and later editions available.
- (2) Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. New York/London, 1965.
- (3) W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East : A physical, social and regional geography.* Methuen, London. First published, 1950, many reprints and editions.

A brief introduction especially designed for Indian readers, is :
Asaf A. A. Fyze, *Introducing the Middle East.* Prasaranga, University of Mysore, 1967.

An informative note on Middle Eastern Studies is by R. Devereaux
Islamic Quarterly (Oxford University Press, 1966), X, 95-102.

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North Africa
Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

by
Prof. A. A. A. Fayzee

IF we look at the map of North Africa, the northern - most part is a curve consisting of three countries, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, apart from portions of the Sahara. Their present areas date from the Turkish conquest about four centuries ago. Before the recent French and Spanish Protectorates, followed by the independence of the three countries, Morocco had existed as an independent state for close upon a thousand years. Tunisia too, with certain interruptions — principally the six centuries of Roman rule — had enjoyed independence since the establishment of Carthage in the first millenium before Christ. Algeria had a chequered history till it became part of the French Republic in the 18th Century ; but, since 1963, it emerged as an independent Republic. For historical, religious and social reasons, we shall deal with them as one compact unit, *al-Maghrib al-Arabi* (the Arab West), and then, if time permits, make brief observations on each one of them. The area may be described as a crescent, bounded on the north by the Mediterranean and on the south by the greatest desert known to us, the Sahara. In between, is a mountain range, the Atlas Mountains, and fertile land, including oases in desert patches.

Roughly, three-quarters of the population speak the Arabic language as their mother-tongue, and the rest of the people, dialects of Berber tongue. Knowledge of French is common to the upper classes of all communities, and French culture has permeated to the intellectual classes of the people. A certain amount of Spanish and Italian are also spoken.

The population of the *maghrib* is about 30 million ; 2 to 3 million in the Sahara, and the remaining in the cultivated land and towns. About one-tenth of the population is European, either pure or mixed ; and there are also about half a million Jews, chiefly settled in Morocco.

The thickly populated areas are the towns, fertile lands, and the oases ; they may well be termed 'islands' in the desert, which are thinly covered by mountains. The desert area, chiefly in Algeria, contains rich oil reserves, and iron and other minerals. Their proper exploitation

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is bound to transform in due course the whole life of the people. In the *Maghrib*, Arab and Berber, both white races, are mixed together and the blacker races of negroid origin are to be found in the southern region.

Originally the Berbers were first influenced by the Carthagians for about 1000 years roughly from 1200 B. C. The second period dates from the Roman domination, from about 146 B. C. and lasted 650 years. The third is of Arab domination lasting some 12 centuries. And lastly, in the middle of this century, each of the three countries was established as an independent state, Morocco as a Constitutional Monarchy, and the other two, as republics, with Islam as the state religion and Arabic as the official and national language.

The Arab phase of history of which we possess the most detailed information is too extensive for an adequate treatment. I hope to speak of the States, singly, at the end of the lecture. There were many dynasties such as the Idrisids, Almoravids, Almohades and Merinids, about which a great deal has been written, chiefly in Arabic and French. They were followed in Morocco finally by the Hasanid Sharifs, who rule to this day. In Tunisia and Algeria, however, the rule of particular Muslim dynasties has ended and, for our present purpose, it is the European domination which is of importance. European domination produced the form of nationalism which has resulted in throwing off their political bondage but retaining cultural ties of a very distinct character with France. This story must now be unfolded at some length. It will be convenient briefly to state the history of the last century.

After a chequered history, Morocco was divided into spheres of influence, French and Spanish, on November 27, 1912. In that year Sidi Mohammed ben Yousuf, officially known as Mohammed V, came to the throne, and until his death on February 6, 1961, he was one of the greatest forces for the liberalization and independence of the Moroccan nation. In 1962 came the present Moroccan Constitution written by a Constituent Assembly directly under the guidance of Mohammed V. Since then Moulay Hassan II, his son, has been the King of Morocco.

Algeria was occupied by the French in 1830. After much bloodshed and struggle, it achieved independence as the result of the Agreement of Evian, March 18, 1962, which was followed by the

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Constitution of Algeria adopted on August 28, 1963 under Ahmed Ben Bella (1).

In Tunisia, the French Protectorate extended from 1881-1943; from 1944-56, there came the struggle for independence; and in 1956-58, came independence under Habib Bourguiba, who still retains the Presidency.

Early in the 19th century, the pirates of Barbary were plying their trade, and it was France who put an end to this by capturing Algeria in 1830. The Muslim piratical activity was almost nominal, but it furnished a good excuse for France to enter Africa. Another complication was that Algerian pirates were seriously disturbing American shipping, and Americans shippers could do nothing as they had no navy to protect them. So they asked France for help. There was a time when the Americans could neither pay France nor the pirates the dues extracted from them, and an American General, Eaton, indignantly asked: "Shall America, who, when in an infant state, destitute of all apparatus of war, without discipline and without funds, dared to resist the whole force of the lion's den of Great Britain to establish her freedom, now that she has acquired manhood, resources and experience, bring her humiliation to the basest dog kennel of Barbary?" (2). In the world of today, when America is the greatest naval power on earth, sentiments like these constitute strange reading!

The French propaganda preceding the occupation was that they had come to rescue the Algerians from Turkish tyranny, and they said: "We are going to drive out your tyrants, the Turks...; abandon your Pasha: follow our advice; it is good advice and can only make you happy" (3). This was insincere propaganda; there was even a proposal to set up an Algerian Prince. The consequence was that the Algerian people suffered greatly: The best mosques were turned into churches; Muslim feast-days ceased to be holidays; tribal land was confiscated; national symbols were destroyed. This was the beginning of a policy of turning the land into France—"frenchification", if I may be permitted

1) See Joachim Joaston, *The New Algeria* (Chicago, 1964), 193 ff. and A. Humbaraci, *Algeria* (London, 1966), 31.

2) N. Barbour, *A Survey of North West Africa, The Maghrib*, (London, 1959), 42.

3) *Ibid*, 43.

to use a descriptive epithet. The new policy was laid down as follows by General Bugeaud. Addressing the French troops he said : "Soldiers, you have often beaten the Arabs. You will beat them again, but to rout them is a small thing ; they must be subdued". To civilians he added : "The Arabs must be reduced to submission so that only the French flag stands up in African soil"⁽⁴⁾. A French historian Baudicourt reports : "Our soldiers returning from the expedition were themselves ashamed ; about 18,000 trees had been cut down ; houses had been burnt ; women, children and old men had been killed. The unfortunate women particularly excited cupidity by the habit of wearing silver ear-rings, leg-rings and arm-rings. These rings have no catches like French brecelets. Fastened in youth to the limbs of girls they cannot be removed when they are grown up. To get them off, our soldiers used to cut off their limbs and leave them alive in this mutilated condition"⁽⁵⁾.

Budgett-Meakin, an Englishman, who had unrivalled knowledge of the country, visited Morocco and Tunisia, and has left a great book of descriptive travel, *Life in Morocco*, (London, 1905). "The natives", he wrote : "are despised, if not hated, and despise and hate in return. The conquerors have repeated in Algeria the old mistake which has brought about such dire results in other lands, of always retaining the position of conquerors, and never unbending to the conquered, or encouraging friendship with them...There is actual hatred in Algeria, fostered by the foreigner far more than by the smouldering bigotry of Islam. They do not seem to intermingle even as oil and water, but to follow each a separate independent course"⁽⁶⁾.

Of course there was the other side of the picture : Algerians and Frenchmen fighting side by side in war ; the devotion of doctors to their patients ; the affection between teacher and student ; genuine love affairs. And yet a certain number of Algerians absorbed more of French culture than those of any other North African country. The net result was that the invasion was never forgotten ; the difference in living

(4) loc. cit.

(5) Ibid., 44

(6) loc. cit.

standards never forgiven ; the absence of Algerians from posts of responsibility never condoned. There was no colour bar as in India, but the distinction between the ruler and the ruled remained as a dead wall until independence was achieved.

Once Algeria was occupied, it was only a matter of time and diplomacy before France extended her control on the countries on either side. Tunisia lost her independence in 1881, followed by Egypt in 1882. Budgett-Meakin says that the Tunisian system was superior to that of the naked force employed in Algeria. The natives were left in charge of the administration and took the blame for the failure, while France took the credit for such successes as were achieved.

Morocco was occupied in 1912 jointly by France and Spain. The first French Resident General Marshall Lyautey was a man of genius. He loved the country and the people, appreciated the thousand-year old civilisation of Morocco, and was a great soldier and administrator. He worked with great understanding and sympathy, and in forty-four years freed Morocco from the fetters from which she suffered since medieval times.

Morocco has been described by many travellers and residents. They wrote of its remarkable features—long journeys on horse-back or mule-back ; virgin soil covered by a carpet of flowers ; medieval cities with their colourful crowds and bustling markets. These contrasted with the old mud-walled cities ; the houses of merchants with blank walls outside, and tiled court-yards, fountains and orange-gardens inside. These features made an unforgettable impression and gave rise to masterly descriptions. For instance, a French observer, Aubin, says :

“Our stay in Fez was long enough to enable us to enter Moorish society. I cannot express the pleasure which I experienced in a form of living which, however, degenerate, was once so glorious and still remains so impervious to European influences and so distinct from our own. I have spent most agreeable hours in very fine houses, where I have been invited to an excellent dinner accompanied by the strangest music. I have shared in the refined life of the Fasis. I have received information about details of dress from men reserved and cultured, those flowing garments enhance their dignity, who enjoy the pleasures of music and good cheer without ostentation, who are attentive and polite, leave their slippers at the door to avoid soiling the carpet with the mud of

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the street, come in softly, exchange some polite formula with their host or kiss him on the shoulder, and, if they have something to say, enter into conversation in a low tone to avoid disturbing the general quiet... The Patio is lighted by several lanterns, placed on the ground, while tapers in a room at the other end produce an effect of indefinite depth in the obscurity of the night. From a neighbouring room comes the sound of music softened by the distance, as it mingles with the splash of the water that falls from the fountain or bubbles within the basin in the centre of the court"(7).

There was the other side of the shield as well : There were hardly any engineers, doctors or chemists ; no roads or wheeled traffic ; indifference to human suffering ; inhuman punishments ; lack of sanitation ; the glory heads of decapitated rebels or criminals were to be seen nailed over city gates.

The official occupation of Morocco was the result of a treaty signed by Sultan Moulay Abd al-Hafidh in 1912, known as the Treaty of Fez. European rule in North West Africa naturally differed according as the rulers were French, Italian or Spanish, and according to the nature of the people governed and the social life of the country. Italian and French rulers considered themselves to be the legitimate heirs of Imperial Rome. They were there to create an imperishable order and civilization. There was an impenetrable wall of distinction between ruler and ruled. Arab Civilization was second class ; the destiny of Rome as understood by its French and Italian heirs was to implant a new civilization in an old land, a vastly superior form of culture. While Rome built for Eternity, Italy and France realized with some uneasiness that the term accorded to them was perhaps for a lesser duration.

Spain, however, had her own tradition of imperialism, markedly at variance with that of France or Italy. In many ways it was akin to ideals of Arab imperialism. Its essential order of development was conquest, followed by assimilation, by implantation of religion and language, and intermarriage. As the dissimilarity between Islam and Christianity was so great, and as Islamic communities are generally immune to conversion, Spain could never hope for the complete success

(7) Ibid., 47.

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of its policies as it had been in South America. Their uneasy steps are comparable with British rule in the Colonies. Thus Tomas Carcia Figueras, a very experienced Protectorate official, claimed that the goal of Spain may be defined as "a free and great Moroccan people who will be united with Spain...A people who will collaborate with her in a magnificent renaissance of Hispano-Arabic culture". It would be impossible to find any parallel in French or Italian statements of policy, for, the kinship of Arab and Spanish Civilizations has a long history since the time of Islamic domination of Spain in medieval times. Thus it envisaged a real cultural partnership rather than complete absorption.

The establishment of European rule gave rise to a new type of nationalism among the people. A landmark is 1934, the birth of a dynamic new nationalist party, Neo-Dastour, under Habib Bourguiba, the future president of the Tunisian Republic, who still holds that august office. In the same year the visit of Mohammed V to Fez was marked by a significant national demonstration. According to most authorities, however, the real break-through had come eight years before when Marshal Lyautey departed, after the surrender of the great Rif leader Abdelkrim. The original leaders of this nation-wide movement were Mohammed Bannouna (Tetuan), Ahmed Balafrej, later the first Foreign Minister of independent Morocco, and 'Allāl al-Fāsī, author, thinker and statesman. Their original demands were (a) Abolition of direct French administration, (b) Equality between Moroccan and Frenchman, and (c) Elected municipalities. The answer was repression on a wide scale: some of them were named as rebels and communists, and suffered jail and even torture and physical injury. It is a matter of speculation what the course of events would have been if, instead of repression, sympathy and understanding had been the policy — as in India after 1947. The results would hardly have been different, but with lesser bloodshed and hardship.

In 1954 France at last recognized that, at any rate in Tunisia, the time for internal autonomy, if not absolute independence, had arrived. In Africa, only Algeria seemed safe for the continuance of France as overlord, for, according to the Statute of 1947, Algeria had become part of metropolitan France with the right to send its elected representatives to French Parliament.

Historically it seems clear that since 1954 a new policy had to emerge. Mohammed V succeeded to the throne of Morocco at the age

of 18 ; and 25 years later he had developed diplomatic talents, perseverance, patience and modernism to a remarkable extent, and had in fact become a thorough-going nationalist. General Juin decided in 1947 to eliminate the combination of the Nationalist party with the Moroccan King, and had him exiled. But this only fanned the flame of nationalism and it went through a regular explosion in Morocco and Tunisia, although things seemed quieter in Algeria. France, therefore, decided to loosen its grip over Morocco and Tunisia, particularly as Morocco was known to possess great mineral wealth which could be the object of political negotiation. It was, however, a mistake to suppose that the two wings of North West Africa could enjoy the fruits of freedom, without its ultimate emergence in the centre, Algeria. As a Moroccan delegate to the United Nations said : "When three houses in a row are inhabited by three brothers and the centre house is on fire, it is not much use expecting the brothers on either side not to interest themselves in what is happening in the centre, whatever the legal position may be" (8).

But the French thought otherwise. First, they argued, that the economy of each of the three countries was such that a third of the budget came as a subsidy from France. Without these, life itself be as hard as it would be in Kashmir at present, without the aid of India*. All that can be said of this argument is, that there is a world of difference between the Arab of the Maghrib and the Kashmiri.

Secondly, under the French system, two-third of the officials and technicians were French. In Tunisia, out of 600 doctors, only 200 were Tunisian ; in the larger Morocco, there were only 50 ; thus, replacement was almost an impossibility, except by degree.

Thirdly, the French forces were to remain in the country until a new agreement was reached. Even if independence were to come, difficulties of the occupation forces would still remain. These were undoubtedly real difficulties ; but the French policy was wavering until de Gaulle made a departure and secured the independence of Algeria. But this was only after a war of independence extending over seven years, and, as a young Algerian diplomat told me in New Delhi, only "after one man in ten was shot, and one house in four burnt down to the ground".

(8) Ibid., 54.

* The date of these Lectures is 1969. (Pub.)

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I should like to summarise the position in the words of Barbour, who has written the standard volume on North West Africa⁽⁹⁾ :

While Tunisia and Morocco have much in common there were profound differences between them. Tunisia is a relatively small but culturally advanced republic, with markedly bourgeois and socialist tendencies. It has a strongly centralized government, with power in the hand of the Neo-Dastour party and its leader, who is both President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. Bourguiba is a hard-headed realist and has often proposed peace with Israel, rather than a barren war. He realises that the main weaknesses of the Arab are (1) disunity ; (2) personal corruption in all walks of life ; and, (3) the capacity for make-beliefs at all levels of society.

Morocco on the other hand is a spacious land, far from homogeneous but with a certain air of empire about it. The main factor of unity is the monarchy ; this is an indigenous institution deeply rooted in the life and traditions of the country. The monarch holds sway over the minds of the people, because as a Hasanid Sharif, the king is a descendent of the Prophet. Secondly, the claims of kingship have been exercised by the kings and recognised by the people for so long that a denial of the institution does not come easy to the Moroccan, however modern he may be. There is a huge Berber-speaking area, which was very independent of the central authority even before the French and Spanish occupation and which must still give cause for anxiety. The seat of power is by no means so clearly defined as in Tunisia. The personality and prestige of the reigning sultan makes him the main source of authority and the symbol of national unity. It is the good fortune of Morocco that they have been recently served by such a modern-minded Sultan as Mohammed V.

Beside the royal authority, however, there is the *Istiqlal* party who are the driving force in Government. For instance, the President of the Party is the great scholar, thinker and statesman, Allal al-Fasi. He is not an academic student alone, or a mere politician. He is the author of one of the most penetrating criticisms of Islam in its present shape, in his classic *al-Naqd al-Dhati*. He stands for modernisation but with a traditional colouring, a puritanical and Islamic colouring. He may fitly be compared with our own Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

(9) *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Thursday, May 29, 1958, page 5.

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Outside the traditional Cities, there is the great semi-American, Semi-Oriental city of Casablanca with its important European population, economy and industry. Finally there is the mountainous northern region, with its tough mountaineers and urban population which to some extent has come under Spanish influence, whereas French culture has infiltrated in the South. Thus though it is larger and richer than its counterpart, in Tunisia, Morocco has a long way to go before achieving the homogeneity of its sister Maghrib state.

The problem in Algeria is yet another facet of the Maghrib. The nationalist movement known by its party, the F. L. N. (*Front de Libération Nationale*), came into being as a resistance movement, organised by men who had decided that political agitation was never going to get them anywhere. An English observer reports one of their national songs which is as follows :

March to glory, March to the fight
With your blades rebuild the Arab nation
O Arab People.

Once we were the star of Humanity
We have conquered Earth and Sea
O Arab People?

Fly for ever, you banner of the Arabs
Eternal symbol of the Arabs
You represent our highest glory
O Arab People.

Fly for ever more banner of the Arabs
We are your servants
We shall defend you
Sacrifice our lives for you
O Arab People ! (10)

The present Algerian National Anthem is in French ; there is to be a competition for a new National Anthem in Arabic, one of the curiosities of history ! (11).

(10) A. Humbaraci, *Algeria* (London, 1966), 32.

(11) J. C. Frazer, *The Dying God* (Vol. IV, *The Golden Bough*), Macmillan, 1914. 152 f.,

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The F. L. N. has no outstanding leader : it was not founded by intellectuals but by practical men endured to hardship. After independence Ahmed Ben Bella assumed power as Dictator ; but within three years he was dethroned by Colonel Houari Boumedienne, not such a colourful figure, but a hard-headed fighting man, deeply imbued with Islamic and democratic ideals. But the leaders are all full of European modes of thought, and even the traditional dress of the Arabs is not looked upon with favour, and it is on the cards that Algeria will follow the pattern of Kemalist policies in Turkey. Algeria suffered heavily during the war of Liberation against France. And whatever the future may be, there is a highly developed national consciousness of Algerian as a distinct way of life, very different from either Moroccan or Tunisian.

A tentative conclusion is that the future of the Maghrib will contain, the following elements : (1) A new phase of coexistence with European culture has come into being. It will be influenced by European ideals in the North under Spanish influence, and French civilization in most other parts. (2) The feeling that the Maghrib is of the Arabs, a part of Arab legacy, fostered by the magnificent resources of the Arabic language, will play an increasing part in their culture. And, (3) the developments in the three sister countries will naturally be somewhat at variance with each other, Algeria will probably be in the vanguard of accepting French ideals, combining them with socialist and *avant-guard* tendencies.

I shall now attempt a brief description of each of the three components of the Maghrib.

MOROCCO

From 1912 to 1956 Morocco was divided into three zones : a French protectorate, a Spanish Pr6tectorate, and the international zone of Tangier. Morocco became an independent sovereign state in 1956. A Constitution was adopted by referendum and came into force on December 14, 1962. It was based on the French Constitution providing a two-house elected legislature with limited legislative power, and a considerable degree of over-all power vested in the Monarch. The House of Representatives is elected directly by the people for four years, and the House of Counsellors is elected by towns and provincial councils, and by bodies such as trade unions, chambers of commerce and industry, for six years. King Hassan II succeeded on the death of his father, Muhammad V, in 1961. As sovereign Head of State, he appoints the Prime Minister and other Ministers and has the right to dissolve Parliament.

Political Parties : Istiqlal Party ; National Union of Popular Forces ; Popular Movement ; Socialist and Democratic Party ; Constitutional Democratic Party ; Front for the Defence of Constitutional Institutions. Communist Party is illegal.

Place and People : Area 166,000 sq. miles ; with a coast line of 1000 miles.

Natural Resources : Economy depends heavily on primary industries, with agricultural products as the mainstay. Nearly 70 per cent of the people live off the soil. Foreign earnings are mainly from minerals, principally rock phosphate. Also significant amounts of iron ore, manganese, lead, zinc and cobalt are produced. Some coal, gas and oil is available for local consumption. Fishing is a major industry, with 3400 boats catching a total about 200,000 tons in 1965.

Population : Estimated at 13,00,726, in July, 1967. Foreigners, 180,000.
Capital : Rabat (355,000) ; the economic nerve centre is Casablanca (*al-Dar al-Bayda*). Principal cities : Marrakesh (255,000) ; Fez (*Fas*), 235,000 ; Meknes (185,000) ; Oujda (130,000), and Tangier (110,000). Tangier is the summer capital for two months a year.

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Economy : Currency, Dirham (DH), introduced into the national currency as a unit in October, 1959. 12.15 dirhams=1 £ sterling.

Budget : The 1967 budget allowed for expenditure of over 2,219 m. DH. and revenue of 2,108 m. DH. 1966, Exports : 2168m. DH ; imports, 2417 m. DH. Main suppliers and consumers : Common Market countries, United Kingdom and United States. Trade with the U. K. is on the way to rapid development, and the tourist trade is on the increase.

Social Scene : Islam is the established religion, and the official language is Arabic, but French and Spanish are spoken as subsidiary languages. Broadcasting is mainly in Arabic ; also in Berber, French, Spanish and English from Rabat and Tangier. Television has been introduced since 1962, and is in Arabic and French.

Education : In 1966, 1,030,201 children were attending schools at the primary stage & 156,000, secondary education ; two Universities in Rabat (Mohammed V) and Fez (Qarawin), 8000 students.

Communications :

Roads : The communications are very well developed in Morocco. This is one of the tourist attractions. Total, 32,000 miles, of which 11,000 miles are metalled.

Shipping : along more than 1,200 miles on the coast-line. In 1964, 12 ports handled 15m. tons cargo. Main port : Casablanca. Mohammedia is main petroleum port.

Air transport : Main airports, Anfa and Casablanca serve the city of Casablanca, and there are nine other fields. Royal Air Maroc is a joint venture by government and private owners, including Air France.

A digression may here, perhaps be permitted :

Now that students' activities are so much in the air, an anecdote of the students at Fez (Morocco) may not be without interest. In the beginning of this Century, the Muhammadan students of Fez, in

Morocco, were allowed to appoint a sultan of their own, who reigns for a few weeks, and is known as *Sultanu 't-tulaba*, "the Sultan of the Scribes." This brief authority is put up for auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. It brings some substantial privileges with it, for the holder is freed from taxes thenceforward, and he has the right of asking a favour from the real sultan. That favour is seldom refused; it usually consists in the release of a prisoner. Moreover, the agents of the student-sultan levy fines on the shopkeepers and householders, against whom they trump up various humorous charges. The temporary sultan is surrounded with the pomp of a real court, and parades the streets in state with music and shouting, while a royal umbrella is held over his head. With the so-called fines and free-will offerings, to which the real sultan adds a liberal supply of provisions, the students have enough to furnish for a magnificent banquet; and altogether they enjoy themselves thoroughly, indulging in all kinds of games and amusements. For the first seven days the mock-sultan remains in the college; then he goes about a mile out of the town and encamps on the bank of the river, attended by the students and not a few of the citizens. On the seventh day of his stay outside the town he is visited by the real sultan, who grants him his request and gives him seven days more to reign, so that the reign of "the Sultan of the *Scribes*" nominally lasts three weeks. But when six days of the last week have passed the mock-sultan runs back to the town by night. This temporary sultanship always falls in spring, about the beginning of April.

Its origin is said to have been as follows: When Mulay Rasheed II was fighting for the throne in 1664 or 1665, a certain Jew usurped the royal authority at Taza. But the rebellion was soon suppressed through the loyalty and devotion of the students. To effect their purpose they resorted to an ingenious stratagem. Forty of them caused themselves to be packed in chests which were sent as a present to the usurper. In the dead of night, while the unsuspecting Jew was slumbering peacefully among the packing-cases, the lids were stealthily raised, the brave forty crept forth, slew the usurper, and took possession of the city in the name of the real sultan, who, to mark his gratitude for the help thus rendered him in time of need, conferred on the students the right of annually appointing a sultan of their own. The narrative has all the air of a fiction devised to explain an old custom, of which the real meaning and origin have been forgotten" (12).

But nevertheless, an Ali Baba story in good taste!

ALGERIA

Ruled by the French for 132 years before independence in 1962, Algeria has had a turbulent, and often a violent, history. The National Liberation Front (F. L. N.) was formed in 1951, and open warfare broke out against the French in November 1954. In 1958, a Free Algerian Government was formed in Cairo. Finally a referendum was held both in metropolitan France and in Algeria in 1961, and it overwhelmingly approved of President de Gaulle's proposals for independence. Sovereignty was handed over on July 3, 1962, and in September, 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella was elected President of the new Democratic People's Republic of Algeria. But the Government was overthrown by a junta of army officers which set up a Revolutionary Council in June 1965, under Colonel Houari Boumedienne, who became Prime Minister and Minister of defence. The Government is based on a one-party system.

Place and People : Algeria is the largest of the three North African States, collectively known as the Maghrib. It is bounded on either side by the other two, Morocco in the west and Tunisia in the East. Algeria's Mediterranean coast-line is about 950 miles.

The area is about 900,000 square miles, almost as large as Argentina. About four-fifths of this area is arid as it is in the Western Sahara. Northern Algeria has a Mediterranean type of climate with a rainy and a relatively cold winter season, and a dry hot summer. Southern Algeria has a dry tropical climate.

In the northern region the country has two mountain chains, the Tell Atlas and the Saharan Atlas. In the west the two chains separate, giving way to high plateaux which are hilly and crossed by deep canyons. In the east they rejoin and form the Aures mountain block.

Natural Resources : Two large oil fields went into production in 1957, and by 1960 about two hundred wells were flowing. Natural gas was found in 1954 and again in 1956; huge reserves are now known to exist and are steadily being exploited. A wide range of minerals, including iron ore, zinc, lead, mercury, copper and antimony, is being tapped. In 1962, 300,000 ounces of fine silver were produced.

Population : Estimated in 1966 at 12,102,000. Mainly Arabs, but there were 1m. European settlers in 1960, which dropped to about 90,000 by 1966.

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Capital : Algiers (Ar., *Al-Jaza'ir*), 820,000. Other major centres are Oran (270,000), Constantine (255,000), Annaba (155,000) and Sidibel-Abbes (101,000).

Currency : 12 Algerian *dinars* (DA)=1£ sterling. The dinar replaced the Algerian franc of the same value in 1964. Budget for 1967, total revenue, 3,332m. DA. Since 1962, 80 per cent of the trade has been with France.

Output : Rich mineral resources, including large oil and gas reserves constitute Algeria's most valuable asset. Potentially it is the richest of the three Maghribian states. Crude oil production began in the Sahara in 1958. From 1959 when the production was 1,200,000 tons it rose to 26m. tons in 1964/65, the figure being limited by the availability of only two pipelines to the coast. But in 1966 a third pipeline went into service and in 1967 the production rose to 32m. tons.

Shipment of oil to Britain on special tankers began in 1964; Britain takes 700,000 tons annually and France about 300,000. In 1965 gas sales were about 1,754m. cubic metres.

But like many other Arab countries, Algeria is still basically an agricultural country, with much of the population living off the land. The grape harvest is the most valuable; wine is being extensively manufactured, especially, by French merchants and farmers. Other crops include cereals, olives, citrus fruits and tobacco. The best briar for pipe smokers comes from Algeria. There are extensive fisheries, sardines, anchovies, sprats, tunny fish and shellfish; forestry is also gaining importance.

A number of light industries are growing up. They include a steel pipe plant, a railway wagon works, modern grain mills, textile complexes, tanneries, a fruit juice plant, flat gas works and food industries.

Social Scene : The exodus of Europeans after independence has had a serious effect on several aspects of life, but particularly on agricultural land, previously owned by Europeans. Now these farms and businesses have lost much of European skill and experience, and the economy has suffered.

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The country is predominantly Arab, with Islam as the main religion and Arabic the language of 70 per cent of the Muslims. Berber is the second language ; French is also spoken. There are a number of Arabic and French dailies and weeklies. Several radio stations broadcast in Arabic and French. There are television stations in Algiers, Oran, Tizi-Ouzou, Chrea and Constantine, and in 1960 there were 30,000 receivers.

In 1963, there were 180,000 cars and 76,000 lorries and commercial vehicles.

Education : Primary students, 1,400,000 ; secondary students, 82,382 pupils.

The University of Algiers had 4,400 students in 1964. A new University was opened at Oran in 1967. About 2000 Algerians are studying abroad, mostly in France. There are many French teachers in the country, and only 500 Algerians are graduate teachers.

Road and Transport : There are 22,000 miles of roads. New roads are being rapidly constructed, chiefly linking the Sahara oilfields with the coastland centres. The railway is a century old. Total track : 2,500 miles.

Shipping : Algiers is the main port. Harbours at Annaba, Oran and Arzew.

Air : The main airport at Algiers is international. Smaller airports at Oran, Annaba and Constantine. Air Algerie operates through out the country, and also serves a number of European and Arab capitals.

TUNISIA

Tunisia was under French domination for long. In 1959 it achieved independence, the Constitution came into effect on June 1, 1959. Tunisia is a democratic republic, with Islam as the state religion and Arabic as the state language. Legislative power resides in a National Assembly of 90 members, elected by direct universal suffrage and secret ballot for five years. The President as well as the Assembly have the power to introduce legislation. The Assembly votes laws, regulates the budget, ratifies treaties and can revise the Constitution.

The President exercises executive authority. He must be a proved Tunisian by descent for three generations, and be a Muslim. His term of office is five years, but he can be re-elected, provided always that the office of President cannot be held for more than three terms consecutively. He upholds the Constitution, lays down Government policy, promulgates laws and applies them. Provincial administration is divided between 12 Governors, and sub-divided in delegations. Municipal and communal councils manage local affairs.

Party In Power : Dastour Socialist Party. The head of the state is Habib Bourguiba who has been in office since independence, and is a great statesman, hard-headed, practical and forward-looking.

Place and People : Area - 45,000 square miles, with a 750-mile coastline. Rainfall is upto 30 degree, in the north, near the sea ; it is almost nil in the south. Climate dry, except near the coast.

The natural resources consist of agricultural products, such as wheat, barley, dates, citrus fruits, grapes, cork, olives, almonds and esparto grass. The industrial products are phosphates of lime, iron ore, lead ore, tobacco, mercury and salt.

The population is 4,500,000 (May, 1966). There is an increase in urban population, of late, owing to industrial development. The north of the country is richer with more water. 98% of the population is Muslim, the rest are Jews and Christians. There is a high rate of birth, and constantly falling death rate. The population has doubled itself in 45 years, and it is estimated that in 1980 it will be 5,500,000.

Towns and Capital : Tunis is the capital, 680,000. The larger towns are : Sfax (65,000), Sousa (48,200), Bizerta (44,700), Cables (35,000) and Kairouwan, the *qayrawan* of history, one of the oldest settlements of the Arabs in Africa (40,000).

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Currency : A Tunisian dinar is about 16 sh. Under the budget of 1966, the expenditure was 135,500,000 TD. Revenue estimated at 100,500,000 TD.

Exports : Olive oil, wine, phosphates, wheat, iron ore, vegetables, lead and lead products, sponges and barley, dates, copper, citrus fruits, live animals, flour and semolina, meat and fish pastes, dried vegetables.

Export Markets : France, Italy and West Germany, Libya, and U. K. Also Yugoslavia, USSR, India, Algeria, USA, Holland, China & Czechoslovakia.

Principal Imports : Machinery, iron and steel products, petroleum products, wheat, electrical apparatus, vehicles and spare parts, sugar, chemical goods, vegetable oils, paper, tea, timber and products, cotton textiles, clothing, glass and ceramics.

Suppliers : France, United States, Italy, Germany, USSR, UK, Holland, Yugoslavia, India, Czechoslovakia, Algeria, China, Libya.

British Trade : Imports 1,754,000 £ ; Exports £ 2,346,000.

Overseas Aid : U. S. 80m. dollars. Also from USSR, Italy, Poland Czechoslovakia, West Germany, France, Yugoslavia and Kuwait.

Main Industries : Processing of local raw materials, minerals, wool, leather and food. Vegetable oil processing is a large industry. There is sugar refinery ; 20 Flour Mills. There are factories of pasteurized milk, making butter, cheese and yoghurt.

There is an oil refinery (1m. ton) which caters for local needs. Newer industries are : two wool factories, 20 canning factories, nitrogenous fertilizer plant, phosphates plant, glass works, tractor and agricultural implements ; steel complex with 120,000 tons capacity.

Nuclear Energy : There are plans for a nuclear reactor costing 15m. TD at Gabes.

Agricultural produce is likely to rise by 5.5% under a ten-year plan in operation. The basis of government reforms is the formation of co-operative units to take over the exploits of the lands held by foreigners.

Law Reform : One of the most significant reforms is the Personal Status Code which forbids polygamy, raises the age of consent

North Africa

for marriage to 18, and makes divorce the subject of court decision. The Tunisian woman is a full citizen. There are women MPs and women take part in all spheres of national life. The problem of family planning is taken up, and birth control clinics set up. The veil is disappearing without the necessity of any law to prevent its use. The dress is rapidly being Europeanized, but in the home and for religious purposes, the *barnouse* (gown) and the *sheshaya* (red cap, without tassel) retain their primacy.

The transport system, radio and television are well developed.

Education : 70% of all population is in schools : in this respect the most advanced Arab country. Primary grade : 770,049 ; 27,000 in college and intermediate grades ; 7,500 in higher and university education ; 2000 each year go abroad, the largest number to France. Adult literacy work is advancing rapidly.

The budget of education in 1964 was TD 5,500,000 ; in 1966 it was TD 9,65,000.

The health organization is far in advance of other Arab countries. 22,000 wandering children have been housed and given training in 22 villages. Leisure-time activities are on the increase. Small-pox has disappeared ; tuberculosis is receding ; malaria has become a secondary problem, and there has been a successful battle against trachoma.

In 1971, there will be four hospitals ; beds for every 1000 inhabitants.

Communications : 6,165m. metalled roads, and 3,5000m. of tracks in good condition.

Railway : 560 miles. Fair traffic.

Air : three international airports, with good business.

From my own experience, Tunisia is one of the cleanest countries I have visited, and comes next only to California. Tunis is a beautiful city, clean, quiet, beautiful, a miniature Paris. The people are soft-spoken and very helpful. French culture is in evidence everywhere.

● I would conclude with the remark that Morocco is the most picturesque, Tunisia the most civilized, and Algeria, potentially, the richest of the countries of the Maghrib.

Why not drop in on your way to Europe, and see for yourself !

FOR FURTHER READING

- I. *General Information* on the Maghrib may be obtained from N. Barbour, *A Survey of North Africa (The Maghrib)*, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1959, Reprinted.
Statistics from : *The Middle East and North Africa*, Europa Publications, 12th edition, 1965/66. Later edition is published but not available to me in Bombay.
 - II. For *Morocco*, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III (first ed), 579 ; s. v. "Berbers (*barber*)", *EI*, I (revised ed.), 1171 ; s. v. "Moors", *EI*, III, (first ed.), 560 ; "Saracens", *EI*, IV (first de.), 155.
 - III. For *Algeria*, see "Algeria (*Algerie, al-barr al-Jazā'ir*) in *EI*, I, (rev. ed.,) 364-379.
 - IV. For *Tunisia*, "Tunisia" in *EI*, I (first ed.,) 847 ; each of these articles contains an excellent bibliography.
 - V. For periodical literature, see J. D. Pearson, *Index Islamicus*, Cambridge, 1958, and its two *Supplements*.
For *chronology*, the *Middle East Journal*, Washington, D. C., is convenient.
 - VI The facts and figures given by me at the end of my survey are taken from the excellent supplement to *The Times* (London), March 7, 1968, on "The Arab World", to which my grateful acknowledgments are due.
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EGYPT

STATED in simple terms – perhaps oversimplified – there are three triangles in the Middle East around which everything seems to revolve. There are three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam – the dominant religion ; there are three races, Arab, Persian, Turkish ; and, there are three principal European powers, England, France and the United States of America. But the USSR and West Germany have already entered the field, and Britain with its depleted economy, is retreating into the background. In action, reaction and interplay, it is these essential factors which must be kept in view before the true significance of any large historical event can be explained and understood.

The changing pattern of society must also be taken into consideration. The Arab either lives in the desert or the village, or in the town ; but oil and its exploitation, is socially drawing the population to urban areas, or urbanizing the life of the bedouin of the desert. Israel has created the problems of disunity among the Arabs and of the enormous number of refugees swarming the deserts and towns of Jordan and other regions. Modernism – whether French or American – is touching the vital institutions of Islam. It is around these factors that we must seek the solution of most of the problems connected with the Middle East.

For our purpose, we shall leave aside the remote past, or the period of Islamic domination, culminating in the rule of the Osmanlis, or European interference from Napoleon down to Ramsay Macdonald, till the advent of Sad Zaghlul in 1922, when the British Protectorate ended and Egypt was declared an independent sovereign state. It was four years earlier, on 15 January 1918 that Gamal, the

son of Abdel Nasser Husain Khalil Sultan was born, the eldest son of his parents⁽¹⁾. His father was a postmaster at a village called Khataba, between Cairo and Alexandria, drawing a salary of 20 Egyptian pounds per month. Although actually born in Alexandria, his earliest memories are connected with Khataba. His father was always worried about the rebellious nature of the boy, and matters came to a head when, in 1933, there was a clash with the police in which some 500 students were involved. Gamal belonged to a revolutionary party, *Hizb al-Fatat*, and the authorities were rather critical about their activities. Later he was dismissed by the school for political disturbances and sent to Cairo for further studies.

Nasser says that he is opposed to communism as it forbids belief in God, an essential dogma of Islam, and the central direction of its policies comes from Moscow. But as an astute politician, he has no hesitation in accepting economic aid from Soviet Russia and lionizing Mr. Krushchev on the completion of the first part of the Aswan dam. But it was noticeable that, at the completion of the second part last year, no notable Soviet leader accepted his invitation to be present.

Nasser joined the Military Academy in 1936 and passed out as a Second Lieutenant in 1938. With him were his two colleagues in the Revolution (Arabic, *thawra*) Zakariyya Muhyiddin and Anwar al-Sadat. He found the army full of corruption and inefficiency and many of his friends resigned, but he stuck to his guns, for, he wanted to reform it in the interests of his country. He became acquainted with Abdel Hakim 'Amir. He was the first Vice-President for some time, but after the defeat of the U.A.R. in the war with Israel, he lost the confidence of Nasser, was imprisoned, and ultimately committed suicide rather than face trial. His so-called confession has been published by some American papers, but it is doubtful how far it represents the truth. His death, however, is shrouded in a mystery which has not so far been resolved.

An event which made the greatest impression upon Nasser's mind was the British perfidy in 1942. They compelled King Farouk to appoint Mustafa Nahas Pasha as Premier, with a pro-British Cabinet, at the point of the bayonet, and on pain of abdication.

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And Nasser swore to himself that he would destroy the British power in Egypt. During 1945-48 the spirit of rebellion was reborn in Egypt and Nasser gathered together a group of young officers who resented the power of Britain, as it throve on Egyptian corruption, nepotism and inefficiency. From 1948-52 the dynasty of Mohamed Aly, the Turk, was his main target. His two aims were to destroy the British as well as the Turkish dynasty ruling over his country. He wished to have an Egyptian government in which the common people of Egypt would be sovereign. Nothing can demonstrate the corruption and maladministration of the army more clearly than the defeat of the combined Arab armies at the hands of the tiny disciplined forces of Israel: not once, but *twice within a few years*. One of the tragic problems of the Middle East is the State of Israel. The avowed object of the Arabs is to "wipe out" Israel and to give back the lands held by the Arabs for more than a thousand years to the sons of the soil, now refugees over a wide area mainly in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It is a tragic problem, because there is no meeting ground between Israel and the Arabs. Jewish ambition has been strengthened by the Hitlerian crime of the destruction of 6 million Jews who were shot, killed, burnt or banished. But why the Arabs are made to pay for the crimes of Hitler's Germany is one of the great tragedies of modern times. The historian Toynbee has written very ably and sympathetically about the question, but it is very doubtful whether any one is willing to listen to the urbane voice of history and learning⁽²⁾.

Nasser relates the events of 1953 in dramatic terms. It was a matter of destiny that he was spared to accomplish the coup which led to King Farouk's abdication and departure from Egypt on July 24, 1952. In the words of Farouk to Nasser, "You have done to me what I would have done to you". But this is not to be believed; had Farouk got Nasser into his clutches, he would have done to him as he had done with many of his avowed opponents. It is distinctly to the credit of Nasser and his colleagues that the barbarous and inhuman method of violence and assassination followed in Syria, Jordan and Iraq was not adopted by the leaders of the Egyptian Revolution. And for this, the credit for the most part goes to Nasser, and no praise can be too high for him in this respect.

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Almost the first thing that Nasser did was to destroy the *pasha* class by the redistribution of land. These landlords led a life of luxury, spent their summers in Europe, developed an 'international' mentality, and were thoroughly degenerate in their personal lives. In 1950, 90% of the land belonged to 5% of the people, King Farouk, one of the most hated of kings, holding some 60,000 *feddāns* (a *feddan* is a little more than an acre). A limit was set for the holding of land, and the excess distributed among the Egyptian agriculturists, known as the *fellaheen*. It is mainly for this reason that for long the strongest supporters of Nasser and his policies were the tillers of the soil; and the most vociferous of his critics were those that were deprived of their so-called 'heritage'. The present parliament gives a fair representation to the *fellaheen*.

In 1956 came the Suez incident. After making promises, both U.S.A. and Britain backed out of the offer for financial aid for the Great Aswan Dam. The only way to get the money was to scarp the multilateral treaty constituting the Suez Canal Authority, to nationalize it, and to look elsewhere for aid. Although the legality of doing away with an international treaty to which there were many parties may be open to doubt in some respects, Nasser's diplomatic timing was superb. He left the rest guessing, took Soviet help and proceeded with the Plan. In 1964, the first part of the Dam was completed, and on May 14, 1964, Krushchev witnessed the diversion of the waters of the Nile. The second part of the Dam has now been completed, and although particulars are not yet available, little remains to be done. The threat by Israel to attack the Dam is a serious matter, and it was reported in the Press that the U.S.S.R. has made it perfectly clear to all concerned that it will defend this project which is a "very dear thing" to them.

Although a large number of foreign pilots left the Suez Canal, Egyptian pilots took over and the Canal continued to function till the last war with Israel. Now unfortunately for Egypt, the Eastern Bank is in the hands of Israel and no shipping is at all possible. The Arab States, particularly Kuwait, are making a handsome subsidy to Egypt for the daily loss that is ensuing as a result of the defeat of Egyptian arms in the recent war with Israel.

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The Six Days War : The greatest debacle in the career of President Nasser was the Six Days War of 1967. After a considerable diplomatic and wordy warfare, Nasser decided to ask the U.N. forces to be withdrawn from Sinai. On May 19, U Thant told the General Assembly that he had decided to withdraw the forces. On May 22, the U.A.R. declared the Straits of Tiran closed, claiming them to be Egyptian territorial waters. So far, India had supported the U.A.R., but *the Times* continued to be critical. On May 24, U.S.A. and Britain agreed with Israel that the Gulf of Aqaba be kept open as an international waterway. Later, both U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. advised Nasser not to start hostilities. The situation developed rapidly. And on June 1, General Dayan, a great Israeli General, assumed office as Minister of War. This was the signal for War.

It was on June 5 at 0745 hrs. (Israeli time) that the air strike on Egypt began ; by 1035 hrs. the whole of the Egyptian air force was destroyed and ten airfields put out of action. Naval action followed. Sinai was attacked on the same day. Jerusalem fell in two days. In three days the eastern bank of the Suez Canal was reached by the Israeli force. Then Syria got a severe hammering. And finally on Saturday at 1930 hrs, the cease-fire came into operation. The position is summed up by Randolph S. Churchill and Winston S. Churchill in *The Six Day War* as follows :

“...Israel had become the strongest power in the Near and Middle East. Israel had shown that she had the most effective Air Force and Army in that area with perhaps the exception of Turkey. With a population of 2½ million as against 40 million in the actively belligerent Arab nations, this was a staggering achievement. It is clear that Israeli supremacy will be the dominating factor in Middle Eastern politics for a long time to come. Only the overt intervention of Russia or the United States, the two super powers, could alter the balance” (3).

I shall not give you the later history which is well known to you. The two parties have not come to any terms for peace. The net result is that Sinai is completely occupied by Israel ; Jerusalem is lost to Jordan ; the eastern bank of the Suez Canal is in Israeli hands ; the Canal is closed to all shipping ; and the Israeli flag flies

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over Aqaba. I shall now end my observations on the U. A. R. by giving you a few factual particulars :

Constitution : The U. A. R. has provisional Constitution since 1964. The National Assembly guarantees at least 50% of the seats to the representatives of peasants and working classes. The independence of the judiciary is guaranteed. A special committee is preparing the permanent Constitution.

Since June 1967, the President also holds the office of Prime Minister. President and Head of State, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Area & Climate : 386,100 sq. m. Hot dry summer, warm spring, and mild winter, with very little rain. *Natural resources* : crude petroleum, phosphate, manganese, iron, salt, nitron, sulphur, kaolin, etc.

Population : 30, 083, 000 (1966), increasing by 2.6% a year.

Capital : Cairo, 4,200,000. Largest towns include. Alexandria (2m.), Asyut (300000), Tanta (300,000). Business centres are Cairo and Alexandria.

Economy : From 1962/3 to 1964/5, the income was greater than expenditure by about. £E 5/600,000 (£E1. 04=£1)

Revenue varied between 1,562m. to 1,884m. Expenditure 1,012m. to 1,206m.

The figures for 1965/6, and 1966/67 are not available.

Principal Exports : raw cotton, cotton yarn, textiles, clothing, shoes, leather goods, etc. *Markets* : U. S. S. R., Europe (including Switzerland and a few other countries).

Imports : metals and manufactured goods of metal, coal, coke, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, plant and other machinery, vehicles, foodstuffs, timber, wood, paper, textiles. *Main Suppliers* : East and West Europe, Scandinavia, Arab and African countries.

Financial Aid : U. S. S. R. gave £E 200 million For the Aswan Dam ; total cost, 400m.

Agriculture, along the banks of the Nile, the chief feature. From 1962, 100 acres is the limit of holding in land. Surplus, requis-

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tioned and distributed among landless peasants. Co-operatives have also been established. The Aswan dam now irrigates about 500,000 acres additionally ; ultimately it will irrigate 1,500,000 acres.

Social Scene : the peasants have been the greatest gainers, but how far there is real advance, is a matter for speculation. 120,000 private cars. 300,000 television sets.

Culture : The Ministry of Culture was established ten years ago. Great increase in artistic life, plays, and music. Generally a rise in folklore and ballet entertainments.

Religion : Islam, about 26 million ; 2.5m. Christians mainly Copts, a very ancient Christian sect.

Education : Free from kindergarten to University.

There are six universities at present. The *Azhar* is the oldest existing university in the world, mainly religious.

Roads : 10,500m. of roads in 1952, increased to 13,372 in ten years.

Canal was deepened and improved in recent years. In 1966, 21,000 vessels passed through 7 tonnage, 274,5m. tons. Now it is completely closed to shipping, entailing great loss which is borne by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and some other contributories.

Air Lines : U. A. R. air line 230m. passengers. Small, but well run.

The Great Aswan Dam will create an artificial lake of 511sq. miles and may change the climate of Upper Egypt. Woods and parks are being planned on its banks. The Temple of Abu Simbel was saved by international aid through the efforts of UNESCO (4).

TURKEY

It is often stated rhetorically that a certain individual represents his country or his age. It is doubtful however whether any single individual can fill the vacuum called "age" or "country". Probably it is more correct to say, prosaically, that the individual, within the limits of time, place and circumstance, was the leading light of a certain movement in a certain age or in a certain country, which produced results of an enduring quality. Such a leader undoubtedly was Kemal Ataturk. The soldier became *ghāzī*, the Conqueror; and the *ghāzī* in time became the Father of the People, Ataturk. His great achievement was to help Turkey draw itself out from the Middle Ages and enter into the twentieth century. What distinguishes Kemal from leaders of a like stature is that he is a Father whom the Turks remember and obey, not a Father whose name is on their lips, but whose teaching is conveniently forgotten. I shall therefore begin by giving you briefly the main facts of his life and career.

Mustafa Kemal was born in Salonica in 1881. He entered Salonica Military School, went on to the Monastir Military Academy, and finally to the War College, Istanbul. He graduated as Staff Captain in 1905. From his earliest days he worked against the Sultan. In 1914 he covered himself with glory in fighting against the British at Gallipoli, and was made a Brigadier and a Pasha. In 1918, he fought against Allenby and saved his army from destruction by a strategic retreat. 1920 was the turning point. The Grand National Assembly declared to the world, through Mustafa Kemal, their President :

"Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the nation. The Grand National Assembly is the true and sole representative of the nation. Legislative authority and executive power are manifested and concentrated in the Grand National Assembly" (5).

Thus came into being the First Turkish Republic, and the first Republic, in the modern sense, in the nations of Islam.

The war with Greece followed soon after and Ismet İnönü drove the Greeks into the sea at Bursa on January 10, 1921. The Greeks rallied and attacked again: but by 26 August 1922, they were defeated, leaving Kemal the sole victor. An Armistice was

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signed at Mūdania in October 1922. A month later, 17 November 1922, Mehmet VI Vahideddin boarded a British warship and fled to Malta. Thus ended ingloriously the Caliphate of Islam. At the Peace Conference in Lausanne, the gentle Ismet Pasha as Foreign Minister represented Turkey; his patience and forbearance were maddening, but in the end the Treaty signed on 24 July 1923 was completely in favour of Turkey.

The Sultanate ended in 1922; next came the turn of the Caliphate. On 20 April 1924, the New Constitution laid down:

1. The Turkish State is a Republic.
2. The religion of the Turkish State is Islam. Its official language is Turkish. Its Capital is the City of, Ankara.
3. Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the nation (6).

The Turkish people offered Kemal the Caliphate, but he chose to be President of the Republic. Kemal's position now was very strong and he began modernizing Turkey. The Roman script replaced the Arabic for the Turkish language. Civil and criminal codes were adopted on European patterns. Polygamy was ended. The red cap and the veil were discarded. Surnames were made compulsory for the Turks, and he himself accepted Ataturk, the Father of the Turks.

A life full of hardships, adventures and...had undermined his health, and he died at the age of 57 on November 10, 1938, and was succeeded by Ismet Inonü. Kemal's lifelong friend. The life and character of Ataturk have been the subject of much controversy. For myself I would accept the judgement of Professor Bernard Lewis in his magistral work, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (7).

"Kemal Ataturk was a man of swift and decisive action, of sudden and often violent decision. A tough and brilliant soldier, hard drinker and *vencher*, he was in all things a man of immense will and abounding vitality. But by his contemporaries he was often called a dictator, and in a sense he certainly was. But in saying this, one must remember that his rule was very different from that of other men in Europe and the Middle East yesterday and today, to whom the same term is applied. An autocrat by personal and

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professional bias, dominating and imperious by temperament, he yet showed a respect for decency and legality, for human and political standards that is in astonishing contrast with the behaviour of lesser and more pretentious men. His was a dictatorship without the uneasy over-the-shoulder glance, the terror of the door-bell, the dark-bell, the dark menace of the concentration camp. Force and repression were certainly used to establish and maintain the Republic during the period of revolutionary change, but no longer; and after the executions of 1926 there was little danger to life and to personal liberty. Political activity against the regime was banned and newspapers were under strict control. But apart from this, talk, and even books and periodicals, were comparatively free. Critics of the regime from the humbler classes were left alone; critics among the ruling elite were, in accordance with earlier Ottoman practice, punished with governorships of embassies in remote places. Violence was rare, and was usually in response to violent opposition.

“The subsequent rise of military regimes in other Muslim countries in the Middle East has led some observers to see in Ataturk and his Revolution the prototype of these later movements. There is, however, very little resemblance between them. Ataturk was not a revolutionary junior officer seizing power by coup d’etat, but a general and a pasha, taking control by gradual, almost reluctant, steps in a moment of profound national crisis. He and his associates, though imbued with new ideas, were, by status and habit, men of the old Ottoman ruling elite, with centuries of military and Imperial experience. Even after the destruction of the Empire and the banishment of the dynasty, they still had the assurance and authority to demand, and receive, obedience, not needing either to court popularity or enforce submission. And so they were able to carry through their Revolution by a kind of paternalistic guidance, without resort to the whole monstrous apparatus of demagoguery and repression familiar in the European dictatorships and their imitations elsewhere.

“It was as soldier that Ataturk first rose to lead his people as the brilliant and inspired leader who snatched the Sick Man of Europe from his death-bed and infused him with a new life and vitality. His first great achievements were in the heroic mode, in fashioning an army, a movement and a nation from the debris

of the shattered Empire, and driving the invaders from the national soil.

“Yet it is not in these achievements, great as they were, that the true greatness of Ataturk lies. Rather does it lie in his realization that all this was enough and yet not enough ; that the military task was completed, and another, very different one remained. In 1923, at the moment of his triumph, there were many opportunities which might have tempted a military commander to seek more glory, or a nationalist leader to arouse new passions. He renounced them all, and with a realism, restraint and moderation, unusual among heroes, warned his people against all such heady adventures. The next task was at home : for when all the invaders, military, financial, political, had gone, there still remained the problem of rebuilding the country, already backward, now further weakened by long years of war and internal struggle. It is the supreme merit of Kemal Ataturk that he, the Ottoman soldier, the victorious hero, was able to see this, and to make the immense effort of imagination and courage that it required of him. In a society that despised labour and trade, where ingenuity was an infidel trick and the military virtues the only universally accepted standard, the Gazi Pasha became a civilian President, and setting aside his uniform, appeared to his people in a top hat and evening dress. With this new image of himself, Kemal Ataturk, the master of social symbolism, made it clear to his people that, for the time being, the age of martial valour in holy war had ended ; the time had come for solid, bourgeois virtues of industry, skill, and thrift, needed in the hard, unglamorous, but urgent, task of developing the country and raising the standard of living of her people.

“In his political ideas Kemal Ataturk was an heir to the Young Turks, more especially of the nationalist, positivist, and Westernising wing among them. The two dominant beliefs of his life were in the Turkish nation and in progress ; the future of both lay in civilization, which for him meant the modern civilization of the west, and no other. His nationalism was healthy and reasonable ; there was no arrogant trampling on the rights or aspirations of other nations, no neurotic rejection of responsibility for the national past. The Turks were a great people of great achievements, who had gone astray through the evil effects of certain elements and forces among them ;

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they must be restored to the path of progress, to find their place in the community of civilized nations. 'The Turks', he said in 1924, 'are the friends of all civilized nations. Countries vary, but civilization is one, and for a nation to progress it must take part in this single civilization'.

"Unlike so many reformers, Kemal Ataturk was well aware that a mere facade of modernization was worthless; and if Turkey was to hold her own in the world of our time, fundamental changes were necessary in the whole structure of society and culture. Opinions are divided on the success and on the wisdom of some of his policies. If on the one hand there were complaints that the reforms were limited in their application to the towns and urban classes, and brought little change to the peasant mass of the population, on the other hand there were many who felt that the reforms were too violent and abrupt, and caused a rupture with the religious and cultural traditions of the nation that was harmful in its effects on the younger generation.

"Whatever views one may hold on those points, this much is indisputable that, at the darkest moment in their history, the Kemalist Revolution brought new life and hope to the Turkish people, restored their energies and self-respect, and set them firmly on the road not only to independence, but to that rarer and more precious thing that is freedom."

Kemal's dictatorship was characterized by four factors: 1) His basic western outlook; 2) his benevolence, unselfishness, and incorruptibility; 3) his great military prowess; and 4) his power stemming from the Peoples' Party: He followed them, and they followed him.

Taken as a whole, he was the greatest Muslim political leader of the 19th and the 20th centuries, comparable in stature, wisdom and influence to Sulaiman the Magnificent, and Akbar the Great, and one of the three great statesman of our time, with Churchill & De Gaulle.

Immediately after the death of Kemal, non-aggression treaties were signed with England and France in 1939. Russia became uneasy at certain developments and an understanding was

also arrived at with her. But in 1947, Turkey definitely leaned to the west ; in 1949 a cultural pact was entered into with U.S.A. and it received some 5,000,000 dollars. Since then some 1,500 million liras have been received by her from the U. S. A. Turkey's loyalty can be seen from the fact that in Vietnam there is a brigade of 4,500, fighting alongwith the U. S. troops with great valour. As a young Turkish Air-line official told me once at the Istanbul airport "We receive money from the U. S. A., and we have given our hand to them as Turks".

Around 1950, there was a certain amount of religious revival ; but when the First Republic ended in 1960, and a new Constitution was adopted, Kemalist principles again prevailed. The existing government was considered oppressive, and the Army, hitherto entirely neutral, stepped in and seized power. On 27 May 1960, General Gursel took over, and imprisoned President Bayar, Premier Manderes and others. Within one year, May 27, 1961, a new Constitution was adopted by the Assembly and approved by a Referendum. It forcefully emphasizes the democratic principles and the Kemalist conception of Turkey, strongly safeguarding individual liberty and protection against oppression by government.

There are at present four³ political parties, with the Republican Peoples' Party in the lead. Turkey is fairly set on her own policies but like all other "progressive" countries, continues to have a deficit budget, and without western support, progress would be slower.

Brief Facts

Area : 780,576 miles. *Population* : 31,200,000 (1964).

Four-fifths of the people live in rural areas, and 2/3 live off the land ; 1/5 live in urban areas.

Ankara (Capital), 664,000 ; Istanbul, 1,466,535.

Important Crops : Cereals. Tobacco, very good quality grown in the north, near the Black Sea ; the finest, near Samsun, earning 1/4 of all the foreign exchange. Also Cotton, fruit, and nuts. Wool, the finest coming from the Angora goats, called *Mohair*. Grapes, figs

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Mineral Resources : Coal, lignite, iron ore, chrome, copper, and meerschaum, a soft whitish clay, used for pipes. Also, a little petroleum.

Industry : Since 1950, rapid industrialization, with American aid. A mixed economy. Foreign investments are encouraged in commodities like textiles and cement. **State Monopoly :** 1) Tobacco 2) Wine, 3) Spirits, 4) beer, 5) salt, 6) tea.

National Finance :

T£ (Lira) 1=100 kurus

£1 sterling = 25 liras

Budget Revenue, T£ 14, 021m.

Expenditure, 14,422m. (deficit).

Before World War II, there were always a surplus of exports, but since then the situation has changed. There is a State Planning Organization.

Foreign Aid comes chiefly from USA, U. K., Canada, European Six.

Chief Imports from U. S. A., Germany, Italy, and U.K.

Tourism increasing rapidly : 1960=124,000 ; 1961,=144,000 ; 1962,=192,000

Constitution : 21 May 1960, the Second Republic. A Nationalistic, secular democratic, and social state, based on Kemalist principles. The Official language in Turkish. The capital is Ankara.

The Grand National Assembly consists of National Assembly & Senate.

Religion : 98% are Sunni (Hanafi), Roughly, in 1923, the power of religion was broken ; 1950, a revival was to be seen ; 1960 Revolution brings back Turkey to Kemalist ideals. Head, of Muslim Faith : *Diyanat islori reisi*.

Universities : 1. Ankara University ; 2. Ataturk (Erzurum) ; 3. Ege (Bornova, Izmir) ; 4) Istanbul (Beyazit) ; 5) Istanbul Teknik University 6) Karadeniz Teknik University ; 7) *The Middle East Technical University (Ankara)*.

IRAN

Of all the countries of the Middle East, the one with which we are most familiar is Persia, now officially called Iran. But the term Persia is graciously allowed to be used by the "King of Kings" to those of us who are familiar with ancient usage, and find it difficult to change. My remarks will therefore be brief.

People : Many people, both in ancient and in modern times, have passed through or settled in this country. The Medes and Parthians came from Central Asian Steppes. Later came migrations of Semitic and Turkish tribes. Even today Turki-speaking Turks, speaking a variety of dialects, are to be found in Azerbaijan, and near Qazwin, Hamadan and Khwar (Near Tehran), and also in Māzandrān.

Language : The Persian language (*Fārsī*) is a member of the Iranian group of Indo-European languages. As we have seen in the first lecture, it may be divided into *Old Persian*, the language of Achaemenian Emperors, known through cuneiform inscriptions and Avestan texts such as the Gāthas; *Middle Persian*, the language of the Sasanians, known as *pahlavi*; and, the *New Persian*, *Fārsī*, the most widely spoken dialect. Related to it are the dialects known as Kurdish, Luri, Mazandranī and *Gilaki*. A great deal of work has been done on the dialects of Persia by German and Russian Orientalists during the last two centuries.

The Persians are predominantly Muslims and Shiites. The Ithnā 'Ashari form of the Shiite faith, which venerates the Twelve Imams, is the official religion; in fact, the jaw-breaking term means nothing more than "relating to Twelve". Najaf and Kerbala (both in Iraq), containing the tombs of Ali and his son Husayn (the Third Imām), are important centres of Pilgrimage. In the two cities reside the Shiite ulema, known as the *Mujtahids* (literally, *those who make ceaseless efforts for knowing the law*), who continue the pursuit of Shiite theology, and are noted for their bigotry, learning and capacity for rancorous disputations. To these two places, all Shiite scholars have to go, to perfect their knowledge of the "true" Shari'at. The Kurds and Turkomans are Sunnite, and the state recognizes Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The last named religion is accepted as divinely revealed, and possessing a "Book"; thus its adherents are among the People of the Book, (Arabic, *ahl al-Kitāb*; *Kitabī*, *Kitabiyya* in Persian). This is the doctrine of both the Fatimid and a majority of the Twelver Shiites.

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Numerically, the Christians are estimated at 150,000, Jews at 50,000; Zoroastrians, 10-15 thousand. The Christians belong mainly to the Armenian Church and are skilled artisans; Jews are mostly traders, some of them travelling to India with carpets; and the Zoroastrians, unlike their Indian kith and kin, are agriculturists, mostly.

History: The first Empire was that of the Achaemenian dynasty (6th Cen. B. C.). It was destroyed by Alexander the Great (circa 330 B. C.). After a few minor dynasties, there came the Sasanians who ruled over Persia from the 3rd cen. A. D.; its zenith was reached under Anushirwan (Pah. *Anūshak-rubān*, of auspicious soul), A. D. 531-59; after him there was rapid decline and fall.

In the first half of the 7th cen., the Arabs entered upon the scene. The Sasanian Empire was incorporated in the Umayyad Caliphate, 661-750, and later absorbed into the Abbasid Domain, circa 750. After the reign of Hārūn al-Rashid, 786-849, the effective authority of the Caliphate began to decline and a series of semi independent rulers, *Muluk al-tawa'if* held sway.

In the middle of the 11th cen. a new force entered upon the scene. In 1040 Mas'ūd b. Mahmūd the Ghaznavid, was defeated by the Ghuzz Turks, and thus the Saljuq Empire was founded. The Empire was broken into pieces later during the time of Sanjar in 1153. A century later the Mongols swept the country, and the dreaded Hulagu Khan not only destroyed Baghdad but also conquered Persia and founded the Ilkhan dynasty. The Ilkhans came to an end in the middle of the 14th Century, when Persia fell a prey to another monster Timur (Tamerlane), 1360-80.

A truly Persian dynasty was founded by Shah Ismail, the Safavid, who conquered certain parts of Iran, about 1500; The greatest ruler among the Safavids was Shah Abbās (1587-1629); and then, as is so usual in history, there was a rapid decline. The next invasion was that of Nādir Shāh in the 18th cen. (1735-47) who founded the Afsharid Dynasty. They were followed by the Zands, and the Qājārs who ruled till about 1925. It is the modern period, extending over forty years, *which brings us to our own times* (8).

During the later part of the 19th century, maladministration had increased in Iran to such an extent that both Russia and Britain tried to increase their hold on the country. In the World War I, British troops had been stationed at a great many places in the M. E., and a treaty was signed on August 9, 1911, in London whereby Britain gave a loan of 2m. pounds to Iran and promised to reorganise the Army and the Treasury. Thus virtually a British Protectorate was created.

In the meanwhile the Russian Revolution had commenced, and Russia wanted to consolidate its influence over Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. In 1921 Iran concluded a Treaty with U.S.S.R. in which it gave up its territorial ambitions only on the condition that it had the right to enter Persian territory if anti-Soviet aggression was contemplated by an enemy power. It was at this stage that Reza Shah Pahlavi came on the Scene. As an officer in the Cossack brigade, he marched on Tehran and accomplished a *coup d'etat* in 1921, making himself commander-in-Chief and Minister of War. In October, 1925 the National Assembly deposed Ahmad Shah Qājār and gave the crown of Persia to Reza Shah Pahlavi, the founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty. Reza Shah put down internal disorders and started improvements. Compulsory military service was introduced; communications were improved; legal reforms introduced; the Capitulations were abolished; education was reformed on western lines; women were deprived of the veil in 1936, and rapid industrialization was favoured. Gradually his regime became totalitarian, the people had little opportunity for political or social action, and discontent became widespread.

Then came the World War II, 1939-44. In 1939 Iran declared her neutrality, a benevolent one for the Allies. The British Government, fearing German infiltration, demanded the expulsion of all German nationals. This was refused, whereupon on August 20, 1941, British and Soviet troops entered the country, subdued it within days, and forced the abdication of Reza Shah, in favour of his son Mohammed Reza. A tripartite Treaty was signed between Iran, U. S. S. R. and Britain on Jan. 29, 1942, by which Russian and British troops were allowed to occupy the

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country 'for its protection'. This was the result of Reza Shah's hasty and ill-considered efforts to emulate Kemal Ataturk.

The result of this occupation was an increase of Soviet influence in the North, while the British troops remained mainly in the South to protect British interests in the Companies. The Soviet pressure reached its peak by the end of 1946. In July 1946 a general strike was organized by the Tudeh Party at Abadan and there was violent rioting and bloodshed. The old Assembly was dissolved and a New National Assembly began on July 17, 1947. Events moved rapidly and the New National Assembly repudiated the Irano-Soviet Oil Agreement on October 22, 1947, followed by widespread and hectic diplomatic activity between the Allies, chiefly Britain and U.S.A. A ray of hope came from the Shah, Mohammed Reza Shah.

In 1948 he called a Constituent Assembly which established the Senate, a second House. The government gradually came under American influence and the friendship between U.S.A. and Iran grew. The Truman doctrine proclaiming the containment of communism, with a pledge of assistance to Greece and Turkey, was hailed in Tehran as a step in the right direction. Tangible results of American friendship followed; an immediate grant of 10m. dollars for military aid, and hopes of a portion of 250m. dollar Development Loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction were the solid results of this policy. The Shah continued his good work of purging the administration and cleaning the air. Some of the aid hoped for did not materialize and the Oil crisis emerged in all its intensity in 1951. It seemed an easy way for the country to nationalise the Iranian Oil Companies and obtain an enormous income.

The history of the last twenty years in Persia is the history of oil, its exploitation, production and sale. This is what we must briefly summarize at this juncture.

The Majlis, under the influence of a popular leader Dr. Mossadegh (strictly, Musaddiq), was very critical of the Anglo-Iranian Oil concession, and on March 20, 1951, took the momentous decision to nationalise the oil industry. Britain reacted

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sharply to this, and the Foreign Secretary replied that all necessary action would be taken to protect British lives and British interests. After some changes in the Cabinet, Dr. Mossadegh took over as Prime Minister and rejected the British offer of negotiations. The U.S.A. was generally favourable to Britain, but the dispute proved a long-drawn-out affair.

The following chief events may be mentioned :

On May 26, 1951, the matter was referred to the International Court of Justice at the Hague by Britain, and they issued a mandatory injunction.

After much diplomatic activity, Iran agreed to open negotiations with Britain, who accepted Nationalization on the condition that adequate compensation be paid and the British personnel be in charge of technical supervision.

On September 29, 1951, Britain brought the matter before the U.N. Security Council.

The Nationalists however stood out for the following 7 demands :

1. Expulsion of the U.S. Military Mission ;
2. Legalization of the Tudeh Party ;
3. Recognition of Communist China ;
4. Rejection of the Foreign Aid Programme ;
5. Release of political prisoners ;
6. End of the Martial Law in the oil fields region ;
7. Nationalizing of the Bahrein Oil fields where an American Company was producing 10 million barrels of oil a year.

The oil disputes led to the stoppage of the flow of oil and the end of Iran-British relations. The relations with the U.S.A., also, as a consequence, worsened. Internal confusion and lack of funds followed, but Mossadegh returned to power and the Majlis passed the land-reforms decree in 1952. As a result, normalcy was attained when General Zahedi staged a coup and took over the reins of government from Mossadegh. He immediately appealed to the U.S.A. for financial aid.

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In 1953-54 a Consortium of eight companies was effected whereby England obtained 40%, U.S.A. 40%; and the rest of the 20% was divided between Iran and Britain on the one hand, and U. S. A. on the other. Zahedi then resigned and an elder statesman, Husain Ala, took over and steered the course of Iranian amity with the U.S.A. with success. This in turn was suspected by the U.S.S.R. and they began to exert pressure. Since 1955 a steady economic policy of friendliness with the U.S.A. has been pursued.

The root of the problem in Iran is the lag between the hopes of the intelligensia and the rising middle classes, and the lack of capacity of the state to fulfil these expectations.

The friendship of the U. S. A. has to be offset by the opposition of Cairo for Iran's pro-Israel policy, and Soviet suspicion. In all this shelter of conflicting interests, Mohammed Reza Shah seems to have consolidated his position as a wise and patient ruler.

Brief Particulars

Geography: An interior plateau, 3/5000ft. high, ringed by mountains, Damavend, 18,7000 feet. Extremes of climate from 130 to 30 F. The land is arid for the most part, but rain in N and NW.

Life: Settlements in groups of villages where water available. Many nomadic tribes. Oil industry.

Races: Iranian, or Irano-Afghans. Bakhtiari tribes, nomadic. Some Turki influences, as well.

History: Achaemenid Empire, 533 B.C. to 330 B.C., Alexander's Conquest; Sasanians, 7th cen. till Muslim Conquest. The Muslim Conquest, Battle of Qadisiya, A. D. 637. Abbasids. Saljuqs, till 12th cen. Safavids 16th cen.; Shah Abbas 1587-1629. European influence starts in 18th cen.; Qajars, 18th cen. to 1925.

Wars with Turkey and Russia; increased foreign intervention.

World War I: Iran Neutral.

1923, Reza Khan becomes Prime Minister; 1925, Reza Shah crowned. Modernization, autarchy, unveiling of women.

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1941, Allied invade Iran, Reza abdicates, Mohammed Reza succeeds.
1951, Oil Industry nationalized.

1954, Eight company Consortium. Shah's power increases.
Earthquakes.

1960, Crown Prince Reza Kurush born.
Good relations continue with U.S.A.

Area : 628,000sq. miles. *Population* : 22 million.

Currency : 1 rial=100 dinars. £1=210-214 rials.

Budget cannot be balanced without borrowing

Education : Primary enrolment, 1,719,353.

Higher Education ; 49 institutions, 25,000 pupils.

Universities : (1) Tehran (2) Jundeshapur (Ahwaz) (3) Isfahan
(4) Meshad (5) Pahlavi (Shiraz) (6) Tabriz.

Constitution : 30 December 1906, Amended, 1949.

Executive power is with the President (Shah). Legislature, two houses.

Religion : Majority, Shiites ; 5% Sunnites. 150,000 Christians, mostly Armenians. 50,000 Jews, mostly traders. 10-16,000 Zoroastrians, headed by the *Moubad*.

Agriculture : 5-10% land, cultivated. Chief crop, wheat, Rice of good quality, Millet, Maize.

Fruits of great importance. Apricots (finest in the world). Grapes, Citrus, cherries, pears, apple and strawberries. Dates.

Commercial Crops : Cotton, Silk, Opium. *Minor crops* : Tea and Tobacco.

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FOR FURTHER READING :

For particular countries and topics : The Encyclopaedia of Islam. 1st edition, London Leiden, 4 vols. and *Supplement*. The second edition is in course of publication. See particularly 'Arabs', 'Arabiyya' in Vol. I (rev. ed.), 324f. ; 'Persia', III, 1038 ; and 'Turkistan', 'Turkeman', and 'Turks', IV, 895-972.

General Background :

1. *The Middle East : a political and economic survey.* Royal Institute of International Affairs (Oxford University Press), London, 1950, and later editions.
2. Dón Peretz, *The Middle East Today.* Holt, Rinchart and Winston, New York/London, 1967.
3. George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in world Affairs.* Cornell/New York, 3rd edition, 1967.
4. W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East : a physical Isocia and regional geography.* Methuen, London, 5th edition, 1960

For Factual Information :

The Middle East and North Africa. Europa Publications, London, 12th edition, 1965-66.

Atlas of the Arab World and The Middle East. Macmillan, London, 1960.

For Chronology of Events. see the summaries in the *Middle East Journal*, Washington, D. C., and for *Constitutional Changes* see 'Dustūr', EI, I (rev. ed.), 638.

Notes

- (1) P. Mansfield, *Nasser's Egypt* (Penguin, 1965), 32; also Robert St. John, *The Boss* (Earker, London, 1960)
- (2) Of Toynbee's many articles in various journals and especially in *The Times* (London), attention may be drawn to the last one known to me namely, "Aspects of Arab History" in *Listener* (London), 5 September 1968 293-95.
- (3) Heinemann, London, 1967, p. 192. The details are from the same work
- (4) The above particulars are taken from *The Times* (London), March 7, 1968, page VIII.
- (5) Geoffrey Lewis, *Turkey* (London, 1960), 61.
- (6) *op. cit.*, 82.
- (7) From the reprint of 1965 (London), pp. 284-87.
- (8) The literature on Persian History is voluminous and the *Ency. of Islam* gives the main sources. For the 20th cen. see Peter Avery *Modern Iran*, Benn, London, 1965.

POST SCRIPT

These lectures were delivered in 1969; the uncovered span upto 1985, therefore, requires a brief post-script :

The region which Fyzee called the Middle East is now more commonly named as West Asia and North Africa. It includes. :

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen (North) & Yemen (South). Of these, Fyzee selected six countries as most important ones. If he had the chance to revise his selection today, the choice would have gone in favour of Libya to the exclusion of Morocco; and he would have added Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to make the total 8.

Now the post-script :

Morocco : New Constitution 1972.

—One more important party : Istiqlal of Allal al-Fassi inadvertently omitted in Fyzee text.

Algeria : Ben Bella, the first President after Independence, overthrown by C-in-C Col. Houari Boumedienne in 1965. Boumedienne died in December, 1978 to be succeeded by Col. Bendjedid Chadli who was elected President in February, 1979 and re-elected in 1984 for another 5 years. Currency : (1984) \$1 = 6.8 AD. (Against Fyzee's \$1 = 12 in 1965).

Tunisia : Constitutional amendment, 1974, designates PM as President's successor and allows for appointment of a president for life (1980). Bourguiba became President for life (1975). Hedi Nour, Prime Minister, fell ill and replaced by Md. Mzali. Pol. Parties were allowed (1981) provided they rejected violence and religious fanaticism and were not dependant ideologically and materially on any foreign group. Communist Party, banned since 1963, was also officially recognised, 1982.
— Independent since 1956.
— Area 63, 170 sq. miles.

Egypt : Nasser dies Sept. 28, 1970. SADAT succeeds. New Constitution (1971) : UAR again becomes Egypt. War against Israel (1973). Visit to US (1975). Abrogates treaty with USSR (1976) Egypt-Israel disengagement and no-war pact (1975). SADAT visits Israel, 1977. Camp David agreement (1978) leading to peace treaty signed in 1979 providing phased withdrawal from SINAI. Dip. relations with Israel (1980). SADAT assassinated (1981, Oct. 6.) Husni Mubarak becomes President; re-elected in 1984. Since 1982 (recall of ambassador from Israel) brotherly relations with Arabs; re-enters OIC (1984).

—Area 385229 sq. miles (inhabited & cultivated territory 13,587 sq. miles only).

—Population(1982) Above 4 1/2 Crores.Cairo, above 5 m. (1976).

—Currency : \$1 = 9695 milleems (1000 m. = 100 Piastre = £E1).

Turkey

.. Constitution : (1982) envisages single-Chamber legislature with 5 years term. President's term is 7 years and a temporary article appended thereto automatically installed the incumbent President of NSC (Nat. Sec. Council which took over in Sep. 1980) as head of the State for 7 years assisted by NSC which becomes President's Council.

In 1950 elections. Democrats emerge victorious against Inonu's Peoples Party. Jalal Bayar President, Adnan Mendres Prime Minister. Cyprus becomes independent (1960), Coup (1974), Turkey occupies northern Cyprus (1975) and independent Turkish North Cyprus Republic declared (1983).

In the wake of Dem. vs Rep. quarrel, General Gursel takes over, May 1960. Adnan Mendres executed, Jalal Bayar imprisoned for life. New constitution (1961). PP wins 1961 elections; JP (Justice Party = Democrats) under Suleiman Demirel wins 1975 elections. Gen. Cevdet Sunay succeeds Gursel (1966) Political anarchy and violence continues. Sunay succeeded by Senator Fakhri Koruturk (1973). Islamic drift. Turkey attends, first time, Islamic Summit (March 1974) VIOLENCE continues, Islamic Fundamentalists demonstrate for Shariah violently. Koruturk's term expires (April 1983). Pol. Parties could not agree on any one name for presidency. VIOLENCE and political murder continue Coup (Sept. 1980). by Gen. Kenan Evren. Bulent Ulusu Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal Dy. Prime Minister. New constitution, (1982). Gen. Elections (Nov. 1983). Motherland party, 3rd in position. Marshal Law continues in 54 of 67 provinces. Press and Unions under strict control. Area 300948 Sq. m. (2,91,773 sq. miles Asian Turkey or Anatolia, and 9,175 sq.miles European Turkey or Thrace). Population : Above 4 1/2 Crores (1982), Ankara 13.77 lakhs. Istanbul 27.72 lakhs (1982)

...Currency : 1\$ = TL 357.7 £1 = 495 TL

Iran

More than US 800 m. poured into Iran. 1945-60. RCD 1964 (Turkey, Pakistan & Iran). Prime Minister Mansoor assassinated in 1965 reportedly at the instance of the Imam Hoveida, Prime Minister (1965-77) Shah's Coronation celebrations (1967), kingship's 2509 years anniversary celebrations (1971). SAVAK's activities / atrocities strengthened opposition. Demonstrations. Political Violence. In January 1979 Shahpur Bakhtyar, Prime Minister

adopts conciliatory measures, but, *too late*. Shah leaves Iran on 15th January, 1979 in the wake of rightists and *leftists* both opposing him *Imam Khumaini* who was in Iraq for 14 years, as opponent to white revolution's 'farce', came to France in Oct., 1978, established an Islamic Revolution Council in January 1979 and named Mehdi Bazargan, Prime Minister (CLASH with US. 4 Nov., '53, American hostages to face trial; bad relations with US. for 14 months, resolved on Shah's death in Egypt 27 July 1980; release of hostages, 20 January 1981).

By a Referendum, 'Do You Favour Islamic Republic' Iran unanimously became Islamic Republic (March 1979), Constitution adopted by referendum (Dec. 1979) : President for 4 years, Majlis of 270 for 4 years (A Council for protection of Constitution, of 12 members, to supervise all legislation, of them a few to be nominated by Imam). Vilayati Faqih, in the Constitution to play the role of Imam *Akhiruzza-man* during his *Ghaibah*. A Council of Experts of 83 members (elected Dec. 1982) to elect one, three or 5 persons to act as council of leadership after Imam Khumeini passes away. After Constitution, Bazargan resigns. Rajai became Prime Minister and Bani Sadr President. Bani Sadr leaves Iran, June 1980, for ever. BAHUNAR Prime Minister and Rajai President, both killed in August 1980. KHAMINA'I president, Musawi Prime Minister, re-elected in 1984. Mujahideen-e-Khalq main opposition group, Tudeh (Comunist Party) come next. Tudeh Secretary-General Nureddin Kianuri arrested, Former Foreign Minister Sadiq Qutb Zadeh executed.

Next to the Imam, in importance, are Ayatullah Muntazari and Ayatullah Shariat-madari. Revolution gives utmost importance to two of his Shaheed writers, Murtaza Muttahhari and Shariati who happen to be its best exponents. KAIHAN, the spokesman newspaper, is published in English, Arabic and Persian. 22 Universities (8 in Tehran) : closed after revolution, reopened in 1983

Shatt-al Arab Issue : 1937 treaty gave Iraq sovereignty over it. In 1965 Iran decided to abrogate it. 1975-treaty defined borders/frontiers according to Thalwig line i. e. middle of the deepest shipping channel. In 1980 Iraq decided to abrogate it (to revert to 1937) and Iraq-Iran War started in Sept. 1980. War continues till today, the end of 1985. Iran demands 160 million in repatriation as war damages and President Saddam's removal. So far, 5 lakhs killed or wounded.

Area : 636296 Sq. m., Population more than 4 crores (1980),
Curreney \$1 = 122.7 Riyal, £1 = 98.6 R. (1984)

— A. R. BEDAR

RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI

by
A. J. Kidwai

Rafi Ahmad Kidwai belonged to that vintage of educated youth who influxed into the national movement in the twenties. Actively involved in the campaign to get the MAO College closed in response to Gandhiji's boycott call, he took to a life of deprivation in public service till the time he breathed his last.

Rafi operated from the backbenches, getting pro-Government speakers, hooted down, countering informers of the principal against student rebels by organising eavesdropping of the principal's room exposing a tale teller against the rebels. His interests were practical and organisational. He had already begun practising the arts of least visibility and driving of cars from the backseat. That remained his style all his life.

Rafi's interests and activities remained intensely political. These involved intermittent spells of jail going between 1920 and 1945.

He left college barely six months before he was to take his law degree. But unlike most Muslim entrants into the national movement, he did not come to it through the Khilafat Movement. Both Hindu and Muslim revivalisms were rampant in the movement. While most Hindu leaders harked back for inspiration to a past of India free from the Muslim incubus, Muslim leaders waxed eloquent about the early glories of Islam. Both Muslim and Hindu scriptures were being profusely quoted in support of the movement.

Rafi had no heart in these revivalisms. He was unfit for emulating the model of Muslim revivalists. He wore no beard, could not punctuate his speeches with quotations from the Koran, never swore, cursed or blessed in the name of Allah, did not spout Urdu poetry, never harked back to the early glories of Islam and kept away from purely Muslim organisations. That is why even in the fullness of time he never qualified for the Muslim show window of the movement.

He opted out of the Khilafat Movement with a scarcely heard whimper and joined the national movement as a Congressman, pure

and simple, committed to its purely political and economic goals. But this crucial decision of his life enabled him to travel much farther with the national movement than many of his Muslim contemporaries. His driving urge for national freedom did not flag when Hindu and Muslim revivalisms broke apart and the Muslim drift began away from the Congress.

Privately, he was no less a Muslim than those who wore religion on their sleeves. He had a deep and dumb religious faith which was more attracted to Islamic teachings of self-denial and self-abnegation than its permitted indulgences. Thus he would fast for all the thirty days of the month of Ramzan and perform the marathon Taraviah prayers in the last three nights of the fasting month on his feet all the time. He despised all chattels of existence except his personal clothes. He loved books but gave them away after having read them and did not even possess a library. His giving was furtive and he tried not to let his left hand know what he gave from his right hand. He began to harden his body for a long career of intermittent jail going. He neither drank, nor smoked, nor chewed betel leaf. He would lie down in noonday Sun of May and June to train his body for the heat of prison cells and would never allow the cheaply hired coolie to pull the ceiling fan during the hot weather. His jail going was without any fuss of garlands or brave declarations in Court or photographs in newspapers. In fact he never offered himself for arrest through dramatic acts of Satyagrah but busied himself with the nuts and bolts of the struggle with the least visibility till the police could catch up with him and take him to prison. Often they found the charges framed against him hard to prove but they could get away with them only because Congressmen were forbidden to defend themselves. For many years after he joined the struggle, he was a faceless worker hardly seen on public platforms, unheard of in newspapers so that the police found it difficult to recognize him. His returns from Prison were also quiet and casual.

Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was essentially a man of action rather than a man of articulate thought. He acted on hunches instead of a carefully articulated theory. His decisions both during the movement and later in administration were quick like lightning.

He found his forte for organisation, in December, 1921 soon after he had joined the movement. He had gone to Allahabad to attend a meeting of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee where the police swooped down upon the meeting and arrested its 55 participants. Rafi escaped arrest because of his habitual attachment to backbenches. He was in fact standing at the rear and taken for a spectator. He was

nowhere in the succession list for the Secretaryship of the Provincial Congress Committee which had been drawn up by Jawaharlal Nehru on his own arrest. The succession, therefore, went to a second ranker who on his own arrest a few weeks later appointed him Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. That was his first experience of using his organizational skills and flair in the service of the movement in the Province. He ran it for nearly two months after which he was arrested and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. But that was his minor tryst with destiny because he was destined to grasp the rudder of the U.P. Congress again and again at all critical phases of the Struggle.

On his release from Prison in the closing months of 1922, he joined the Swaraj Party of Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das and rapidly rose in the estimation of Motilal for his organisational skills and practical flair. In 1926, he stood as Swarajist Candidate for the Muslim constituency of Oudh in U.P. and was elected. In Delhi, he rose rapidly in the esteem of Motilal Nehru, was made chief whip of the party and finally its General Secretary. The Swaraj Party was in no commanding position in the Central Assembly and had to work together with Jinna's predominantly Muslim Independence Party and Malviya's Hindu nationalist party to obstruct the Government in the Assembly. Rafi was an effective and resourceful whip, but the tactics and manoeuvres which went into his party's successes in the Assembly vote have died with him and his contemporaries. Inside the party he helped Motilal in his tussles with his chief opponents, Vithalbhai Patel and Srinivas Iyengar.

He was helped in these lobbying operations by the style in which he lived in Delhi. He lived in a house in Daryaganj close to Dr. Ansari's, which he shared with Shafi Daudi, Yusuf Imam, Shah Mohammad Zubair and Jinnah's lieutenant, Abdul Matin Chaudhary of Assam. The sharing of each others contacts and social linkages by the inmates of the house was of great advantage to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai as whip of the Swaraj Party.

There is no trace of these second rankers in any records regarding the authorship of the Delhi Muslim proposals of 1927. But from a scribbled note on slips of paper in the private papers of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, one finds that these proposals were initially evolved by this group and convassed with the front rank leaders of the parties. These proposals provided for joint electorate and Muslim majorities in Punjab, and Bengal and creation of Sind and NWFP as separate and inevitably a future constitution. They convassed hard for these proposals among the leaders of the parties and achieved a consensus

which was approved at the first All Parties Conference in Delhi in February 1927. But soon after the Sikhs raised the standard of revolt against them while Malviya and other Hindu leaders backtracked on the agreement. So the proposals were wrecked.

The All parties exercises for future constitution making led to the appointment of the Nehru Committee to draft a future constitution for India. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was the Secretary of the All Parties Convention which met in the Christmas of 1928 to consider the report. The convention led to a break over the report between the Congress and Muslim leadership in the person of Jinnah and the Ali Brothers. Throughout 1929, the Congress campaigned for the acceptance of the report by the Muslims. Rafi was in organisational charge of the campaign in U.P. He genuinely believed that the Nehru report adequately safe-guarded the position of the Muslims in the future constitution. The provision of adult suffrage in the report would ensure Muslim majorities in Punjab and Bengal while the creation of Sind and NWFP as separate provinces would give Muslims another two Muslim majority provinces. Besides he believed that future alignments in an independent India would not be on the basis of Hindu and Muslim. Social and economic issue would break up these alignments and there would be no majorities and minorities on the basis of religion. That was the hope of many nationalists at the time but they were reckoning without the deep seated caste and religious alignments in India. The campaign failed. During the campaign for the Nehru report, Rafi came in the first prolonged touch with the Jamia Millia Islamia. The Nehru report was translated into Urdu here and there was frequent correspondence between him and Prof. Mohd. Mujib over its translation and publication. For the rest, he and Jamia's architects remained distant fellow travellers.

By the end of 1929, Gandhiji and Motilal Nehru had despaired of a Hindu-Muslim settlement as a prerequisite for another spell of direct action against British Rule. The Congress boycotted and Round Table Conference convened by the British Government in London to deliberate on future reforms, and in the last week of 1929, the Lahore Session of the Congress under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru called upon Swarajist legislators in Central Assembly and the Provincial Councils to resign their seats and resolved to launch a Civil disobedience Movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. Dr. Ansari and his group of nationalist Muslims were unhappy at this decision and though they did not oppose this decision in deference to Gandhiji, they for some months sulked in their tents and stayed aloof from the

movement for some time. During the Lahore Congress, the Nationalist Muslim Party also met and elected Maulana Azad as its President and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai as its Secretary.

Rafi Ahmad resigned his seat in the Central Assembly; but he had no heart either in the Nationalist Muslim Party or in the symbolic and spectacular campaign of breaking the salt laws launched by Gandhiji. In his view the symbolic Salt Satyagrah would not cause sufficient discomfiture to the Government. But simultaneously with the Salt Satyagrah, peasant unrest was hotting up in U.P. because of a big crash in grain prices and the failure of the Government to scale down revenue and rent. Jawaharlal Nehru's eyes were fixed on the clout which the Peasant Movement would provide to the movement in U.P.

Rafi therefore, quietly opted out of Salt Satyagrah and took Nehru's permission to organise the peasantry in Rae Bareilly which was the storm centre of the peasant movement. Despite ten years of public life he had remained a faceless worker. Therefore, he had initially considerable freedom to move into the countryside of Rae Bariely organizing the campaign. Unrecognised by the police for a long time, he made the waiting room of the Rae Bareilly railway station his pied de terre and would disappear into the villages early in the morning to return late at night. At its peak the No-Rent campaign gave a lot of trouble to the Government, involving arrests, seizures of peasant property and police firings. At last the police caught up with him and he was arrested. But the police had no evidence of any overt act of law breaking on his part. The trial in prison went on for several weeks while Rafi watched the Magistrate's discomfiture like a naughty school boy. Finally, he was sentenced on trumped up evidence.

In jail took place the only spectacular act of Rafi's career during the Movement. He was strolling in the Prison courtyard, when the Commissioner of the Division, H.C. Walton came and demanded why he was not doing the prescribed hard labour. Walton advanced towards him waving his cane, Rafi fearing assault caught hold of the cane and broke it into two. He was pushed into solitary confinement in prison. But the news leaked out of prison. There were letters in newspapers and questions in the Central Legislative Assembly as a result of which he was reprieved and transferred to another prison.

Released as result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, he came back to the peasant campaign in U.P. which now became the principal programme of the U.P. Congress. He was elected General Secretary of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and under Jawaharlal Nehru leadership began hotting up the Peasant Movement in U.P. on the issue of

remissions in rent. By the time Gandhiji returned from the Round Table Conference, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in UP was in tatters and both Government and the UP Congress were ready for head-on conflict. Gandhiji's conciliatory approaches to Lord Willingdon having failed, the Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed, and there was a countrywide round up of important leaders.

Thanks to his facelessness, Rafi escaped arrest in the first round. But he had two spells in prison between 1932 and 1934. During interregnums of freedom and in the face of Government repression, he organised the movement in guerilla fashion during which Satyagrahi bands would suddenly appear in villages and city squares shouting slogans against the Government and would be arrested. Nothing more was possible under severe Government repression but he wanted to keep resistance alive even at a low ebb. This involved also the use of secret methods of communication and finance which were forbidden by Gandhiji but which Rafi had no scruples in using.

During the ebb tide of the Movement voices began to be raised by moderate Congress leaders calling for suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement and return by Congressmen to the boycotted legislature. Jawaharlal Nehru was in prison and there was on one of the same stature to oppose them. But in various congress conclaves Rafi stoutly opposed such a retreat and kept on pushing for keeping national resistance alive. But two major events caused diversions from the main thrust of the movement. The first was Gandhiji's fast against the Communal award separating the scheduled caste from the main body of the Hindu electorate under the 1935 constitution. This led to diversion of freedom fighters into the safer, social reformist activity of the anti-untouchability movement. The second was the Bihar earthquake of 1934 which diverted a large number of Congressmen into safer and meritorious activity of relief. Rafi worked hard to keep the Congress in U.P. aloof from such diversions. In the middle of 1933 Jawaharlal Nehru came fuming out of prison. He scotched the moves of the moderates for calling off the Civil Disobdience Movement and return to the boycotted legislatures. He deprecated safer forms of activity such as earthquake relief work and Harijan uplift as old maidish and reminded Congressmen that the struggle for freedom came first. In a series of articles he proposed socialist goals for the freedom movement and organised a series of lectures in Allahabad introducing the ideology of Socialism to Congressmen. This was the longest spell of freedom, which Rafi and Nehru spent together. During this period they were in complete rythm. Rafi devoured socialist and communist

literature of the thirties voraciously but this like religion disappeared into the recesses of his reticent being. He disliked talking about first principles. He was hell bent on urgent and specific tasks. At the end of 1933, they were both arrested again, one after the other.

During Nehru's absence in prison, the moderates in the Congress raised their heads again. This time they had the support of Dr. Ansari, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Dr. B. C. Roy. Ansari succeeded in getting Gandhiji's support to the move and at the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Patna in June, 1934, the Congress decided to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement and contest the forthcoming elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. A Parliamentary Board jointly nominated by Ansari and Malviya was appointed to run these elections.

In August, 1934, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was released from prison. He came out angry. In a newspaper article, he attacked the Congress Working Committee for having failed the Movement and gave specific instances of members of the Working Committee who had retired to safe living after their first terms in prison. In these personal attacks, he did not spare even Dr. Ansari and Maulana Abulkalam Azad. He accused the Working Committee of trying to dilute the goal of complete independence by use of ambiguous language and characterised the constitution of a Parliamentary Board nominated by Dr. Ansari and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya as undemocratic. Such a violent attack by a second ranker on the Congress leadership would have called for Rafi's expulsion from the Congress. But just then Jawaharlal Nehru paroled out of prison due to the illness of his wife wrote a long letter to Gandhiji expressing the same dissatisfactions with change in Congress policy in loftier language. In the Congress Working Committee meeting in Wardha, Gandhiji saved Rafi from expulsion and in substance the Committee conceded the points he had raised in the newspaper article and subsequent agitation in UP. The Committee reiterated the goal of complete independence and decided to make the Congress Parliamentary Board elective by the All India Congress Committee.

This was the beginning of a controversial existence for Rafi for the rest of his life. His next move was to agitate against office acceptance by the Congress under the new constitution. He initiated a manifesto signed by Jayaprakash Narain and a number of Socialist and leftist leaders in the Congress demanding that the Congress refuse to accept office in provinces in which it secured electoral majorities in Assemblies under the new constitution and thereby wreck it. Jawaharlal

Nehru then in Europe in connection with the illness of his wife, was also sympathetic to the move. The advocates of non-acceptance held a big conference in Delhi under the Presidentship of Sardar Sardul Singh Cavesheer to press this policy on the Congress Working Committee. But the Congress Working Committee prevaricated till after the elections to the Assemblies despite Jawaharlal Nehru's eloquent plea for non-acceptance of office at the Lucknow session of the Congress. Finally after the general elections in 1937, office was accepted by the Congress with Gandhiji's support. But during these controversies Rafi had damaged the chances of his preferment within the Congress organisation further by attacking Sardar Patel and Rajagopalachari as reactionaries who wanted to take the Congress back to the sterile path of constitutionalism. This together with the 1934 attack on individual members of the Congress Working Committee had angered the Congress leadership so much that he was kept out of the Congress Working Committee for the next twelve years.

While Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and the Congress Socialist Party fellow travelled with each other in these protests against the policies of Congress Working Committee simultaneously he came into conflict with the UP branch of the Party. When he returned from prison in 1934, he found that the Congress Socialist Party in UP as constituted, consisted of a medley of elements. Some were genuine socialists, but many of them were communalists and Hindu revivalists or just power brokers. Not only he but many militant Congressmen who had played an equally effective role in the peasant movement had been kept out of the party for reasons of power politics. Conflict broke out between them over control of the Reception Committee of the Lucknow session of the Congress in which he sided with non-socialists. Then followed election for the Presidentship of the UP Provincial Congress Committee. He was opposed by Sampurnand in a bitterly controversial contest in which his opponents even used his Muslimness against him in whispered tones. But his roots in the UP Congress were so deep that Sampurnand was defeated. The CSP boycotted the Executive Council formed by him but came back a year later.

In 1936, by virtue of his Presidentship of the Provincial Congress Committee, he became the President of the Provincial Parliamentary Committee constituted to run the UP Assembly elections under the 1935 Act. He ran the elections mainly with Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant as chief campaigners with himself in charge of the election machine. It was a difficult election as ranged against the Congress was the National Agriculturist Party of UP landlords. They

were rich and supported by Government. The Congress in UP had shed its rich connections during the peasant movement, was poor and short of funds. He himself was falling ill by recurrent heart trouble. Nevertheless, he fought the election largely from his bed with a beside telephone, monitoring the progress of the campaign in various districts and giving directions to the candidates. He supplemented the inadequate supply of funds from the Centre in various ways, signing personal pronotes, exploiting jealousies between landlords to raise money to get a rival landlord defeated. In the early stages of the election, the Congress was not sure of gaining an absolute majority in the Assembly. Therefore, he tried to run the Muslim part of it a private understanding with the Ex-Congressite Muslim League leader, Chaudhary Khaliqzaman. They were engaged in getting the maximum number of ex-non-cooperationist Muslims to be given the League ticket. The expectation was that if the Congress failed to get a majority in the Assembly, it may be able to detach this element from the League and form the Government. This tactic was conceived as a second string to the Congress bow to which only Govind Ballabh Pant was privy.

In the ensuing poll, the Congress with his organisational efficiency and Jawahar Lal Nehru's spell over the masses, swept the election and was returned with an absolute majority. He himself had stood from a constituency but had neglected it entirely and never even visited it. He lost the election but was elected in a bye-election in which the Muslim League hoping for participation in a Congress Ministry did not oppose him.

After the election, came the question of electing the leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly. Purshotam Das Tandon was the most senior and respected leader in the U.P. Congress but he had at the same time a strong Hindu revivalist streak in his make up. Rafi had always been opposed to him. He got round Jawaharlal Nehru who in turn got round the socialist leaders to support Govind Ballabh Pant for leadership of the party. Pant was elected but Tandon remained bitter against Rafi for the rest of his life.

When the Congress Ministry was formed in July, 1937, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai had emerged as the most powerful Minister in the Pant cabinet, ranking second in precedence and having a large personal following in the party. At the same time he had become the *bete noire* of both the Muslim league outside and the Congress Socialist party inside the U.P. Congress. In the Ministry while Pant and Dr. Kailashnath Katju, loaded themselves with a large number of portfolios, he chose to travel light and chose only two portfolios, namely revenue and jails. He knew,

that the central achievement of the Ministry would be measured by its ability to introduce land reforms and cripple the Zamindari system since under the limitations of the 1935 Act, the system itself could not be abolished. He also wanted to introduce Jail reforms based on his intimate knowledge for the bestial treatment of ordinary prisoners he had experienced in Prison, and partly in the expectation that congressmen would have to go to jail again in persuance of the freedom struggle. The ensuing Tenancy Bill conferring hereditary rights of tenure on tenants, outlawing forced labour and protecting them against ejections was a dull piece of legislation in the course of which the house in U.P. used to empty leaving Rafi with a few others on the Treasury benches and few landlord spokesmen on the opposition benches. He plodded through it for the next two years and had it passed. In the upper house of the U.P. Legislature, there was a landlord majority but by a series of manoeuvres he split their opposition and had the bill passed. By the time, the Congress Ministry resigned in October 1939, the bill had received the assent of the Governor. The Tenancy Act remained the central achievement of the Congress Ministry in U.P. For the rest, he was a source of constant nuisance to the Ministry driving them towards courses which would bring them in conflict with the Governor. One of them was over the release of ex-terrorists and Kakori case prisoners. He forced the issue to a point at which not only the U.P. Ministry but also other Congress Ministries resigned and came back again after the Viceroy had agreed to a central policy of their release.

For some months during 1939, he became the acting Premier of U.P. during Govind Ballabh Pant's illness. In those months, came the conflict with the Khaksars who in their para-military formations were camping in U.P. and getting very aggressive. He cracked down on them suddenly at dead of one night and sent them all to prison. This unnerved, the Khaksar leader, Allama Mashriqi so much that he sent the Ministry a written apology and got out of the U.P.

In his personal life as Minister, Rafi modelled himself on the lives of the first four Caliphs of Islam, despite the fact that his Muslimness had always remained unobtrusive and inarticulate. He kept an open house for guests not so much high as low and a large table where anyone could barge in and eat. He was accessible to night innumerable persons with petitions, grievances and complaints came to see him. He tackled their problems with sympathy and despatch. His fund raising capacity had increased greatly as Minister and he used this money with great promiscuity and abandon to help indigent Congressmen, poor

Muslims of the Jamiatul-Ulema, young communists and Royists, struggling Urdu newspapers. Officially, the Muslim League in U.P. was bitterly opposed to him but privately he had many Muslim leaguers as his friends who enjoyed his hospitality or came to him for various problems with the administration.

By the time, the UP Ministry resigned along with other Ministries on the war issue at the end of 1939, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai had emerged as the most popular minister in U.P.

He was appointed Organiser of the Satyagrah campaign in UP which he set about organising with his characteristic efficiency and resourcefulness. At the same time, he held out a furtive hand to Jogesh Chatterji's group of ex-terrorists to undertake violent action when the time came and kept on financing them. He himself was averse to performing symbolic and spectacular acts of Satyagrah and did not offer himself for arrest. But the new Chief Secretary of U.P. was Frank Mudie (later Sir Frank Mudie Governor of Punjab and Sind). Mudie had been Rafi's Revenue Secretary during the Ministerial period and knew his capacity for mischief. He had him arrested under the Defense of India Act and detained without trial. Typical of Rafi's ability to keep cordial personal relations was the correspondence he kept up with Mudie from Gorakhpur prison. He would write to Mudie letters on piddling little problems of detenués in prison and get courteous replies sometimes agreeing to his recommendations.

At the end of 1941, he was released from Prison in pursuance of another jail delivery following the Japanese entry into the War and preceding the Cripps mission to India. While the Congress High Command busied itself in negotiations with Cripps. Rafi busied himself with preparations for the forthcoming resumption of the struggle. As a cover for his activities, he accepted Presidentship of a Communist Sponsered body, the Friends of the Soviet Union which was allied to Britain and the United States in the War against Germany. But the cover did not deceive the UP Government. He was arrested several months before the launching of the Quit India Movement in August 1942. Followed nearly three years of incarceration from which he was only released with Jail delivery in 1945.

In the subsequent UP Assembly elections of 1946, while he was member of the committee for conducting the elections, he was sidelined from the central position of convener because of Congress Socialist opposition to him. But he remained in charge of the elections from the Muslim electorate. By that time, the Muslim League had gained so much away over the Muslim vote that the chances of Con-

gress Muslim candidates looked extremely bleak. He did not want the Congress to be in a position in which it has no Muslim members to induct into its Ministry at the time of its formation. He, therefore, engaged the Muslim League on the widest front during the elections using all pockets and backwaters of local or personal influence or the Jamitul-Ulema to fight the Muslim League. In this way, he succeeded in getting about ten independent or pro-Congress Muslims for the Assembly. In order to divert the attention of the Muslim League, he himself stood from three constituencies and kept the Muslim League on the run, campaigning against their principal foe. He never even cared to visit these constituencies and lost from all of them. He was returned to the Assembly from the Joint electorate constituency of the Universities.

In the ensuing Ministry formation in UP he was extremely reluctant to take up the Home portfolio which was offered to him. He knew that he would not only have to face the Muslim League turbulence initially but would finally have to battle with Hindu communalism which was getting organised both inside and outside the Congress in U.P. That would be the end of him in U.P. But Jawaharlal Nehru compelled him to take up the Portfolio, which he combined with his favourite portfolio of revenue.

Before the Congress could get bogged down in other troubles of that tumultuous period, Rafi was anxious to get through with the abolition of the Zamindari system. Therefore, in the very first months of the Assembly, he moved the resolution in the Assembly resolving on the abolition of the Zamindari System and the appointment of a Committee to draft a bill for the purpose. But soon his problems as Home Minister overwhelmed him so much that he had to give up the Revenue portfolio and concentrate on the law order situation in U.P. First, the Muslim League took the offensive organising communal clashes and disturbances in various districts which Rafi dealt with a firm hand, arresting Muslim Leaguers. He was looked upon as the black beast of the Congress hated by Muslim leaguers who preferred Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant to him and thought Rafi to be the villain of the piece.

But as the partition of India approached, in the later part of 1946, the Hindus took the offensive, led by the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS with whom large elements inside the U.P. Congress were in clandestine sympathy. Programmes against Muslims were organised in various towns of U.P. There was a particularly heinous one in the Gurmukteshwar fair at Meruth where Muslims in the fair were massacred and even the Muslim president of the local Congress Committee

was killed. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai began dealing with this Hindu offensive with the same impartiality and firmness as he had shown against the Muslim offensive. There were no aeroplanes for Ministers then and Rafi rushed about the towns of U.P. in a motor car like a fire brigade, putting out fires, getting communal incendiaries arrested, imposing collective fines on localities where riots had taken place.

Thereupon, an agitation grew up in U.P. demanding the removal of the Muslim Home Minister. It was started by the Hindu Mahasabha but was encouraged inside the Congress by Socialists leaders Charan Singh and several Congress Socialists leaders who thought it was a good opportunity to get rid of Rafi who had thwarted their bid for power in the U.P. Congress for many years. By this time the Premier, Govind Ballabh Pant was so fed up with Rafi's stubbornness and independence that he also wanted to get rid of him. Congressmen went up to Jawaharlal Nehru in seeming sympathy to tell him that Rafi's position in U.P. had become extremely difficult and to advise him to take him into the Central Government. Whether it was Rafi's sense of expediency, or Jawaharlal Nehru's personal appeal to come to the Centre because, he, Jawaharlal, needed him; the result was his induction as Central Minister in August 1947 on the formation of the first Government of free India. His last act in U.P. before handing over charge as Home Minister was to round up all leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha at dead of night and land them in prison. They were released after Rafi's departure.

Soon after Rafi's induction to the Centre, the big anti-Muslim Programmes in Delhi broke out when Muslims were killed or uprooted from their homes. Apart from the old fort of Delhi, his own ministerial house in Delhi became virtually a Muslim refugee camp where Muslims slept on floors in the house or parked themselves in tents set up in the lawns. The feeding and care of these refugees became a big problem for Rafi. But with the help of Jawaharlal Nehru and his rich Hindu friends he got through it. Thanks to his ministerial charge of the department of civil aviation, he was able to transport hundreds of Muslims who wanted to go to Pakistan. Others were rehabilitated in safer localities and towns. But it was a far cry from the recent period when he was being looked upon as a black beast by the Muslims. On the other hand, in Hindu papers of Delhi there were allegations that his house had become a centre of Pakistanis and a staging post for their journey to Pakistan. Rafi did not bother to explain his position. In October 1947, Rafi himself paid a heavy price for the partition of India. His own and a much loved brother, Shafi Ahmad Kidwai who was

Administrator of the Mussorie Municipal Board was killed on his way to the office by Hindu communalists. Shafi had stuck on in Mussorie despite communal riots and had refused to come back to the safety of his brother's ministerial home on the ground that with his departure, there would no influential Muslim left to look after the uprooted Muslim refugees. He paid the price for his courage. On the news of his brother's murder, Rafi flew to Dehradun alone and with tearless eyes buried him. The U.P. Government did not even bother to trace the murderers. Back in Delhi, he busied himself with work as though nothing had happened though his pillows used to be wet with silent tears in the night. Apart from his official duties, Rafi busied himself with care and rehabilitation of Muslims victims of the riots. During this period, he worked closely, with Mirdula Sarabai, Subhadra Joshi and Dr. Zakir Husain.

In the Central Government, he was given an unimportant portfolio like communications partly out of deference to Sardar Patel who disliked him and partly out of the policy of keeping Muslim Ministers at a distance from the main state policies. But he did big things in that portfolio. During the first Kashmir war, he established telecommunication links between India and Kashmir in record time of few weeks. He ordered Sundays as the Postman's holiday of which they had been deprived for long. He set up the first Public sector factory for the manufacture of Telecommunication Equipment in Bangalore. Since, public money for expansion of telephonic equipment was short, he hit upon the idea of "Own your Telephone" scheme under which moneyed individuals and firms could own telephones in perpetuity in return for lump sum payments. But his biggest battle came with JRD Tata over night air mail. Tata opposed the carrying of mails by aeroplanes at night on the plea that most airports were not equipped for night landings. Besides, it would be a commercial loss to the airlines. There was an acrimonious controversy between him and Tata in which many newspapers also supported Tata. But Rafi stuck to his guns and in an acrimonious debate in Parliament, defeated the Tata lobby in Parliament. He put through the Night Air Mail Scheme which was a great success. His last act before leaving the Communications Ministry in 1950 was to set the ball rolling for the nationalisation of the Indian Airlines.

During 1948-50 he also took interest in developments in Nepal, where the Nepali Congress had started a movement against the Rana Regime in Nepal. Rafi had personal relationships with B.P. Koirala and other leaders of the Nepali Congress who had been with him in

Indian prisons. Rafi wanted more active support to be given to the rebels but the Government of India was committed to non-intervention in the internal affairs of Nepal and had posted their police on the U.P. Bihar borders with Nepal to prevent the rebels from using India as their base. Rafi, therefore, arranged surreptitiously with Ghulam Mohammed Bakhshi Home Minister of Kashmir to give him Kashmir police arms. He got hold of the Himalyan Airline owned by a dissident Nepalese Rana and got him to fly the arms to Nepal. He even conspired with an army Brigadier to take arms from an army dump in India but Jawaharlal Nehru came to know about it in time and sharply rebuked him. He desisted. But the timely supply of arms kept up the resistance of the Nepalese Congress till the Government of India intervened diplomatically secured the establishment of a popular Government in Nepal with the cooperation of the king who himself had been a prisoner of the Ranas. In the process of devising a popular Government in Nepal, there were bitter differences between Rafi and Rajagopalachari then Minister in the Nehru Government. Rajagopalachari had devised a settlement which would still give the Ranas a preponderent influence in the new Nepalese Government. Rafi opposed him in a telegram to Nehru in London and proposed a Ministry with the preponderance of the Nepalese Congress. Nehru sided with Rafi in this dispute at which Rajagopalachari was very bitter. He also had other issues in the face. He worked up the agitation against Shanmakhem Chetty for his attempt to let tax evaders including Ghan-shyam Das Birla go scot free and was successful in forcing him to resign. He clashed with Sardar Patel over the scuttling of Jai Narain Vyas and the installation of the Pro-Birla Ministry of Jainarain Vyas in Rajasthan. He clashed with him again over the scuttling of the Bhim Sen Sachari Ministry in Punjab and the installation of the more communal Gopichand Bhargava, as Chief Minister.

During Jawaharlal Nehru's absence in London, the election to Presidentship of the Congress came up. Tandon and Pattabhi Seetharamayya were the candidates. Before Nehru's departure for London, it had been agreed that both the leaders would remain neutral. But during Nehru's absence in London, Patel quietly asked his henchmen to work for Tandon whereupon Rafi also got busy mobilising support for Seetharamayya whom he did not know or care for. But his object was to prevent Sardar Patel from achieving complete control of the Congress machine till Nehru was Prime Minister. Rafi was able to switch sufficient votes in favour of Seetharamayya to defeat Tandon,

thereby, embittering Sardar Patel and the dominant wing of the U.P. Congress against him.

In his interventions in the U.P. Congress, the dominant group led by Chandrabhan Gupta and Charan Singh began liquidating his supporters in the Congress. They were supported by Purshotamdas Tandon & Sampurnand and had the sympathy of Pandit Pant who had become greatly annoyed by Rafi's exposures of growing corruption in the U.P. administration. The dominant group was greatly helped by Chandrabhan Gupta's control of the department of civil supplies which had the power to dispense licences for ration shops to its supporters. A large number of Congress men were thus won over by means of this patronage. The dissidents mounted a big campaign against such misuse of power and patronage and supported their allegations with facts and figures. But in the Congress Working Committee while Sardar Patel was intensely hostile to them, Pandit Nehru kept neutral. The dissidents were asked to apologise on pain of expulsion and a number of them were expelled. The dissidents formed themselves into the people's Congress in U.P. and began to sit on separate benches in the U.P. Assembly. Rafi continued to be friendly with them and finance them.

In 1950, there was election again for the Presidentship of the Congress. Tandon was candidate again. This time Rafi put up Acharya Kriplani against Tandon though they had never got on with each other in Congress politics. Kriplani had also a communal streak in his make up but Rafi considered him a lesser evil than Purshotamdas Tandon. Sardar Patel openly came out for Tandon despite Nehru's protests in writing to Sardar Patel. Nehru did not openly come out in favour of Kriplani although he let it be known that he would be willing to work with Kriplani. The election was bitterly fought in which Sardar Patel used his control of the Congress machine to gain victory for Purshotamdas Tandon. Votes of the Andhra Congress Committee which would have gone against Tandon were disqualified on some technical grounds. Jainarain Vyas, the leader in Rajasthan who was a partisan of Rafi was won over by withdrawal of the cases instituted against him by Sardar Patel's States Ministry.

As a result Tandon won against Kriplani. When it came to formation of the new Working Committee of the Congress, Tandon refused to have Rafi Ahmad Kidwai as one of its members. Thereupon, Jawaharlal Nehru refused to join the Working Committee. There was a deadlock in which Maulana Azad and Rajagopalachari both of whom disliked Rafi worked on him to join Tandon's Working Committee.

Rafi knew that Nehru was going to yield. Therefore, he decided to make it easier for him by writing a letter that he would not in any case join a Working Committee led by Tandon even if he was invited to join.

Nehru joined Tandon's Working Committee, but Rafi knew that the conflict between him and Tandon had been postponed for another day as no Prime Minister would be able to put up with an incompatible President of the Congress. He therefore left the Congress and set about organising a party of Congress dissidents from all over India. This party under the Presidentship of Kriplani was called the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and consisted of all kinds of disparate elements. But Rafi's calculation was that in case Nehru was defeated in the struggle against Patel and Tandon, he would have a party to lead in the country. Fortunately, for Nehru, Sardar Patel died. After his death, then Nehru struck against Tandon. He resigned from the Congress Working Committee and created a crisis. The dominant wing of the Congress left leaderless after Patel's death surrendered to him. Tandon resigned and Nehru became President of the Congress.

Patel's death was unfortunate for Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. Nehru had inherited the Patel built machine in the Congress. Its key figures had surrendered to him. He did not need Rafi. Rafi on the other hand had organised the Praja Party as a second string to Jawaharlal Nehru's bow. He could not live without Jawaharlal Nehru: So he walked back into Congress incurring the charge of inconsistency. He was appointed to the Congress Working Committee but was sidelined in organisational matters. He was appointed Food Minister, in the new Nehru Ministry which was formed in 1952; losing all hope of combatting corruption and bossism in the Congress, he concentrated on the Food Portfolio.

The Central problem he faced in the Food Administration was the regime of controls and rationing. In theory, control was a good thing. But it led to political and administrative corruption and inefficient distribution. Distribution through the normal channels of trade had its own hazards but the profit motive made it more efficient. He therefore opted for decontrol. He was supported by Rajagopalachari, then Chief Minister of Madras who had always disliked him personally. In the Centre, he was bitterly opposed by C.D. Deshmukh and the Planning Commission. There was an unusual occasion during the Food Debate in Parliament when Rafi and Deshmukh spoke on opposite sides. With the grudging support of Nehru who was not wholly convinced of the wisdom of decontrol, he won.

Decontrol was implemented. Foodgrains came out of underground hordes and prices came crashing down. There was a sense of plenty in

the Country. For the first time, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, a much maligned and controversial figure was a public hero. There was praise for him from all quarters and various sections of opinion began proposing publicly that he should be entrusted with one or other important portfolio including defence. But Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was a sad and broken man. He had pulled off the tricks in the Communication and the Food Ministries with his left hand. But he had failed to achieve what he attempted with his right hand. That was to end, reaction, communalism, bossism and corruption in the Congress. On top of that Nehru was preparing to resign the Presidentship of the Congress and entrust the control to the old Patelite leaders who had now sworn loyalty to him. Before, Nehru left for China in September 1954, he went to Nehru, panting with cardiac Asthama and told him "The Spirit of revolt is not dead in me." But he was not to live to implement this promise. He died before Nehru's return from China, on 24th October, 1954, while addressing a Congress meeting in Delhi. He had his final heart attack. He stopped his speech, said farewell to the audience, got into his car, got out of it, walked unaided to his bed, lay down, looked at his watch and died.

His funeral procession was a triumphal procession he had not known in his life. Huge and weeping crowds all the way to Delhi station, weeping and wailing crowds at all stations all the way to his home town of Barabanki in the train.

Now he rests in his grave in his native village of Masauri in the stillness of death, all passions spent, largely forgotten by the people he served.

The maker of phrases survives the maker of things in history. "There is nothing so swiftly forgotten" says Gore Vidal as the public's memory of a good action. That is why great men insist on putting up monuments to themselves with their deeds carefully recorded since those they saved will not honour them in life or in death. Heroes must see to their own fame. No one else will."

Rafi Ahmad Kidwai lacked such forethought and his good deeds have crumbled to dust. I wish he were a maker of good phrases and not things.

— oOo —





ہندستانی تاریخ و تہذیب

اور

علاوہ اسلامیہ کے بارے میں

جلد اول

(انگریزی)

• از •

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