THE INDIAN MUSLIMS

M. Mujeeb

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BY

M. MUJEEB

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PREFACE

IDEAS of what is significant in history are naturally influenced by the contemporary situation, and histories of India written during British rule and after are no exceptions to this rule. A general discussion of such histories or of monographs on special aspects or periods or problems of Indian history would be irrelevant here, but as this book is about the Indian Muslims, it might be said that Muslim historians of India have not, except in rare cases, aimed at an objectivity that would lead to a fuller understanding of personalities, problems, achievements and failures.

The scope of the present work is so wide that a detailed study of all available sources was not possible for the author. All that has been attempted is a thorough study of an adequate number of sources. But a detailed study has to be made, and the main purpose of this work is to suggest a line of study. Briefly stated, the aims of this line of study should be the fullest knowledge of facts, and the application of critical standards that can be regarded as valid for the time and the people of whom the historian is writing. This may possibly lead to that inward experience of the past which Dilthey held to be the genuine form of historical knowledge, and which appears at the moment to be lacking in the study and writing of Indian history.

This book would not have been written but for the encouragement and assistance given by Dr Wilfred C. Smith, when he was Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. The author is grateful also to Dr Charles J. Adams, the present Director and to his colleagues at the Institute for the keen interest they have taken in the publication of this book, to the staff of the National Library, Calcutta, who very generously undertook to prepare a bibliography and enabled the author to make a selection of the source material to be studied. Finally, the author must thank his assistants and his colleagues for the help they have given.

Jamia Millia, New Delhi
20th July, 1966

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Part I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

WHO are the Indian Muslims?

Whoever they may be, and wherever they may be in India, the Indian Muslims take themselves for granted. This is true of all periods of Indian Muslim history, and it is true even now, when a division of the country has taken place on a basis that does not appear to be justified by history. But the Indian Muslims have taken themselves for granted in many different ways, and a precise definition of who and what they are becomes very difficult. The principle of the census, that anyone who is an Indian and calls himself a Muslim is an Indian Muslim, obviously gives no indication of what it is to be an Indian Muslim. If we apply any of the criteria on ground of which individuals can be considered to constitute a community, we are faced with the problem of classifying masses of people whose unity comprehends many diversities the significance of which can be understood only in the light of their historical development.

This book is an attempt to portray the life of the Indian Muslims in all its aspects, beginning with the advent of the Muslims in India. Its account, to be perfectly valid should, therefore, have been based on a series of complete records covering about twelve centuries. What we have, however, are chronicles of political activities and events, and accounts of travellers and observers at particular periods. The political histories are generally poor material from which to draw conclusions in regard to the sociological structure and character of the Indian Muslims during the whole course of their history. The accounts of travellers and observers are illuminating, but they are of value only for the time with which they deal and the aspects of life in which the writers were interested. In the Imperial Gazetteer of India, compiled towards the end of the last and the beginning of the present century we can, however, obtain information about Indian Muslims all over the country. This information is given piecemeal. The District Gazetteers had necessarily to be compiled by different officers. They did not have the same approach and some give evidence of antipathy, of preconceived ideas or of the

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superciliousness natural to those who considered themselves culturally superior. But the Gazetteers have the great value of being comprehensive, and can serve very well as an indication of the complexity of Indian Muslim life, specially of beliefs and practices, of the time with which they deal. They also indicate certain trends of growth in numbers and of developments in culture which are problems for the historian as well as for the student of contemporary life.

Educated Indian Muslims have had their particular way of looking at their community. Islām has, in all countries, promoted urban life, and Muslim civilization has everywhere been essentially urban in character. This has not prevented Muslim society from taking root in the regions where Islām was propagated. But the standards of life and culture have been urban: the ideally good life has been life 'among men', in habitations where the variety of habits, tastes and conditions has provided sufficient opportunity for cultural and spiritual experience. Educated Indian Muslims have, therefore, thought of their community as consisting primarily of city-dwellers, and judged themselves as a people setting up and conforming to standards of city life; the uneducated, uninformed population of the countryside has not been given the consideration to which it is entitled by the very fact of its existence. This is understandable, because almost the whole contribution of the Muslims in manners, in literature, in art, is seen in the cities. But no study of the Indian Muslims can be objective, and, of course, no information about them can be complete, unless we consider both the urban and the rural population.

Let us first form an idea of the diversity of beliefs on the basis of random samples from the Imperial Gazetteer, fixing Delhi as the centre, and proceeding in different directions, one after another.

In Karnāl, not far to the north of Delhi, a large number of Muslim agriculturists were, till 1865, worshipping their old village deities, though as Muslims they repeated the *kalimah*, the Muslim profession of faith, and practised circumcision. In the Panjāb, the North-West Frontier, and Jammū and Kashmīr State, most of the uneducated and many of the educated were superstitious and disposed to running to dead and living saints for the fulfilment of their desires or for relief from suffering. They were spiritually dependent on miracles and magic to a degree incompatible with genuine belief in an omnipotent God.

In the south-western direction from Delhi, in the native states of Alwar and Bharatpūr, lived the Mē'ōs and the Mīnās. They had purely Hindū names or tagged on *Khān* to a Hindū name. They celebrated not only *Dīvālī* and *Dasehrā* which, though Hindū festivals, had acquired something of a national character, but also

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Janam-ashtamī, the birthday of Shrī Krishna, and on the day preceding Amāvas, the night when there is no moon, ceased, like the Hindūs, from all labour. When intending to dig a well, they first built a *chabūtrā*, or platform, dedicated to Bairuj or to the monkey-god, Hanūmān. Few could recite the *kalimah*. Their shrines or places of worship were the Panch Pīrā, the Bhayyā or Bhōmiyā, and the Chahundā. The Panch Pīrā was a stone set up near a tank and dedicated to the Five Saints. The Bhayyā consisted of a platform with stones placed on it so as to protect a lamp and was sacred to the guardian spirit of the locality. At the Chahundā, also called the Khērā Dē'o, which was also a platform, bloody sacrifices were offered to the goddess Mahādēvī. However, it was Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī, believed to be a son of one of the generals of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghaznī, Madār Ṣāḥib, an equally mythical figure, and Khwājah Ṣāḥib, (Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī) of Ajmēr whose heroic or semi-divine personalities loomed largest in the religious consciousness of the Mē'ōs. Pilgrimages to the tombs of these saints were made by other Muslims also, but they entered more deeply into the life of the Mē'ō. The *Sālār*, or banner, of Mas'ūd Ghāzī was worshipped in every Mē'ō village during *Shabbarāt*. The *sālārs* of Madār Ṣāḥib and Khwājah Ṣāḥib were regarded with equal reverence. The Mē'ōs, like the Hindūs, did not marry within the *gōtra*[1], and their daughters were not entitled to inherit[2].

The Mīnās, an allied tribe, practised *dharēchā*[3], worshipped Bhairōṇ, a form of Shiva, and Hanūmān, and swore by the *Kaṭār*[4]. In the native state of Būṇdī lived the Parihār Mīnās, who considered the meat of the cow and the wild boar prohibited, but no other. They received money for a daughter given in marriage[5]. Muslim cultivators in the native state of Jā'ōrā, about fifty miles north of Ratlām, mainly followed Hindū customs in their marriages, worshipped the goddess of smallpox and, for the marriage ceremonial, fixed the *tōran*, a wooden arch, putting the wooden figures of a parrot in the middle and a plough over the door.

In and around the native state of Pālanpūr, to the north of Aḥmadābād, there was in evidence another phenomenon, the sect of the Mahdawīs, whom persecution had forced to close their ranks. They practised *taqīyah*, which means dissimulation, or concealment of belief, passing as orthodox Muslims while they really held that,

[1] *Gōtra* means a family group having the same surname.

[2] Gazetteer of Alwar. Trubner and Co., London, 1878. P. 37 ff. and p. 70.

[3] The custom of marrying a woman who had become a widow to a man of low caste.

[4] A heavy, broad, curved knife.

[5] Bundi State Gazetteer, p. 223.

as the Mahdī[6] had already come, there was no further need for repentance from sins or for praying for the souls of the dead. They were organized in *dā'irahs* or circles, under spiritual heads, whom they called Sayyids, and they married only within their own sect. In the same area were Kōlīs, Bhīls, Sindhīs, and Ṯhākurdārs, whom conversion to Islām had not weaned away from criminal practices or the superstitions of the aborigine.

Across the deserts, in Sind, while there were people of unimpeachable orthodoxy, like the Sunnī Mēmans, the beliefs of the vast majority of the population were more or less tainted with credulity, an inordinate reverence for living and dead saints and Sayyids, and practices which looked like survivals of the worship of trees and rivers. 'The essentially Sindhī cults are based on the two principles of a male fertilizing element in River and a female producing element in Nature or vegetation.' There was the cult of Shaikh Ṭabarī or Ṭāhir, to whom God was believed to have appeared in the form of a camel, and whose shrine was visited on appointed days by a large number of betrothed men and married women. He was called Udērōlāl by the Hindūs, and was considered as an incarnation of the river god, who emerges as an armed chieftain in times of stress to rescue his people. The cult of the river Indus, Daryā Panth, consisted of a simple ritual and was peculiar to the Sindhī Lohānās. The formal address to the deity was, 'Master of the waves, grant a favour.' The cult of the River at Sakkhar had become the worship of Khwājah Khiḍr, and near Ṯhaṯha adoration of Shāh Jhandō, the saviour ferryman. There was the cult of the Crocodile, which was found, not uncommonly, to be related to the veneration of the *Pīr*, or Saint. The vegetation cults were closely associated in several ways with the feminine. Midway between Ṯhaṯha and Mīrpūr Sakrō was the central place of the cult of Pīr Jhārīyōṇ—a feminine plural noun meaning 'trees'. The Pīr's *khalīfah* was always a woman of the Hiṇgōrā clan. An independent form of this same cult was found in the Ghōrbarī district, just outside the boundaries of the modern Ḏēh Jhārīyōṇ. Near the river Richhal was the shrine of Mā'ī Pīr—Mother Saint. It lay within a coppice enclosed by a low bank of earth, about 100 yards in circumference, inside which no man was allowed to set foot, for Mā'ī Pīr was a virgin. The shrine itself was a rude hut from the roof of which a score of cattle bells were hung[7].

Apart from these cults, there were in Sind several sects, some of moderate, others of extreme heterodoxy. The Ismā'īlī Khōjahs of the Panjbhā'ī community were followers of the Āghā Khān. They regarded 'Alī as the tenth incarnation of Vishnū, paid the *zakāt* to the

[6] Sayyid Muḥammad of Jaunpūr. His life and work will be discussed later.
[7] I. E. L. Carter, in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XLVI (1917), pp. 205 ff.

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Āghā Khān, the 'Unrevealed Imām', and instead of the Qur'ān, read a manual prepared by one of their Pīrs, Ṣadruddīn. Their prayers contained a mixture of Hindū and Islāmic terms. The Pīra'īs, who were a community of Ismā'īlīs that had thrown off its allegiance to the Āghā Khān, still retained Hindū customs connected with birth, marriage and death. The Dhikrīs, or Dā'īs, read the Qur'ān, but regarded the commands of the Prophet to have been superseded by those of the Mahdī, whom they followed. They did not pray or fast, but met every Friday to repeat their *dhikr*, or liturgy. Their reverence for their *mullās* bordered on idolatry. Members of the sect of Khadrās dressed like women, called themselves Faqīrs and had a creed consisting of the worship of Bhakrāsar Dēvī or Dēval Dēvī. Her image was set up in what was called a Mar'ī, and a paste of flour, sugar and ghī was offered to her[8]. The Dhikrīs and Dā'īs of Makrān in Balūchistān, the followers of the Mahdi, had set up their Ka'bah at Kōh-i-Murād, near Turbat, and went there on pilgrimage at the same time as the orthodox Muslims went to Mecca[9].

Eastwards from Delhi, in what is now the State of Uttar Pradēsh, and in the central part of Bihār, south of the Ganges, there were sects and sectarian differences, and a belief in the miraculous powers of saints, living and dead. In some areas, there were fairly large semi-converted 'neo-Muslim' tribes. Ghāzī Mīyāṇ's fair, held around the tank of Manēr, might be quoted as an example of a greater lapse from orthodoxy than the numerous *'urs*, or death anniversary celebrations at the tombs of the saints. Here, in summer, a mock marriage procession, starting from the town with music and men carrying the banners of Ghāzī Mīyāṇ, went to the tank. Eunuchs performed the duties of the parents of the mock bride and groom. At a shrine on a mound near the tank women and girls supposed to be possessed by evil spirits prostrated themselves, fell into a trance and danced hysterically. The fair was also an occasion for consuming large quantities of toddy[10]. This, however, was a popular aberration rather than an expression of belief.

North of the Ganges, in the district of Purnea, while there were educated and orthodox Muslims also, the dividing line between the religious beliefs and practices of the lower class Hindūs and Muslims was very faint indeed. In every village could be found a Kālī-asthān, a shrine dedicated to the worship of the goddess Kālī, and attached to almost every Muslim house was a little shrine called Khudā'ī Ghar, or God's House, where prayers were offered in which the names of both Allāh and Kālī were used. A part of the Muslim marriage

[8] Sindh Gazeteer, Vol. A (1907). Mercantile Steam Press, Karachi. Pp. 160 ff.
[9] Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series. Baluchistan. P. 30.
[10] Patna District Gazetteer, p. 69.

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ceremony was performed at the shrine of the goddess Bhagvatī. Goats, fowls, pigeons and the first fruit of trees and crops were offered to purely Hindū deities, in particular the village godling, who was generally supposed to live in the most convenient tree. The most popular deity, among both Hindūs and Muslims, was Dēvatā Mahārāj, with his door-keeper, Hadī. His abode and temple consisted of nothing more than a bamboo planted in the ground, from which were hung an old winnowing basket, a bow, an old fishing net and a hook. The 'Bengālī' sub-caste of Muslims living in the Kishanganj sub-division built little shrines for Hindū deities, generally for Baishāhārī, the snake-goddess. They explained this by saying that according to the custom of their forefathers they had both a Khudā-kā-Ghar (God's house) and a Baishāhārī-Mā'ī-ka Ghar (house of Mother Baishāhārī)[11].

In the Barārat and Bashīrhāt sub-divisions of the 24-Parganas the Muslim woodcutters and fishermen venerated Mōbrāh (Mubārak) Ghāzī. He was believed to be a *faqīr* who had so overawed the wild beasts of the jungle that he went about riding on a tiger, and the Zamīndār or Rājā of the area in consequence ordered that every village should have an altar dedicated to him. These altars were very common in villages in the vicinity of the Sundarbans, and woodcutters never went into the jungle without invoking Mōbrāh Ghāzī's protection. There was a regular ritual for this, performed by *faqīrs* claiming descent from the Ghāzī. The *faqīr* would go with the woodcutters to the spot where they had to work, clear a bit of jungle, and mark out a circle, repeating charms and incantations. Within this circle he built seven small huts with stakes and leaves, the first one dedicated to Jagbandhū, the friend of the world, the second to Mahādēva, the destroyer, the third to Manāsā, the goddess of snakes. Next to this would be erected a small platform in honour of Rūpāparī, a spirit of the jungle, and beyond this came the fourth hut. This would be divided into two compartments, one for Kālī and the other for her daughter, Kālīmayyā. Then would come another platform, on which offerings would be made to Ōrparī, a winged spirit of the jungle, and after that another hut, again divided into two compartments, one for Kāmēshvarī and the other for Būrhī Ṭhākurānī (Old Ṭhākur, or Landlord's Wife). Next came a tree, called the Rakshayā Chandī (another name for Kālī), the trunk of which would be smeared with vermilion, but to which no offerings would be made. The sixth and seventh huts, which followed, would have flags flying over them. Each of these had two compartments, the first dedicated to Ghāzī Ṣāḥib (Mubārak Ghāzī) and his brother

[11] Purnea District Gazetteer, Vol. XXV, Bengal District Gazetteers, Calcutta, 1911. Pp. 58 ff.

Kālū, the second to his son, Chāwal Pīr, and his nephew, Rām Ghāzī. The last deity to be propitiated was Bastū Dēvatā (the Earth), to whom no hut or platform was erected. Offerings were placed on the ground in plantain leaves. When everything was ready, the *faqīr* had a bath, put on a *dhōtī* provided for him by the wood-cutters and smeared his hands and forehead with vermilion. Then, with hands folded before his face, he went down on his knees, bowed his head to the ground, and remained in this attitude for a few seconds before each of the deities in succession, offering prayers to them[12].

In the Chittagong District, Pīr Badar was venerated as their guardian saint by Hindū as well as Muslim sailors. When they started on a voyage by sea or river, they invoked him, saying, 'We are but children, the Ghāzī is our protector, the Ganges is on our head. Oh Five Saints, O Badar, Badar, Badar!' It has been suggested that Pīr Badar is the same as Khwājah Khiḍr, who is believed to reside in the seas and rivers and to protect mariners from shipwreck[13].

Southwards from Delhi, around Indore in central India, Muslim Paṭēls and Mīrdhās[14] had Hindū names, dressed exactly like the Hindūs and some of them recognized Bhavānī and other Hindū deities. The Nāyatās of Khajrānā, a rural population looked down upon by Muslims in the towns, were the descendants of Pindārī free-booters and the prisoners whom they had converted. They had amalgamated completely with their Hindū neighbours[15].

The Gujarāt region has been, it seems, a melting-pot of races and beliefs. It would not be correct to say that heterodoxy in various degrees was the characteristic feature of Muslim beliefs in Gujarāt, but there were forms of it which were not so evident elsewhere. Apart from the Khōjahs and the Mahdawīs (or Ghair-Mahdawīs, as they were also called), who have been mentioned already, there were a number of tribal or sectarian groups whose beliefs and practices could not be fitted into any Islāmic pattern. Among the tribal groups, the outstanding were the Sīdīs, the Mōlislāms, the Kasbātīs, the Rāṭhōrs and the Ghānchīs; among the sectarian groups were the Ḥusainī Brahmans, the Madārīs, the Shaikhdas or Shaikhs, and the Kamāliyās.

The Sīdīs were the descendants of Africans, imported as slaves, mainly from Somaliland. Among them were professional singers and

[12] Bengal District Gazetteers, Vol. XXXI, 24-Parganas, Calcutta, 1914. Pp. 74-76.

[13] *Ibid.*, Vol. I. Chittagong. Calcutta, 1908. Pp. 56 ff.

[14] Originally the secret police officers posted in villages.

[15] Indore State Gazetteer. Calcutta, 1908. P. 59.

dancers who held their instruments, the *jhunjhunā* or rattle and the drum in great veneration. The *jhunjhunā* was sacred to Māmā (or Mother) Misrah, the drum to Father Ghar, and it was believed that they would punish anyone who touched an instrument while ceremonially impure[16]. The Mōlislāms, Rāṯhōrs and Kasbātīs were segments of Rājpūt tribes who, while accepting a new faith, had given up as little as was possible of their old beliefs and practices. The Mōlislāms not only observed Hindū festivals but worshipped Hindū gods[17], the Rāṯhōrs claimed to be Sunnīs but did not perform the daily prayers or read the Qur'ān. Some of them kept the pictures of Svāmīnārāyan in their houses and worshipped them. They intermarried with Hindūs and Muslims, which was characteristic of the Kasbātīs also[18]. The Ghānchīs, found mainly in the Panch Maḥals (Godhrā), described themselves as followers of a certain Manṣūr. They were believed to abhor all other Muslims and to be well inclined towards Hindūs[19].

Among the sectarian groups, the Ḥusainī Brahmans called themselves followers of Atharvavēda and derived their name from Imām Ḥusain, the grandson of the Prophet. It could be said that they were not really converts to Islām, but had adopted such Islāmic beliefs and practices as were not deemed contrary to the Hindū faith. Except beef they ate secretly all other kinds of meat. The men dressed like Muslims, but put the *tilak*, or browmark, on their foreheads. They did not practise circumcision, their marriages were performed by a priest of their own class, and they buried their dead in a sitting posture. At the same time they fasted during Ramaḍān and followed other Muslim practices. They held the saint, Khwājāh Mu'īnuddīn of Ajmēr, in special reverence. The Madārīs proclaimed themselves believers in the celibate saint, Badī'uddīn Madār Shāh, whom they held to be still alive in his tomb at Makanpūr, near Kañpūr. They worshipped Hindū gods as well as Muslim saints.

The Shaikhdās, or Shaikhs, were devotees of Bālā Muḥammad Shāh, one of the minor saints buried at Pirānā, near Aḥmadābād. They were not circumcized, they put the *tilak* marks on their foreheads and did not eat with the Muslims. Many of them, in fact, belonged to the community of the Swāmīnārāyans. But in marriages they adopted both the Hindū and the Muslim ritual, employing the services of a *faqīr* and of a Brahman, and buried their dead like the Muslims.

[16] Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IX, Part II. Bombay, 1899. P. 12, n.

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. VII Baroda, p. 72.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, Part II, p. 69 and 64.

[19] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 226.

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Of the Kamāliyās the *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī* says, 'In the sub-district of Chunval, forty miles to the north of Aḥmadābād, in the village of San Khānpūr, under Pattan, is a temple wherein is no idol, but a niche which is named after Bahūcharā, one of the names of the goddess Bhavānī. The worshippers are divided into two classes, the Pavaiyās (eunuchs) and the Kamāliyās. The Kamāliyās are men of the military profession who always bear the emblem of Bahūcharā, which is a trident. Both classes are Mussalmans. . . . They sacrifice buffaloes at Bahūcharā's shrine and mark the forehead with the victim's blood'. They did not circumcize, and except that they buried the dead (after branding the breast), all their ceremonies were Hindū[20]. All these sectarian groups followed begging in some form as their profession.

The Mōmnās of Cutch professed to belong to the Shī'ah sect of the Muslims, but were quite like the Hindūs in their habits, feelings and general mode of thinking. They did not associate with Muslims, did not eat flesh, did not practise circumcision, did not perform the daily prayers or keep the fast in Ramaḍān. On the sixth day after the birth of a child a cross was made on the ground with a red powder, called *gulāl*, and at the end of a month a Saraswat Brahman was called to name the child.[21] Vows to the river-god were common among the Bhadālās, who claimed to be Sunnīs[22].

In the district of Nīmar, and having its centre at Burhānpūr, was a sect known as Pīrzādā. It was founded about 250 years ago by a saint, Muḥammad Shāh Dullā. He adopted as the supreme deity the tenth incarnation of Vishnū, which was to come, and was known in the sect as Nishkalaṇkī, or the Sinless One. He accepted Vishnū in all his other incarnations, but disowned all other Hindū deities. A number of Hindūs, chiefly Kuṇbīs and Gūjars, who became his followers were allowed to remain in, and follow the rules of, their respective castes. The heads of the sect, the spiritual successors of Muḥammad Shāh, presided over an annual assembly of the followers at the tomb of the founder; a book compiled by him, consisting of selections from the religious literature of the Hindūs and Muslims, served as the scripture. The heads are said to have considered themselves as orthodox Muslims and not to have believed in Nishkalaṇkī. They also admitted that their followers were, to all intents and purposes, Hindūs[23].

Of the Muslims living in the rural areas of what was formerly known as the Central Provinces and Birār, and in the districts of

[20] *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, Part II, pp. 19-24 and 58-85.
[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, Cutch, Pālanpūr and Mahikantha, p. 91.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[23] Central Provinces Gazetteer, Vol. XIV. Nīmar, Allahabad, 1908. P. 63.

Thānā, Aḥmadnagar and Bījāpūr, it could be said generally that they were more than three-fourths Hindū. The Muslim Bihnās, or cotton-carders, practised in all seriousness what was a parody of the prescribed manner of killing a fowl for food. The formula they repeated was:

'Father and Son, Shaikh Farīdullah, kill the fowl. It is the order of God that the fowl should die by my hand.' The egg was also killed ceremonially. While slicing off the top of the egg, the bihnā would say:

'White dome, full of moisture, I know not whether there is a male or a female within. In the name of God, I kill you.'[24]

Some Dēshmukhs and Dēshpāndēs of Buldānā professed the Muslim religion, and employed Brahmans in secret to worship their old tutelary deities[25]. The Qaṣā'īs of Thānā, Aḥmadnagar and Bījāpūr had strong Hindū leanings. They abhorred beef-eating to such an extent that they would not even touch a beef butcher, and they avoided mixing with Muslims, though a qāḍī was engaged for marriage ceremonies and funerals. In Aḥmadnagar, the Qaṣā'īs or Baqar Qaṣābs and the Pinjārās still worshipped Hindū gods and had their idols in their houses[26]. In Bījāpūr, in addition to these two communities, the Bāghbāns (gardeners), Kanjars, poulterers, rope-makers, pindhrās and grass-cutters, though professing to be Muslim, had such strong leanings towards Hindūs that they did not associate with other Muslims and openly worshipped Hindū gods. The Chhaparbands, who were originally highwaymen, also continued to worship Hindū gods in spite of their conversion.

Southern India presents a curiously different picture. Here Islām came directly from Arabia through Arab traders, and in matters of doctrine the Muslims remained very largely unaffected by the environment. On the other hand, in dress, in food, in manners and customs and in the laws of inheritance their assimilation with the non-Muslims has been quite considerable, specially along the sea-coast. The South does not, of course, form a homogeneous unit, the Muslims of Mysore and Bangalore being much closer culturally to those of Ḥaidarābād than to the Mōplāhs and Navāyats of Kērala, who are geographically much nearer. But the divergence is in manners and customs, which we shall deal with later, and not in belief.

This is an assortment of the religious beliefs of mainly uneducated Indian Muslims, chiefly of the lower classes or the rural areas, towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

[24] Central Provinces District Gazetteers, Vol. XVII, Seoni Distt. Allahabad, 1907. P 221.

[25] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 282.

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 296.

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The picture given is by no means complete. It does not include the Sunnī Ḥanafīs, who formed the vast majority of the urban and the landholding classes, other sects of Sunnīs or the Shī'ahs. It may not be representative of actual conditions of a century or two earlier. The conditions may have changed during the present century, and the Gazetteers now under preparation may give quite another picture of the Indian Muslims of the same classes and areas. We close this part of our discussion with a news item which appeared in *The Statesman* of March 11, 1959:

'A Hindū temple near Sūratgaṛh in Rājasthān has Muslim priests who perform worship of the idol and receive offerings from devotees. This has been going on for generations.

'The temple in question is at Ghōgāmeṛhī, which has an idol of Ghōgājī, a Rājpūt saint who is reputed to have performed miracles in his lifetime.

'Mr Murlīdhar Vyās, who had tabled questions on this subject in the State Assembly, was told today by the Minister in charge of temples, Mr Dāmōdhar Vyās, that Mr Ratan Singh Chōhān had petitioned the government in 1951, disputing the right of the Muslim family to act as priests in the temple dedicated to his ancestors, and claiming the rights for himself. The Minister said that the Government had upheld the rights of the Muslim family after an enquiry.'

The rough survey we have made should not be taken to imply that Indian Islām lacked form, though it does serve as an argument against over-simplification in classifying beliefs. Mainly it shows that conversion to Islām has been a process that has been going on for centuries. As a religious community the Indian Muslims have been continuously and still are in the making.

In social forms also we see variety. When the Muslims—Arabs and Turks—first came to India, they must have given the impression of a well-knit, egalitarian community. After the Delhi Sultanate was established, and political policy became the determining factor directly in the relations of the Muslim ruling cliques and classes among themselves, and indirectly in the groups attached to them, the principle of the equality of all Muslims was never repudiated or even openly challenged. There is also no doubt that communities practising trades and professions not dishonourable in themselves, but looked down upon by Hindū society, acquired through conversion a status that would have been unattainable in any other way. But we have also the familiar distinction of Sayyid, Shaikh (in the sense of a person or family Arab in origin but not belonging to the direct line of the descendants of 'Alī, the Prophet's son-in-law)

Mughal (or Turk) and Pathān. Families that became prosperous, or prosperous communities that became converted to Islām, but were racially non-descript, fitted themselves in the four accepted racial categories by means of historical fictions. But they remained distinct. Often they did not themselves want to intermarry as a matter of course with other families within the same category. Maintenance of the purity of the family stock has all through been an important consideration with those who claimed to belong to the 'noble' class, and their attitude was regarded as a sign of respectability. Communities belonging to the lower classes did not, on being converted, discard or grow out of their inherited ideas of caste, and sometimes even maintained caste distinctions tenaciously. We have noted some instances of such Muslim communities avoiding other Muslims socially. But almost all over the country the upper classes have been a unifying factor, no matter which of the four 'racial' categories they may have belonged to. And the type of exclusiveness we have noted is local, unusual, and without much significance. Muslims generally recognize or can be made to recognize it as an obligation to sit and eat together. Not only prayer in the mosque but even the feast at a marriage has brought rich and poor, people of 'good', non-descript, and low families together. Religion condemns and, on particular occasions, public opinion resents any restraints placed on freedom of social intercourse, any denial or open evasion, in practice, of the doctrine that all Muslims are equal. The claim of the Muslim to the hospitality of a brother Muslim has been so openly and universally recognized that it could be regarded as one of the basic characteristics of Indian Muslim society.

Like the Hindūs, or in fact like the people of any other country, the presence of the Muslims in India can be traced to three different sources, conquest, immigration, and conversion, with the mingling of different stocks taking place in a manner that was beyond social or political control.

Let us first take conquest. Muḥammad bin Qāsim's conquest of the Sindh valley, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī's plundering expeditions and his annexation of territory up to the Rāvī, and the invasions of Shihābuddīn of Ghōr, which led to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, are matters of political history. The Sultanate expanded rapidly along the trade-routes, and the southernmost limit was reached with the establishment of the short-lived kingdom of Madurā. But conquest meant the victory of the Muslim over the opposing armies. In case the ruler of a territory submitted, there would be very little change; if he did not submit, he and the ruling class would be replaced by Muslims or by pro-Muslim natives of the territory. The armies of the Arabs and Turks to whom we trace the

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political changes that took place in India were very small indeed, and the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate meant only a change of government—and often enough not even that—in the territories which its armies overran. The addition of a Muslim element to the population was due to other causes. Conquest only provided opportunities.

The first Arab settlements on the eastern and western coasts of south India were the result of the development of trade, and the traders did not, like the European adventurers of the early modern period, enjoy the support of a home government interested in promoting commercial activity. But settlement and immigration of Muslims did follow the conquests of Sindh and of northern India. The immigrants came from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, West Asia and the eastern coast of Africa. They came because of unsettled conditions in their native land or in search of adventure and opportunity for achievement. But this was not migration in any considerable numbers. It was rather a slow and spasmodic infiltration of families and individuals. From the tribal territory of the north-west frontier, however, there were migrations of clans and groups of clans, and it is for this reason that Pa<u>t</u>hāns form a substantial part of the upper strata of Indian Muslim society almost all over the country where the number of Muslims is at all considerable. There were also migrations from one part of the country to another. The Arā'īns of the Montgomery district claimed, according to the Gazetteer, to be Sūrajbansī Rājpūts originally settled around Delhi; the Turkiyā banjārās of Rāmpūr in Uttar Pradēsh believed that they had come from Multān, and the Rāmpūr State Gazetteer[27] mentions a group of Shai<u>k</u>h families who first settled in Jālandhar and then made their way south-eastwards to Sahāranpūr, Muẓaffarnagar, Mērath, Bijnōr, Murādābād and Badāyūn. These may be regarded as typical cases. After the establishment of Muslim rule in the Deccan there was both immigration from abroad and migration from the north. A small element of the Muslim population of Kērala consists of immigrants from the Deccan. Sometimes such migration and settlement has been under political pressure, as when Muḥammad bin Tu<u>g</u>hlaq atttempted to send families of nobles and scholars to Daulatābād, mainly it has been due to a search for livelihood and opportunity. But, however significant such migration may have been culturally or economically, its numerical value was small.

The vast majority of the Indian Muslims are converts. Their conversion may be assumed to have been due to one or more of several causes. Force was used on occasions, but the existing historical evidence does not enable us to estimate either the scale or the

[27] Rāmpūr State Gazetteer, Allahabad, 1911. P. 49.

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effectiveness of such conversions. Also, the risks involved in a policy of conversion by force should not be underrated. Islām was adopted by families or groups of families who were regarded as outcasts in Hindū society because of their profession, or because they had lost caste through association with Muslims in some type of civil employment under the government. Service in the army was an attraction, specially for tribal groups with war-like traditions, and this service would inevitably make them outcasts. Persuasion played its part also. The Khōjās, the Bōhrās and the Mēmans are examples of the conversion of whole communities by missionaries. Most of the Muslim communities who appear to have been only partly converted must have changed their religion because of belief in the miraculous powers of particular saints. The communities practising trades that made them outcasts in the Hindū social system would have adopted Islām because of the obvious advantages, and because they were urban communities or depended on the towns for their livelihood, their conversion was also more thorough.

The main agency for conversion were the mystics, and most of the large-scale conversions seem to have taken place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries[28]. But legend and fact have become so mixed up that hardly any such event can be precisely dated.

In view of the manner in which Indian Muslim society was gradually constituted, it becomes necessary to determine the forces that kept its diverse elements together. Political interest, as we shall see, was not the interest of the community as a whole, but of ruling classes and cliques. It did, no doubt, create a kind of solidarity by providing opportunities for employment, for the acquisition of wealth and influence and the promotion of literature, art and cultural activity. But in spite of the formation of such large and powerful states as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, the general tendency was towards division of the Indian Muslims into many potentially and often actually hostile political units. We do not see any common economic interest either. Those engaged in professions and trades depended on the patronage of the ruling classes, but the economic order was seldom affected by a change of rulers[29]. Tradition and custom, professional ethics and the system of the *birādarī* or 'brotherhood' provided the cohesive force within the professional and the productive classes. Normally, the exclusiveness or the self-centredness of these classes and communities would militate against

[28] 'Abdul Qādir Badāyūnī once mentions what appears to have been conversion on a fairly large scale. *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*. Bibliotheca Indica. Vol. III, p.22 ff.

[29] This does not, of course, apply to the age of imperialism and the industrial revolution.

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the creation of social solidarity. The only unifying factor among Indian Muslims was common allegiance to Islām.

This allegiance created the sentiment of belonging to a community, and this sentiment has been the point at which religion, the instinct for self-preservation, political interest and social traditions can be said to meet. This sentiment can remain latent or dormant for generations, but it can also be roused to fever pitch within an incredibly short time. It has brought the joy of release from normal social restraints and inhibitions. It has supported movements for reform. Under normal conditions, its most characteristic expression is the emotional response to a stranger introducing himself as a Muslim, and the realization that comes with it of all the Muslims of the world being one vast brotherhood. This sentiment has not generally overcome sectarian prejudices or material interests. It has not been a generally active political force. But if we have to define the Indian Muslims, we can only say that they are Indians who call themselves Muslims, who believe in the unity and fraternity of the Muslims as a religious and social community, and are capable of showing in practice that they act in accordance with this belief, however they might differ in doctrine and observances.

This does not mean that the Indian Muslims have been amorphous as a community. On the contrary, the diversities within the community, which reflect the wide variety in the Muslim way of life all the world over, have only served to exalt the idea of unity. Modern definitions of nationalism, particularly where the body politic is composed of heterogeneous elements, rely upon the will to political association and unity as the decisive factor. Because of the latent desire for unity it was all too easy to confuse the identity of the Indian Muslims as believers in Islam with their identity as a distinct body politic, as a nation, which they never were and never wanted to be.

The differences in origin, the social structure, the beliefs and practices of the various constituent elements of the Indian Muslims as seen in the early twentieth century could be assumed to have characterized them in varying degrees from the very beginning. Their ideal was to be a well-knit, egalitarian community, believing in Islām and expressing this belief in their daily life. It was only an ideal that, being Muslims, they were automatically a political community. Political power, as we shall see, was something extraneous, and not an organic fulfilment of their community life. The attempts to attain a definite and common religious character produced different kinds of reactions, some inclining elements of the Indian Muslim community towards rigidity in belief and practice, others, which could best be called adventures in self-realization,

opening the way for adjustments that would enable the inclusion within the Islāmic fold of people among whom the doctrines of Islām had barely found a foothold. The Indian Muslims have seen themselves, and been seen by others, only in parts. To see their community as a whole we must look at all the aspects of Indian Muslim life throughout the course of its history. This will enable us to appreciate the variety of forces at work among the Indian Muslims, to isolate the elements of their weakness and strength, to understand their past and throw light upon their future. The ambition to maintain an objective attitude is nowhere common, and the judgements of the Indian Muslims about themselves have been either inspired by self-praise or self-pity, by an idealization of themselves as the embodiment of religious truth and political wisdom or, with equal lack of balance, by a condemnation of themselves as a people unworthy of those ancestors who spread the word of God throughout the world and set the highest example of social and political justice. Both these extreme viewpoints are misleading. They are also simplifications which effectively prevent that understanding of history and contemporary life which is essential for healthy development. A third form of judgement, which is an aspect of the apologetics of the last hundred years, is that of comparison and contrast. The defects of the western way of life and of the manners and customs of the Hindūs are picked out to show that, however bad the Muslims may be, there are others who are worse. This form of vindication is not characteristic of the Muslims only, and sometimes it may be necessary, in the interests of truth, to compare institutions, attitudes and practices, so that those which are the subject of study may be shown in the correct perspective. In this book, while sentimental and *a priori* judgements have been avoided, comparisons and contrasts that would modify any criticisms made have been left to the fair-mindedness of the reader. It is the author's firm belief that the Indian Muslims have, in their religion of Islām, and in the true representatives of the moral and spiritual values of Islām the most reliable standards of judgement, and they do not need to look elsewhere to discover how high or low they stand.

In conclusion, it is necessary to clarify the method of treatment followed in this book. Indian Muslim history has been divided into an early, a middle and a modern period, and the various aspects of life and activity have been discussed under orthodoxy, statesmanship and administration, religious thought, sūfism, poets and writers, architecture and art, and social life. As the purpose of writing is to help in understanding rather than to provide all the information available, only typical and significant ideas and personalities have been discussed. This has involved the risk of judgements in selection

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and omission which might appear defective or prejudiced. Some readers will, perhaps, find only a cursory mention or even no reference at all to ideas, policies, persons or works which, in their opinion, might be more representative and important than those selected. But this risk had to be taken in order to keep the length of discussion within reasonable bounds and to prevent the book from becoming merely an assemblage of facts. Another risk, perhaps inevitable in a study which aims at the analysis and evaluation of the various constituent elements of Indian Muslim religious, political and social life is that the reader may mistake the evaluation of any one factor for an evaluation of the whole. For instance, because orthodoxy has been dealt with separately, a judgement of the orthodox attitude in matters of religion may be taken as a judgement of the orthodox position as a whole, where the author's intention is to evaluate only one aspect of belief and practice. During the modern period an active and effective section of the orthodox, while not abandoning their traditional views in regard to innovations in matters of religion, were nationalist and progressive in their political attitude, and it would be a grave misunderstanding of the author's intention if his observations on their religious views or social behaviour obscured his appraisal of their contribution to political progress. The three periods into which Indian Muslim history has been divided for purposes of this study in fact form one unit, but the reader is requested to suspend his own judgement in regard to the author's presentation of the problems and persons of any particular category until he has a picture of the period, whether early, middle or modern, as a whole.

There will no doubt be readers who will condemn the author for holding or not holding a particular point of view, and scholars who will consider the plan of the book ill-conceived or its execution faulty and the study of the sources partial or inadequate. But there is as yet no work that attempts to present in an organized fashion the various aspects of the whole of Indian Muslim history, and one of the hopes with which this book has been written is that it will provoke scholars and lead to a richer and fuller presentation of the subject.

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CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

I

INDIA is one of the large countries of the world; it has recently been asserted that it is more a subcontinent than a country. It is surrounded by mountains in the east, the north and the north-west, and on the other sides by the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The natural boundaries can promote isolation and create a false sense of security; the Indian people have suffered because of both. The Khyber, Kurram and Bolan passes are dangerous breaches in the natural wall, and the coastline is too long to be defended against an enemy controlling the sea. The physical features of the country itself indicate three major natural divisions, the plains of the north, the Deccan plateau and the territory, not itself a homogeneous geographical unit, south of the Tuṇgabhadrā and Pennar rivers. Each of these major divisions could be split up geographically and, therefore, politically, into smaller units, which is the main reason for the continuing conflict in the political history of India between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies.

The dominant economic fact, till the days of the locomotive and the steamship, was that India lay between two international trade-routes, in the north the Silk Road from China to West Asia, in the south the route of the spice trade between south-east Asia and the Mediterranean countries. The internal trade-routes connected in the north with the Silk Road, in the centre with the sea-ports of Sindh, Gujarāt and Bengal; the Deccan had its own outlets on the western and eastern coasts, but made use also of the Gujarāt ports; the south was almost entirely independent. The courses of the trade-routes indicate that from the point of view of economic relationships with the outside world also, India consisted of three units, and as the main articles of trade differed in each case[1], political integration of

[1] The main exports from the Gujarāt and Bengal ports were textiles, cotton, sugar, silk and silk-thread, indigo, lycium and rice; from the Deccan, precious and semi-precious stones, sandalwood and ebony; from south India, spices and pearls.

the three units was not essential for maintaining or promoting commercial intercourse.

The first contacts between India and the Muslim world were established in the south, because of the age-old trade between Arabia and India. It was the interests of trade, again, which led to the Arab conquest of Sindh, early in the eighth century. Then India became increasingly exposed to Muslim influences, till finally the Delhi Sultanate was set up as an independent political unit in 1206. Thereafter, for over five hundred years, Muslims were politically dominant, and it was mainly from them that the British took over the government of the country.

It is not our purpose here to relate the political history of what is known as the Muslim or medieval period. This has been preserved in a number of chronicles, many of them contemporary or almost contemporary, which together form a continuous and fairly complete record. We shall review this history in terms of administration, defence, military organization and civic attitudes, so as to indicate the general working of the whole political system. We shall also in this way have a background for a study of the types of Indian Muslim statesmen and administrators representative of the early, middle and modern periods of Indian Muslim political history.

II

The establishment of Muslim Turkish rule in India was not just a case of successful invasion followed by measures designed to maintain and perpetuate possession of conquered territory. It was the inevitable result of movements of peoples in Central Asia, and ideologically it represents the clash of two civilizations based on different and in many ways antagonistic systems of living and thinking, the Muslim and the Hindū, in a general sense, and the Turkish and Rājpūt specifically, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The differences between the civilizations could be expressed in terms of principles, but to avoid generalizations we shall consider them in terms of political organization and the social system.

The outstanding feature of the political as well as the social organization of India during the period with which we are concerned was the caste system. For our purposes it is immaterial to determine when and how it came into existence. In principle and in practice it defined all types of obligations, and exercised a decisive influence on thought and action. It prescribed the duties and privileges of the ruler, and the aims and methods of government; it was the embodiment of personal and public law; it determined the character of social and economic life by a division of all activity into (a) learning

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and ritualistic guidance, (b) government and war, (c) trade and commerce and (d) service. The political organization of the Rājpūts was based on this system. The ruler was confirmed in his position both by caste and by hereditary right. So were the chiefs subordinate to him, who recognized him as their overlord. There could be dynastic wars, but within a state the throne was not a prize for those adventurous and capable enough. The ambitions of the rulers themselves were prescribed. 'Let (the king) consider as hostile his immediate neighbour and the partisan of (such a) foe, as friendly the immediate neighbour of his foe, and as neutral (the king) beyond these two.' 'Having cleared the three kinds of roads, and (having made) his sixfold army (efficient), let him leisurely proceed in the manner prescribed for warfare against the enemy's capital.' 'When he has shut up his foe (in a town), let him sit encamped, harass his kingdom and continually spoil his grass, food, fuel and water.' 'But having fully ascertained the wishes of all (the conquered), let him place a relative (of the vanquished ruler) on the throne, and let him impose his conditions.'[2]

A ruler was thus entitled to fight, to assert his supremacy by extending his authority and his territory. But wars did not usually lead to any great political change. 'The Indians,' writes the merchant-traveller Sulaiman in the ninth century, 'sometimes go to war for conquest, but the occasions are rare. . . . When a king subdues a neighbouring state, he places over it a man belonging to the family of the fallen prince, who carries on the government in the name of the conqueror. The inhabitants would not suffer it to be otherwise.'[3] Politics and war thus led to an extension of overlordship, without any change in the system.

> 'The numerous kingdoms into which northern India was divided were themselves subdivided into a multitude of territorial fragments, ruled over by petty chiefs and lords. . . . While enjoying virtual autonomy in their own domains, the feudatory chiefs were bound to their overlord by some kind of allegiance and were expected to help him in times of war. . . . The feudatories were often jealous of one another and did not look upon their subordination with equanimity. Whenever . . . there was a decline in the fortunes of the overlord, the more powerful among the feudatories threw off their dependence, and forced the smaller vassals in their neighbourhood to change their allegiance.'[4]

[2] *Laws of Manu.* Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXV. Translated by Buhler. Oxford, 1886. Pp. 241-9.

[3] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India by its Own Historians*, Vol. I, p. 7, and P. C. Chakravarty, *The Art of War in Ancient India*, Dacca, 1941. P. 187.

[4] Chakravarty, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

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In such a political system, the total resources of a state would never be involved. In terms of persons, those who made it their business to fight would fight, but the results would not to any considerable degree affect the rest of the population. The six-fold division of the army mentioned above consisted of the hereditary troops of the ruler, mercenaries, guild levies—probably drawn from those trade-guilds part of whose professional accomplishment was fighting—feudatories and allies, enemy troops captured or won over and forest tribes[5]. In times of need even, no conscription of members of the non-military castes could be made, nor would military service be normally open to them. In the matter of resources also, the state would not be able to extend its control, even if extraordinary contributions happened to be demanded or agreed to. The community was integrated not by the political organization but by the caste system.

The rural areas were peopled by large and small tribal groups. We have evidence from the very earliest phases of the settlement of the Aryans that every village aimed at being a self-sufficient, self-contained unit, able to protect itself against armed attack. A village or a group of villages was also a tribal unit, with an organization and affiliations of a tribal character. During almost the whole of the Muslim period, the rural areas were dominated by chiefs who are variously called *rā'ēs, rānās, rāwats, muqaddams, khōts* in the chronicles of the Sultanate period. They tried, as far as possible, to maintain their independence; when that was not possible, they accepted whatever terms they had to, and made use of every opportunity to disentangle themselves from the net of the Muslim administration[6]. They could be represented as a force constantly working for freedom. But India could not have advanced politically, socially or culturally if the tribal groups and their hereditary leaders had set the standard for living and thinking. The Indus-valley civilization was an urban civilization. The urban life and interests of this period survived, at least in eastern India, the pastoral culture of the Aryans, and developed to become a distinctive feature of the Maurya and Gupta periods. There were large trading cities in Sindh in the early eighth century and temple cities in north India whose industries and wealth were famous. But urban civilization had suffered an eclipse after the downfall of the Gupta Empire, and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate marks, among other things, the revival of urban civilization.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-8.

[6] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. II. Revised Edition. Cosmopolitan Publishers, Aligarh, 1952. Introduction, p. 9 ff.

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III

Such was the political and social organization of India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The invading Muslim culture, as represented by the Turks, was in many ways diametrically opposed. According to religious doctrine, which embodied the social ideal, the Muslims were a religious community consisting of individuals possessing equal rights and equal status. The interests and the needs of the community had absolute precedence over the needs and interests of the individual, for every kind of sacrifice could be demanded and would have to be made. The injunction to take up arms and fight for the survival of the true belief made every able-bodied Muslim into a potential soldier, as the application of the injunction was not limited by any conditions of profession and competence. This was according to religious doctrine. According to the law as gradually evolved, the Muslim community consisted of rulers and subjects, with the rulers entitled to exercise the authority religion had given to the community as a whole. The authority of the ruler could not be divided. Any system like the contemporary Indian custom of overlordship and feudatory rights was considered undesirable both in the interest of the ruler and of administrative efficiency. The power of the Muslim ruler did not extend to matters of religious doctrine, but in the sphere of politics he was in practice a free agent, and thus all persons, all resources, all activities came under his control.

The Rājpūt political system had little chance of withstanding the Turks. But very soon the new state felt the need to mobilize all its resources. These being almost entirely agricultural, it was necessary for the state to extend and intensify its control over the rural areas. Here it came up against the resistance of the rural chiefs, and the struggle was long and bitter. The chiefs were weak in many respects, but they were able to prolong the struggle for the one great reason that the Muslims represented an urban civilization. Rural life did not attract them. They regarded the village as a place of intellectual and social confinement. They took over many industries, but did not settle on the land as agriculturists in any considerable number. They could not, therefore, be a means of enabling their state to penetrate the defences put up by the rural chiefs. The absence of any traditional and sentimental bonds between the urban and rural populations, which remained alien to each other almost to the very end, accentuated the bitterness of the conflict.

It would not be an over-simplification to say that Muslim government at this period embodied the ways and means adopted by a sulṭān to manage the affairs of his dominion. Religious law, political thought and the precedents of rulers agreed in making him res-

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ponsible for government, and allowing him the latitude necessary for making political and administrative policy a means of maintaining his power and promoting the welfare of his subjects. Religious law enjoined obedience, and political thought assumed that the sulṭān would be able to enforce obedience. The *bai'ah*, the *khuṭbah* and coinage were the symbols of sovereignty. Recognition by the Khalīfah was considered highly desirable, but was not essential.

The position of the sulṭān in fact, however, was not as secure as it appeared to be in theory. It was assumed that a sulṭān would be succeeded by one of his sons. But hereditary right was not defined. It could not be, because if a sultanate was regarded as the personal property of the sulṭān, it had to be divided among his heirs; if it was not personal property, but something in which the Muslim community shared, there had to be some form of choice by election or selection. Religious law could not, therefore, ensure continuity; it could not establish any theory of *de jure* sovereignty, which led to the awful consequence that it could only postulate a sovereignty *de facto*. A sultan ceased automatically to be sulṭān and lost his claim to the obedience and loyalty of his subjects if he was removed from his position by someone possessing greater power, or someone who conspired successfully to remove him and seize his throne.

This basic defect in the Muslim political system, which events all over the Muslim world only too frequently exposed, influenced deeply the spirit and the working of the administration and determined most of its methods. The sulṭān could ignore only at his peril the stark reality that his right depended absolutely on his power.He had to strengthen his position (1) ideologically, by asserting his claim to preeminence and the duty of his subjects to obey him, (2) physically, by building up a strong party of his supporters and destroying his opponents, (3) administratively, by ensuring that not even the most loyal and devoted among his supporters acquired too much influence and power and (4) politically, by using every opportunity to gratify, impress, and intimidate his subjects. There had to be something mysterious and unpredictable about him. It was a sign of weakness if the persons around him could foretell his reactions, and the weakness could prove fatal. Successful government was a masterly exercise of the ruler's judgement and foresight.

Sulṭān Balban (1266-1286) is reported to have said:

> 'If a king is king through his grandfather and father, and is worthy of kingship by right of descent, his dignity and majesty will surely imprint itself on (the people's) hearts, and one can expect his commands to be executed even though he makes no attempt to show that he can punish or be severe, or strike terror or

awe. But if he is not the son or grandson of a king, he cannot make himself the repository of the greatness and virtues of kings, and the awe and majesty of kingship do not get what is due to them among the noblemen and the commoners, the near and the distant, those within and without, in private and in the court, and respect for him and his eminence does not find a place for itself in any heart. . . . The Hindūs become recalcitrant, and the Muslims become heretics because of sinfulness and iniquity . . . and other forbidden things.'[7]

The first sulṭāns of Delhi were distinguished 'slaves'. They were followed by the Khiljīs (1288-1320) and the Tughlaqs (1320-1398). The imperialist tradition was then taken up by the Sūrīs (1540-1556) and the Mughals (1526-1540 and 1556-1748). Among the Mughals there were kings who were the 'sons and grandsons' of kings, and also in the provincial dynasties. Hereditary claims to the throne were recognized, but in spite of this the question as to which son should succeed, if a ruler had more than one son, remained open. It was ultimately the possession of power which decided the issue. Thereafter 'the awe and majesty of kingship' had to be acquired, to ensure continuance in power.

Bai'ah[8] was a convention, and was generally performed, but after the supposedly rightful ruler had been seated on the throne. Only those who collectively had the power to set up or depose a sulṭān, that is, the high officers and the army commanders, needed to perform the *bai'ah*. For the generality of the subjects, announcement in the *khuṭbah*[9] and issue of a new coinage was sufficient. Recognition by the Khalīfah was, as stated, desirable but not essential. When the Delhi Sultanate was established the 'Abbāsī Khalīfah was just a figurehead, and after the capture and destruction of Baghdād by the Mongols in 1258, the Khilāfat ceased to exist. On the coins of the Delhi sulṭāns only Amīr al-Mū'minīn was stamped till the emissaries of Muḥammad Tughlaq discovered a scion of the house of 'Abbās at the Egyptian court. In 1517, the Turkish sulṭān Salīm captured Cairo and put an end to the fiction of an 'Abbāsī Khalīfah. The

[7] Ḍiyā'uddīn Baranī, *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī*. Bibliotheca Indica. P. 34-5.

[8] Oath of allegiance. A historian of the thirteenth century, Minhājuddīn Sirāj, says with reference to one such occasion: '*Maliks* and *amirs*,' *ulamā* and *ṣudūr* (qāḍīs) and the high-placed officers of the army of the capital were made to gather in the sublime court for the performance of a general *bai'ah*'. *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, Bibliotheca Indica. P. 253.

[9] Literally, 'address'. Only an Imām appointed by the ruler could lead the Friday prayers. Muḥammad bin Tughlaq suspended the prayers pending the discovery of the Khalīfah, who would be requested formally to recognize the sulṭān, and thereby entitle him to appoint an Imām to lead the prayers on his behalf. Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

name of the Khalīfah, or the title conferred by the Khalīfah on the reigning sulṭān or a term indicating the sulṭān's relationship with the Khalīfah appears on the Sultanate coins. After the extinction of the Khilāfat, the names of the four Pious Khalīfahs, which are found earlier also on the coins of Muḥammad Tughlaq, began to be stamped.

Coinage was also utilized as a means of indicating the position of the Sulṭān. Quṭubuddīn Mubārak (1316-1320), on one of his coins, calls himself 'The most mighty Imām, the Vice-regent of God, the Khalīfah of the Lord of Heaven and Earth'. Muḥammad Tughlaq's coinage is the most interesting in this respect. He calls himself the 'Servant of God, hopeful of his Mercy', 'Supporter of the *Sunnah* of the last of the Prophets'. He quotes the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*. 'He who obeys the sulṭān obeys God', 'Obey God and obey the Prophet, and those among you who are set up in authority'; also a faked *Ḥadīth*, 'If there be no sulṭān, the people will devour one another'. He is perhaps the first ruler to proclaim on his coinage that the sulṭān is the Shadow of God[10]. This term acquired much currency later. The claim to be the Shadow of God would not have appeared extraordinary, as it was a general opinion that next to prophethood there was no function loftier than that of kingship.

IV

Before we go on to describe the powers of the sulṭān and the structure of the government, we should consider the elements of which the administrative hierarchy was composed, the *khāns*, *maliks* and *amīrs*[11] of the Sultanate and the higher orders of the *manṣabdārs* of the Mughal empire, as they formed the link between the sulṭān and his subjects and were the instruments by means of which his power was exercised. The high officers were, as we have said, regarded as the representatives of the people for the purpose of *bai'ah*, the extent of their support being the measure of the sulṭān's power. It was from among them that candidates for the throne arose, or were chosen. Their position in law and fact was unique, and will be best understood if we first glance at their history.

The Delhi Sultanate was established by army commanders and administrators who were the slaves of Shihābuddīn Ghōrī. They were the cream of the slave-market, which drew its supplies from Central Asia, and had been carefully selected over a number of

[10] E. Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*. Trubner and Co., London, 1871. P. 179 ff. H. N. Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*. Govt. of India, Delhi, 1936.

[11] *Khāns*, *maliks* and *amīrs* constituted the upper ranks of government officers. We shall use the term *amīr* to signify officers of all the three ranks.

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years. They rose to power and position more or less according to their natural gifts. After Shihābuddīn's death, Tājuddīn Yilduz became the independent ruler of Ghaznī, Nāṣiruddīn Qubāchā of Sindh; Quṭubuddīn Ibak had already been installed as viceroy in Delhi, and he became independent here. Iletmish[12], another slave, was governor of Badāyūn when Quṭubuddīn died, and after a brief interregnum was more or less chosen to succeed him (1211). In principle, all the slaves were on the same level, and during the reign of Iletmish (1211-1236) and for about fifteen years after, we find a group known as the 'Forty' doing everything in their power to resist the centralization of authority under the sulṭān. The territory of the Sultanate was not, however, divided up among the provincial governors, the *iqṭā'dārs*, as property over which they could enjoy hereditary rights subject to certain conditions. The *iqṭā'dārs* remained officers performing essential civil and military functions, to whom lands were assigned in lieu of salary. The assignment of an *iqṭā'dār* could be taken from him, or exchanged for any other assignment, and if he died it reverted automatically to the sulṭān. In fact, it was assumed that the officer owed everything to the sulṭān, who could dispose as he pleased of his property and even his life. Further, the officer, though obliged to maintain troops, could keep no more than he was required to under the terms of his appointment, and these troops were regarded as part of the sulṭān's army. The officer could not subdivide land assigned to him among tenants and thus create a body of supporters. The land, so far as we know, remained the property of the cultivator, the sulṭān being entitled to a fixed part of the produce, in kind or cash, for the collection of which a proportion was given to the assignee. He was bound to submit detailed accounts of the revenue and expenditure of his assignment to the revenue ministry for audit. This audit was always strict, and no method was considered too harsh for the recovery of balances that appeared to be due. The position in this respect did not change till the decline of the Mughal Empire, when the rulers were no longer in a position to exercise any control over the governors of provinces and the *amīrs* or *manṣabdārs*.

An important fact, which should constantly be kept in mind, is the discrimination practised both during the Sultanate and the Mughal period. As early as the middle of the thirteenth century, a distinction was made between the Turkish and the other *amīrs*, and between the foreign and indigenous elements of the population. The *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* refers to the whole body of officers as 'all the *amīrs* and *maliks* and Turks'; it relates how an ambitious minister 'took

[12] Hitherto called Iltutmish, it has now been established that his title was Iletmish.

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all the affairs out of the hands of the Turkish *amīrs*', how another minister drove away all the Turkish *maliks* and *amīrs* from the capital[13]. There was inevitably a struggle for power among the *amīrs*, and one of the contending groups was that of 'Turks'. Baranī writes in evident praise of Balban that he did not give position or authority or even opportunity to approach his person to anyone who was not of good family or of a reputable character. The meaning of 'good family' is clarified later. A wealthy person, who was head of the merchants, desired to be presented to Balban, but was repeatedly refused the honour; Kamāl Mahyār, who had been recommended by high officers for the post of *khwājā* or *mutasarrif*, chief accounts officer, of Amrōhā was rejected because Balban discovered that he was the son of a converted Hindū[14]. Clearly Balban thought that government was the prerogative of the Turks, not a right which belonged to all Muslims. The people of Delhi seemed to agree with him. During the fatal illness of his grandson, Kaiqubād, in 1288, the *amīrs* who were supporters of his dynasty conferred together as to how 'the country should be kept under the dynasty of Balban, how it should be prevented from falling into the hands of another race and stock and from being lost to the Turkish race'[15]. This could not be done, and Jalāluddīn Khiljī and his party, who were not regarded as of genuine Turkish stock, seized power. But just for the reason that they were not pure Turks, the citizens of Delhi would not allow them to enter the city, and Jalāluddīn Khiljī had to bide his time outside, till political passion had subsided.

'Alā'uddīn Khiljī (1296-1316) was not the type of ruler who would allow questions of race and family to interfere with his choice of ministers and administrators, and Malik Kāfūr Hazārdīnārī, who obtained complete ascendancy over him during his last years, was a converted slave from Gujarāt. During his rule and that of his son, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak (1316-1320) the non-Turkish *amīrs* were in power. But because they had established themselves, Muḥammad Tughlaq felt the weight of their resistance to his policies, and decided to employ foreign immigrants. When Ibn Baṭṭūṭah arrived at the banks of the Indus, he found that the sulṭān had given orders for particular attention to be shown to foreigners, and only those who were willing to stay over a long period were allowed to proceed beyond Multān. When he came to Delhi, he found more evidence of the sulṭān's regard for foreigners and his anxiety to enrol them in his

[13] Minhājuddīn Sirāj, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 and 198.

[14] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 36. Balban on this occasion cited an instance in which 33 officers had been dismissed by Iletmish because of their 'common' origin. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

service. The rebellion of 'Ainul Mulk Multānī (1339) was a symptom of the resentment felt by the Indian-born *amīrs* against this policy of the sulṭān, which was a continuous source of friction between him and his officers. In the time of Fīrūz Tughlaq, the Indian-born *amīrs* were predominant, Khān-i-Jahān of Tilingānā, a Brahmin convert, being virtual ruler of the country for a number of years.

The rivalry between Indian-born and immigrant officers of the government was an outstanding feature of political life under the Bahmanī sulṭāns of the Deccan, and was endemic and acute in the Mughal Empire also. The career of Maḥmūd Gāwān, the minister of the Bahmanī sulṭān, Muḥammad III (1463-1482), illustrates both the reasons for which preference was given to foreigners and the ineradicable jealousy which it aroused. The Mughal Empire benefited from the ability and drive of several distinguished foreigners, and also suffered from dissensions created by their employment and the influence they acquired in the government.

The Sultanate and the Mughal Empire were not a mixture of bureaucracy with feudalism; their administration was bureaucratic throughout[16]. Over long periods this bureaucratic administration was dominated by immigrants who had had most of their training and experience outside India, and this gave it much of the character of foreign rule. The sulṭān's powers placed him in an isolated position; his authority was not something that grew out of the life, the ideas and the traditions of the people, but was regarded as an expression of Necessity. The bureaucratic administration intensified this isolation and prevented organic integration of ruler and subject, state and people.

There was no method of recruitment to the imperial service. Employment was a favour conferred directly by the sulṭān or emperor or indirectly through the recommendation of the officers of the government. Except for the lower grades of employees and those recruited for purely local service, a presentation at the court for formal approval was usual and could be advantageous to the fresh recruit. The ideal of the imperial officer was to be brought face to face with the sulṭān and have his talent personally and favourably assessed, so that he might be thought of when opportunities for promotion came. The ladder of promotion led to a ministerial post and the personal regard of the sulṭān, but climbing it could be a long and gradual process or a swift and sudden rise. Among the instances given in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, we have one of a person being appointed 'Special Cup-bearer', 'Holder of the Ink-pot', 'Food-taster', 'Master of the Stables', and finally an *iqṭā'dār*, or governor; another

[16] Moreland, *Agrarian System of Muslim India*. Heffers, Cambridge, 1922. P. 221.

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instance of a person being appointed 'Deputy Food-taster', then being made '*Amīr-i-Majlis*', to look after the arrangements of the sulṭān's social evenings, then becoming 'Master of the Elephant Stables' and then governor. Other instances show that a rapid rise was possible, and someone made 'Cup-bearer' in the first instance was promoted to the post of governor. If it took time for an officer to become a governor or a minister, it was not necessarily a reflection on his talent. The sulṭān might want to keep him by his side because he liked and trusted him, and preferred to have him at a post where he would not be too much in the limelight. Such a person could, just because of the personal relationship, have both power and influence. The three main grades under the Sultanate were *malik*, *amīr* and *khān*, *khān* being the highest. Generally, a promotion carried with it a new title, but the use of Turkish, Persian and Arabic titles together makes it difficult for us to form an idea of the exact grading.

Akbar systematized the grades in the imperial service by the creation of *manṣabs*. Princes of the blood held the highest rank or *manṣab*, reckoned in terms of *dhāt* and *sawār*, with *dhāt* indicating personal rank and *sawār* the responsibility of maintaining a number of horsemen proportionate to the rank. The lowest position was ten *dhāt* and *sawār*. The *manṣab* of the princes continued to rise, Shāh Jahān as a prince having a *manṣab* of thirty thousand. Intermediate ranks were created by making the *sawār* rank double (*dō-aspah*) and treble (*sih-aspah*) without increasing the liability in regard to the actual number of horses to be maintained. Quite early in the Mughal period, officers whose families had been in the imperial service for more than two generations came to be distinguished as *Khānahzād*. This distinction, while it may have appeared useful in promoting loyalty and devotion to the emperor's person, also aggravated the tensions within the imperial service.

V

The sulṭān could not, perhaps, be deemed to possess 'absolute' power, because in theory he could not do anything contrary to the *sharī'ah*. In practice, there was no control over him, and he controlled everything. He made the laws which, though called *ḍawābiṭ* or regulations, could cover all aspects of life. It was expected that these regulations would not contravene the *sharī'ah*, unless it was absolutely necessary. The sultan appointed and dismissed the *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*, the chief Qāḍī, the *Shaikh al-Islām*, and all the provincial and local qāḍīs. There was a separate department concerned with charitable gifts of land and money to the religious, and the sulṭān thus had the guardians of the *sharī'ah* in his power. He

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appointed, promoted, rewarded and dismissed ministers and civil and military officers of all ranks; he exercised supreme control over the whole administrative and revenue system and all tributary chiefs. He prescribed punishments for all offences except those that were purely religious, like heresy and apostasy, and even in such offences the sentence could be carried out only by his order. In political, criminal and revenue cases he was the supreme judge and an appeal could be made to him in all civil cases against the decision of a qāḍī. He himself was not subject to any law, though there are a few instances of the sulṭān having appeared before a qāḍī when an appeal was made against him[17]. The sulṭān's private life could not be formally judged or criticized by any authority, and the *sharī'ah* laws of marriage and inheritance did not apply to him. Finally, he could nominate his successor, though the nomination could be ultimately effective only if the high officers also approved of it.

The sulṭān was considered entitled to take all the measures necessary for his security and for the maintenance of his power, but he was expected to follow recognized practices in the administration of the kingdom. He was in a way the leader of the party in power, and had to associate the *amīrs* supporting him by giving them appropriate offices in the government. He would be considered weak if he did not exercise and assert his own judgement, but it was thought proper that he should arrive at a decision after consultation. Rewarding distinguished service was, of course, a matter of policy and in the sulṭān's own interest. Authority was centralized, the sulṭān was the pivot of the administration, and his routine was the routine of the government. But there was also a set pattern for the disposal of official business which had generally to be followed and in which improvements were made from time to time.

The sulṭān held his court of public audience at least once daily. All his ministers, their deputies and subordinate officers would be present, as well as officers entitled or asked to attend, or those having some matter brought up for the sulṭān's consideration. Papers of the different departments would be placed before the sulṭān by the minister of the department concerned, through the chief among the ministers, the head of the *Dīwān-i-Wizārat*, known as the *Ṣadr-i-'Ālī* or, later, *Khwāja-'i-Jahān*, during the Sultanate period, and the *Wakīl-i-Salṭanat* under the Mughal Emperors[18]. Orders were dictated and noted down for being passed on to the department concerned, after they had been reviewed by the sulṭān later in the day or at the court the next day. There was no separate department for foreign

[17] See *infra*., p. 41.

[18] The powers and functions of the chief among the ministers kept on changing.

affairs. Envoys and representatives of independent powers were presented to the sulṭān at the court. This was also the occasion when private persons could be presented and personal affairs placed before him.

Apart from the court of public audience, a review of some part of the military establishment was an essential part of the sulṭān's routine. The rest—consultation with the ministers and those in the sulṭān's confidence, consideration of special reports, drafting of important orders, social assemblies—were normal parts of the routine, but their time and frequency could vary[19]. The sulṭān's meals were also a public function. Akbar added the *darshan* to the court routine by appearing in public every day at sunrise, so that his subjects might behold him, and present their personal matters to him directly, without the mediation of ministers and other officers.

The following list of ministers and officers will give an idea of the framework of the central administration.

Ṣadr-i-Jahān (*Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*), the chief Qāḍī, responsible for the administration of religious law.

Amīr Ḥājib, also called *Bārbak*, under the Sultanate, in charge of the organizational matters relating to the court. Under the Mughal Emperors, the functions of the *Amīr Ḥājib* were divided between the *Mīr Bakhshī* and the *Dārōgha-i-Ghuslkhānah*.

Wazīr-i-Wizārat, *Ṣadr-i-'Ālī*, *Khwāja'-i-Jahān*, minister of revenue, to whom provincial governors would be accountable for the revenue due from them.

Mushrif-i-Mamālik, the accountant-general.

Mustaufī'-i-Mamālik, the auditor-general.

'Āriḍ-i-Mamālik, called *Mīr Bakhshī* under the Mughals, inspector-general and paymaster-general of the army.

Barīd-i-Mamālik, minister of (secret) information, in charge of reporting and espionage.

Amīr-i-Dād, minister responsible for seeing that justice was done.

Dabīr-i-Khās, minister in charge of correspondence.

Wakīl-i-Dar, manager of the sulṭān's household, called *Mīr-i-Sāmān* under the Mughals.

Apart from these large departments, there were minor ones, such as the *Dīwān-i-Risālat*, which dealt with pious foundations, and officers such as the *Sar-i-Jāndār*, chief of the body-guard, the *Mīr-i-Ākhūr*, in charge of the stables, and *Mīr-i-Shikār*, the Master of the Hunt, who, though not technically possessing a high status in the administration, were very close to the sulṭān. Under the Mughals, the *Dārōgha-i-Ghuslkhānah* acquired great importance. The func-

[19] This part of the routine also was fixed as a regular programme by the Mughal Emperors.

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tions of the different departments were not well-defined enough for the minister in charge to become independent, and the procedure for the confirmation and execution of orders was such that the officers acted as checks on each other. No post carried with it rights or privileges that restricted the freedom of the sulṭān to consult whom he liked, and persons other than the ministers could be invited to the royal councils. The post of a *Wazīr* who would represent the ruler and act on his behalf, such as is found in the government of the 'Abbāsī Khalīfahs, was never formally created under the Sultanate or the Mughal Empire[20]. The ministers together did not form a ministry, and there was no question of their acting collectively, though on occasion ministers and other noblemen together made representations. There can be no bureaucracy without a bureaucratic spirit, and this spirit was also in evidence, specially when the sulṭān was weak, like Fīrūz Tughlaq[21]. A vicious sulṭān, who was also negligent of his duties, ultimately forfeited the co-operation of his officers. They provided, through their routine and their records, and sometimes through their behaviour[22], the basic continuity which the absence of recognized hereditary rights endangered.

VI

The provincial[23] administration was in charge of a governor, who was responsible for the collection of revenue, the maintenance of law and order, general supervision and the execution of the sulṭān's orders. In provinces remote from the centre, such as Lakhnautī (Bengal), the governor was almost independent, and was left to himself so long as he remitted the revenue and did not rebel. In the frontier provinces, the governors had to be given extraordinary powers. In the majority of the provinces, the powers of the governors were uniform. Their military authority was limited by the provincial inspector and paymaster of the forces, who was responsible for the

[20] The only two examples of a *Wazīr* with such powers are Ulugh Khān, under Nāṣiruddīn Maḥmūd (1246-1266) and Bairam Khān, who was *Wakīl-i-Sulṭanate* for four years (1556-1560) during Akbar's minority. There were, however, such *wazīrs*, or favourites with the power of such *wazīrs*, in the provincial kingdoms.

[21] Shams Sirāj 'Afīf, *op. cit.*, p. 344-9.

[22] As for example, the nobles appearing in Quṭubuddīn Mubārak's court in spite of their being insulted by the sulṭān's vile and immoral favourites. *Tārīkh-i-Firishtah*. Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow. Vol. I, p. 126.

[23] The unit of the provincial administration under the Ṣultanate was the *iqṭā'*, and the governor was called *iqṭā'dār* or *muqṭi'*. Under the Mughals the province was called *sūbah*, and was further subdivided into *sarkār* and *parganah*.

maintenance and recruitment of troops. There was a revenue officer, a reporter (*barīd*) and also a provincial qāḍī. Nominally these officers were subordinate to the governor, but they also dealt directly with the central department. The procedure for reporting was a most efficient means of maintaining control. All the officers had to submit their reports separately; these were compared with each other, and with the reports of the secret service which had its agents everywhere, and any significant discrepancies in the reports were investigated.

The administration of justice was organized more or less according to the pattern of the 'Abbāsī Khilāfat. We have stated that the sulṭān was the highest judicial authority. So far as religious laws were concerned, he had to follow the *sharī'ah* as interpreted in the recognized books of jurisprudence. In case of difference of opinion, he could call together a conference or a committee of the learned, and ask for their decision. The people looked to him to do the right in matters where lower courts and officers were likely to be influenced against the interests of justice, and officers were appointed and arrangements made to see that flagrant cases of injustice were brought to the sulṭān's notice. Instances have been recorded in the chronicles of spectacular judgements passed by the sovereign against officers and eminent men, and even of the sovereign himself appearing in an ordinary court to plead his case but having the sentence pronounced against him[24].

The principal officer for the administration of justice according to the *sharī'ah* was the Chief Qāḍī, on whose recommendation the qāḍīs of the provinces, districts and towns and of the armies were appointed by the sulṭān. The Minister in charge of revenue was, next to the sulṭān, the highest judicial officer for revenue cases, and his subordinates in the provinces and districts had a similar jurisdiction. Criminal cases that involved breach of the peace or rebellion were dealt with by the *kōtwāl* in the town and by district officers in their executive capacity, but offences involving sentence of death were brought to the governor of the province and through him to the sulṭān, who had the power to modify the sentence, pardon or acquit.

It is unfortunate that Muslim jurisprudence did not recognize the judgements of any court as precedents binding on the same or other judicial authority for cases of an identical nature. This may be justifiable as a matter of principle, but it prevented the development of case law. In the matter of jurisdiction, no procedure was strictly

[24] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 44, 45; 'Afīf, *op. cit.*, pp. 503-8; Niẓāmuddīn Aḥmad, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Newal Kishōre Press, Lucknow, pp. 238-9; Stewart, *History of Bengal*, Ostel and Lepage, Calcutta, 1847. Pp. 90-91.

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followed, the highest authorities having original as well as appellate jurisdiction in all kinds of cases.

The state was neither able nor willing to undertake administration of justice at the village level. The Hindūs as such were subject only to the *ḍawābiṭ*, or state-laws. Disputes between Hindūs would be decided by *panḍits* appointed for the purpose, civil disputes between Hindūs and Muslims would come up before the qāḍī, the law recognized by the defendant being the basis of adjudication. Evidence consisted of statements under oath, to be accepted or rejected by the court in the face of other, conflicting evidence.

VII

The main source of income of the Indian Muslim states was revenue from agricultural land. This land was of three categories: the domains of small and big tributary chiefs, who were otherwise autonomous and paid tribute according to a rough assessment; areas that were part of the sulṭān's territory, but had been assigned to the officers of the government and other grantees; and lands known as the *khālṣah*, which were directly under the sulṭān. Revenues from the assigned lands, unless they were free gifts, were realized after deducting the prescribed share of the assignee. The problems which the administration was continually engaged in solving were, (1) to obtain correct statements in regard to the land under cultivation, (2) to make a correct assessment of the produce and the income from the produce and (3) to collect in time what was due to the state. None of the problems could be solved unless the government had complete control over the rural areas. This itself was a very difficult task, as it brought up the government against resistance of all kinds. If correct figures were obtained, the productive capacity of the various types of soils, the means for irrigation and, where the revenue was to be collected in cash, the market-prices of the produce and the facilities for marketing would have to be taken into account. Where revenue was collected in kind, the difficulties of timely collection would have to be overcome. Three methods of assessment were possible: sharing of the produce; fixing of rent in cash or kind on the basis of measurement of the areas of the crops sown at each season; and fixing of rent on a basis of contract after considering the yield over a number of years. The first method, apart from the difficulty of collection, involved risk of loss to the state; the second could be accurate enough but not just to the peasant, as the actual yield was not taken into account; the third secured the interest of the state, but could add considerably to the burden of the cultivator. His lot was harder still in the assigned lands, because the assignees

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knew that they could be transferred at any time, and therefore tried to get as much as they could out of the assignment.

We shall discuss later in some detail the measures taken by 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī and the Emperor Akbar to increase the control and the income of the state. In fact, between the situation in the middle thirteenth century, when regular armies had to march around in order to collect the revenue, and the middle seventeenth century when, it is said, peasants were running away from the land because of the extortions of the state and the revenue collectors, no system of assessment and collection could be discovered that was satisfactory both to the cultivator and the state. The situation was definitely worse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, except that, as the British government became more and more firmly established, peasants gradually came under the jurisdiction of the law courts and the police.

The area of the land under cultivation gradually increased under the Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, and inducements were offered to bring new land under the plough. But not enough was done to increase the facilities for irrigation, though Muḥammad Tughlaq established a separate department for the promotion of agriculture and Fīrūz Tughlaq and Shāh Jahān constructed some canals, and in Akbar's time the cultivation of cash crops was promoted and the possibility of increasing production through the rotation of crops was studied. It is the general and continued neglect of the improvement of the methods and facilities of agriculture that was the great shortcoming of the Indian Muslim states, as also later of the British government.

The only taxes allowed by Muslim law are *'ushr* and *zakāt* from Muslims and *khirāj* (or *'ushr*, if land designated as *'ushrī* was cultivated) and *jizyah* from *dhimmīs*. The taxes actually levied far exceeded these and were not based on any law or system. There were taxes on agriculturists, on tradesmen and pedlars, on processes of industry and stages in commercial transactions; there were tolls of different kinds and levies for the use of roads and bridges. These taxes inevitably tended to multiply. There were customs dues charged at the frontier and at the seaports. During the Mughal period, the duties on imports and exports were fixed by the Emperor. At Sūrat in 1609 they were 2½ per cent. on goods, 3 per cent. on provisions and 2 per cent. on 'money', which probably meant coined or uncoined gold and silver. By Auraṇgzēb's time the rate had increased, but it was still below 5 per cent. The system of farming out the customs dues, unlike the farming of agricultural revenue, stimulated rather than hampered foreign trade[25].

[25] Moreland, '*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*'. MacMillan, London, 1920. P. 273.

Petty taxes collected in the towns were not levied by the central government, but the income derived from them was taken into account when fixing the income of the *jāgīr* or assignment of which they formed a part. We may also reasonably suspect that, as there is no indication of the accounts of the taxes being checked, the assignees would be tempted to increase them in order to augment their personal income. Now and then, when complaints were made, orders were issued forbidding the levy of most or some of the taxes. Fīrūz Tughlaq's *Futūḥāt* gives a list of petty taxes the levy of which was ordered to be discontinued, as they were not permitted by the *sharī'ah*[26]. The *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī* quotes a *farmān* of the 8th year of Auraṇgzēb abolishing unjust taxes and levies in the province of Aḥmadābād[27]. The accession of a ruler was often marked by the pardoning of offenders and the prohibition of noxious taxes. We may take it that there was no difference of opinion about the injustice of these taxes. They were an economic disease for which remedies were occasionally applied but which could not be cured.

It is difficult to form a clear and objective judgement in regard to the total result of the agrarian and commercial policy of the Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. The wealth and the plenitude and excellence of the manufactured goods to which almost all accounts bear witness would be inconceivable in a country depending mainly on agriculture. The Muslims transmitted (from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century) the rich merchandise of India for the European markets, chiefly from Aden in Arabia, by the Red Sea to Suez, sometimes from the Persian Gulf to the Euphrates, and thence to Aleppo. From here the goods were distributed by Venice. England was supplied with Indian commodities by an annual ship from Venice 'of great burthen and immense value'[28]. 'India alone supplied all the clothing required by the Muslim and Christian population of the east coast of Africa and the adjacent islands.'[29] In Iran 'cotton cloths, drugs and all the usual exports of India were in constant demand'[30]. 'Cotton and silk manufactures, perfumes, innumerable things of ivory, beautiful woodwork of all kinds, bedsteads of all colours, works of art made of coral, as well as agates, cornelians, onyxes and other precious stones, delicate cushions, quilted cloths, canopies of delicate workmanship, beautiful paintings, shields made of tortoise-shell which were "wrought and inlaid very

[26] *Futūḥāt-i-Fīrūzshāhī*. Edited by S. A. Rashīd. Muslim University, Aligarh. P. 5.

[27] Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan, *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī*. Calcutta, 1928. P. 259.

[28] W. Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*. London, 1813. P. i.

[29] Bāl Krishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England*. George Routledge, London, 1924. P. 6.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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workmanlike", fair signets, rings, buttons, handles of knives, and beads of white-as-milk stone were exported from Cambay to all the parts of the world. Gujarāt was the home of textile manufacture. Its silk and cotton stuffs were one of the principal sources of riches in India[31]'. The chief exports of Bengal were its piece-goods of various sorts, fine and flowered tusser stuffs, butter, rice, wheat, opium, saltpetre, raw silk, ginger, lac, cotton, long pepper, borax, musk, agate, civet, elephants, furniture and large quantities of black and red pottery, fruits and scented oils, sugar and rattan, and Bengal received in return all sorts of spices, ivory, ebony and many other sorts of fine wood for the making of house-furniture, cowries, tin, copper, spelter, salt, sandal, radix china, rhubarb, porcelain. Arakān, Martabān, Tenasserim, Pēgū, Siām, Cambodia and Cochin-China exported to India gold, silver, rubies, sapphires, spinels, some diamonds and emeralds, and imported from India white and coloured piecegoods of Bengal, Coromandel and Gujarāt, silk stuffs, drugs, pearls, pepper, rose-water, lead, iron, steel, copper, vermillion and quicksilver[32]. There was considerable trade with Sumatra, Java and China as well. The conclusion to be drawn from this survey of commodities exchanged is that 'India was the respiratory organ for the circulation of the moneys and commodities of the commercial system of the world. It was the sea into which all the rivers of trade and industry flowed, and thus profusely enriched its inhabitants'[33].

This commercial intercourse was free; it was also international in the sense that production, transport and distribution were shared between the craftsmen and merchants of many nations. Indian Muslim rulers and officials participated in commercial enterprises without attempting to exclude other parties. In 1613, the Portuguese captured a richly laden Indian ship in which Jahāṇgīr's mother was interested, and in 1621 and 1623 junks belonging to Jahāṇgīr and his son, Prince Khurram, were seized by the English, who also found that often their rivals in trade were high Mughal officials[34]. The European nations who found their way into this area of peaceful commercial intercourse could only think in terms of monopoly, and they sought to create this with a greed and brutality that equals the ruthlessness of any 'oriental' conqueror. Pelsaert, who was in India from 1620 to 1627, mentions places in which the Portuguese used to have extensive trade, 'but they are now subject to the Mughals, because this king has built forts everywhere to keep them in sub-

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[34] *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XXI. Article by V. C. Jōshī on *The East India Co. and the Mughal Authorities.*

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jection'[35]. However, the lack of a navy that could keep the enemies of free commercial intercourse off the sea-routes proved catastrophic to the Mughal Empire and, in fact, to the whole of the east. The commercial policy of the Mughal administration is not to be blamed for the decline of trade and for agriculture having to bear the whole burden of the Empire. 'Portuguese, Muslims and Hindūs all concur in putting the blame for this state of things on the English and on us (the Dutch), saying that we are the scourge of the sea and of their prosperity. . . . They point to the number of ships that sailed from Sūrat alone—every year four or five of the king's great ships, each of 400-500 last (800-1000 tons) . . . besides smaller ships owned by individual merchants, coming and going in large numbers. Nowadays the total is very small.'[36] This was the state of things after the Portuguese had done their worst for over a century, and it could not be improved by a land-empire that was helpless on the seas.

VIII

The ideas and policies of defence illustrate, more than any other aspect of political organization and activity, the awareness of conditions in the world, the ability to appreciate the total needs of defence, and to coordinate the military administration with the civil government in such a way as to meet these needs. The security or the danger in which a state finds itself determines the means and methods used to maintain law and order, and influences administrative and political policy in other ways more difficult to define.

India had been invaded many times, but the statesmen of the Delhi Sultanate were the first to realize that the kingdoms or peoples beyond the Khyber Pass were a perpetual source of danger. There was no system in those days of a permanent diplomatic service, but the Delhi sulṭāns kept themselves informed about developments. After the conquest of central Asia by the Mongols (1219-1222) refugees kept on coming into India, and were a valuable source of information. When the Mongol power in this area disintegrated, the idea of extending the Delhi Sultanate across the mountains of the north-west began to be considered. Sulṭān Muḥammad Tughlaq (1325-1351) formed a plan of annexing Khurāsān, because reports from there made it appear that this would be feasible. Later, we find the Mughal Emperors using all means within their power to maintain their hold over Qandhār, Ghaznī and Kābul, and Shāh Jahān attempted, in 1645-1646, to occupy Balkh

[35] *Jahāngīr's India. The Remonstrantie* of Francisco Pelsaert. Translated from the Dutch by Moreland and Geyl. W. Heffer, Cambridge, 1925. Pp. 7-8.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

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and even territory beyond. On the other hand, facts make it evident that a wide-awake policy in regard to the north-west frontier and beyond is followed when the idea of a single state extending over the whole or the larger part of the country is in the process of realization. The north-west frontier and its significance are completely forgotten when the large state disintegrates into small units. The organization of the defence of the north-west frontier is an index of the degree of administrative and political unity within the country.

After Iletmish had recovered Lahore and the upper Punjab in 1217 and Multān and Uch in 1226, the north-west frontier area became a part of the Delhi Sultanate. Mongol invasions became a menace after the death of Iletmish, but within ten years Balban laid down a strategy of defence. This consisted in withdrawing the frontier to the east of the Indus, leaving a 40 to 50 miles broad strip of no-man's land so laid waste as to deny the invader water and fodder, and offering battle when he had crossed this strip. The bases of the defending armies were at Lahore, Ḍīpālpūr and Multān, from where they could operate freely and manoeuvre as required in the particular situations. The defence bases were in charge of the most outstanding commanders, two of whom, Jalāluddīn Fīrūz Khiljī and Ghiyāthuddīn Tughlaq, were raised to the throne.

This strategy, based on a withdrawn frontier, was replaced in the second half of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī's reign (1296-1316) by what may be called the strategy of the advanced frontier. No bases were acquired to the west of the mountains, but it seems to have become for some time a routine of the Indian armies to advance from their bases and march back and forth along the Qandhār-Ghaznī-Kābul route[37]. Sulṭān Muḥammad Tughlaq's plan of annexing Khurāsān did not materialize, but during the Mughal period, as already stated, the strategy of an advanced frontier was followed. Kābul was not finally lost till 1738.

The defence of the north-west frontier and of the Khyber trade-route has always been complicated by the uncontrollable nature of the tribes in this area. The desperate remedies of forced conversion or total annihilation were sometimes attempted. From some typical Pathān names among the nobles of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī and developments in Muḥammad Tughlaq's reign, it appears that the more reasonable policy of providing employment in the army had been followed for some time. This enabled large-scale migration of the frontier tribes into the country, leading up to the establishment of Pathān rule. But even this was not enough. During a part of the

[37] Barani, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

Mughal period, large subsidies had to be paid annually to the tribal chiefs to ensure the security of the Khyber trade-route.

The Himalayan frontier did not present the same kind of problem. It was only necessary occasionally to send forces against hill chiefs who raided the adjacent plains. Control over the route to Tibet had to be obtained when the province of Bengal expanded during the Mughal period, and there was conflict with the rājās of Cooch-Bihar and the Ahōms in Assam.

The protection of the coast-line was not possible without a navy, which the land-based Indian Muslim states did not possess. The Arabian Sea had from time immemorial been an open international trade-route. Ocean-faring merchant ships and coastal vessels plied in this area. Pirates preyed upon this trade, but their bases were on the mainland, and were destroyed if their depredations became too bold or continuous. The Portuguese and later the English were too strong for the defensive powers of the Indian Muslim states. They had better ships, better arms, and far superior skill in naval warfare. Their sailors and soldiers possessed a training which fitted them for fighting against odds. After the failure of the joint enterprise of the Ottoman Sulṭān Sulaimān and the king of Gujarāt to capture Diu in 1538, there was no hope of defeating the Europeans at sea. And unless they were driven off the seas, they could not be prevented from establishing footholds on the Indian coast. All that the Mughal emperors could do was to restrain them from extending their power on the land. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was clear that the English were establishing their dominion as well as carrying on trade, it was too late for the Indian rulers to take effective action. That they did not attempt it because of jealousy or fear of each other is, however, a blot on Indian statesmanship of the time.

The army was the means of defence, and military organization and policy have now to be considered. The accounts of wars and battles with which the Persian chronicles are filled and which contemporary writers of Indian Muslim history faithfully reproduce, completely confuse the picture unless we distinguish between wars waged as a part of policy and wars without policy. Rebellions and measures taken to suppress them, conflicts between the provincial kingdoms after the decline of the Sultanate, the almost annual wars between the Bahmanī kingdom and Vijayanagar, Auraṇgzēb's wars in the Deccan, and the ceaseless internecine strife that followed his death are examples of wars without policy. They have to be regarded as defects of political thinking or the result of an economic and social system which offered no better solution for the problem of employment or increase of resources than waging wars for the acquisition of

new territory. Wars that indicate policy are related to defence, to expansion of the state along trade-routes and the need to safeguard these routes. A study of these routes will explain the policy underlying many wars.

Apart from being the means of defence, the army was needed to support the administration. Its commanders performed the duties of civil officers as well. The loyalty of the commanders and the soldiers was, therefore, a matter of supreme importance, and everything possible had to be done to maintain it. Appeal was made to religious sentiment and to self-interest, and since this also was not enough, harsh punishments were inflicted for disloyalty and rebellion. The army was also kept busy, and successful wars were used as a means of evoking admiration for the ruler and faith in his government. By degrees, methods of recruitment and payment were adopted that reduced the hold of the commanders and increased the influence and the control of the government. However, because of the extent of the country, the defective means of communication and the fissiparous tendencies that found encouragement from these two sources, the loyalty of the army remained a major problem for the Indian Muslim statesmen who aimed at a strong, centralized government extending over the whole country.

The main store of military equipment was a part of the royal household and was reviewed periodically. The production of weapons and armaments was also organized at the centre. The maintenance of law and order and defence necessitated a threefold division of the army. One of these divisions remained at the capital, another was stationed at strategic positions near the frontier and in the interior, and the third consisted of troops maintained by the provincial governors. For local disturbances and the chastisement of refractory chiefs or rājās the governors of the neighbouring provinces would be asked to send assistance, if the local forces proved insufficient. For expeditions organized by the sultan or the Emperor, governors of provinces were summoned to appear with their troops, and special levies were added, if necessary. This method of mobilization took time, and during the half-century or so of sudden Mongol invasions, it sometimes appeared to have failed. But it was on the whole a fairly good working method, and met the requirements of most cases of emergency.

Soldiers were recruited by the officers of the *Dīwān-i-'Arḍ*, later called *Bakhshīs*. The horseman had to provide his own horse or horses, his own equipment and arms, and have them approved at the periodic muster. The horse was branded after approval (*dāgh*), and in the Mughal period, a descriptive note (*chihrā*) was prepared of the horse and the equipment, to enable subsequent identification and

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checking. The system had its defects, but as far as possible it was ensured that horses and equipment would be up to standard. Specially in peace-time, however, there was danger of neglect and deterioration.

The fighting power and the reliability of an army depends also on the system of remuneration. Soldiers in the Sultanate period were paid by the government, either directly or indirectly, in cash or through assignment of land. There is evidence of both the methods being followed. Cash payment promoted the mercenary instinct, while the assignment of land tended to make the soldier's profession hereditary. It must also have created ties that interfered with the soldier's loyalty to the government. Shēr Shāh is credited with having personally recruited the fittest persons available, to have paid the salaries in cash and instituted a system of transfers that prevented the growth of personal relationships between the soldiers and the officers. With the decline of the Mughal Empire, war lost all meaning in terms of policy, and armies became mercenary.

There does not appear to have been any established system of collective training. The *Ādāb al-Ḥarb wa 'l-Shujā'at* of Muḥammad Manṣūr Sa'īd, a thirteenth century work, mentions gymnastic exercises, but no form of drilling. The cavalry was the main strength of the army; each horseman was expected to learn the art of fighting for himself, and also to do his part as the member of a group according to directions given. This may have resulted, no doubt, in personal accomplishments of a high order, but it did not provide a sound training for combined action. It also tended to increase reliance on mere numbers, and to swell the size of armies without adding to their effectiveness. The wars with the Marhattas in the seventeenth century revealed the weakness of a slow-moving army against light-armed, swift horsemen, and though Shāh Jahān once trained picked troops for fighting the Marhattas in their own fashion, the Mughal armies did not change their tactics. The first battles with European and European-trained Indian infantry showed that small armies, properly drilled and disciplined, could make short work of masses of cavalry. European methods of drilling were soon adopted, but the change came too late to influence the course of events.

The introduction of fire-arms was a great revolution in warfare. In India, also, fire-arms came into use by degrees, and armies were equipped with cannon and matchlockmen. But no scientific study of the use of fire-arms was made, and the value of infantry armed with guns was not realized till it was too late.

Strategy and tactics tend to become traditional, and are difficult to change because so much else has to be changed with them, in particular, the personnel of the army. The Rājpūts failed against the

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Turks because they could not alter their system of warfare to the degree necessary to match the mobility of the Turkish cavalry. The Muslims maintained their system of fighting in the open. Catapults and machines of various types for breaking down walls are mentioned in the chronicles, and means of reducing forts were studied. But no strategy of warfare based on forts was evolved[38]. Very soon, however, the elephant, that treacherous symbol of power and glory, found an honoured place in the military imagination of the Indian Muslims, and though the cavalry continued to be the main arm, the mobility of their armies was endangered by the employment of the elephant. But not entirely. The cavalry continued to be the main arm. Bābar defeated both the Paṯhāns and the Rājpūts by his tactical use of cannon. But the Mughals did not develop the technique of using artillery, and cannon could be deemed to have reduced mobility without making a corresponding addition to effectiveness. The decline of the army as an efficient instrument for war as policy was one of the great reasons for the decline of the Indian Muslim states.

In considering the strategy and tactics of warfare and the armament industries which supported the war efforts during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we must remember that the industrial and political revolutions of Europe have formed our attitudes and standards, and these cannot be applied to a situation in which war was still the concern of kings and professional soldiers. In India, firearms had begun to be produced, and cannon of weight and calibre appropriate to the various tactical uses were cast. But there was no indigenous iron industry to support this manufacture, and because firearms produced in Europe became available, the possibility of large-scale manufacture within the country decreased.

IX

The position and powers of the ruler and the methods of administration had a theoretical aspect also, but this, as we have indicated, was less the result of political thought than an attempt to adapt what was regarded as wise and established practice. Political theorists, just as they ignored the rights of subjects, also omitted to study the attitude of the governed towards their rulers, except the tendency towards disobedience, conspiracy and rebellion, which was just one aspect of the problem. We cannot fully understand the working of the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughal Empire and other Muslim states in

[38] Small forts were built at strategic points, and a few large ones also, for instance, by Shēr Shāh. But they were in fact walled cantonments. All the well-known forts date from the Rājpūt period.

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India without considering the attitude of the people, both Muslims and Hindūs, towards the state.

The Muslim attitude is difficult to analyze because it was basically irrational. Political matters were supposed to be the concern only of those who desired power, and took the risks of obtaining and exercising it. The risks were both physical and moral, and it was a deep-rooted belief that if one desired contentment in this world and salvation in the next, these risks were not worth taking. The wise man was not one who desired to rule over others, but one who was able to discover a safe and honourable way through the conflicts of political interests, gaining his ends without committing himself morally to the political system, watching and learning from all that happened without himself becoming involved. But such philosophic detachment was not easily possible. It was the duty of the good Muslim to concern himself with the condition of Islām and the Muslims. He would be considered disloyal if he did not feel proud of the expansion of Muslim power or sorrowful at its decline, if he did not admire the magnificence of the court or the munificence of kings and noblemen, if he did not accept the system of rank and status, and look upon himself with the appropriate degree of humility. He had to accept it as axiomatic that those who possessed power would exercise it, ruthlessly if need be, to achieve their purpose or even to satisfy their whims. Of course, the excesses of rulers could bring things to such a pass that God's judgement could not be awaited, and it happened that people who did not otherwise concern themselves with the intrigues of the court and the nobility rose against one party or another. But such uprisings had no background of political thinking and did not produce any change in the system. It also happened that the king commanded or required something that was deemed to be forbidden by religion, and the people opposed him as a matter of religious duty. However, such recorded cases are rare. It was far easier for rulers to rouse popular sentiment against heresy and heretics, and the execution of rebels, no matter what the cause of the rebellion, was frequently a spectacle which the mob would gather in numbers to behold.

The effects of this negative attitude towards political affairs were accentuated by the expectation that the government would be a source of benefit, which meant, in the first instance, personal benefit. The craftsman desired patronage, the physically fit person military or police service, the merchant wanted many and good bargains, the educated man hoped for employment, the man clever with his tongue demanded opportunity for a profitable exercise of his talent, and all of them believed it to be the obligation of those who possessed wealth and power to be sympathetic and generous to the limit. In

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fact, miserliness was among the universally detested vices, and only a discriminating few would distinguish between miserliness and ordered expenditure, whether of wealth or of sympathy. A man who was in a position to give or to refuse would be considered rude if he gave without an expression of modesty that safeguarded the self-esteem of the receiver, and he would be looked down upon as one thankless to God, hard-hearted and callous towards his fellow-men if he did not adopt a sufficiently devious way of showing his inability to fulfil even an unreasonable request. This attitude made cultured life very ornamental, but it was disastrous in public affairs. It deprived the public servant of standards of upright conduct to which he could appeal, and according to which he could expect his own actions to be judged, while it gave ample occasion for his motives to be suspected and his words and deeds to be misconstrued. The ruler, as the supposed possessor of absolute power and infinite wealth, was of course under the closest and most continuous scrutiny of those expecting benefits. He was to a degree safe because he was also feared. But he knew that prodigality was a surer means of ensuring his popularity and safety than thrift. Those around him being entirely dependent on him, had nothing to fall back on. The public by its attitude made political life into a gamble without realizing its own responsibility in creating this undesirable situation.

But it cannot be denied that there were also elements in the common people and in the nobility who were by nature disposed to reckless and desperate action. This unsocial tendency is found everywhere and at all times. It is regarded as a criminal tendency and is repressed. But government and law can repress it only if public opinion supports them fully. Unfortunately, in the Indian Muslim state, religious law made right conditional on power. This is a reasonable and defensible point of view academically. But in a state where the ruler has no hereditary right, and where obedience is due to him only so long as he can command it, rebellion, no matter how strongly it is condemned, does offer an opportunity to the ambitious to acquire right through power. The good Muslim knew that he had to be loyal to God, to the Prophet, to the *sharī'ah* and to the ruler. But loyalty to a particular ruler who was in danger of being displaced was a matter of personal choice, and he would not necessarily be considered good if he was imprudent enough to place loyalty above personal interest and suffer the consequences. Personal loyalty to the losing or the lost cause of a ruler was a social, but not a religious value.

Lastly, we must not forget those whose chief concern was the good life in this world and salvation in the next. Such people could not be set apart. Among them were men who obeyed the religious

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injunctions of prayer and fasting mainly as a social form, but could bring into their love and fear of God a degree of sincerity that would change their attitude to life. There were men who were fervently religious, the 'righteous' *'ulamā* or the *ṣūfīs* and their followers, for whom political affairs were not only unworthy of attention but a snare, who thought of salvation and nothing else. And if they lived on generosity, they did not ask who was generous to them, and how the means which enabled a person to feed the poor had been acquired. The possessor of power could obtain indirect and tacit recognition of his position by having his offering accepted, as Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā accepted the offering of money from Khusrau, the favourite of Quṭubuddīn Mubārak who had murdered him and seized his throne[39]. A ruler could depend as little on the loyalty and support of the religious-minded men as he could on that of the worldly.

The attitude of the Hindūs was a direct or indirect result of the caste system. Government and war were the business of particular castes; the others would acknowledge this as their right, but were not bound by law to fight for the maintenance of this right. The establishment of Muslim rule meant that the Kshattrīyās, as rulers and warriors, lost their position, but it did not follow that those belonging to the other castes would carry on a continuous struggle against the Muslims for the sake of the ruling and warrior castes. On the other hand, though Muslim rule could be regarded as an inescapable decree of fate, there could be no question of accepting it in principle. Muslim jurisprudence, while it assigned an inferior status to the Hindūs, also provided a positive legal basis for co-existence, for social relationships and political co-operation, and once this basis was accepted, and some form had been given to social relationships and political co-operation, custom would tend to modify law, and gradually replace discrimination with a working system of equality[40]. But the Muslims could not, under any circumstances, find a place within the caste system. Neither Hindū law nor custom could give them any status, however dominant they may have been politically and socially. This did not, however, deprive them of the co-operation of Hindūs. The Hindū soldier was

[39] Dr K. A. Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i-Dihlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, Nadwatul-Muṣannifīn, Delhi. Pp. 314-5.

[40] Sulṭān Jalāluddīn Khiljī, giving a realistic description of his position, told Malik Aḥmed Chap; 'Do you not see daily the Hindus, who are the bitterest enemies of God and of the religion of the Prophet, pass under the walls of my palace, beating their drums and blowing their trumpets, and proceeding to the Jumnā, where they worship idols and perform acts of polytheism and *kufr*, while we, who are shameless pimps calling ourselves Muslim and King of Muslims, look on. They do not care for our power and magnificence.' Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-7.

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by caste a soldier. It was more in keeping with his prescribed function if he joined service in the Muslim army than if he adopted some other profession. There were Hindū soldiers in the army of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī, and a Hindū general of his is mentioned by name in the chronicles. The foot-soldiers (*pā'iks*) in the army of the Sultanate were almost all Hindūs. They must have begun to be recruited quite early, and were followed by warrior castes of a higher status[41]. The number of Muslims available for the non-military services being small, the lower posts in the administration would have had to be thrown open to the Hindūs, and there must have been in the cities numbers of men of nondescript castes who availed themselves of this opportunity of employment[42]. There were no social risks attached to commercial intercourse, and this had begun centuries before the establishment of the Sultanate. Apart from the accidents of war, to which Muslims and non-Muslims were alike exposed, it seems that the assets of the Hindū capitalist were safer than the wealth of the most powerful Muslim nobleman. They could not be lost as the result of a court intrigue or fall from favour, and they could be passed on from father to son without being divided up or escheating to the royal treasury. The social obligations of the Muslim merchant would bring his wealth into prominence; the caste restrictions of the Hindu capitalist kept his possessions concealed.

But even when Hindu chiefs and merchants linked up their fortune and their fate with Muslim rulers, it must have been apparent that the basis of political co-operation was far from sound. The ruler could not directly promote political or social integration. He could issue decrees, but he could not legislate in matters of religious belief or practice either for the Muslims or the Hindūs. All that he could do was to set an example of equal justice.

When we judge the political or religious policy of the Indian Muslim rulers we must, therefore, bear in mind the dilemma in which they were placed. A rational policy, or a policy in which prejudices were disregarded, would have deprived them of the sympathy and support of the Muslims without giving them any right or title to the loyalty of the Hindūs. They had to exercise personal discretion under circumstances which they did not create and for which they could find no remedy.

[41] Baranī mentions '*pā'iks*' or foot soldiers, who must have been Hindūs. Fīrūz Tughlaq addressed the Hindūs of his army on the expedition to Nagarkōt. 'Afīf, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-7.

[42] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II. Revised edition referred to above, p. 54 ff.

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Part II. The Early Period

CHAPTER III

ORTHODOXY AND THE ORTHODOX

THE SHARĪ'AH AS LAW

I

THE Indian Muslims have regarded themselves as a community, and primarily a religious community. In theory, if not always in fact, their judgement in regard to beliefs, political policies, social customs and the way of life generally has been influenced by a concern to act as strictly as possible in accordance with the teachings of Islām. This is the basis of their orthodoxy, which they have held to be the embodiment of both the worldly and the spiritual good, the ideal framework within which life should be lived. It seems most appropriate, therefore, to begin with a discussion of orthodoxy and the orthodox during each of the periods into which this study has been divided.

We may define orthodoxy in general terms as the principle and system of maintaining uniformity in belief and practice by determining what is true or desirable, by discouraging deviation, and applying appropriate social and legal sanctions to enforce conformity. Orthodoxy reflects the tendency of adhering to tradition, of accepting the results of what is held to be valid thought and experience and of objecting to and resisting change as something wrong. There is an orthodox point of view in regard to property or liberty or personal conduct, and this point of view is embodied in the legal system. There is orthodoxy in tastes, in art and literature, the sanctions of which reside in public opinion, and can sometimes be quite effective. It is in religion, however, that orthodoxy can be most definite and most comprehensive, and it is of religion that we primarily think when we use the term orthodoxy.

The history of human thought is the record of conflict between the desire for stability and the need for change, between orthodoxy and innovation. Stability and change are both essential for survival, and an innovation that is accepted becomes a part of orthodoxy. In the history of religions, issues often become complicated because

every departure from current belief and practice is made to appear as a return to the original and authentic form of the faith. By degrees it becomes impossible to decide which particular beliefs and practices represent the original form of a religion, and orthodoxy becomes the orthodoxy of sects, not of the believers as a whole.

The Islāmic way of life, comprehending beliefs, ritual, practices, public and personal law, and being stretched even to include dress, personal appearance and rules of behaviour in social intercourse, is called the *sharī'ah*. Differences in regard to doctrines and practices and interpretations of the law began among the Muslims soon after the death of the Prophet. These differences were not so much disagreements as the inevitable results of efforts to make the *sharī'ah* of Islām complete in every respect. The absolute validity of the Qur'ān as the source and basis of the *sharī'ah* was assumed and has never been questioned. In specific cases, where the Qur'ān was not explicit, the choice lay between finding what the decision or the view or the action of the Prophet had been or, where no known act or opinion of the Prophet could serve as a relevant precedent, relying upon one's own judgement or opinion (*ijtihād*) or *ijmā'* (consensus of opinion among those entitled to give an opinion). As no source other than the Qur'ān possessed absolute validity, the development of Muslim jurisprudence, called *fiqh*, depended upon assigning the proper degree of validity to the other sources. The *ḥadīth* (Traditions), and all details regarding the actions of the Prophet, comprehended in the term *sunnah*, were collected and their authenticity continuously examined. *Ijtihād* was also made use of. As Islām was held to be based on an integration of the spiritual and the worldly life, a harmonization of religious observance, morality and law, it was necessary that doctrines, ritual and law should be integrated within a system. Islām does not permit the constitution of a church or of any body to give a final or binding opinion in matters of doctrine, ritual or law. Muslim jurisprudence is the sum total of independent, personal opinion, the validity of which was based on the number of adherents a particular opinion or a comprehensive body of opinions happened to obtain. The degree of validity, therefore, also varied. But the ideal was that all Muslims should follow the *sunnah*, the example of the Prophet, and should constitute one, united community; that they should be, to use the technical phrase, *ahl-i-sunnah wa 'l jamā'āh*. So far as jurisprudence was concerned, four schools of thought (*madhāhib*), the Mālikī, the Ḥanafī, the Shāfi'ī and the Ḥanbalī, came to be recognized as equally authentic. For a time it was permissible to consult the opinions of all the four schools, but then for various reasons it became the rule to follow one particular school. This rule gradually came to be regarded as bind-

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ing, and was called *taqlīd*. In other words, orthodoxy came to be regarded as strict adherence to one of the four schools of *fiqh*. The particular *fiqh* followed was naturally regarded as comprehending the manifold aspects of the *sharī'ah*.

When the Turks established their power in India, the Muslim world stretched from the banks of the Beas and the lower Indus to the shores of the Atlantic, and northwards to the Caspian and Aral seas. Samarqand and Bukhārā were centres of learning which exercised the greatest influence on the Turks. The standard of orthodoxy came thus to be based on works of *fiqh* whose authority was recognized by the learned men of central Asia, and as these learned men generally followed the Ḥanafī *fiqh*, orthodoxy in Muslim India came to mean *taqlīd* of the Sunnī Ḥanafī *fiqh* as presented by the central Asian scholars of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries[1], the standard work being the *Hidāyah* of Burhānuddīn Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Marghīnānī, written in the twelfth century. This orthodoxy received official recognition and support, and constituted the *sharī'ah* of Islām which it was the duty of kings to maintain. With rare exceptions, only scholars who had studied the Ḥanafī *fiqh* were appointed to the post of qāḍī or *ṣadr*, though they could, at the request of litigants, decide cases in accordance with the *fiqh* of other schools. The Ḥanafī *fiqh* was the core of the instruction given in all educational institutions. Commentaries on the Qur'ān and collections of *ḥadīth* were also prescribed and studied, but mainly as the academic counterpart of the *fiqh*. The urge to study the Qur'ān or the whole corpus of *ḥadīths* in order to form an independent judgement was discouraged, and scholars devoted their attention instead to writing commentaries upon or preparing adaptations of the recognized and prescribed books. Indian Muslim jurists did not permit themselves the exercise of independent judgement even in matters of detail. But it was inevitable that Indian Muslims should be influenced by their environment and, in practice, gradually make those adjustments which appeared necessary. It was also evident that those who were converts would not give up all their established customs and habits. The legal categories of *'urf* and *'ādah*[2] provided

[1] There have been Shī'ah sects in India from the close of the eighth century, and among the Sunnīs also there have been theological differences. But the Hanafī Sunnīs have always formed the vast majority, and it was because of them that orthodoxy became a significant and potent influence.

[2] *'Urf* is a term used for custom, for customary law, for laws made or procedures adopted by the ruler, for 'that upon which minds have agreed because of the evidence of reason, and in accepting which men of all dispositions concur', etc. *'Urf* cannot, in principle, override the *sharī'ah*; in practice, it has often done so. *'Ādah* is a prescriptive right, an established practice. See Levi, *The Social Structure of Islām*, Ch. VI, and *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, *'Urf* and *'Ādah*.

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opportunity for a realistic co-ordination of religious law with existing fact. But no advantage was taken of this. Muslim jurisprudence, therefore, remained an extraneous element, envisaging conditions that were largely, if not entirely, hypothetical or irrelevant to the actual conditions of life. It could not but be as rigid as any system which is purely logical is sure to become.

The method generally adopted to ensure conformity was to ask for the opinion (*fatwā*) of the learned on any matter under discussion. In appearance this method was democratic, as the community would be able in this way to find out the opinion of the majority of those entitled to give an opinion on the basis of their knowledge. In reality, it was a kind of inquisition which any member of the community could initiate. To take, as an instance, what has actually been a subject of controversy. Is it permissible to listen to music? Any of the *'ulamā* could be asked this question. If he declared it was not permissible or held that it was or even if he declined to give an answer, he would have to show on what authority he based his opinion or attitude. This led inevitably to a discussion of the relative validity of the various authorities; and those who relied on the Qur'ān or the *ḥadīth* could not close the discussion, because even when quoting the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* they could be accused of deviating from an opinion held by the majority of the community for many generations and, therefore, of creating dissension. So, even though there were few points apart from the basic doctrines on which the recognized works of *fiqh* themselves gave categorical judgements, the safest course for a scholar was to avoid controversy by confining himself to the study and exposition of accepted opinions. Practice could not be controlled, but formal expressions of opinion on questions of dogma and practice were subject to a scrutiny the consequences of which could not be foreseen. Determined advocacy of opinions unacceptable to the *'ulamā* possessing authority led to the destruction of the 'innovator' or, if he was successful in collecting a sufficiently large number of determined followers, to the formation of a sect.

As Muslim jurisprudence developed and became more and more a specialized study, a distinction had begun to be made between the *faqīh*, or jurist, the religious thinker and the *ṣūfī*. Technically, and also in fact, they were all *'ulamā*. They studied the same books and relied on the same sources. But the jurists, concerned mainly with the application of the law as officers of the state, devoted their entire attention to matters of law and believed in following the opinions of recognized jurists as the most valid precedents. The religious thinkers regarded the *sharī'ah* as an indivisible body of doctrine and practice. They kept aloof from kings and courts and the administration of the

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state. For them the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* were the main and the immediate as well as the ultimate sources of guidance. The *ṣūfīs* claimed to follow the *sharī'ah* but, as we shall see later, their belief and conduct was governed by what they considered to be the requirements of the truly spiritual life. The jurists gave opinions in matters of law as *muftīs*, administered the law as qāḍīs, as judges of all ranks, and the highest among them would be religious and legal adviser to the ruler, recommending appointments, promotions and transfers of qāḍīs, and generally also supervising the distribution of charities, which could take the form of grants of land and endowments or cash payments. The dependence of the jurists on the ruler and the administration was obvious. It was equally obvious that the jurists had to support the administration because they were supported by it, and it was likely that in matters of controversy they would be guided more by political policy than the *sharī'ah* or their own conscience. They were not above casuistry, and could use the legal formulation of a religious injunction both as a means of enforcing as well as of evading it[3]. Conscientious theologians were obliged to condemn the whole system of sulṭān and qāḍī and legalistic interpretation. But they could do so only in certain ways and within certain limits. For, apart from the fact that the jurists could withhold patronage and reduce the theologian to utter dependence on charity, it was the jurists who ultimately decided what was a wrong or a right view in matters of religion, and their decision would be enforced by the political authority. The independent *'ulamā* retaliated by calling the jurists believers in externals, *'ulamā-i ẓāhir*, worldly men who could not attain righteousness. Thus, while the jurists represented and enforced orthodoxy, they were not regarded as truly religious men, while the independent *'ulamā*, however high the honour in which they may have been held, could not obtain general acceptance for what they held to be the true orthodoxy. The *ṣūfīs* were even less inclined to endure subjection to a narrow, legalistic interpretation of the *sharī'ah*. So we find that although orthodoxy was recognized as obligatory, it could not be stated with any confidence by the Muslims of any period after the

[3] To take an example. 'It is written in the book of *nikāh* (marriage) that any person both of whose parents are Muslim is *kufw* (eligible for marriage)'. But the jurist introduces variations. 'If a person is openly immoral (for instance, he drinks wine openly and staggers and stumbles while passing through streets), he will not be considered eligible for a virtuous young woman. But he will be eligible if he conceals this fact and does not let it become evident. . . . If an openly immoral person is treated with respect by the people, for instance, because he is a courtier, then he will be considered eligible, but if he is a common sort of man, he will not be'. *Fatāwā'-i-Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. 1, p. 349-350. Printed on the margin of the *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī*, published by Maṭba' al-Bulāq, Egypt, 1310A.H.

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Pious Khalīfahs as to who among their contemporaries were the orthodox men whose opinions were to be accepted and whose example followed as a matter of course. The believing Muslim felt no real respect for the qāḍī who, he was told, belonged to the category of worldly men, even if he was honest in his dealings. But he saw that the views of those who lived a genuinely spiritual life could not prevail against the idea of orthodoxy which had the approval of the government and the jurists. The protests of the religious-minded continued to undermine the moral foundations of the political organization of the Muslims and to create a mental embarrassment and unrest within the community which served to counteract tendencies towards the sealing up of its mind.

II

The Muslim community has been a political as well as a religious society. Both these aspects have been regarded as inseparable, because Islāmic teaching insists upon the integration of the worldly and the spiritual life. It ordains that the religious and the worldly life should be organized on the basis of the same values, that equality before God should be given a social and political expression in the form of legal and political equality, that the *bait al-māl*, or public treasury, should be regarded as a means of promoting public welfare. In political affairs, while authority is to be entrusted to the most righteous, the individual member of the community, by virtue of his obligation to enjoin what is known to be good and forbid what is evil, becomes entitled to judge personal behaviour and public policies and actions and to condemn what is wrong. The integration of political and religious values was obvious in the life and thought of the Prophet himself and of some of his Companions, but could not become organic except through actual practice over a period of time sufficient to establish precedents and constitutional procedures. During the life time of the Prophet, questions of constitutional procedure did not arise. After his death, and with the expansion of the Muslim community, they became all-important. Authority had to be vested in someone worthy to be called his successor, who would have the spiritual and moral qualities desirable in an *Imām*, a religious head, and at the same time be a capable statesman and administrator. How could this be done? One possible method was some form of election or selection, another the acknowledgement of a hereditary right, both in the spiritual and the physical sense. But questions of principle became obscured in the struggle for power among Arab tribes and families, and the profession of allegiance, known as *bai'ah*, was made to legalize the possession of power. The Muslim community

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remained both a religious and a political society, but after the Banū Umayyah had established a system of personal rule, it came to be assumed that peace, stability and prosperity depended on an effective administration controlled by a monarch.

The examples of the Prophet and the Pious Khalifahs make it fairly clear what the spirit and the general policy of a ruler and an administration following the principles of Islām should be. In matters of doubt the method of consultation could be adopted, which meant that the opinion of the majority would be followed. But the stability of a political organization depends on discipline as well as the right and duty to oppose what is patently wrong or unjust. There are sayings of the Prophet which make obedience obligatory. He is reported to have taken the following promise from 'Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit along with other promises: 'We offer *bai'ah* (allegiance) with the conditions that we shall submit and obey both when we are pleased and when we are displeased, when we (are made to) suffer hardships and when we are in ease; also when others are preferred over us. We offer *bai'ah* also with the condition that we shall not enter into dispute with the officers of the government . . .' 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd relates that the Prophet told us that after him we would see injustices and undesirable acts committed (by the rulers). The Companions asked, "What do you command us to do under these circumstances?" The Prophet replied, "Give to these rulers what is due to them and ask God for what is due to you". It has been reported by Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet of God said that if anyone sees his ruler commit an undesirable act, then he should be patient, for whoever moves away by a hand's span from (the path of) obedience to the Imām, he will die the death of the *jāhilīyah* (Age of Ignorance)'[4]. 'Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān has related that the Prophet (Peace be on him) said, "After me there will be *Imāms* who will not do as I have instructed and will not follow my *sunnah*, and shortly there will become prominent among these rulers men whose hearts will be like the hearts of devils in the bodies of men". I [Ḥudhaifah] submitted: "O Prophet of God, if I see this condition, how shall I act?" The Prophet said, "You must obey your ruler even if you are beaten on the back; and if your property is taken away, even then you must obey him" '[5]. Taken out of their historical context, these Traditions seem clearly incompatible with the fundamental doctrines of Islām, and inconsistent with the Prophet's sense of justice and his solicitude for his community. We should, therefore, consider them along with those Traditions which make obedience conditional. "Ubādah bin

[4] *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Vol. II, *Kitāb al-Fitan*. Aṣaḥḥ al-Maṭābi'. P. 1045.
[5] *Muslim* as quoted in *Mishkāt*, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, Kānpūr, Qayyūmī Press, p. 462.

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Sāmit reports that the Prophet asked for *bai'ah* with the condition that he would be obeyed under all conditions and circumstances, that those placed in authority would not be challenged, save in cases where they committed patent acts of *kufr* and there was evidence in the Book of God to show that these were acts of *kufr*"[6]. ' "Your best rulers are those for whom you have love in your hearts and who have love in their hearts for you, for whom you pray that God should bestow His favours on them and who do the same for you. And the worst *Imāms* are those for whom you have enmity in your hearts and who have enmity in their hearts for you, those whom you curse and who curse you". The Companions said, "O Prophet of God, should we not oppose such men?" The Prophet said, "No, not so long as they maintain *salāh* (prayer) among you" '[7]. 'It is not permitted to obey man in what is sinful; obedience is only in righteousness'[8]. 'Listening and obeying is (obligatory) on the Muslim in all matters, whether pleasing to him or displeasing, save when he is commanded to do what is sinful. So if he is commanded to do what is sinful, listening and obeying is not (obligatory)'[9]. ' "Help your brother [Muslim], whether he is unjust or being subjected to injustice". The Companions said, "We understand what it means to help those subjected to injustice, but how shall we help the unjust?" The Prophet replied, "Help to the unjust is this, that you hold his hand and restrain him from committing injustice" '[10]. 'If any of you sees any evil, he should remove it with his own hand. If the circumstances are such that he cannot remove it with his own hand, he should declare publicly that it is evil. If circumstances do not allow even of that, he should consider in his heart that it is evil. This is the lowest form of faith'[11]. There are theological opinions given later that repeat these principles. According to the *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 'People should not rebel against the sulṭān until he commits patent acts of *kufr*, but if he does commit such it is obligatory to attack him'[12]. The most definite and encouraging authority for disobedience is the

[6] *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* as quoted in *Mishkāt, Kitāb al-Imārah wa 'l-Qaḍā'*. Kānpūr, Qayyūmī Press. P. 319. The text is confusing, obedience being shown as due sometimes to the Prophet and sometimes to hypothetical rulers. *Kufr* means unbelief, ingratitude, impiety, infidelity. It has been used loosely to imply hostility of persons or repugnance of actions to Islām. Theologians and poets have played so much with this term that it has now hardly any precise connotation.

[7] *Muslim*, as quoted in *Mishkāt*, p. 319.

[8] *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* as quoted in *Mishkāt*, p. 319.

[9] *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* as quoted in *Mishkāt*, p. 319.

[10] *Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maẓālim*. Published by Maṭba' al-Mujtabā', 1343, A.H. Vol. I & II, p. 330-31.

[11] *Muslim*, as quoted in *Mishkāt, Bāb al-'Amr bi'l Ma'rūf*, p. 436.

[12] Imām Ibn Ḥajr 'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. XIII, p. 7.

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ḥadīth, 'The most excellent *jihād* (is performed by) one who declares the truth before an unjust sulṭān'. This *ḥadīth* has been quoted by Imām Ghazālī. Its authenticity can be disputed on the ground that 'sulṭān' was not used for 'ruler' or 'king' in the Prophet's life time, but what we are concerned with is its currency. This is established by this *ḥadīth* being included in the *Mishkāt* on the authority of Tirmidhī, Abū Dā'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad and Nasa'ī[13].

The effectiveness and political value of the traditions making obedience conditional would depend on the meaning attached to *kufr* and the 'maintenance of *salah*'. But, to say the least, they make it a religious obligation on the Muslim to judge the actions of the sulṭān, to make it clear that his obedience is conditional. We have examples, specially in the first century after the Prophet, of people suffering because of refusal to accept an unjust political system[14]. It was, therefore, incumbent on the learned, and most of all the jurists, to clarify as far as possible the conditions for obedience and opposition. They could not have changed the course of political events. They may have been afraid of the consequences of expressing opinions too freely. But too many went to the other extreme of making the ruler responsible to God and not to the community and, what was very much worse, of identifying his right with his power[15], and his power as a ruler with the good of the Muslim community. Obedience thereby became almost a religious duty, without any corresponding obligations being imposed on the ruler, who could be deprived of authority only if he apostasized. This plunged orthodox Muslim thought into gross inconsistencies, wrecked its moral position and proved, both in India and elsewhere, disastrous to the Muslim community.

[13] *Mishkāt*, p. 322.

[14] There are examples in Indian Muslim history also of courageous refusal to serve tyrants and to co-operate with them in any way except by admonition and spiritual guidance. An instance is given later in this chapter (p. 74). See also *The Raḥlah of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, translated by Dr. Mahdī Ḥusain. Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. CXXII. P. 86-88.

[15] 'Our '*ulamā* say that a person can become a sulṭān on the fulfilment of two conditions. First, the people should offer *bai'ah* (allegiance). It must be understood that the *bai'ah* of the nobility and the leaders of the people is to be considered valid. Secondly, his orders should be capable of enforcement because of the terror and overwhelming nature of his power.

'If the people offer *bai'ah* to someone and his orders cannot be enforced among his subjects because he lacks pomp and magnificence, he shall not be considered sulṭān.

'If the people offer *bai'ah* to a sulṭān, and thereafter he begins to practise cruelty, then, provided he possesses power and pomp, he shall not be deposed, as he will again become sulṭān because of his power and superiority, and there is no advantage in deposing him. But if he does not possess power, he can be deposed'. *Fatāwā-i-Qāḍī Khān*, Vol. III, p. 584.

As already stated, Muslim jurisprudence had been developed and established in its normative capacity when the Muslims came to India. We shall illustrate the basic inconsistencies in its political doctrines with a few examples.

The historian Baranī, for whom orthodoxy seems to have been the supreme value, quotes from a sermon stated to have been given in the court of Iletmish (1211-1236) by a renowned—and, presumably, dreaded—preacher, who was also *Shaikh al-Islām*, Sayyid Nūruddīn Mubārak Ghaznawī:

> 'Whatever kings do as an essential requirement of the affairs of kingship, the way they eat and drink and robe themselves, the way they sit and get up and ride on horseback, and seat the people and make them prostrate themselves; the way they maintain, with their heart and soul, the manners and customs of the kings of Iran and Byzantium, those rebels against God, the way they deal with God's creatures in all their affairs on a special basis is opposed to (the example of) the Prophet, is an assumption of the attributes of God and a ground for punishment in the life to come'[16].

Baranī repeats the same view in his *Fatāwā'i-Jahāndārī*:

> 'There is no verse of the Qur'ān and no *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet permitting the pomp, ceremonies, manners and customs of kings, or all those actions of pride and power by which the terror of kings is engraved on the hearts of the subjects, both far and near, and which are a means of securing the enforcement of their orders. Also, from the words and acts of the Pious Khalīfahs, which are worthy of being adopted by kings of the Muslim faith, no precept has come down to us'[17].

The same historian reports a conversation between 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī and Qāḍī Mughīth of Bayānā, in which the qāḍī tells the king that, from books on law and religion which he has read, it is clear that the magnificence and the expenditure of the court, the excessive punishments, the appropriation of the booty obtained from Dē'ōgīr are all against the *sharī'ah*[18]. In fact, the methods of monarchical and despotic rulers were never accepted as permissible, and were the subject of continuous admonition and condemnation. Drinking and immorality, vices common in most kings and courtiers, were even more frequently censured.

[16] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[17] M. Ḥabīb, *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*. Kitāb Maḥal, Allahabad, 1960. P. 67.
[18] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 293-4.

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But the power of the kings had to be maintained. 'Enjoining what is known to be good and forbidding what is evil' is the obligation of every Muslim, but it was not extended to include resistance to patent injustices or acts of cruelty or violations of the *sharī'ah* committed by kings, who were answerable only to God for their actions.

> 'If a body of Muslims rise (against the *Imām*)[19], then we must first discover the reason. If the reason is the injustice and cruelty of the sulṭān, then these people will not be called rebels, and it behoves the sulṭān to give up injustice and take to justice. But it would be inappropriate for other Muslims not belonging to this body to assist the *Imām*, for that would be indirectly aiding and abetting injustice, nor should they help the body (in revolt), for that would mean helping a body of people in its opposition to the *Imām*. But if the cause of the people rising (in revolt) is not an act of cruelty of the *Imām*, but their belief that they are entitled to rule and have for that reason become opponents of the *Imām*, then they have the status of rebels, and it is incumbent on everyone to support the *Imām*. If there are people who only talk of rising (in revolt), and have not carried out this intention, then the *Imām* should not take them to task. In our times, the stronger has his way. There is no distinction possible between the just man and the rebel, for all are equally desirous (of the good things) of the world'[20].

This casuistry makes it clear that, without condemning rebellion unconditionally, it was made impossible for any large or small body of Muslims to urge the commandments of God to live righteously, to persuade others to do the same, and to resist injustice and evil as a valid reason for revolt, disobedience or even collective expression of disagreement. The ruler could be forced to listen to admonition, but all discussion of the circumstances under which righteous Muslims could unite to compel a ruler to act according to the *sharī'ah* seems to have been avoided.

The power of the king in the sphere of religious law was extended by his control over the qāḍīs. According to the *Fatāwā'-i-Bazāzīyah*, the qāḍī should be appointed only by the Khalīfah, or by the sulṭān, if the Khalīfah has given him the power. If the sulṭān is the appointing authority, he has the right to depose a qāḍī when there is no cause for suspicion or when there is a cause. If the sulṭān appoints

[19] *Imām* here means ruler, sulṭān.

[20] *Al-Fatāwā al-Bazāzīyah*, of Shaikh Imām Ḥāfiẓuddīn Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Shihāb, known as Ibn al-Bazāz al-Kardarī al-Ḥanafī, compiled in the ninth century of the Hijrah, 15th century A.D. Printed on the margin of the *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī*, published by Matba' al-Kubrā, in Egypt, 1310 A.H. Vol. II, p. 133.

an improper person as qāḍī, then the sin will be on the head of the sulṭān. Rectitude is not an essential condition for adopting and transmitting commands (of the law or the *sharī'ah*), therefore the decisions of an immoral person will be obeyed and enforced, but an immoral person should not be made qāḍī. If a person becomes immoral after being made a qāḍī, he deserves to be deposed; but unless the sulṭān deposes him, he cannot be automatically considered as deposed merely on the ground of his immorality[21]. This surrender to the sulṭān in the name of legality is prefaced with the pious remark that 'According to the authorities of the *fiqh*, it is better for a person not to accept the office of qāḍī'. But this piety is neutralized by the statement that if a person—and what could such a person be but a hypocrite—believes honestly that no one but he can fulfil the obligations of this office, then it is his duty to accept it in the interests of the safety of the Muslims[22].

III

The ruler could maintain and enforce the *sharī'ah* only through the qāḍīs, the *muḥtasibs* and the jurists, as he himself had no authority in matters of religion. The qāḍīs and the jurists had no means of inducing people to accept them and their theological credentials except through the king[23]. There was thus an alliance between them based on the particular interest of each party. As we shall see later, the religious thinkers and the mystics had much to say about the evils of this alliance, and the official *'ulamā*, both to maintain their self-respect and their social status, found a psychological compensation in the glorification of those sentiments of self-esteem which are common to most peoples, and in creating such a gulf between the Muslims and the non-Muslims that the Muslims would be forced to aim at domination, and expose themselves to exploitation by the vested interests of kings and noblemen.

There was never any doubt in the minds of the Muslims of their right to spread over the earth. An objective view of this attitude would require a consideration of the historical forces underlying their expansion from the seventh century onwards. The Muslim Turks who established their rule in India were off-shoots of nomadic tribes forced to exploit opportunities of conquest and migration. There are several instances in pre-Muslim Indian history of the conquest of

[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 131.

[22] *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī, Kitāb al-Qāḍī*. Edition referred to above. Vol. III, p. 311.

[23] The king or his deputy's permission was necessary even for leading the Friday prayers. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 145.

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parts of northern India by tribes squeezed out of their home-land, and the irruption of the Muslim Turks was a continuation of this process. The urge and the courage required for the conquest and occupation of alien and unknown lands cannot be the result of philosophical detachment or defeatism. Conquerors have always had some deep conviction that justified their policies. The Muslim Turks found the moral justification for their advance into India in the injunction to propagate Islam. As this could not, in the opinion of kings and warriors, be achieved without the subjugation of the non-Muslims and the occupation of their territory, the propagation of Islām became identical with war and conquest. This view is presented in the Persian chronicles with a tedious and jarring persistence as the literary embellishment of every account of the early Turkish military successes, and of the wars of the sultans of Delhi and of the Mughal emperors. The *Hidāyah* is quite explicit about the legality of *jihād* (holy war) against infidels even when they have not taken the offensive[24]. Verses of the Qur'ān[25] restricting *jihād* to certain contingencies were so interpreted as to show that a condition of war with non-Muslims was the norm, and peace dependent on the existence of appropriate circumstances.

The treatment to be meted out to the Hindūs in India was a corollary to the principle of *jihād*.

> 'The obligation to be the refuge of the faith cannot be fulfilled until they (the kings) have utterly destroyed infidelity and unbelief, polytheism and idolatry for the sake of God and the protection of the true religion. If they cannot wholly extirpate polytheism and infidelity because they have taken root and (exterminate) the infidels and polytheists because of their large number, it will not be less meritorious if, for the sake of Islām and of affording refuge to the true faith, they use their efforts to insult and humiliate and to cause grief to and bring ridicule and shame upon the polytheistic and idolatrous Hindūs, who are the bitterest enemies of God and the Prophet of God. . . . They should not, for the sake of the glory of Islām and the honour of the true faith, permit even a single unbeliever and polytheist to live as a respectable person . . . or be set in authority over a community or a group, a province or a district'[26]. These are not the views of a jurist but of a fanatical preacher of the court of Iletmish, when the Delhi Sultanate was struggling to establish itself. They are repeated, with much less political reason, by Qāḍī Mughīth.

[24] *Hidāyah, Kitāb al-Siyar wa'l-Jihād*. Mujtabā'ī Press, Delhi, 1331-32 A.H. Vol. I and II, p. 539.

[25] For example, *Sūrah 'al-Taubah*, 5.

[26] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.

'Keeping the Hindū in a humble position is one of the essentials of true religiousness'[27].

Technically, the Hindūs were *dhimmīs*, non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim state. The orthodox position in this matter has been a source of grave provocation at all times and appears now to be an exhibition of religious arrogance and fanaticism. It is also a position which was adopted without regard for history and historical precedents. We should, for the sake of an objective judgement, review briefly the different circumstances in which the relationship between the Muslims and the non-Muslims had to be determined.

Islām was first preached among a people swift to resort to violence, bitterly persistent in their feuds and reckless of life. The Prophet suffered patiently the persecution of the Meccans for as long as was possible without his little community being exterminated. After the migration to Madīnah, the Muslims came into contact with other communities and a basis of relationships had to be evolved. Agreements had to be entered into with communities of Jews and Christians. Their terms range from mutual guarantees of help and protection to guarantees of protection given by Muslims to non-Muslim communities willing to integrate themselves with the Muslim body politic. These guarantees represented a form of legal recognition of the right of the non-Muslim community to maintain its organization and its way of life (*sharī'ah*), and gave a substantive form to tolerance and co-existence.

The precedents of the days of the Prophet were followed with a judicious regard for moral principles as well as actual circumstances by his first two successors. Tribes and towns of non-Muslims which became integral parts of the Muslim body politic were given full religious liberty, with only such restrictions as would prevent the exercise of this from causing friction between communities. The cross could be taken in procession but not through Muslim crowds or localities inhabited exclusively by Muslims, the *nāqūs*[28] could be rung at any time except the Muslim times of prayer. In dress and general appearance a certain distinction was maintained, as also in the kind of saddle to be used. These were days when the non-Muslims were superior to the Muslims in all the outward forms of culture, and though it would be proper to object to the insistence on any form of distinction being ordained by law, the motive could not have been to show that the non-Muslim was inferior in appearance. Such details, however, do not appear important if we appreciate the fact that the term *dhimmī* implied that the Muslims took over the res-

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 290.
[28] A kind of wooden gong.

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ponsibility of looking after the non-Muslims within their jurisdiction. Their lives and their property were secured and equal justice was meted out. The *jizyah* was levied as a tax to cover the cost of military protection provided for the *dhimmīs*. Those who undertook or were asked to undertake military service became exempt[29]. *Dhimmīs* in need were entitled to support from the public treasury on the same basis as the Muslims, 'for it is not just that we should derive income (i.e. *jizyah*) from them when they are young and abandon them when they are old'[30].

This may not have been an ideal policy, but it was not unjust or unreasonable. The *fiqh*, however, reverted from these historical precedents to verses of the Qur'ān revealed during the period of the bitterest struggle against those who were bent on crushing the Muslims and Islām. The non-Muslims of all parts of the world, whatever their situation or their attitude towards the Muslims, were identified with the *Kuffār* of Mecca and assumed to be inveterate enemies of Islām. The degree of their humiliation was the measure of the glory and prestige of the Muslims. The *jizyah* was regarded as a punishment for their refusal to accept Islām, and was to be levied from each person in such a way as to demonstrate his abject subservience[31]. It is no wonder that a tax which implied a guarantee of religious liberty, security of life and property and equality of claims upon the state came to be looked upon by the Hindūs as a symbol of religious intolerance and social discrimination.

IV

Restrictions were placed by orthodoxy on intercourse between Muslims and non-Muslims. It was permissible for a *dhimmī* to enter the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* and all other mosques, but undesirable for a Muslim to go into a temple, as that would be infested with devils. It was also undesirable for Muslims held in esteem in their society to be intimate with 'men of falsehood and evil', unless it was necessary. Food should not be eaten in utensils belonging to polytheists unless they had been washed once again, and it was undesirable for a Muslim to wear the clothes of a polytheist when offering prayers, even if he was sure that they were clean. A Muslim could, now and then, eat food prepared by a polytheist, but should not make a habit of it. If, however, the polytheists mumbled something over the food, then he should not eat with them. A *dhimmī*, even if a stranger, could be asked by a Muslim to a meal. A Muslim could not pray to God for the

[29] *Ṭabarī*, p. 2497, quoted in Shibli's *Al-Fārūq*.
[30] Imām Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al Khirāj*. p. 72.
[31] *Hidāyah*, Vol. II, p. 576-7.

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salvation of a *dhimmī*, but could pray for his guidance to the right path. It was sinful for a Muslim to call a *dhimmī* '*kāfir*', if this hurt the *dhimmī*. He could not pray for the *dhimmī* to have a long life, unless he hoped that the *dhimmī* would ultimately accept Islām or desired that he should pay the *jizyah* for a longer period. It was undesirable to shake hands with a *dhimmī*, unless he happened to be a neighbour returning from a journey and would be offended if the Muslim did not shake hands with him. It was undesirable for a Muslim to stand up when a *dhimmī* came to meet him, unless the motive was to induce him to accept Islām. If this respect was shown because of the *dhimmī's* worldly position, then it was wrong[32].

V

These rules could not have been strictly or continuously observed. Political circumstances, economic needs and social and religious tendencies working in a contrary direction prevented their enforcement. Orthodoxy was more evident in other spheres of the individual Muslim's life. Preachers as a rule exercised their imagination and rhetorical ability in describing the horrors and terrible punishments of hell, the ordeal of the grave and the awful occurrences of the Day of Judgement. True belief was the simple safeguard against all the terrors of the unknown, and true belief was reduced to the recitation of the *kalimah* declaring that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His Prophet. A feeling of supreme confidence was created by dilating on the virtues of the Prophet and the glories of the wars during his life time and the rule of the four Pious Khalīfahs. With this was contrasted the decline of morals and the disregard of religious duties evident during the contemporary age. This incredibly simple pattern of thinking seems to have had an amazing quality, as it remained unchanged for centuries without losing its power.

One reason for this may have been that it was continuously reinforced by political and economic conditions. The noblest occupation for a Muslim was *jihād*[33], and the most praiseworthy consummation of his life was martyrdom on the field of battle. In terms of everyday life, this meant that military service provided the best career, and it was the business of kings and commanders to see that every war was a *jihād* and the practice of the military profession identical with the fulfilment of a religious duty. When that could

[32] *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī*, Vol. V, p. 346-8, quoting as authority earlier works.

[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 349, quoting as authority *Al-Akhtiyār Sharḥ al-Mukhtār*. In the *Iḥya al-'Ulūm* and the *Ḥujjah Allāh al-Bālighah*, *jihād* is not mentioned among the professions.

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not be done, the soldier could fall back on his professional pride in achievement or manly courage in bearing the consequences of defeat. Military service became government service also for those who possessed the necessary talent, and was thus the best means of getting on in the world. These beliefs and calculations of benefit were fully exploited by the rulers, and buttressed the political doctrines of orthodoxy with all the strength of a deep and far-flung vested interest. The soldiers and commanders depended entirely on the king. The merchant depended on the king and the noblemen—who were mainly successful soldiers. The three together exploited the agriculturist and the craftsman.

VI

Orthodoxy was sometimes and in some ways irksome, but generally an advantage for the rulers. From the tenth century onwards, even though the 'Abbāsī Khalīfahs had lost all power, it was considered meritorious and, therefore, essential for an independent ruler of any status to get his title to the throne acknowledged by the Khalīfah. Even the imperious Maḥmūd of Ghaznī was forced to observe this formality. The sulṭāns of Delhi maintained this practice. The orthodox concept of political order required that the name of the ruler of the territory concerned and of the reigning Khalīfah should be mentioned in the *khuṭbah* read to the assembled Muslims before the Friday prayers, and there are numerous instances of the name of the Khalīfah and the reigning sulṭān both being embossed on coins. Allegiance to the Khalīfah nominally linked up all Muslim states in a kind of supra-political unity. It did not affect the authority of the independent rulers and legalized their actual possession of power. It was, therefore, a distinct advantage to exchange gifts and obtain a title from the Khalīfah.

It was also useful to observe forms prescribed by orthodoxy. But the manner of observance varied from ruler to ruler. It was normally expected that the king would not openly indulge in what was forbidden, that he would show respect to men of learning and desire their company, that he would attend the Friday prayer and occasionally visit a person of acknowledged spiritual eminence to listen to his admonitions. Munificence in gifts to the learned and the poor was regarded as particularly meritorious. If the sulṭān exhibited the proper degree of prejudice towards polytheists, Shī'ahs, and heretical sects, he was sure to win the hearts of the pious.

But if he did not do all this, he would still remain king and command obedience, provided he had the power[34]. He was not res-

[34] See p. 66 above.

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ponsible to anyone and could behave like a mad elephant if he was elephant enough. But kings who were in general even moderately balanced and sober would retain their popularity if they gave occasional evidence of holding orthodox views. It was considered legitimate for them to suspect even religious people, and be on guard against them. The chief qāḍī, called *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* during the Sultanate period and afterwards, was a minister and adviser, and could not ask for special consideration to be given to his views. The kings could inflict what punishments they thought fit in the interests of their own security, and it was assumed that they would be relentless towards opponents and rebels. Taxes over and above those allowed by the *sharī'ah* could be levied if the king had the power to do so. Criticism, if any, came from the independent *'ulamā* or the *ṣūfīs*, seldom from the official representatives of orthodoxy. But all criticism and murmurs would be silenced if the king knew how to exploit sentiment, to wage a successful war, to persecute heretics and proscribe heretical literature, in short, to discover some 'religious' interest common to himself and his people. The orthodox found excuses for praising and obeying the king if only they got the chance, knowing all the time that almost everything the kings did as persons and as rulers was repugnant to the *sharī'ah* and impossible to justify.

Of the sulṭāns of Delhi, Iletmish (1211-1236) seems to have deserved the high opinion held of him by the orthodox as well as the *ṣūfīs*. Balban (1266-1286), screening himself behind an unimpeachable personal orthodoxy, raised the status of the king to a position totally incompatible with the *sharī'ah*, and in the interests of security inflicted savage punishments on innocent women and children. Jalāluddīn Khiljī (1290-1296) was weak, but he allowed to be killed without trial a person known to be a *ṣūfī* on the suspicion that he was involved in a conspiracy against him[35]. 'Alā'uddīn (1296-1316) is reported to have brought all the issues between his policy and the *sharī'ah* into the open, and to have declared roundly that he would do as he thought fit, and not what was required by the *sharī'ah*. 'I do not know whether such commands are permitted or not by the *sharī'ah*. I command what I consider to be of benefit to my country

[35] 'A king so kind-hearted could not bear to hear of a conspiracy. He gave an order, and did not seek to protect the sanctity of a saintly appearance and the character of *dervishes*. I, the author of this work, remember that on the day Sīdī Maulā was killed, there arose a wind so black that the whole world became dark, and after this event malaise crept into the dominion of Jalāluddīn. For our honoured ones have said that it is an evil sign that a *dervish* should be killed, and such an act has never brought any good to a king. Shortly after the execution of Sīdī Maulā there was a drought and a famine in Delhi.' Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

and what appears to me opportune under the circumstances. I do not know what God will do with me on the Day of Judgement.'[36]

All rulers could not be as frank as 'Alā'uddīn, because they did not possess as much power. But no ruler could give priority to orthodoxy over reasons of state. If we consider the period of the Sultanate and look for the highest common factor in the policies of the kings, it would perhaps be judicious non-interference in matters of religion. This policy could be practised by all the parties, the *'ulamā* associated with the administration, the righteous *'ulamā*, the *ṣūfīs*. But it was also possible for accidents to occur that would raise fundamental questions of jurisdiction and rights. Then it would appear that the whole system depended on the observance of certain conventions, and could be morally damaged if these were disregarded even on minor issues.

Ghiyāthuddīn Balban heard of the knowledge, piety and integrity of Maulānā Kamāluddīn Zāhid. 'The sulṭān desired that Maulānā Kamāluddīn should become his Imām (i.e. the Imām of the chief mosque of the city which the sulṭān attended). For this reason he summoned Maulānā Kamāluddīn to appear before him. When the Maulānā appeared, the sulṭān said, 'We have complete faith in the perfection of your knowledge, integrity and uprightness. It will be extremely kind of you if you agree with us and accept the office of our Imām. We shall then be convinced that our prayer is acceptable to the Glorious God'. The Maulānā replied, 'There is nothing left to us except our prayer. Does the king now wish to take this also away from us?' When the Maulānā gave this reply out of the firmness of his faith, the sulṭān was silent, and he understood that this revered person was not agreeable (to his proposal). He apologized profusely and sent him away.[37]

This is one of the instances, unfortunately not frequent enough, where a scholar and theologian of repute expressed complete disapproval of kings and kingly rule. During the reigns of Jalāluddīn and 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak and Ghiyāthuddīn Tughlaq, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā enjoyed immense popularity and influence. 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī could suspect that this influence would be used for political ends. He sent out feelers, he made offers of gifts and land, but the Shaikh declined to accept anything. He let it be understood that if the king paid him a visit, he would leave his house by another door[38]. 'Alā'uddīn, however, did not take any

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 296.

[37] Amīr Khurd. *Siyar al-Awliyā*. Muḥibb-i-Hind, Delhi, 1302 A.H. P. 106. Further references will be to the work, and not the author.

[38] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*. Mutjaba'ī Press, Delhi, 1309 A.H. P. 57.

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action. His successor Mubārak was incited against the Shaikh, and it is believed he was planning to do something just when he was murdered. It was the genuine detachment of the Shaikh from political affairs that saved him. He had, however, to appear before Sulṭān Ghiyāthuddīn Tughlaq to argue his case in favour of the legality of the *samā'*[39].

Muḥammad Tughlaq (1325-1351) seems to have taken the religious status of the ruler too literally, and to have made demands on the loyalty and co-operation of the *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* which went far beyond anything required of them before or since in Indian Muslim history. His position was logically correct. He could not enforce the *sharī'ah* systematically and scrupulously unless the *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* assisted him wholeheartedly. He called himself *Sulṭān-i-'Ādil*, the title or term used for the typically orthodox ruler, and no one could challenge his assumption of this title. Shaikh Shihābuddīn the Outspoken was by his order thrown down from the wall of the Fort because he told the Sulṭān bluntly that he would not call a cruel ruler *Sulṭān-i-'Ādil'*[40]. It is a matter of history that Muḥammad Tughlaq roused considerable opposition, and failed in most of his schemes. His successor, Fīrūz Tughlaq, had to atone for all his errors and offences by professing an orthodoxy that was entirely of the approved, conventional character, and collect the record of his pious deeds in the *Futūḥāt-i-Fīrūzshāhī*. The high officers and the *'ulamā*, on their side, professed what amounts to absolute obedience.

'Whereas God the Almighty, the Exalted, the Holy, and His Prophet (Peace be on him) have followed the method of oath and solemn promise, and from ancient times men, both high and low, have, for the expression of their fidelity and also for the attainment of honour offered allegiance to the truly religious sultans, so I, the humble one, own (this allegiance) of my own desire and inclination, and state with truthful intent and pure conviction that I swear by the Lord of the Universe, the God of Heaven and Earth, the Possessor of Eminence and Power . . . that I, the humble one, have taken the oath, here and now, and confirmed it with those things the breach of which is *kufr*, that in my submission and obedience to the Lord of the World, Vice-regent of the Amīr al-Mū'minīn, Khalīfah of the Father of the Two Worlds, Sulṭān of sulṭāns, strong in the support of the Merciful God, Abul Muẓaffar, Fīrūz Shāh, Sulṭān (may God preserve his kingdom and his government for all time and elevate his power and his glory)—who is the possessor of absolute power and submission and

[39] *Samā'* was the *ṣūfī* practice of listening to spiritually stimulating songs.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

obedience to whom is, according to the *shar'* and the command of the Imām, obligatory and well-established—that I shall be constant and pure of heart, that my faith (in him) will remain unpolluted, (that I shall be) without deceit, well-wishing, sincere and single-minded; that I shall be a friend to his friends and an enemy to his enemies; that I shall observe these conditions with constancy for the whole of my life; that I shall not under any circumstances and in any way oppose the attendants and servants of, and people connected with and loyal to the court; that I shall never transgress against the just commands of the king; that I shall have no relations with the opponents of the court or be friends with those who wish evil to the king's person; that I shall commit no wrong overtly or covertly, in word or deed or writing, and allow no evil to enter my heart; that I shall accomplish with all my power whatever is possible by way of service and well-wishing and excellence in the performance of my functions; . . . and that if, God forbid, I should transgress against this oath and solemn promise and commit breach of all or any single one of its terms and conditions, may I be considered one who breaks faith with God, and may my fate be as the fate of those in regard to whom was revealed this verse of the Qur'ān, 'These people break faith with God', and as (the fate of) one who abhors the doctrine of the Unity of God, who abhors Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, the reality of the prophets and the angels, the Day of Judgement, the four schools and the revealed books' . . . .[41]

VII

The jurists of this period—the Chief Qāḍī, *Shaikh al-Islām*, qāḍīs—were mainly those who used their knowledge for worldly ends, and were fiercely jealous of each other. Minhājuddīn Sirāj, though himself an effective preacher, was not above making preposterous allegations against another preacher of his time, perhaps because he was more liked by the people[42]. Shaikh Najmuddīn Sughrā went even further, and hired a woman to accuse Shaikh Jalāl Tabrīzī of adultery, and had the mortification of seeing his ugly plot exposed[43]. Perhaps it would be most fair to take Qāḍī Shihābuddīn Daulatābādī

[41] *Inshā'-i-Māhrū*, p. 21-22. A printed copy of this is in the possession of Dr. K. A. Niẓāmī, Muslim University, Aligarh. The publishers and date of publication are not given. That 'Ainul Mulk was the author of such a work is mentioned by Shams Sirāj 'Afīf, *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī*. Bibliothēca Indica. P. 408.

[42] See below, Ch. V, p. 99.

[43] *Siyar-al-'Ārifīn*, p. 169, as quoted in Khaliq Aḥmad Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i-Dihli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*. Nadwatul Muṣannifīn, Delhi, 1958. P. 121 ff.

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as the representative *'ālim* and jurist of the period. He was born at Daulatābād in the reign of Fīrūz Tughlaq, and died at Jaunpūr in 1445. He studied at Delhi under a famous divine, Qāḍī 'Abdul Muqtadar (died 791/1389). His teacher thought very highly of his intellectual gifts, saying that he had knowledge in his skin, in his bones and in his marrow. But during his student days, Shihābuddīn got some gold from somewhere, and instead of giving it away after the manner of the truly religious, he consulted with his mother as to where he should bury it. When his teacher saw him immediately after this, he said, 'You are thinking of where you should bury your gold. How will you acquire knowledge?' Still, Shihābuddīn made remarkable progress.

When Timur attacked Delhi, Shihābuddīn migrated to Jaunpūr and settled there. Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī (1402-1436) made him his Qāḍī and gave him a gilded chair to sit on in his court. 'Although there were many learned and wise men in his time, none attained the fame and eminence which God bestowed on him.' He wrote a commentary on the *Kāfīyah*, which was widely read and appreciated. His *Irshād*, a work on *naḥw*, became a text-book. He wrote on rhetoric, a commentary on a part of *Bazūdī*, a commentary on the Qur'ān in Persian, called *Baḥr-i-Mawwāj*, and many small books and pamphlets in Arabic and Persian. On the other hand, he engaged in a bitter controversy with Shaikh Abul Fatḥ Jaunpūrī on the question whether the saliva of a cat was clean or unclean, and the two abused and cursed each other. Shihābuddīn also quarrelled with a Sayyid over the question of precedence in the court, and wrote a pamphlet to prove that a man of common origin who was learned possessed a higher status than a descendant of the Prophet who was ignorant. Qāḍī Shihābuddīn's teacher was deeply hurt when he heard of this. Qāḍī Shihābuddīn then went and offered his apologies to the Sayyid, promised not to do anything of this kind in the future, and wrote a book on the virtues of the Prophet's descendants.

Some aspects of Qāḍī Shihābuddīn's personality are evident from this account. He was afflicted with self-esteem and he seems to have indulged freely the particular type of pugnacity which has been regarded as a quality inevitable in the official *'ulamā*. Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaq Muḥaddith has criticized his commentary on the Qur'ān as pedantic and verbose. He sent his commentary on the *Kāfīyah* to Qāḍī Naṣīruddīn Gumbadī, a scholar devoted to study and prayer, with the request that he should use it as a text and thus help to popularize it. Qāḍī Naṣīruddīn, 'either because he was immersed in the affairs of his own soul or to avoid discussion and controversy, glanced through the book and said it was well-written and did not need to be used as a text by him'.

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VIII

A high value is placed on orthodoxy everywhere, because it maintains the identity of a community as against other communities and prevents an assimilation that could lead to the community disintegrating and being absorbed by others. It is also a force that works for integration and stability. How far did Indian Muslim orthodoxy fulfil these functions in the early period?

We have mentioned the tendency of the orthodox to represent the military successes of Muslim rulers and the acquisition of power over non-Muslims as additions to the glory of Islām. This may have stimulated ambition during the period of expansion, but its inconsistency became obvious when the vast majority of the subjects of the Muslim state were non-Muslim and their loyalty became essential for the proper governance of the state. We have seen in our own times imperialist governments ruling over subjects whom they despised. But the Muslims who had settled in India, or Indians who had been converted to Islām could not maintain the same attitude. The imperialist governments of our times ruled through their representatives—civil servants, businessmen, teachers—who were together able to maintain an exclusiveness and social superiority because they possessed or were provided with the means of doing so, and their condemnation of those who 'turned native' and disregarded the rules of behaviour through which the superiority of the imperialist power was maintained was generally effective. The Indian Muslims were of all types and classes, those actually possessing wealth and power being a very small minority. Claims to inherent superiority could be maintained only by artificial cultivation. This orthodoxy succeeded in doing. The virtues of Islām could be recited endlessly and convincingly, and the Muslim could be so assured of a privileged position in this world and of salvation in the next at the lowest possible price—the profession of faith by repeating the *kalimah*—that he forgot he was no better than his supposedly misguided countrymen. He could pity, if he was not in a position to despise them. The political and social orthodoxy of the imperialist powers of our days has demanded a high standard of performance from those whom it baptized as superior human beings. Indian Muslim orthodoxy of the earlier period could have done the same. But it was completely unaware of the normative aspect of its functions. It staked everything on military achievement and political power, without attempting to give expansionist tendencies and political self-assertion a character that would bring them closer to the *sharī'ah*. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Sayyid Muḥammad Gēsū-darāz, a prominent *ṣūfī*, told a large audience of

eminent men that the orthodox *'ulamā* had made the Faith dependent on the study of a few books and the remembering of a few words. They had reduced the Faith to something trivial. In fact, 'there is perfection, there is beauty in the Faith. The *'ulamā* say that all one needs in prayer is to know which prayer it is. Concentration on God (according to them) is a condition of excellence, not of normal performance'[44]. Orthodoxy maintained the identity of the Indian Muslim community by condemning the unbelievers in the inherited theological phrases, but demanded from the Muslims little beyond conformity at the lowest religious and ethical level.

Its concept of integration in matters of doctrine was confined to the assertion of the principle of *taqlīd*. Anyone who challenged this principle was an enemy; anyone who expressed an independent opinion in matters of doctrinal or ritualistic detail was a still greater enemy. But rulers and those in power were not criticized. No protests were made against infliction of punishments severer than those laid down by the *sharī'ah*, or against the levy of taxes not permitted by it. The pattern of the good life remained a sacred hypothesis. Answers were given only if questions were asked. The duty of maintaining the *sharī'ah* was a part of the ruler's function, and the responsibility for any contravention of the *sharī'ah* also lay on his shoulders. The orthodox *'ulamā* did not consider it an obligation to insist on the right thing being done. Even those who followed practices contrary to the *sharī'ah* were left alone, so long as they did not attempt to justify these practices on theological grounds. In fact, the *'ulamā* were concerned mainly with criticizing and denouncing each other, and this made the principle of *taqlīd* itself less a means of integration than a source of discord.

That orthodoxy had not succeeded in creating any degree of stability was evident whenever the government was shaken by a revolution. The *'ulamā* never gave a lead to the Muslims as a political community. They waited till something decisive occurred, and then came out to confirm the decision. When, in 1320, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak was murdered by his favourite, Khusrau Khān, who was, or was suspected of being a Hindū, the Muslims of Delhi were not asked to come together as Muslims to make a bid for the continuance of Muslim rule. There was horror and panic, but no evidence that the Muslims had a religion or political and moral values and standards to safeguard. Ghāzī Malik Tughlaq saved the situation for the Muslims, but Khusrau Khān had a sufficient number of supporters, among them many who would otherwise have

[44] *Jawāmi'al-Kalim*, the *Malfūẓāt* (conversations) of Sayyīd Muḥammad Gēsū-darāz. Edited by M. Ḥāmid Ṣiddīqī, Maṭba'-i-Intiẓāmī, Kānpūr. P. 241. Further references will be to the *Jawāmī'al-Kalim*, not the editor.

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been classed as orthodox Muslims, to marshall forces for a battle. An orthodoxy which permitted everything to depend on the chances of war could not claim to have achieved or even systematically worked for stability. It could not establish the *sharī'ah* as the normative principle; instead, it made religion a poor dependent of politics, and converted a source of moral nourishment into a parasite.

This may appear a harsh judgement. But the judgement of history has to take into consideration not only the circumstances of a period but also the effects on future generations of what is done or not done. It cannot be maintained that this period was lacking in men of courage and genuine moral aspirations, or that political circumstances precluded social experimentation of any kind. The *sharī'ah* did not lose its power or dignity, but this was due to the religious thinkers and the *ṣūfīs*. The orthodox *'ulamā*, who should have been the link between the state and the representatives of purely spiritual and moral values, chose to become the creatures of the state and to afflict all that came within their reach with meanness and sterility. The religious thinkers and the *ṣūfīs* were forced to avoid them, as they were forced to avoid kings and courts. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz said on one occasion that if questions were discussed in the proper way, it would become apparent that there was no real difference of opinion between the orthodox *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs*, but as it happened, the only way the *ṣūfīs* could obtain deliverance from this group was to call themselves a part of it. Even so they would be dubbed ignorant, irreligious and atheistic[46]. The result of this attitude of the orthodox *'ulamā* was that the state, the religious thinkers and the *ṣūfīs* could not discover a basis for cooperation or work for a common goal. The Muslim community was not integrated by orthodoxy; it was taught to maintain its identity not through the spiritual and social values which it represented but through the cultivation of prejudices and claims to inherent superiority. Laying such foundations was worse than laying no foundations at all.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 64, and 251.

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CHAPTER IV

STATESMEN AND ADMINISTRATORS

I

'ALĀ'UDDĪN KHILJĪ

IN the previous chapter we have given a general description of the circumstances under which political authority was exercised and indicated the policies that were followed by Indian Muslim rulers. We shall now discuss the career and character of a sulṭān and an administrator of the first period to give a more intimate picture of Muslim rule.

Dillī or Dehli was captured in 1193 and became one of the focal points of the eastern territories of Shihā-buddīn Ghōrī. These territories became an independent sultanate under Quṭubuddīn Ībak in 1204. Iletmish (1211-1235), and after him Balban, first as chief minister (1246-1266) and then as sulṭān (1266-1286) helped the sultanate through the vicissitudes inevitable for a new-born kingdom. Both these sulṭāns were slaves from Turkistān who rose to eminence because of sheer merit, and though they acquired in India most of the political experience which enabled them to succeed as rulers, it is a matter of doubt whether they could be called Indian Muslims. The Khiljī dynasty, which succeeded Balban's, could be called Indian Muslim, and 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, who is our first subject of study, was also the first effective Indian Muslim ruler.

When 'Alā'uddīn first finds mention in the chronicles, he is already a grown-up young man, nephew and son-in-law of the sulṭān, Jalāluddin Fīrzū Khiljī (1288-1296), and governor of Karā. His father's name is given by Amīr Khusrau and Firishtah as Shihā-buddīn Mas'ūd, and Khusrau says he was both a military leader and a doughty warrior[1]. We do not know when 'Alā'uddīn was born, why he received no education and under what circumstances he grew up. He must have been married before his uncle's accession to the throne, because when we hear of him at Karā he seems to have already been driven desperate by the intrigues and the general conduct of his

[1] Amīr Khusrau, *Dewal Rānī Khiḍr Khān*. Muslim University, Aligarh. P. 54.

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mother-in-law and his wife. There is no indication in the chronicles as to what the mother and daughter wanted, but perhaps it would not be unsafe to conjecture that 'Alā'uddīn's untamed nature instigated them to exercise their wits, their capacity for intrigue and their tongues. They were so persistent that 'Alā'uddīn was forced to plan measures of relief, and resolutions that were to have momentous consequences formed themselves in his mind as, surrounded by his boon companions, he indulged himself in heavy drinking and wild talk. This in turn must have led to more nagging and more precise threats, and must have made 'Alā'uddīn's desire for a life of his own very much an obsession.

Escape and freedom were not possible without resources, for 'Alā'uddīn had no romantic intention of disappearing into the unknown to lead a simple, carefree life. So he planned to use the men and money at his disposal to organize an expedition and collect a treasure that would enable him to establish an independent kingdom in Lakhnautī or beyond. In 1292, he plundered Bhīlsā, presenting the spoils to his delighted uncle who, as a reward, made him the *'Āriḍ-i-Mamālik*, or Muster-Master-General of the imperial armies, and governor of Oudh in addition to Karā. Then he persuaded Jalāluddīn to permit him to withhold payment of the revenues due from his provinces for a year, so that he might raise troops for an attack on Chandērī. In fact, while at Bhīlsā, he had heard from travellers of the wealth of the Rājā of Dē'ōgīr, and the proposal to attack Chandērī was a blind. He raised a few thousand horse, arranged for regular reports to be sent to his uncle, and marched along unfrequented routes past Ellichpūr to appear suddenly before Dē'ogīr. The rājā, Rāmachandra, taken by surprise and defeated in the field, came to terms, and bought off 'Alā'uddīn with treasure and goods. But as 'Alā'uddīn was about to retire, Rāmachandra's son appeared with an army. 'Alā'uddīn was successful in this second engagement also, and after a brief siege, the rājā capitulated. 'Alā'uddīn was now able to collect a fabulous amount of gold, silver, pearls and precious stones, and he rushed back to Karā with his booty. But now he was in a dilemma. If he kept the treasure, he would have to fight his uncle, and if he surrendered it, he would have no means of fulfilling his ambitions. The problem of saving his treasure soon became a fight for life, and he and his brother, Ilmās Bēg, together prevailed upon the good-natured but credulous and greedy old uncle to come to Karā, where 'Alā'uddīn had him murdered at the river-bank with incredible callousness. This crime horrified all who heard of it, but no immediate action was taken. At Delhi, Jalāluddīn's widow, without consulting Arkalī Khān, her grown-up son, placed a boy on the throne, and destroyed all chances of the royal family and

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its loyal supporters uniting to avenge the murder. As 'Alā'uddīn marched on Delhi, scattering gold and silver, his army was swelled by deserters, and he captured the city after a show of resistance by the young king (1296).

'Alā'uddīn 'was a man who was unaware of (the existence of any such thing as) knowledge and had never kept company with learned men. He could not read or write a letter. He was ill-tempered, by nature grasping and extremely hard-hearted'[2]. The treasures of Dē'ogīr, the unexpectedly successful conspiracy that ended with the murder of his uncle and the quick disposal of the male members of his family, the ease with which money and power won him supporters, the conquest of Gujarāt (1297), went into his head. According to Baranī, 'Out of intoxication and youth, ignorance and lack of culture, unawareness of reality, madness and insolence', he raved during his drinking parties about establishing a new religion and conquering the world. It was a critical stage in his life, when there was imminent risk of his degenerating into a drunkard and a braggart, and dying at the hands of an intriguing noble or a petty palace guard, or, if he was spared even by such scavengers of the haunts of power, of succumbing prematurely to some vile disease.

But 'Alā'uddīn was brought to his senses by a series of shocks. The first was some plain speaking by one of his most trusted advisers, 'Alā'ul Mulk, the Kōtwāl of Delhi. Reports that 'Alā'uddīn's orgies of drinking were spiced with heretical ideas of founding a new faith and swashbuckling plans of conquering the world were becoming the talk of the capital. The people could endure injustice and bloodshed, but they could not for long bear to hear of a drunkard forcing them to adopt a new religion because he happened to be seated on a throne and surrounded by executioners. 'Alā'ul Mulk, as kōtwāl, had his hand on the pulse of the town, and at last decided to bring this to the notice of the king. He was so fat that he had to be carried around, and had for this reason been allowed to reduce his visits to the court to once a month. On one of these visits he told the king of what was being said about him in the town, and warned him against meddling with religion, which was not the business of kings. The ambition to conquer the world was laudable, but the sultan should first bring his kingdom under full control, safeguard the frontier and Punjāb against Mongol invasions and then expand his dominions by the conquest of neighbouring territories. This straightforward speech had an unexpectedly sobering effect. 'Alā'uddīn gave up bragging. He even changed the routine of his hunts, satisfying himself with game he could get around the city.

The second shock was the sudden appearance of a Mongol army

[2] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

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before Delhi. Mongol attacks had been almost continuous, some being border raids, some plundering expeditions. But Qutlugh Khwājah's invasion of 1299 showed that the Mongols had changed their strategy, and now aimed at the overthrow of the Sultanate by lightning attacks on the capital. 'Alā'uddīn mustered what forces he could, and instead of allowing himself to be besieged, boldly marched out to meet the enemy. 'Alāl'ul Mulk advised caution, but 'Alā'uddīn bluntly told him that he was 'a scribe and the son of a scribe', and should not meddle in what was the business of a soldier. On the day of battle, 'Alā'uddīn's right wing, under Ẓafar Khān, delivered a furious attack on the Mongol left, which broke and fled. Ẓafar Khān pursued it so hotly and thoughtlessly that detachments from the main Mongol army were able to surround and exterminate him and his men. But the Mongols for some reason decided to retire, and marched back as swiftly as they had come.

The third and probably the severest shock to 'Alā'uddīn's complacence was an attempt by Akat Khān to kill him while he was hunting near Tilpat. Within a short time after leaving him for dead in a forest clearing, Akat Khān seated himself on the throne, and people attached to the court began to waver. If 'Alā'uddīn had followed his first impulse of escaping to a safe distance, there is no doubt that Akat Khān would have collected a large number of people around him. But 'Alā'uddīn took the risk of appearing before the camp and the army, and Akat Khān was forced to flee. This incident occurred when 'Alā'uddīn was proceeding towards Ranthambōr. He decided to go on instead of returning to Delhi. During his absence, there was an uprising at the capital under Hājī Maulā, and two of 'Alā'uddīn's own nephews also rebelled, one at Badāyūn and the other in Oudh. He felt, at last, that something had to be done, and he ordered some of his trusted men to put their heads together and suggest what measures should be taken.

The suggestions of this 'committee' are significant in themselves, but even more remarkable because of the objective appraisal of the sulṭān himself. His ignorance of the state of the country and the affairs of government were declared without any courtly circumlocution to be the principal reason for unrest and rebellion. The sulṭān must, therefore, take continuing, personal interest in all matters. Further reasons for the unsatisfactory state of affairs were supposed by the 'committee' to be:

1. The general practice of excessive drinking, which fuddled the brains and loosened the tongues of people, and undermined all discipline;

2. Intermarriages between families of high officers, which instigated them to support each other in conspiracies and rebellions;

3. Excessive wealth of the people.

The significant period of 'Alā'uddīn's reign begins with his decision to take action on the suggestions of 'Alā'ul Mulk and the 'committee' of advisers. These suggestions also reveal a situation that should not be overlooked. The Sultanate was in fact the government of a small minority in which power was seized now by one group and now by another, with every victor following a policy of exterminating the vanquished. Power consisted in the possession of armies, the collection of revenue and the suppression of opposition. The sulṭān and the government were able to maintain themselves, but do little else. The people of Delhi were prosperous, their wealth consisting of both cash and goods, and the population of other towns would have shared more or less in this prosperity. The sulṭans had done hardly anything to promote economic development beyond making roads safe for travel and maintaining law and order. It must have been the Islāmic ideas of equality of classes and respect for the person who earned his livelihood through productive work that brought about this affluence in the towns[3]. In the countryside, the chiefs had come to agreements with the government that were favourable to their interests, and they fulfilled their part of the agreement only if the government could force them to do so. Otherwise they were not concerned. They lived well and dressed well, rode fine horses and carried on wars against each other with miniature armies. The people had use for the government only because it provided the necessary security. It was not expected to do anything better than this, but it could do worse. It was, therefore feared, disliked and avoided.

But the population itself did not consist entirely of peaceful elements. There were robbers by caste, barbarians like the tribes of Mēwāt who preyed upon merchant caravans and robbed townsmen when they could. But even more disturbing were those who promoted or joined in rebellions out of sheer lust for adventure. The instance of Hājī Maulā shows that they were not always led by disaffected or ambitious officers. It would not be men engaged in trade and industry who took part in these revolts. Jalāluddīn's son, Arkalī Khān, and his adherents were not able to enlist the support of the citizens of Multān against the army of 'Alā'uddīn, and were surrendered after promises that were obviously taken from 'Alā'uddīn's commanders only to save face. The restless elements must have been drawn from the unemployed soldiers or desperate characters for whom gamble for power was a part of the game of life. That 'Alā'uddīn had treacherously murdered his uncle and seized his

[3] The *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī* is very explicit about the duty of earning one's livelihood. Vol. V, p. 349.

throne was for the vast majority of the people a crime that would have to be atoned for in this world or the next, but it was also for some a precedent that challenged them to perform deeds of equal unscrupulousness and daring.

'What will be the use of all this treasure and elephants and horses that I have acquired if I do not attempt to conquer the world and annex other territories, but rest content with the country around Delhi?' 'Alā'uddīn had asked 'Alā'ul Mulk, when the latter was reasoning with him to reconsider his vain ambition to overrun the world[4]. The substance of 'Alā'ul Mulk's reply, as of the recommendations of the 'committee' was that 'Alā'uddīn should aim at a real and not a nominal or precarious control of the people, that he should take proper measures for the defence of the country, and extend his dominions only when these two tasks had been satisfactorily accomplished. 'Alā'uddīn must have felt that this was a big enough challenge, and success in this would be as difficult and as impressive as conquest of the world. He accepted the challenge.

As an earnest of his resolution to prohibit the drinking of wine, he had his own drinking vessels broken and heaped up before one of the city gates and all the wine in his cellars poured out on the ground. But prohibition could not be enforced under pressure of such examples. Drinking was not only a widespread habit but astonishingly deep-rooted. 'Alā'uddīn had pits dug outside the city gates and threw drunkards into them, apart from inflicting punishments that brought public disgrace. Still the brewing and drinking continued. Ultimately the sulṭān had to permit brewing and drinking in the privacy of the home, for even the champions of orthodoxy could not support him in the harsh measures that he had adopted[5]. But his political object was achieved. Addiction to drink remained a personal habit, but ceased to be a political danger. Intermarriages between families of noblemen were easier to control. So was freedom of speech. For the sulṭān recruited a large number of spies and informers, men, women and children, from every profession and every station in life, and took swift action on their reports. Very soon no one could trust his neighbour, his servant or even his closest relative. This put a stop not only to conspiracies but even to conversations. There were no informal parties, no festivities. The puritanism enforced by this sinner was far more effective than the rule of tight-lipped piety has ever been before or since.

The purely administrative measures taken by 'Alā'uddīn are

[4] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

[5] 'Alā'uddīn attempted to eradicate adultery also, but the punishment he chose to inflict was not permitted by the *sharī'ah*, and Qāḍī Mughīth had to confess that the sulṭan's action was illegal.

even more striking. It is said that by degrees all the cash—and probably valuables—were taken from everyone except *maliks*, *amīrs*, officers, Multānīs and sāhās. Multānīs were merchants and traders, sāhās were bankers, who provided loans on interest. Most probably all that was done was to deprive particular persons—though their number may have been large—whose affiliations or conduct rendered them liable to suspicion, of their cash and property. But the principle enunciated was that affluence fosters rebelliousness, and men will become obedient and submissive only if they are forced to devote all their time and energy to earning their livelihood. As a result of 'Alā'uddīn's exactions, the people are supposed in course of time to have thought only of their work and not meddled in political affairs. There was prosperity, but also a pronounced inclination to live in peace[6].

'Alā'uddīn went much beyond the merely negative measures of depriving people of wealth that could be misused. All the grants of rent-free land made by previous sulṭāns were resumed, and fresh grants made only in rare cases. At the same time, 'Alā'uddīn decided to assess revenue on the basis of measurement[7], and at one stroke brought all the land, revenue of which was collected by the rural chiefs, directly under the government. The chiefs were reduced to the level of the peasantry, and had to pay rent for the land they cultivated. They were deprived of all authority and all the perquisites to which they were entitled on the basis of tradition and status. The levy of a tax on houses and on pastures reduced their income and position still further. The duty of collecting revenue was assigned to officers appointed for this purpose. Their work was supervised and their accounts and papers subjected to a very strict scrutiny. Any irregularities were punished so severely that 'people stopped giving their daughters in marriage to these clerks'. It is astonishing that 'Alā'uddīn could change the agrarian system so completely and in such a short time. The measurement of the land, the institution of proper records and the collection of revenue through officers of the government is attributed to 'Alā'uddīn's revenue minister, Sharaf Qā'ī, and it was indeed an impressive achievement.

The extension of control over the rural areas was accompanied or followed by a regulation of economic activity that was unprecedented as an idea and a marvel of organization in practice. A schedule was drawn up of the prices of all types of goods, and a department of high-powered officers, with a host of spies and informers, was set

[6] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 323 ff.

[7] This means that the land cultivated by the farmer was measured and rent charged according to the area in which each crop was sown.

up to see that all goods were sold at the fixed price. The agricultural revenue of a demarcated area was levied in kind, and the foodgrains so collected were stored in government granaries. This was a reserve, utilized to keep prices down in case of shortage. To maintain the normal supply, officers in the rural areas were directed to see that peasants sold all the surplus grain; transport was arranged by forcing the banjārās, whose hereditary profession it was to cart foodgrains to the markets, to work as agents of the government, and grain merchants in the towns were made to keep full accounts of their stocks and submit them for scrutiny. When harvests were bad, rationing was introduced, and the necessary grain was supplied from the government granaries. An elaborate system of registration of dealers and goods was introduced which enabled the department of supplies to control all transactions. For cloth which, next to grain, was a basic necessity, a separate market was established, and put in charge of Multānīs, who were given subsidies so that they could maintain stocks adequate to the people's needs. Honesty was enforced by standardizing weights and measures and continuously checking up to see that no customer was cheated. 'Alā'uddīn made it a practice to send the little boys who looked after the royal pigeons to buy sweets and other eatables with small change. What they obtained was immediately weighed, and if it was found to be less than what was due, so much flesh was cut off from the dealer's body. These harsh measures had their effect. Goods were never so plentiful and so cheap as in 'Alā'uddīn's time.

We do not know definitely the reasons which induced 'Alā'uddīn to launch on his policy of economic control. Baranī adduces it to the need of an army large enough to maintain law and order, defend the country against the Mongols and also acquire fresh territory. 'Alā'uddīn was not willing to spend the treasures he had accumulated and which formed a necessary reserve on paying the army. But if prices remained as they were, the normal revenue would not suffice to cover the cost of the army that was required. Therefore, prices had to be reduced and stabilized. The basis of calculation was the maximum pay that could be given to a horseman, and prices had to be reduced so that a horseman could live on his pay for the year. The point of view seems logical. But probably the motive for 'Alā'uddīn's economic policy was not purely administrative or military. The insistence on absolute honesty in dealings indicates that it was philanthropic as well, and from Baranī's own account seems to have been taken in this light by the people.

In the *Khair al-Majālis*, a statement of Qāḍī Ḥamīd Multānī is quoted from which it appears that 'Alā'uddīn's economic policy was a purely philanthropic enterprise and had no connection whatever

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with his military plans. 'Qāḍī Ḥamīduddīn, Malik al-Tujjār . . . related, 'Once I saw Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn seated on a small throne, bare-headed, his feet on the ground, wrapt in some thought and muttering (something to himself). I went and stood before him. He took no notice. I withdrew, and coming out (of the room) I told Malik Qarā Bēg about the condition in which I had seen the sulṭān, and asked him to go and see what was wrong. Malik Qarā Bēg used also to sit in the councils (of the Sulṭān). He went up and drew the Sulṭān into conversation. After that he said, 'O king of the Musalmāns, I have a request to make'. 'Alā'uddīn commanded, 'Say what you wish to'. Thereupon the Qāḍī stepped forward and said, 'I came in and saw Your Majesty bareheaded and absorbed in thought. What was Your Majesty worried about?' The Sulṭān said, 'Listen, for some time an idea has been (revolving) in my mind. I said to myself, 'God has so many servants in this world; He has exalted me above them. Now I must do something from which all the people of God benefit'. I thought to myself, 'What is to be done? If I give away all my treasures and a hundred such other treasures, it will not suffice for all the people. If I give away villages and *wilāyats* (provinces) that also will not suffice. I have been pondering what I should do that will benefit all the people. An idea has occurred to me just now; I shall tell you about it. It has occurred to me that I should cheapen grain, so that everyone should benefit. Now, how can grain be made cheaper? I shall command that all the *nāyaks*, those who transport grain to the city from the surrounding regions, should be called together. Some of these *nāyaks* bring ten thousand, some twenty thousand beasts of burden (into the city). I should call them, give them robes (of honour), money from the treasury, maintenance for their families, so that they bring grain, and sell it at the rates which I fix'. The sulṭān gave orders accordingly. Grain began to come in from the surrounding regions, and in a few days it was 7 jitals to the maund. Oil, sugar and other dainties all became cheap, and this brought benefit to all the people'[8]. Considering 'Alā'uddīn's impulsive nature, it is quite possible that concern for the common people should have induced him to take measures for the reduction of the cost of living. The soldiers had, as we have seen, to provide their own weapons and horses and also feed the horses at their own expense. They would also have benefited. If 'Alā'uddīn had the maintenance costs of a large army in mind, the philanthropic motive would not have been an obstacle to the fulfilment of his military aim. It was not in his nature to be lax or half-hearted.

[8] Ḥamīd Shā'ir Qalandar, *Khair al-Majālis*. Edited by Dr K. A. Niẓāmī. Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh. P. 241. Further references will be to the work and not the author.

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Once a decision had been taken, he used all his authority and resources to see that it was enforced.

Measures for checking Mongol invasions formed an essential part of 'Alā'uddīn's policy. He ordered all the forts along the routes followed by the Mongols to be repaired and new ones to be constructed where necessary. These forts were cantonments, and were placed in charge of well-known kōtwāls, officers who were not regular army commanders but administrators, and their principal function would have been to see that the armed forces stationed in these cantonments were supplied with weapons of all kinds, including catapults and other machines useful in case of siege, and with stocks of grain and fodder. In spite of these precautions, the Mongols were able to cross the border and penetrate far into the interior, but in each case they were trapped and almost or completely annihilated. After the last invasion, in 1307-8, the frontier armies of the Sultanate were able to take the initiative and maintain such an effective system of patrols that the Mongols did not risk any further inroads.

Even before the Mongol attacks stopped, the whole of Mālwā was occupied by the reduction of Ujjain, Māndū, Dhār, Chandērī and Jālōr. Gujarāt had already been conquered in 1297. Now all the routes leading from Delhi to Gujarāt were under the control of the Sultanate, and the way was opened for further expansion. Siwānā, in Mārwār, was captured in 1308, and the same year an army was sent against Waraṇgal in Tīliṇgānā. 'Alā'uddīn did not intend to conquer Tiliṇgānā and administer it directly; it was considered sufficient that the Rājā, Laddar Dē'o, agreed to pay tribute. The finale of 'Alā'uddīn's military exploits was the expedition in 1310, when the armies of the Sultanate reached the southernmost limits of India, and returned triumphant with enormous spoils of war and tributes from defeated rājās. Consolidation of these conquests was to come later. During 'Alā'uddīn's lifetime only Dē'ogīr was brought directly under the central government.

We have stated earlier that two problems connected with military organization were the maintenance of proper standards of equipment and the payment of the army. 'Alā'uddīn introduced the system of branding, which enabled the military department to make sure that the horses presented at the muster were not borrowed for the purpose. The salaries of the soldiers were paid directly in cash out of the annual revenue, and the danger of intermediaries acquiring undue influence over them, or of the soldiers becoming more interested in the lands assigned to them in lieu of salary than in the performance of their military duties was avoided. No revolt in 'Alā'uddīn's time seems to have had the support of the army, and the only instance of disaffection was due to Nuṣrat Khān, the com-

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mander of the army which conquered Gujarāt in 1297, demanding from the soldiers what they thought was their legitimate share of the spoils.

'Alā'uddīn represents the worst as well as the best features of the Indian Muslim statesman. The big blot on his career is the cold-blooded murder of his uncle, who must also be considered his benefactor, in spite of all that his aunt and his wife may have done to make his life miserable. The treatment of wives and children as hostages and taking revenge on them for crimes committed by their husbands and fathers was an utterly inexcusable piece of savagery. Other punishments also were excessive. It would not be a convincing argument in 'Alā'uddīn's defence to say that he was not cruel by nature but only for reasons of state. But we seldom find sulṭans tolerating such plain speaking, amounting almost to direct reproach, as 'Alā'uddīn did, and the achievements of his reign are due almost entirely to the fact that he was willing to listen to reason and good counsel. He was a terror to his advisers, but though he had absolute power of life and death, his reactions were not regarded as unpredictable. He was not inclined to be generous in rewarding services, though there is something of infatuation in the way he gave honour and authority to Malik Kāfūr during the last years of his reign. But he trusted those to whom he gave power and responsibility, and they did not betray his trust. In fact, except during the last years, there seem to have existed bonds of loyalty and attachment between 'Alā'uddīn and his advisers which were rare during this period and also later. That he and his advisers worked like a team in the execution of such difficult tasks as the subjugation of the rural areas and the control of prices is a remarkable instance of understanding and cooperation. Together they gave the people complete security from foreign invasion and internal disorder, made the necessities of life available to the poorest and imposed on government officers standards of integrity and honesty to which governments generally aspire in vain. At its best, 'Alā'uddīn's administration was a miracle of efficiency.

But it is in the nature of miracles that they do not become a system. They just occur.

> 'I have not studied any of the sciences or read a book, but I am descended from many generations of Muslims and am the son of a Muslim. In order that there should be no rebellions, for in each rebellion so many thousand people are killed, I order people to do what is good for the country and good for them, but they are treacherous and indifferent and do not obey my orders. Therefore, it becomes necessary for me to give harsh punishments, so that

they may become obedient. I do not know whether these punishments are allowed or not allowed by the *sharī'ah*. I command whatever I consider to be beneficial to my country and whatever appears opportune to me. I do not know how God will deal with me on the Day of Judgement. But, Maulānā Mughīth, there is something I say to the Almighty God in my prayers to Him. Oh God, I say, thou knowest that if a man commits adultery with another's wife, he does no harm to my kingdom; if a man drinks wine, he also does me no harm; if he steals, he does not take away anything from my inheritance, that I should feel hurt by it; if he takes money and does not appear at the review, the work of reviewing is not left undone because of the non-appearance of ten or twenty men. In respect of all these four types of men I do what is enjoined by the prophets. But in our times a race of such men has been born that hardly one in a hundred or five hundred thousand does anything but talk and brag and neglect all matters of this world and the next.'[9]

The tasks of reform which 'Alā'uddīn set himself to carry out were dictates of wisdom or perhaps of conscience. They had no background, and in spite of their accord with moral and social values, they were something quite unexpected. Like the mango-tree produced by the juggler, which bears fruit before the eyes of spectators, but has no roots, 'Alā'uddīn's miracle aroused amazement and admiration, but could not find the sustenance or strength of public co-operation or support because it was imposed. An imaginative sulṭān and his able and loyal officers set up an organization that was merciless in its efficiency and honesty, but it served without the desire to serve and conferred benefits without getting any real gratitude in return. The people attributed all the blessings of peace and plenty to the grace of God bestowed on Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. It was held that 'Alā'uddīn was addicted to vices and sins beyond number and had become a bloodthirsty executioner because of the many murders he had committed. 'What can bloodshed have to do with revelation (of the divine mysteries) and performance of miracles?'[10] There is something deeply tragic in this summing up of the achievements of a ruler. It did not, however, represent a universal opinion. There were people who visited 'Alā'uddīn's grave, asked for his spiritual intercession for the fulfilment of their wishes, and tied strings for the purpose[11]. But we can understand that the innate moral sense of the people refused to accept the justice or the appropriateness of

[9] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-6.
[10] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
[11] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 241.

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the means adopted by 'Alā'uddīn for attaining the ends he had in view. The political historian must judge differently. Reasons of state, in politics, take precedence over all other considerations, and 'Alā'uddīn deserves full admiration for his realistic appraisal of a particular situation, his insistence on obedience in principle and in detail to commands given in order to strengthen the administration, his measures for defence and his expansion of his dominions with a view to bringing the whole country under one effective, centralized administration. In an age when personal government was the only conceivable form of government, the glory of the ruler was the only possible expression of the power and the greatness of the people and the state.

II

'AINUL MULK MULTĀNI

We have already indicated the general position of the 'nobility' in the Indian Muslim state. A detailed study of the careers of individual *maliks* and *amīrs* has yet to be made. When that is done, the impression given by the chronicles that the court and the government was a seething cauldron of ambitions and disasters might be considerably modified. As it is, only the unusual is related, and officers of the state who prudently avoided the limelight or whose abilities did not extend beyond the performance of routine work do not seem to have existed.

A remarkable instance of prolonged service, disciplined ambitions and enviable versatility is 'Ainul Mulk Multānī[12]. He became prominent in the early years of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī and died in 1362 A.D., when his age must have been well over eighty years. His name was 'Ainuddīn, he was called 'Māhrū' after his father, and Multānī because his family was settled in Multān. He must have had a good education; a collection of his letters which has come down to us reveals his literary accomplishment[13]. He obtained service at an early age, probably because of older men being removed by Balban and the Khiljīs. 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī seems to have discerned his talent. When Ilmās Bēg, Nuṣrat Khān and Ẓafar Khān were dead, he was in need of competent and loyal advisers, and 'Ainuddīn began to be asked to the private assemblies of the sulṭān. He was one of the 'committee' of three appointed to suggest ways and means for eradicating rebelliousness. Then he was awarded the title of 'Ainul Mulk, and placed in command of an expeditionary force for the conquest of Mālwā. We do not know the details of the campaign.

[12] I am indebted for many facts in this account to a well-documented paper, still unpublished, by Dr Khaliq Aḥmad Niẓāmī.

[13] *Inshā'-i-Māhrū*. See note, *supra*, p. 76.

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Its purpose becomes clear if we remember that Gujarāt had been conquered in 1297, Ranthambōr in 1301 and Chittōr in 1302-3, and thereafter it was essential to protect the trade-routes passing through Mālwā, which extends across the western half of the Vindhyā hills, from Rājpūt chiefs entrenched in their hill forts. 'Ainul Mulk was successful in reducing Ujjain, Māndū, Dhār, Chandērī and Jālōr, and as a reward received appointment as governor of the new province of Mālwā. We do not know how long he remained here. In the last years of 'Alā'uddīn's reign he was at Dē'ogīr, which had recently been taken from the hereditary rājās and placed under the central administration.

'Alā'uddīn was now exhausted in body and spirit, and his deputy, Malik Nā'ib Kāfūr, exercised power in his name. It is difficult to say whether Malik Kāfūr was just a royal favourite or a really capable statesman and commander whom historians have defamed. Undoubtedly he lost his head because the absolute power of the sulṭān came into his hands and he was uncertain of what would be his fate if he did not secure it for himself by right of actual and complete possession. He got a rival, Alp Khān, who was governor of Gujarāt, assassinated, and when this led to rebellion, he appointed 'Ainul Mulk governor. 'Ainul Mulk decided to come with his army to Delhi instead of proceeding straight to Gujarāt, and when he had reached Chitōr, he came to know of the intrigues and assassinations which had very soon led to the murder of Malik Kāfūr himself. So he stayed where he was, waiting for the position in the capital to stabilize. Then he received orders from the new sulṭān, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak, to proceed to Gujarāt for quelling the disturbances there. But he did not know whether this was a punishment or a reward, or what would happen to him if his success was not decisive enough. He consulted his subordinate officers, who were all very anxious because their families at Delhi were in danger. 'Ainul Mulk had their desire that their loyalty and position should be recognized conveyed to the sulṭān, and when satisfactory assurance had been given, he marched towards Gujarāt. Here he was able to wean the rebels away from their leaders, to pacify the province and bring it under control. But in spite of his success as an administrator he was recalled to Delhi.

The sulṭan rewarded him generously for his services. But it is also related that the behaviour of the sulṭān and his favourite clowns and prostitutes was too shameless for words, and the *amīrs* and *maliks* who came for the audience as a matter of duty were subjected to every type of indignity. After being made to endure this for some time, 'Ainul Mulk was appointed governor of Dē'ogīr, but he was back in Delhi when Khusrau Khān murdered the sulṭān and seated himself on the throne.

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No law, moral or political, could require loyalty to such a sulṭān as Quṭubuddīn, and he thoroughly deserved what came to him. But on what principle was allegiance to Khusrau Khān to be offered or withheld? 'Ainul Mulk could not decide. It seems that there were doubts about Khusrau Khān being a Muslim, but loyalty to the Muslim community in the abstract was not inculcated among government officers. They could be loyal to the sulṭān or join a party opposed to him, and thus create another basis of loyalty. Khusrau Khān also realized this. He killed those whom he suspected of being determined opponents and tried to intimidate or win over others. 'Ainul Mulk aimed at nothing but his own survival. He assured Khusrau Khān that he was a staunch supporter, and even showed him a letter sent by Ghāzī Malik Tughlaq, who was mobilizing forces for a war of revenge. A second letter from Ghāzī Malik brought tears into his eyes. He wrote secretly to Ghāzī Malik that his family had been Muslim for ten generations, that he was anxious for the overthrow of Khusrau Khān's regime, but was quite helpless under the existing circumstances. He promised not to give any active support to Khusrau Khān and, after Khusrau Khān had been removed, he would leave it to Ghāzī Malik to pardon or to kill him as he thought fit. When Ghāzī Malik and Khusrau Khān's forces were arrayed against each other, 'Ainul Mulk slipped out of Delhi and went to his estate at Ujjain. He returned when Ghāzī Malik had ascended the throne and is mentioned among the prominent nobles. He was forgiven, but probably his services were not utilized.

Muḥammad Tughlaq appointed 'Ainul Mulk governor of Oudh and Ẓafarābād. This was the only appointment he held long enough to give convincing evidence of his competence as an administrator. He brought the province completely under control, giving it the prosperity that comes with peace and administrative benevolence. During the great famine of 1337, when Muḥammad Tughlaq moved out with the people of Delhi to Swargdwārī, 'Ainul Mulk supplied the enormous amount of provisions required with extraordinary efficiency and also gave money for the relief of distress in the Dō'āb[14]. But this performance proved disastrous for 'Ainul Mulk himself. The sulṭān was either so impressed by his administrative capacity that he thought of giving him another assignment where his talent would be of still greater service, or he grew suspicious because of 'Ainul Mulk's obvious influence over the people. He, therefore, asked him to take over the governorship of Dē'ōgīr. 'Ainul Mulk, on his part, felt he was being uprooted with the object of being ultimately destroyed. His brothers and supporters instigated him to rebel, and very unwisely he let himself be persuaded. The result was defeat

[14] The northern half of the region between the Jumna and the Ganges.

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and humiliation and the loss of his brothers and other relatives. The relentless sulṭān was unexpectedly merciful in sparing 'Ainul Mulk's own life, and even restored him to favour, but not to high office.

When Muḥammad Tughlaq died, 'Ainul Mulk was at Multān, and had again to decide whom to offer his allegiance to, for the army had elected Fīrūz Tughlaq sulṭān at Thatta, in Sind, and Khwāja'-i-Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz had placed a boy, alleged to be the son of Muḥammad Tughlaq, on the throne at Delhi. 'Ainul Mulk won the confidence of Fīrūz by showing him a letter written to him by Khwāja'-i-Jahān, and was appointed *Mushrif* or Accountant-General of the kingdom in 1352. But a much younger man, Khān-i-Jahān Tiliṇgānī, who was the sulṭān's favourite, was appointed *Mustaufī*, or Auditor-General, and this seemed to 'Ainul Mulk to be beyond endurance. He and Khān-i-Jahān quarrelled violently and continuously, and the sulṭān could not make up his mind what to do about it. Ultimately, he decided in favour of Khān-i-Jahān, and appointed 'Ainul Mulk to the *iqtā'* of Multān. 'Ainul Mulk was at first very angry and did not come to the court for three days. Then he agreed to accept the assignment on the condition that he should send his accounts directly to the sulṭān and not to Khān-i-Jahān. To this the sulṭān agreed.

But many officers of the court were unhappy about the sulṭān's decision to transfer 'Ainul Mulk. They met together, and resolved to convey to the sulṭān their fears about a minister becoming so influential with the sulṭān as to have everything decided in his favour. The sulṭān, when apprised of this, thought that it was a situation in which 'Ainul Mulk should be consulted, and as he had not gone far from Delhi, he was recalled. On being questioned by the sulṭān, he expressed disagreement with the officers and said that even if Khān-i-Jahān had committed a mistake, it was dangerous to exaggerate its significance.

'Ainul Mulk again showed himself to be a wise and efficient administrator, and the province of Multān, where both the army and the people were disaffected, was soon peaceful and prosperous.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

THE SHARĪ'AH AS A SYSTEM OF LIVING

WE have already attempted a definition of orthodoxy, and very briefly indicated the difference in the attitudes of the orthodox, the religious thinkers and the *ṣūfīs*. We shall now proceed to a study of religious thought.

It would be a mistake to aim at rigid distinctions, as that might lead to a misrepresentation of facts or create unnecessary difficulties. Religious thought among the Indian Muslims never became a philosophy of religion; it was the search for the true spirit of the *sharī'ah*, and basically an intellectual and emotional vindication and affirmation of accepted belief. Its sphere can be demarcated best if we look at the Indian Muslim community as it were from the outside and examine the forces that held it together. We have, first, the assumption that there is a system combining religious and public law which is a precise expression and stable embodiment of Islāmic doctrine; secondly, we find an ardent desire to strengthen religious life by a close coordination of belief and practice; and, thirdly, we see attempts in various forms to interpret doctrine, law and system in terms of individual experience, to transform belief and practice into an organic adjustment of individual human nature and religious truth, and to make personal fulfilment the aim of religious life. The first is the sphere of what we have called orthodoxy, the third of ṣūfism. Religious thought stands between them, its sphere overlapping the other two. During the early and middle periods, it took from orthodoxy the insistence on the fundamental value of doctrine and system, and from ṣūfism the insistence on sincerity. As the sources of authority were the same for all the three, the specific character of religious thought became most obvious when a new social expression was given to belief. But even when such an expression was not given, religious thought could be distinguished by its rejection of the 'worldliness' which tainted the orthodox approach, by its continuous appeal to the original sources, the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, and by its disregard of the personality and needs of the individual believer. In its positive aspect, it was a harmonization of

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dogmatic belief with the spiritual qualities of ṣūfism; in its negative aspect, it was an indictment of the hypocrisy of the orthodox and the innovations and extravagances of the *ṣūfīs*. It represented a continuous endeavour to keep the house of religion clean. It did not add to the house or to its amenities, but it did bring in light into religious life. It aimed at an ideal adjustment of values, at preventing acquired habits of thought and objectionable customs from establishing themselves as Islāmic beliefs, and at presenting correct belief in the form of correct practice. We find no originality in Indian Muslim religious thought, except to some extent in the modern period; it began and fulfilled itself in the affirmation of the Muslim *sharī'ah* as the perfection of doctrine. It could not, therefore, be animated with any desire to move out of or expand the system of belief and practice represented in the *sharī'ah*, but could only emphasize particular doctrines and injunctions as embodying its true spirit.

Would this, however, justify its being placed in a separate category as 'thought'? It would, if we consider not only the ideas but the circumstances under which they were expressed. The orthodox regarded the *sharī'ah* primarily as a system of obligations and rights, and religious knowledge primarily as the knowledge of what was enjoined, permitted and forbidden. They professed reverence for the ethical principles embodied in the law, and considered those who attempted to follow them praiseworthy. But they did not acknowledge that the principles themselves had the force of law, and all that they insisted upon was conformity with doctrine and practice as presented in the *fiqh*. The established system which it was the function of orthodoxy to support and maintain represented political authority, just and unjust laws and policies based on reasons of state, the vested interests of a social and economic order in which the few exploited the many, and the education, the habits and the ideas which served the purposes of these vested interests. It required considerable imagination, intellectual courage and moral initiative to reject the orthodox conception of the *sharī'ah*. Those who did reject it visualized a system which did not exist. They expressed ideas which derived from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, but which would occur only to those who turned away from the books on which they had been educated and searched on their own for the truths to be found in the original sources of Islam and the *sharī'ah*. They emphasized values the urge to attain which promised spiritual fulfilment or opened out new prospects of thought and social organization. The records of the earliest religious thinkers are very meagre. But it is generally possible to surmise in what particular way a religious thinker had discovered for himself the spirit of the *sharī'ah*, and towards the close of the early period we have a typical

example in the teachings of Sayyid Muḥammad of Jaunpūr. During the middle period we have the works of two of the most important personalities in Indian Muslim religious history, Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaq Muḥaddith and Shāh Walīullāh. In the nineteenth century, because of the disintegration of the Muslim states, orthodoxy had no secular arm to support it, and became essentially an attitude towards Islāmic doctrine and observances. At the same time, the spread of modern education and the infiltration of new ideas undermined the concept of an absolute, all-comprehending and perfect system of belief and practice. During this period, religious thought took a different form. It asserted the need of religion and attempted to present traditional Muslim beliefs and concepts in a manner that was more in keeping with modern methods of discussion and standards of determining the truth.

The first religious thinker of whom we have information was Shaikh Nūruddīn Turk, who was prominent in the days of Raḍīyah Sulṭān (1236-1240). He was bitter against the *'ulamā* of the city because he saw them embroiled in the affairs of the world; it was not in his nature to be overawed by anyone, and he spoke out his mind freely enough to rouse their resentment and opposition. For this reason, Minhājuddīn Sirāj, who was *Ṣadr* and *Shaikh al-Islām* at the time, has written adversely about him in his *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*[1]. But his eloquence was captivating, and his own study and spiritual effort inspired him with supreme confidence. He was extremely strict with himself, and lived on the one *dirham* a day earned for him by a slave who was a cotton-dresser. Raḍīyah Sulṭān sent some money as a gift to him once. He beat the coins with a stick he had in his hand, saying, 'What is this? Take it away from here!'[2] Shaikh Niẓāmuddin Abul Muwayyad, who was a contemporary, was also an effective speaker, and frequently brought tears into the eyes of his audience[3]. Maulānā Ḍiyā'uddīn Sunāmī, who was a contemporary of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā, and must have lived between 1225 and 1325, is another example of a religious thinker. He surpassed in integrity and piety; he was very particular in matters of the *sharī'ah*, and wrote a book, the *Niṣāb-i-Iḥtisāb*[4]. He disagreed violently with

[1] P. 189. He accuses Shaikh Nūruddīn of having instigated Carmathians and atheists to attack and slaughter the Muslims of Delhi, of collecting loafers and vagabonds around himself, of calling the Sunnī *'ulamā 'Nāṣibīs'* (enemies of 'Alī) and *Murji'īs* (who believe that only faith is necessary, not good works) and of creating among the common people hostility towards the whole body of the Ḥanafī and Shafi'ī *'ulamā*.

[2] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[4] The book is not extant. It dealt with the details and methods of inquisition, heresies and the commandments of the *sunnah*. Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

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Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn on the lawfulness of listening to songs and of dancing in ecstasy. The Shaikh was always apologetic and submissive in his manner, and treated him with the utmost respect. During the illness which in the event turned out to be fatal, Maulānā Sunāmī heard that Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn was coming to see him. He asked that his turban should be spread out as a carpet at the door of his house. When Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn saw the turban, he took it up, kissed it and pressed it to his eyes. The Maulānā was so filled with regret that he would not look Shaikh Niẓāmuddin in the face, and just as the Shaikh was leaving his house the Maulānā breathed his last. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn wept in sorrow and said, 'There was one defender of the *sharī'ah*, and now even he has passed away'[5].

Shaikh Badruddīn Ghaznawī was also a well-known preacher. He emphasized the aspect of love in Islām. He was very fond of *samā'*, and in extreme old age, when he was hardly able to move, he danced in the *samā'* like a ten-year-old lad. People wondered and asked him how that was possible. 'It is not the Shaikh who dances,' he said, 'but Love. . . . Whoever has Love within him has also dance within him'.

Maulānā Kamāluddīn Zāhid, Shaikh Burhānuddīn Nasafī and Maulānā 'Alā'uddin 'Uṣūlī were scholars widely known and revered for their piety. We have already related how Maulānā Kamāluddīn refused to accept the office of Imām offered to him by Balban and condemned the state as only an independent and deeply religious man could. Shaikh Nasafī was also a scholar and teacher. 'When anyone wanted to become his pupil, he would say, "First agree with me upon three conditions, then I shall teach you. The first condition is that you take only one meal a day, so as to leave room for knowledge; the second is that you do not miss any lesson. If you fail to come on one day, I shall not teach you the next day; the third is that if you meet me in the street, salute me and go your way, do not touch my feet or make a display of reverence" '[6]. Maulānā 'Alā'uddīn 'Uṣūlī was a scholar with a rare spirit of independence. He would not accept any gifts, but if he was in need and was offered something he took of it only as much as was absolutely necessary. One day he had nothing to eat and to still his hunger was chewing a piece of oil-cake. Unexpectedly his barber appeared, and Maulānā 'Uṣūlī concealed the oil-cake in his turban. When the barber took off the turban to trim his hair, the oil-cake fell down, and the barber guessed that Maulānā 'Uṣūlī had been eating it. As soon as he had finished his work, he went to the nearest nobleman and told him it was a shame that he should have everything in plenty and a man of God who was his neighbour should be starving. The nobleman was touched, and

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

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immediately sent grain and butter and other things in generous measure. Maulānā 'Uṣūlī returned everything, reproached the barber for having revealed his secret and asked him never to come to him again[7].

These examples, taken from the first century of the Delhi sultanate, indicate the types of those whom we have classed as religious thinkers. If any of the sermons of those who were preachers had been preserved, we would have been able to estimate their personal contribution to the presentation of the *sharī'ah*. But we can be sure that this contribution would not have been a reinterpretation of the *sharī'ah* in the context of Indian conditions. The religious thinkers were all opposed to the official *'ulamā*, because these *'ulamā* served not God but the state, and they were opposed to the state because its structure and policy was a negation of the *sharī'ah*. Their opposition to the state was indirect but unrelenting, and deprived it of a moral basis and spiritual sanction. They were opposed to the possession of property, to exploitation of the labour of others, and to all relationships which involved possible loss of moral integrity or spiritual independence. Their weakness lay in their being passive in their attitude, in their reluctance to call for social action because they feared to incur the sin of creating dissension and conflict. But their theological position was weak, too. The *sharī'ah* does not repudiate the possession or exercise of political authority; it does not positively forbid the possession of property or the exploitation of the labour of others. The morally preferable course can only be imposed on the principle of 'enjoining what is known to be good and forbidding what is evil', if there are members of the Islāmic community who impose this course upon themselves and insist upon others doing the same. In the reign of Fīrūz Tughlaq we see symptoms of religious ferment. Shī'ah propaganda became active. A certain Aḥmad Bihārī proclaimed himself God[8]. A man named Ruknuddīn declared himself to be the promised Mahdī[9]. The breakdown of the central authority and the dispersal of the *'ulamā* afforded dissident opinion opportunity of expressing itself. It was at this time that Sayyid Muḥammad of Jaunpūr began to preach, and his movement for moral and social reform is the first expression of religious thought as an active and assertive social force in Indian Muslim society.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 77, and *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 190.

[8] 'Aḥmad Bihārī ate nothing for twelve years. But in the end his mind was affected. He began to utter strange things. He turned away altogether from the Faith. He would prostrate himself before a tree. He said what came into his mind; but there was nothing wild or disordered about what he said.' *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 157.

[9] *Futūḥāt-i-Fīrūzshāhī*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 379.

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Sayyid Muḥammad was born at Jaunpūr in 847/1443. His father's name is given variously as Yūsuf[10] and Sayyid 'Abdullāh[11]. There is no strictly contemporary account of his life and teachings, and all accounts are biased[12]. Sayyid Muḥammad had quite exceptional intellectual gifts, and fairly early in life his success in disputations earned him the title of *Asad al-'Ulamā*, the Lion of the *'Ulamā*. He became later the disciple and *khalīfah* of Shaikh Dāniyāl. Then he seems to have undergone spiritual experiences which took him far beyond the sphere of scholastic disputation. 'He was one of the saints subject to moods of exaltation and to spiritual ecstasy. Just as others, because of this ecstasy, said, "I am God", or "I am the Truth", and other things of the same kind, he in this condition said, "I am the Mahdī"[13]. But when his condition became normal, he repented of having made this claim, as the other great ones repented of their claim to being God. He professed his belief in (the future advent of) the Mahdī, and this matter is regarded by the eminent as proved. But ignorant men who happened to be present when he was in his ecstatic mood made this claim about him when he was in his normal spiritual state and became positive and definite about it. This is, however, a pure fabrication and an imputation against the poor Sayyid'[14]. This statement represents the viewpoint of those who largely agreed with the teachings of Sayyid Muḥammad, admired his attempt to reform Muslim life and had great respect for Sayyid Muḥammad himself. The reformer's eloquence seems to have made a deep impression on the people, and he made a long tour of central India, Gujarāt and the Deccan. He proclaimed himself a Mahdī, or the promised Mahdī about 905/1499, either at Mecca, where he had gone on a pilgrimage or on his return to

[10] *Ma'ārij al-Wilāyat*, Vol. II, p. 29. The book is by Ghulām Mu'īnuddīn 'Abdullāh al-Khēshgī, and was completed in 1682. A Mss. is in the private collection of Dr Khalīq Aḥmad Niẓāmī, Muslim University, Aligarh.

[11] The name of Sayyid Muḥammad's father is given as Sayyid 'Abdullāh on p. 4 of the *Sīrat* and as Sayyid Khān on p. 83.

[12] The discussion here is based primarily on the *Ma'arij al-Wilāyat*, the *Sīrat-i-Imām Mahdī Mau'ūd*, by Shāh 'Abdurraḥmān, the son of Shāh Niẓām, the fourth Khalīfah of the Mahdī (Shāh 'Abdurraḥman was born in 1499, five years before the death of Sayyid Muḥammad), the *Al-Mi'yar wa ba'ḍ al Āyāt*, by Sayyid Khōnd Mīr, Siddīq-i-Wilāyat, the second Khalifah of Sayyid Muḥammad, the *Inṣāf Nāmah*, also known as the *Matan-i-Sharīf*, and the *Hāshīya-i-Inṣāf Nāmah* by Walī Tābi'ī, the son of Yūsuf, a 'companion' of Sayyid Muḥammad, and the *Majālis-i-Shaikh Musṭafā Gujarātī*. Except for the *Ma'ārij al-Wilāyat*, all the other books have been published by the Jama'at-i-Mahdawīyah, Dā'irah Zamistānpūr, Mushīr-ābād, Haiderabad (Deccan).

[13] There is a tradition, whose validity cannot be conclusively determined, that a reformer and ruler, to be known as the Mahdī, will appear 'at the end of Time'. 'Mahdī' means, literally, 'he who is guided (by God)'.

[14] *Ma'ārij al-Wilāyat*, Vol. II, p. 29.

Gujarāt. Thereafter, the opposition of the *'ulamā* became more bitter and violent, but the reformer was not deterred. In a letter he is believed to have written to the Sulṭān of Gujarāt, he declared, 'I have proclaimed myself Mahdī by the command of God. You should investigate this claim; if I am right, you must obey me, if I am wrong you must admonish me, and if I do not understand and accept the truth, you must kill me. I declare to you that wherever I go I shall proclaim and preach the truth about myself and point out the (right) path to the people, or, in the view of the worldly *'ulamā*, mislead the people'[15]. This challenging boldness made it impossible for governors and rulers, who might otherwise have resisted the aggressiveness of the *'ulamā*, to allow Sayyid Muḥammad to remain within their jurisdiction. He was eventually forced to leave Gujarāt. He went to Sind and intended to go on to Khurāsān, but died on the way at Fārāb in 910/1504. His missionary activity is reckoned by his followers to have lasted twenty-three years.

It is unfortunate that during Sayyid Muḥammad's lifetime and for about a century thereafter controversy should have centred round the question whether he was or was not the promised Mahdī. It gave his opponents, whom he appears to have confounded on most occasions, the excuse they desired for persecuting him and his followers and of belittling him in the eyes of the Indian Muslim masses. On the other hand, his followers were forced by this very persecution to become more exclusive than they need have been, and to make the acknowledgement of Sayyid Muḥammad as the promised Mahdī the integrating factor in their organization as a community. Even without this the demands made by Sayyid Muḥammad of all true believers were rigorous enough, and he was not always disposed to suffer persecution patiently[16]. His followers asserted that he was the promised Mahdī and endeavoured faithfully to maintain the religious discipline and the rules of community living which he had laid down. Thereby they separated themselves from the generality of the Indian Muslims and became a fanatical sect[17].

[15] *Sīrat*, p. 83.

[16] 'At one time the Madhī took up his sword and said, "Now the sword is the only means of dealing with them. These people are not convinced by knowledge" '. *Inṣāf Nāmah*, p. 49.

[17] 'Bandgī Sayyid Khōndmīr said that they (the Mahdawīs) should go (for preaching the truth) to the Jāmi' Masjid and 'Idgāh as a group prepared, well-dressed and armed, so that opponents may burn in the fire of envy, feel afraid of (the Mahdawī) true believers and say, "They are (indeed) many". *Inṣāf Nāmah*, p. 205.

'It has become obligatory on others to respond to the call of the Mahdī. If people do not believe in him, their destination is hell. . . . Whoever does not recognize Muḥammad, called the Mahdī, of a certainty does not recognize Muḥammad, the Prophet of God'. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The teachings of Sayyid Muḥammad could not, therefore, serve long enough as a leavening influence. But this does not make them less significant for us.

Since all the records are of a time subsequent to the death of Sayyid Muḥammad, we can never be quite sure whether he held any particular belief attributed to him. In the *Al-Mi'yār*, which is supposed to have been written by or compiled in the time of the second Khalīfah of Sayyid Muḥammad, it is stated:

> 'Therefore, of the opponents one says that the companions of Sayyid Muḥammad repudiate all the books[18], interpret the Qur'ān in their own way and consider it forbidden to work for a living; they do not recite the whole of the *kalimah*; everyone among them claims to have had a vision of God and makes his nose the instrument for the *dhikr*[19] of God. All this which they impute to the companions of Sayyid Muḥammad is absolutely false. The companions desire God (or Truth), they read all the books, and practise whatever is found in these books which is in accordance with the Book of God and the Traditions of the Prophet. . . . They do not consider it forbidden to work for a living, but within their own community they say that it is incumbent on everyone who seeks God to inquire strictly into what he does in order to make a living. If he finds that his occupation is a hindrance in the *dhikr* of God and in his devoting himself to God, then he should give it up, regard it as forbidden, or rather as an idol which he is worshipping'[20].

In the preamble to the *Inṣāf Nāmah*, Walī ibn Yūsuf, the author, refers to a saying of Sayyid Muḥammad that if anyone attributed a statement to him, that statement was to be considered genuine only if it was in accord with the teachings of the Qur'ān; otherwise it was to be rejected. But, in fact, all the Mahdawīs based their doctrines on the Qur'an, and this reservation does not help us to separate the original teachings of Sayyid Muḥammad from later accretions. We cannot give here, even in outline, all the beliefs of the Mahdawīs. Some of the basic doctrines of Sayyid Muḥammad found in the religious literature of the Mahdawīs are given as an illustration of the original spiritual fervour of this sect.

[18] The theological literature of the Muslims, including *hadith*, *tafsīr* and *fiqh* is probably meant here.

[19] *Dhikr* is the continuous repetition of one of the names of God, the *kalimah*, or any part of it, or any word or phrase of spiritual significance. The posture generally adopted was the same as the sitting posture in the prayers. *Dhikr* could be congregational or individual, loud or silent; it could be performed at prescribed times or all or most of the time.

[20] *Al-Mi'yār*, pp. 21-3. The same point of view is expressed in the *Sīrat*, p. 90 ff.

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'Contentment does not consist in being satisfied with a piece of bread and nakedness, but in turning away both from this world and the next and remaining absorbed in the thought of God. . . . Oh, my friend, if you taste the sweetness of (this) contentment and realize its quality, I swear by God that you will never bow down before sulṭans out of greed and will not hold the world worth more than a grain of barley.'[21]

'Ḥaḍrat Mahdī (Sayyid Muḥammad) always enjoined that we should entrust ourselves to God utterly; that we should not indulge in (idle) talk with anyone; and that we should not desire anything. Depend on God only and do not be obliged to any of His creatures even for the smallest thing.'[22]

'Ḥaḍrat Mahdī said, "God will not ask you whether you are the son of Aḥmad or of Mahdī. He will ask about the works done with love. Therefore, my brother, see what God has commanded, and do not presume that because you are a member of the *Dā'irah* (circle or brotherhood), you will obtain salvation for Mahdī's sake".'[23]

'Further he said, "What is the necessary thing that the seeker should possess in order to attain to God?" Then he said, "This (necessary) thing is love". He also said, "How does one attain love?" He added, "One must keep one's mind fixed on God, so that no other thought enters the heart. For this one must always remain in solitude, and not have anything to do with anyone, whether friend or stranger; one must under all conditions think of nothing but God, whether standing or lying down or eating and drinking. Under all conditions one must think of God".'[24]

'Someone asked Ḥaḍrat Mahdī what stood as a veil between the creature and his God, and Ḥaḍrat Mahdī took hold of a piece of bread and said, "Between the creature and his God this bread stands as a veil".'[25]

'Ḥaḍrat Mahdī said, "God sent the Mahdī at a time when the purpose and aim of the Faith had been nullified by three things, (social) custom, (personal) habit and innovations".'[26]

'Ḥaḍrat Mahdī said, "It is hard for anyone who has a slave-girl or a slave in the house to remain (firm) in the faith".'[27]

[21] *Inṣāf Nāmah*, pp. 84-5.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[25] *Hāshīyah'-i-Inṣāf Nāmah*, p. 30.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

'Ḥaḍrat Mahdī said, "Whoever reads much disgraces himself by desiring the world, and if he does not desire the world, he becomes puffed up with pride".'[28]

These doctrines could be summarily characterized as militant ṣūfism, and in fact what distinguished the Mahdawīs was their individual and collective action on the precept of enjoining what is known to be good and forbidding what is evil. So far, action on this precept had been one of the functions of the state, the officer entrusted with this duty being called the *muḥtasib*. He was generally one of the *'ulamā*. Occasionally there would, no doubt, be *muḥtasibs* who acted on their own initiative; generally they would examine beliefs declared to be heretical by the *'ulamā* and consider cases of flagrant misconduct brought to their notice. In making *iḥtisāb*—examination of belief and conduct—the duty of each individual, the Mahdawīs were only reviving the faith, though it was unjustifiable to use force, as they did, where persuasion failed to have any effect[29]. An equally great shock to the complacence of the Indian Muslims of the day must have been the Mahdawī condemnation of a life of ease and of the disregard of moral values and religious injunctions in obtaining means of livelihood. The original Mahdawī doctrines in regard to work for livelihood present in a somewhat dramatized form what was generally held to be commendable by religious thinkers[30], just as their insistence on poverty and austerity is the expression of an old and established tendency. What is new is the social form given to this tendency. We would not be reading later on irrelevant ideas into the Mahdawī doctrines if we held that they constitute a revolt against a social and economic system that claimed to be Islāmic but was patently based on exploitation and oppression. The expression given to this revolt was inevitably religious, because the social system was in theory based on religious laws, and it was extremist in character because moral values can only be accepted or denied, and persons of a religious type of mind believe that they must be accepted absolutely and unconditionally. The opponents of the Mahdawīs raised issues that appear trivial, but they seem to have been aware that if they did not challenge and disprove Sayyid Muḥammad's claim to be the promised Mahdī, they

[28] *Inṣāf Nāmah*, p. 249.

[29] *Ibid.*, Chapter 16. The persecution which the Mahdawīs had to endure was terrible, and Chapter 16 of the *Inṣāf Nāmah*, where the question of fighting against their enemies is discussed, also indicates the dire straits to which they had been reduced.

[30] See, for instance, Ghazālī, *Iḥyā al-'Ulūm*, Book II, Chapter III (Urdu Translation under the title of *Madhāq al-'Ārifīn*); Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.

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would not be able to refute any of his teachings, and the existing political and social system would have to be rejected and destroyed as something evil and subversive of Islām.

Badāyūnī has given an account of two Mahdawī leaders of the middle sixteenth century, Shaikh 'Alā'ī and Miyān 'Abdullāh Niyāzī, who may be regarded as representative of their sect.

Shaikh 'Alā'ī was the son of Shaikh Ḥasan, one of the eminent men of learning in Bengal. Shaikh Ḥasan went on a pilgrimage with his younger brother, Shaikh Naṣrullāh, and after their return, both settled down at Bayānā. Shaikh 'Alā'ī studied under his father, and being possessed of exceptional intelligence and aptitude, he soon completed his studies and began to teach on his own. After the death of his father, he gave up the traditional methods of instruction, took to spiritual self-discipline and began, as a Shaikh, to guide those who desired to travel on the path of spiritual fulfilment. But he had not completely overcome his vanity, and could not bear to see another Shaikh in the same city sharing honour and esteem with him. Once, on the day of *'Īd*, he had a Shaikh, who was a scholar and a mystic, dragged out of his palanquin and insulted. He became supreme in the city, even those of his brothers who were older than he regarding him as their superior. About the same time, Miyān 'Abdullāh Niyāzī also came and settled near the same city. Miyān 'Abdullāh was among the outstanding Khalīfahs of Shaikh Salīm Chishtī. He went on a pilgrimage with the Shaikh's permission. In the Holy Cities he practised several methods of self-discipline and ultimately became a follower of Sayyid Muḥammad Jaunpurī's system. He selected a corner of a garden at some distance from the city for the practice of his devotions. He carried water on his own head, and when the time for prayer came, he collected the artisans, wood-cutters and water-carriers who used to pass that way and held prayers in congregation. If he found someone unable to join the prayer because he would thereby lose his earnings, he gave him some money and persuaded him not to forego the merit of praying with a congregation. When Shaikh 'Alā'ī came to know of this he was very happy. He told his friends and disciples that the real faith and the real Islām was to be found in what Miyān 'Abdullāh professed and practised, and what he himself had been doing was nothing but idolatry. He gave up the way of his forefathers, and abandoning all considerations of interest and all pride, he began to seek the goodwill of the poor and with all humility begged forgiveness of those whom he had offended and insulted. He disposed of the land given to him for subsistence, closed his kitchen and his *khānqāh*, and distributed all that he had, even his books, among the poor. He told his wife that he had been seized with the passion to seek God; if she was willing to

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bear poverty and starvation she would be most welcome to join him, otherwise she could take her share of his property and do as she pleased. His wife, however, joined him most willingly, as she was herself most anxious to live in the fashion that Shaikh 'Alā'ī had resolved upon.

Shaikh 'Alā'ī came and settled near Miyān 'Abdullāh, and obtained instruction from him in the Mahdawī system of devotions. He grasped easily the interpretation given by the Mahdawīs to Qur'ānic teaching, and the points and subtleties of their arguments. A large number of those who believed in and admired Shaikh 'Alā'ī came and joined him, some by themselves, some with their families, so that about three hundred persons, without having any means of livelihood, dwelt together. If they received unexpected gifts of any kind, they divided what they got equally and justly among themselves. If any among them died of hunger, the resolution of the remainder was not shaken; and if any person, unable to adhere to the rule of not working for a livelihood, took to doing so, he gave one-tenth of his earnings to the community. Twice a day, after the early morning and the afternoon prayers, the whole community, old and young, gathered together to listen to the exposition of the Qur'ān. Shaikh 'Alā'ī possessed such eloquence and persuasive power that many visitors who heard him interpret the Qur'ān gave up their profession, abandoned their household and joined his community, and those who did not have the courage to do so, repented of all that was unpermitted or sinful in their way of life. It was often seen that a person all at once gave away everything he possessed—even the salt and the lentils and the water in his house—putting complete trust in the providence of God. The principle was to live from day to day, not saving anything for the morrow.

In spite of all this, however, members of this community carried weapons to defend themselves, and anyone who was unaware of the real facts would have mistaken them for rich and powerful people. Wherever in the city they saw anything that was not permitted or was forbidden by the *sharī'ah*, they objected to it, and insisted on the *sharī'ah* being followed, having no regard whatsoever for the officer in charge of the city. In most cases, they succeeded. They were helpful to those officers who were favourably disposed to them; those who were opposed to them could not withstand them. When Miyān 'Abdullāh saw that Shaikh 'Alā'ī was getting involved with the high and low and had muddied the clear water of his life, he told him gently and by way of friendly guidance that the times were not propitious for such behaviour, that truth was more bitter than gall and wormwood for the people of the day. He should give up behaving as he did or seek obscurity or go to the Hijāz.

Shaikh 'Alā'ī left for Gujarāt with six or seven hundred followers, hoping in this way to learn about the devotional and other methods being followed by Mahdawī *dā'irahs* or community groups elsewhere. From Bēsāwar, where Badāyūnī's father went to pay his respects to him, and where Badāyūnī remembers having seen him, Shaikh 'Alā'ī turned towards Jōdhpūr. Khawāṣ Khān, the governor of the province, came out to meet him and joined the circle of his followers. But Khawāṣ Khān was fond of the *samā'*, and *ṣufīs* used to gather in his house to listen to songs. Shaikh 'Alā'ī objected to this and tried to stop it. Besides, he attempted to fulfil the obligation of enjoining what was known to be good and forbidding what was not permitted in the army as well. Soon there was disagreement between him and Khawāṣ Khān, and because of this and other difficulties, Shaikh 'Alā'ī returned to Bayānā.

About this time, Islām Shāh[31] ascended the throne. Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī, the *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*, instigated him to take action against Shaikh 'Alā'ī, and he commanded the Shaikh to come to Agra. The Shaikh appeared with a few select followers, all armed, and disregarding court etiquette, saluted the sulṭān and all those assembled in the manner prescribed by the *sunnah*. This annoyed the sulṭān and his courtiers. Before the proposed discussion had begun, Shaikh 'Alā'ī, according to his custom, recited a few verses from the Qur'ān, and preached a sermon on the wickedness of the world, on the Day of Judgement and on the falsehood of the *'ulamā*. The sulṭān and his courtiers were deeply affected. Islām Shāh left the assembly and went inside the palace, sending from there food for Shaikh 'Alā'ī and his companions. The Shaikh declined to eat the food himself, but permitted those of his companions who so desired to partake of it. When Islām Shāh came out of the palace, he did not stand up to show respect. On being asked why he had refused the food offered to him, he told the sulṭān that the food represented the property of the Muslims of which he, the sulṭān, had taken more than was his due, in disregard of the *sharī'ah*. Islām Shāh swallowed his anger, and having directed the discussion to begin, he entrusted the matter to the *'ulamā*. Shaikh 'Alā'ī overcame all in the discussion. When Mīr Sayyid Rafī'uddīn began to quote traditions in regard to the promised Mahdī, he turned upon him, saying, 'You are a Shāfi'ī and I am a Ḥanafī; we follow different principles in regard to the *hadith*. How can I agree to your interpretations and expositions to be accepted as arguments in this discussion?' He did not allow Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī to utter a word, accusing him of being a worldly *'ālim*, a thief of religion, a man who was guilty of so many contraventions of the *sharī'ah* that he could no

[31] Badāyūnī calls him Salīm Shāh (1545-1554).

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longer act justly. Even now the sounds of song and music could be heard coming out of his house. In accordance with true and established *hadiths*, a fly that sits on filth is superior to those learned men who make the doorway of government officers and sulṭāns their *qiblah*[32] and go (begging) from door to door. One day during the discussion Mulla Jalāl Bahīm, a scholar of Agra, mispronounced a word, and Shaikh 'Alā'ī put him to shame by pointing out his mistake. Islām Shāh was quite enchanted by his discourse and arguments and sent word to him that if he even whispered in his ear that he had rejected Sayyid Muḥammad's claim to be the Mahdī, he would make him the *muḥtasib* of all his dominions. So far he had commanded the performance of what was known to be good and the eschewing of what was forbidden without legal authority; henceforth he would be able to do the same with full powers. If the Shaikh did not agree, the *'ulamā* of the time had given a *fatwā* for his execution. He (Islām Shāh) did not want his blood to be spilt, but would be unable to do anything. The Shaikh, however, refused to change his beliefs merely because the sulṭān wanted him to. In the meantime, Islām Shāh got news daily of Pathān commanders having joined the *dā'irah* of the Shaikh, and Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī kept on pressing him to order the Shaikh's execution. Ultimately, Islām Shāh asked the Shaikh to leave his dominions and go to the Deccan. Shaikh 'Alā'ī himself had the desire to meet the Mahdawīs of that region and he agreed willingly.

When Shaikh 'Alā'ī reached Hindīya, the frontier town of the Deccan, the governor, A'ẓam Humāyūn Shērwānī, received him and kept him for some time in his province. He joined the Shaikh's circle and so did more than half of his army. This was reported to Islām Shāh, and he was filled with chagrin. Maulānā 'Abdullāh took advantage of this opportunity to misrepresent the matter further, and induced the sulṭān to order the Shaikh to return.

About the same time (1548), Islām Shāh set out from Agra for the Punjāb to suppress the revolt of the Niyāzī Pathāns. When he reached the neighbourhood of Bayānā, Maulānā 'Abdullāh told him that he had got rid of the Minor Seducer, Shaikh 'Alā'ī, for a while, but the Major Seducer, Shaikh 'Abdullāh Niyāzī, who was the pīr of Shaikh 'Alā'ī and of all the Niyāzīs, was still at large, with a following of three or four hundred armed men. Islām Shāh was already thirsting for the blood of the Niyāzīs. He sent an order to the governor of Bayānā that Miyān 'Abdullāh should be interrogated. The governor, who was among the disciples closest to Miyān 'Abdullāh, advised him to withdraw for a time to some other place; probably the sulṭān would forget all about him. But Miyān 'Abdullāh disagreed, and

[32] All Muslims pray in the direction of the Ka'bah. This is their *qiblah*.

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started for the sulṭān's camp the same night, reaching it the next morning, when the sulṭān was about to march. He saw Islām Shāh's equipage and went forward and saluted him as required by the *sunnah*. The governor of Bayānā, who was with him, caught hold of the nape of his neck and, bending it, said, 'O Shaikh, kings are saluted like this'. Miyān 'Abdullāh looked angrily at him and said he knew of only one form of salutation, the one adopted by the Prophet and his Companions. Islām Shāh asked if he was the pīr of Shaikh 'Alā'ī, and Maulānā 'Abdullāh, who was waiting for this question, said, 'It is he'. Islam Shāh forthwith ordered him to be kicked and beaten with scourges. So long as he remained conscious, Miyān 'Abdullāh recited a verse of the Qur'ān which ends with a prayer for victory over the unbelieving people. Islām Shāh enquired as to what he was saying, and Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī told him he was calling them all *kāfirs*. Islam Shāh got even more angry and ordered that Miyān 'Abdullāh should be beaten even harder. He stood for a whole hour watching Miyān 'Abdullāh being thus punished, and finally, thinking him dead, proceeded on his journey.

But there was just a little life left in him. His followers tended him carefully, and when he had recovered, he left Bayānā and travelled about for some time in the north-west of India, finally settling down at Sarhind. He abandoned completely the creed and the practices of the Mahdawīs, asking his followers to do the same, and reverted to the way of the ordinary Muslims. When Akbar passed by Sarhind on his way to Attock in 1585, he invited Miyān 'Abdullāh to meet him and pressed him to accept a gift of land. Miyān 'Abdullāh died at the age of ninety (lunar) years in 1592.

When Islām Shāh returned after suppressing the Niyāzīs, Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī again began to pester him to recall Shaikh 'Alā'ī from the Deccan and give him the punishment he deserved. Islām Shāh knew that the Maulānā was an interested party, but he could think of no one among the *'ulamā* of Agra and Delhi who was competent to deal with this matter. So he ordered Shaikh 'Alā'ī to go to Bihār and have his beliefs and opinions scrutinized by Shaikh Badh, a scholar, *ṣūfī* and physician whom Islām Shāh's father, Shēr Shāh, had regarded with great respect. We shall relate elsewhere how Shaikh 'Alā'ī offended the sons and relatives of Shaikh Badh by objecting to the singing that was going on inside the house. Shaikh Badh himself admitted that Shaikh 'Alā'ī was right, and in the letter he first drafted he is believed to have written that the question of the Mahdī was not one on which a man's faith could be judged, that there was considerable difference of opinion in regard to the signs of the Mahdī, that books, of which there were too few where he was and many in the possession of the *'ulamā* of Delhi and

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Agra, should be consulted. But Shaikh Badh's sons and relatives said that a letter like this would mean that Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī, who possessed great authority, would summon him to Delhi, and he was too old and weak to undertake such a journey. In spite of his protests they privately wrote a letter on his behalf saying that Maulānā 'Abdullāh was one of the legal authorities of his day, his view was the correct view and his *fatwā* the correct *fatwā*. When Shaikh 'Alā'ī arrived with this letter, Islām Shāh was in the Panjāb. He read the letter, asked Shaikh 'Alā'ī to come near him and told him to admit privately to him alone that he had abjured the Mahdawī creed and he would be free to go where he liked. Shaikh 'Alā'ī refused. Islām Shāh, having lost all hope, turned to Maulānā 'Abdullāh and said, 'Now it's your affair and this man's', and ordered Shaikh 'Alā'ī to be formally scourged in his presence. Shaikh 'Alā'ī had suffered from the plague, which was then raging, and was weakened by the journey also. He expired at the third blow. Then his body was tied to the foot of an elephant and taken around the camp. But there was mourning in the army, and next day it was found that his heart, which had been declared unworthy of burial, was covered with a sarcophagus of flowers[33].

[33] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 394 ff.

CHAPTER VI

ṢŪFĪS AND ṢŪFISM

I

WE have discussed two aspects of the religious life of the Indian Muslims, orthodoxy and religious thought. In both of these the aim was to achieve system, definiteness, harmonization of details with the whole. It was assumed that the individual Muslim and the organization of his life have to be subject to the system of the *sharī'ah*, that definiteness in beliefs and practices, and the logical integration of the details of life so that they form a consistent whole, will make the truth of Islām more evident and ensure success in this world and salvation in the next. Correct practice was deduced from true belief. Both orthodoxy and religious thought regarded personal experience of value if it confirmed dogma; if it did not, then they supposed that, like doubt, it could lead to error, and must be rejected. Their strength lay in their ability to clarify the obligations to be fulfilled and to assure the Muslim of the 'liberties' he possessed and the rewards he would obtain in return for fulfilling the obligations which the *sharī'ah* imposed upon him. But there has been among Muslims, as among the followers of other religions, the mystical type of mind which, because of its peculiar constitution, seeks confirmation of belief through its own individual experience. This experience may lead it towards a more complete and fruitful acceptance of current and established belief, or towards attempts to adjust it to persons and circumstances. The first Muslim mystics were known as *zuhhād* and *bakkā'ūn*, as men who were so terrified by the sinfulness of the flesh that they practised the severest austerities, or men to whom physical existence itself was such an obstacle to the full realization of God that they wept continuously for release from earthly bonds. As Islām spread from Arabia into other lands, it was inevitable that its expression should take diverse forms. Muslim mysticism imbibed Gnostic and Neo-Platonic ideas, adapted the system of monasticism and created an ideal of *futūwwah*[1] as the

[1] The term *futūwwah* is derived from *fatā*, which in pre-Islāmic Arabia meant 'a young man', and was associated with *murūwwah*, the ideal of 'manliness'. In the pre-Islāmic Near East there were to be found associations for specific

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basis of community life. But any kind of organization was a matter of choice and convenience. Muslim mysticism never became confined within any particular framework, and though there were *khānqāhs* (monasteries) with a routine of devotions and some kind of community living, the Muslim mystic never lost his freedom to live as he liked. By the ninth century, probably because of their ideal of brotherhood and *futūwwah*, the mystics began to distinguish themselves in appearance also by wearing an overgarment of coarse wool (*ṣūf*), and thus came to be called *ṣūfīs*[2].

Just as the jurists and religious thinkers evolved a system of dogma and law on the basis of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, of *qiyās* and *ijmā'*, the Muslim mystic sought guidance and light from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* in his exploration of the spiritual world. In the course of his adventures he endeavoured to indicate, through his acts and his sayings, the path he had followed and the conditions or states he had passed through. These were signs for those who had the same thirst for spiritual adventure, and the many individual paths that met and crossed and parted from each other came to be known as 'the Path', or *Ṭarīqah*, to distinguish it in principle from the *sharī'ah*. The *ṭarīqah*, or ṣūfism, is a generic term. Ṣūfism is difficult to define because it had no dogma, and differed in some measure with each *ṣūfī* both in principle and in practice. As an illustration, we give below a few definitions of *ṣūfī* and ṣūfism taken by Nicholson[3] from the *Tadhkirah al-Awlīyā* and the *Risālah* of Qushairī.

> '*Taṣawwuf* (ṣūfism) is this, that actions (or conditions) should be passing over a person which are known to God only and that he should always be with God in a way that is known to God only' (abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, (d. 830 A.D.).
>
> 'They (the *ṣūfīs*) are a people who have preferred God to everything, so that God has preferred them to everything' (Dhu'l Nūn Miṣrī, d. 859).
>
> 'The *ṣūfī* is not defiled by anything and everything is purified by him (Abu Turāb al-Nakhshabī, d. 859).

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purposes with limited membership and a particular way of living. The Muslim mystics combined the idea of cultivating virtue with the system of forming associations whose members undertook to distinguish themselves for purity, generosity, service of neighbour or stranger, etc. See Art. by Franz Taeschner, *Die islamischen Futūwwahbände*, in *Z.D.M.G.*, Band 12 (Neue Folge).

[2] This is the generally accepted but not the only explanation of the term *ṣūfī*. The etymology of the term is uncertain. According to some, it is derived from *sophia*, wisdom.

[3] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, p. 330 ff.

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'He (the *ṣūfī*) is one the divine light of whose knowledge does not extinguish the light of his piety: he does not utter esoteric doctrine which is contradicted by the exterior light of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*; and the miracles (*karāmah*) vouchsafed to him do not cause him to violate the holy ordinances of God' (Sarī al-Saqaṭī, d. 870).

'*Taṣawwuf* is wholly discipline' (Abu Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddād, d. 878).

'The *ṣūfī* is he who has nothing bound to himself and who is not bound to anything' (Abul Ḥusain al-Nūrī, d. 907).

'*Taṣawwuf* is freedom and manliness and abandonment of constraint and generosity (Ibid.).

'The *ṣūfī* is like the earth, on which every foul thing is thrown and from which only fair things come forth' (Junaid al-Baghdādī, d. 909).

'The *ṣūfī* is he who regards his devotion as a crime for which it behoves him to ask forgiveness of God (Abū Bakr al-Qaṭṭānī).

'The *ṣūfī* is only then a (true) *ṣūfī* when he regards all mankind as his dependents' (Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, d. 945).

'*Taṣawwuf* is patience under commandments and prohibitions' (Abū 'Amr bin al-Nājid, d. 976 A.D.).

'The *ṣūfī* is he whose ecstasy is his real existence and whose attributes are his veil' (Abul Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrī, d. 981 A.D.).

'The *ṣūfī* does not become a *ṣūfī* because of his tattered clothing or his prayer-carpet; he does not become a *ṣūfī* because of his routine or his habits; the *ṣūfī* is he who has ceased to exist'(Abul Ḥasan al-Khurqānī, d. 1033 A.D.).

These definitions are no more than random samples. They should be taken only as an indication of the wide range of thought and feeling comprehended in the term *ṭarīqah*. From some of the definitions quoted above is apparent a tendency towards metaphysical speculation, while in others we see that ṣūfism had a pronounced social and philanthropic character. Manṣūr Ḥallāj (858-922) paid for his metaphysical doctrines with his life, but his *anā'l-Ḥaqq* (I am the Truth) became symbolic of *ṣūfī* metaphysics. Scholars of renown and admirers of ṣūfism like al-Qushairī (986-1074) and Imām Ghazālī (1058-1111) cleared ṣūfism of the imputation of heresy, and by the time of Muḥiyuddīn ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) the metaphysical doctrines of the *ṣūfī*s were no longer regarded by the orthodox as subversive enough to require extreme measures for their

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suppression. The *ṣūfīs* were at first very strict in accepting people as disciples (*murīds*); Shaikh Abū Sa'īd abu'l Khair (967-1049) was probably the first to accept indiscriminately anyone who desired to become his *murīd*. With Shaikh Muḥiyuddīn 'Abdul Qādir of Gīlān (1077-1166), the founder of the Qādirī Order[4], the enrolment of *murīds* became a means of propagating religiousness, and Shaikh Shihābuddīn 'Umar Suhrawardī (1145-1234), the founder of the Suhrawardī Order, followed the same practice[5]. The Chishtī Order, whose first eminent representative was Khwajah Abū Isḥāq of Chisht (d. 940), was perhaps the oldest. The fourth of these Orders, which are all regarded as orthodox, was first known as the *Silsilah-i-Khwājgān*, and later as the Naqshbandī, after Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (1317-1389). By the thirteenth century, ṣūfism had become a movement, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that it brought Islām to the masses and the masses towards Islām. Shaikh Abū Sa'īd abu'l Khair was also a poet, and the quartrains he composed mark the beginning of that union with literature which enabled ṣūfism to exercise a profound influence on ideas, social life and culture.

II

The expansive force of ṣūfism brought it into India. There is some evidence, but very meagre, of Muslim missionary activity in South India, where it seems to have created a general spiritual ferment among the masses[6]. But little is known about the personalities of these missionaries and their ideas and methods of work. The main stream of *ṣūfī* influence flowed into India from the north. Shaikh 'Alī Hujwairī, the author of the well-known work on ṣūfism and the *ṣūfīs*, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, settled at Lahore and died there some time between 1072 and 1079. Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī established himself at Ajmēr, probably a little after the decisive battle between Shihābuddīn Ghōrī and Prithvī Rāj. Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakarīyā and Shaikh Jalāl Tabrīzī were asked by their master, Shaikh Shihābuddīn 'Umar Suhrawardī, to extend the work of the Suhrawardī Order in India. These and many other outstanding personalities formed the links between the *ṣūfīs* of Iran, Khurāsān, Turkistān

[4] The *ṣūfī* Orders or *Silsilahs*, of which the total number has been reckoned as 161, represent different forms of the *ṭarīqah*. Most *silsilahs* traced their origin to 'Ali, some to the Prophet, the *Silsilah-i-Khwājgān* to Abū Bakr. Each *silsilah* had its own concept of community life, and its own routine of supererogatory prayers and fasts, litanies, etc. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Art. *Ṭarīḳa*.

[5] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 347.

[6] Tārā Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*. Indian Press, Allahabad, 1936. P. 40.

and India, and the whole *ṣūfī* tradition was also brought over and continued here without any break.

We have seen that ṣūfism had developed its own character by the twelfth century. Its constituent elements—the metaphysical doctrines, the ethics and precepts, the routine of supererogatory prayers and fasts, the system of *dhikr*, the institution of *Shaikh* or *Pīr* (master) and disciple (*murīd*), the community life of the *khānqāh*—together formed a consistent, integrated, almost indivisible whole. But because ṣūfism was essentially spontaneous, and the normative factor was not authority or system but personality, any of the constituent elements could by itself be considered the whole of ṣūfism. *Ṣūfīs* in India, to begin with, avoided metaphysics, and most of them devoted themselves to personal instruction of their *murīds* within the framework of the *sharī'ah*. But ṣūfism was also the first to respond to the influence of the new environment, and along with the orthodox there were also unorthodox *ṣūfīs*. Later, the tendency towards metaphysics became stronger, and the doctrine of Immanence—*waḥdah al-wujūd*—based on the teachings of Muḥīyuddīn ibn 'Arabī, became so popular among *ṣūfīs* as to be identified with ṣūfism. Orthodox ṣūfism did not venture beyond the limits fixed for it by its original, non-Indian tradition, and orthodox *ṣūfīs* in India did not make any original contribution to the ideas and methods of ṣūfism. But, unlike orthodoxy, ṣūfism did not, even in the beginning, suffer from being an extraneous element. It took root immediately in the life of the people, and was more Indian in its character and expression than orthodoxy could ever become.

It is not within the scope of this study to discuss metaphysical speculations in detail or to give complete accounts of the various orthodox or unorthodox *ṣūfīs* or orders. We shall concern ourselves only with ṣūfism as an aspect of Indian Muslim life and history, and we shall consider mainly representative concepts, types of ṣūfis and the influence of ṣūfism. For this purpose it seems most appropriate to take the *shaikh*, and the relationship between the *shaikh* and his *murīds* as the basic feature of ṣūfism, remembering, however, that there were also *shaikhs* who did not care to have *murīds*, because they were not interested in creating systems of thought or conduct or establishing any form of institutions, and *ṣūfīs* who did not have any *shaikhs* and did not undergo any systematic discipline.

The *Siyar al-Awlīyā*[7] gives a list of the qualities which a shaikh ought to possess:

[7] P. 349. The *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* of Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhrawardī was the basic text-book of ṣūfism. The *Siyar al-Awlīyā* has been quoted because it is an Indian Muslim work and not because of its authenticity as an exposition of ṣūfism.

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(a) He must have attained the spiritual eminence which he desires, so that he is fit to instruct others;

(b) He must have travelled the road along which he has to guide others;

(c) He must know the rules of conduct, so that he may teach the *murīd*;

(d) He must be generous and sincere;

(e) He must not desire anything which the *murīd* possesses;

(f) He must instruct the *murīd* gently and firmly;

(g) As far as possible, his instruction should be indirect;

(h) He must command positively what has been commanded by the *sharī'ah*;

(i) He must abstain from doing what is not permitted and make his *murīd* do the same.

These qualities should be considered the basic, the 'academic' qualifications. It was presumed that the shaikh would be a *walī*[8]. The quality or state of being a *walī* (*wilāyah*) could be such that neither the *walī* himself nor other people should be aware of it, or such that others should be aware of it but not he himself, or such that both he and other people should be aware of it[9]. The question whether a particular *ṣūfī* was also a *walī* would not, therefore, arise. It was different with *karāmah*. This was, in theory, a power through which three things could be obtained: knowledge without study, the faculty to see in the waking state what people generally see in dreams, and the ability to impress on the minds of others what is seen in one's own mind[10]. But in fact it came to mean very much more, a supernatural power which enabled the *ṣūfī* to do almost anything and attain almost any position in the eyes of God. It became a criterion by which ṣūfism and the *ṣūfīs* were judged, and the common reason why people believed in them. All accounts of the *ṣūfīs* are full of stories of *karāmah*, many of them so incredible or absurd that unless a plausible explanation for the stories being told can be given, ṣūfism loses in our estimation.

[8] *Walī* means 'protector', 'benefactor', 'companion', 'friend'. It has been regarded as a term equivalent to *'ārif bi'llāh*, 'he who possesses mystic knowledge', 'he who knows God'. The *walīs* have been classed in a hierarchy, with a *Quṭb* or *Ghauth* at the head, and *nuqabā, awṭād, abrār, abdāl* and *akhyār* below him. The number of *walīs*, known or concealed, was believed to be constant, those who died being replaced by those below them. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Art. *Walī*.

[9] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 350.

[10] 'The supernatural power is of four kinds: *mu'jizah*, or (power to perform) miracles, *karāmah*, *ma'ūnah* and *istidrāj*. *Mu'jizah* is characteristic of the prophets (*anbīyā'*), *karāmah* of the saints (*walī*); *ma'ūnah* is the work of crazy people who have neither knowledge nor virtue, *istidrāj* is magic, hypnotism, etc. *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, pp. 351-2.

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It was improper for a *ṣūfī* to show his *karāmah*, even if he possessed it. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn held that just as it was obligatory on the prophets to perform miracles, it was obligatory on the *ṣūfīs* to conceal their *karāmah*[11]. '*Kashf*—things revealed to a *ṣūfī*—and *karāmah* are obstacles in the path'[12], because 'there are a hundred stages in the path of ṣūfism and *karāmah* is no more than the seventeenth. Anyone who stops at this stage fails to attain the remaining eighty-three'[13]. He relates a story in which the exhibition of supernatural powers is condemned. Shaikh Abu'l Ḥasan Nūrī[14] was sitting on the bank of the Tigris. He asked a fisherman to throw his net into the river and predicted the weight of the fish he would catch. The fisherman threw his net and caught exactly the quantity of fish predicted. When people told Shaikh Junaid about this, he said, 'Alas, it were better if there had been a black snake in the net to bite Abu'l Ḥasan and kill him!' People asked, 'Why do you say this?' He replied, 'If a snake had bitten him, he would have died a martyr. Now that he is still alive, who knows what his end will be?'[15]. But side by side with the expression of such views and the relation of such stories, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, who was one of the most learned and sober of the Indian Muslim *ṣūfīs*, repeats the most incredible stories without comment or explanation. We must assume that his views in regard to the demonstration of *karāmah* did not imply a rejection of belief in *karāmah* itself, but were in the nature of wise counsel to the aspiring *ṣūfī* not to let himself be distracted by it[16].

It would not be fair, however, to forget that the *ṣūfīs* were not the only people who believed in the possibility of attaining and exercising supernatural powers. This belief is found among the followers of all religions, and though the Prophet Muḥammad performed no miracles, the miraculous deeds of earlier prophets are related in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān at the same time ceaselessly enjoins the true believer to think. The *ṣūfīs* also encouraged sober reflection. In fact, some went to the other extreme of saying things which challenged thought. But in a society where the miraculous was a part of established belief, the *ṣūfī* could not, even if he wanted to, assert

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

[12] Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*. Further references will be to the work and not the author. p. 33.

[13] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 354.

[14] 'Nawā'ī' in the text which is most probably a misprint. Shaikh Abu'l Ḥasan Nūrī was a contemporary of Shaikh Junaid of Baghdād.

[15] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 173.

[16] He told one of his disciples: '*Karāmah* is steadfastness in front of the door of the Unknown. Be firm in (the performance of) your (spiritual) tasks. Why do you desire the power to do extraordinary things?' *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 262.

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that spiritual attainment had nothing to do with supernatural powers, and that no matter how near to God a person was, he could not perform miracles. We cannot say when the stories of the *karāmah* of *ṣūfīs* began to be told, but it was inevitable that they should be. And when once this process had begun, it could not be stopped. To reject one story was to reject a tradition; to question one account was to question the validity of a whole system of reporting and recording.

There were other reasons also why stories of *karāmah* began to be told and retold. As soon as ṣūfism became institutional, it had to show on the basis of what authority it existed. Most *ṣūfī* genealogies trace the spiritual descent of ṣūfism from 'Alī, who was the son-in-law of the Prophet and could be regarded as his immediate spiritual, if not political, successor. But this was not enough, and ṣūfism had inevitably to seek the support of the miraculous in order to make up for the defects in its theological foundations. It also, and again inevitably, came into conflict with orthodoxy. As orthodoxy had the support of the secular arm, and in appearance and theory, at least, was securely based on the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, the *ṣūfī* who held unorthodox views, no matter how true or edifying they may have been, did not stand any chance of success. His opinions would not, in the first place, be generally understood; and if they were, they could not prevail against accepted interpretations of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. The *ṣūfīs* themselves may have been willing to suffer the consequences of holding particular views, but their followers were not, and legend was made to compensate for what was unattainable in reality. The miracle made the *ṣūfī* infinitely superior personally to the representatives of orthodoxy, and, by inference, to orthodoxy itself.

But perhaps the most important reason for the growth of a tradition of miracles was that they fulfilled a real need. The orthodox *'ulamā* represented the authority of the state or the authority of dogma and law. They were not interested in intimate, personal problems. A man could not go to an *'ālim* and say that he got no spiritual satisfaction out of prayer and fasting, or tell him that prayer and fasting did provide satisfaction, and, therefore, he felt the desire to do something more. There was also no room in the *'ālim*'s heart for the sinner; he was basically a lawyer and could only talk in terms of performance and reward, of crime and punishment. Ṣūfism took Islām to the masses, and in doing so it took over the enormous and delicate responsibility of dealing at a personal level with a baffling variety of problems. It could not perform the miracle of mass guidance without allowing ample room for belief in the miraculous.

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Finally, an explanation of why stories of miraculous deeds and occurrences were told does not oblige us to accept the stories themselves. They are *all* stories and reports, legends that grew up without the particular *ṣūfīs* concerned themselves being responsible.[17] Whether the supernatural itself is worthy of belief is another question altogether, and we cannot discuss it here. But while the *ṣūfīs* did believe in the supernatural[18], an objective study of the lives and thoughts of the genuine *ṣūfīs* may quite reasonably lead us to the conclusion that they used the accounts of miraculous deeds and occurrences mainly to create an atmosphere in which they could impress upon the minds of their audience what was in fact necessary and rational.

We give below examples of stories of karāmah taken from the *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, the *Siyar al-Awlīyā* and the *Khair al-Majālis*, which are all authentic works.

The following are probably intended to indicate the superiority of ṣūfism:

> 'Whenever Khwājah Maudūd Chishtī was overpowered by the desire to visit the Ka'bah, angels were ordered to bring the Ka'bah and place it before him. The Khwājah circumambulated the Ka'bah and performed the prescribed prayers. The Ka'bah was then taken away.'[19]
>
> 'They say that on one occasion he (Shaikh Luqmān of Sarakhs) had missed his Friday prayer or omitted to follow one or the other of the divine injunctions. . . . The religious leaders of the town came out to interrogate him. People said to him, "The leaders of the town are coming in order to argue with you". "Are they coming on foot or riding?" he asked. People replied, "They come riding". The Shaikh was at the time sitting on a wall. He said to it, "Move, by the command of God". The wall immediately began to move'[20].

[17] There were *ṣūfīs* later who made extraordinary claims about the spiritual eminence they had attained. This is to be distinguished from *karāmah*.

[18] But even in this respect we may have to reconcile two such statements: 'Prayer (*du'ā*) is a consolation for the heart. God knows what is to be done', and 'When a misfortune descends from above, prayer (*du'ā*) rises from below. They collide in the air. If the prayer is stronger, it forces the misfortune back. Otherwise the misfortune descends'. *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, pp. 62 and 53.

A hair of Shaikh Farīduddīn's beard, which Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn kept as a relic, used to work cures. But on one occasion, when he wanted it for a child, it could not be found. The child died. Later, the relic was discovered at the place where it was usually kept. 'It disappeared', the Shaikh said, 'because the child was fated to die'. What supernatural power did he associate with the relic?

[19] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 42.

[20] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 9.

Several persons came to visit Shaikh Niẓāmuddin. Each of them brought something as an offering, except a *dānishmand*, who wrapped up a handful of dust in a piece of paper and put it among the presents. When the servant was collecting the presents to put them away, the Shaikh said to him, 'Leave this paper packet here; it contains collyrium meant specially for my eyes.'[21]

The following story is of the type told in order to stimulate enthusiasm:

A *dervīsh* had gone for the *ḥajj*. When he had completed the *ḥajj*, he saw that every one was offering some sacrifice; a camel, a sheep or whatever a person had taken, he was sacrificing in the way of the Lord. The *dervīsh* stood at the place and said, 'O God, Thou knowest I have not much to offer. I shall sacrifice myself for Thy sake. If my *ḥajj* has been acceptable to Thee, accept my sacrifice also'. He said this and ran his forefinger across his throat. His head was severed from his body[22].

The power of the Shaikh was of great concern to the *murīds*, and many stories were told to create the feeling that *karāmah* was a great and mysterious power which the *ṣūfī* could use as he chose. Here is an example.

Shaikh Farīduddīn's sons, who were cultivating land, repeatedly complained to him about the hostile attitude of the local revenue officer. Each time the Shaikh asked them to be patient. Once, while he was performing his ablutions, they came to him and asked him of what use all his eminence and spiritual power was if they had to suffer injustice continuously from such a person. The Shaikh picked up his staff and made the gesture of hitting someone with it. Immediately the revenue officer felt acute pain in his stomach. People brought him to the Shaikh's door, but he asked them to take him away, as the arrow had already pierced the target. Soon after he had been taken home, the man died. When the Shaikh was told about it, he said, 'For forty years God's servant Mas'ūd[23] has done what He commanded. Now, for a number of years, God has been doing what His servant Mas'ūd has had in his mind or what he asked Him for'[24].

What we might call supernaturally guided accidents constitute another type of *karāmah*.

A *dānishmand* who had lost the deed assigning him his salary, came to Shaikh Niẓamuddīn for help. The Shaikh asked him to go

[21] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 142. The term *dānishmand* is used in the early *ṣūfī* literature for a learned person who had studied in order to enter state service. A person who studied with a sincere and religious motive was called *'ālim*.

[22] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 214.

[23] Original name of Shaikh Farīduddīn.

[24] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 182.

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and buy a *jītal's*[25] worth of sweets to be offered as *niyāz*[26] for Shaikh Farīduddīn. The *dānishmand* went to buy sweets from a shop near by. When the sweetmeat-seller took out a piece of paper to wrap the sweets purchased, the *dānishmand* saw that it was the deed that he had lost. He took the paper from the sweetmeat-seller and came back and fell at the Shaikh's feet[27].

There were stories of *karāmah* not wanting in humour.

There was a saint who was blind. An opponent came and sat before him, wanting to test him. He thought to himself, 'This person is blind. No doubt there will be a defect in his inner self also'. So he turned to the blind man and asked, 'What is the sign of a saint?' While he was asking this question a fly came and sat on his nose. The man drove it off, but it came again and sat at the same place. He drove it off a second time, and again a third time. In the meanwhile he had asked his question. The blind man said, 'One of the signs of a saint is that no fly sits on his nose'[28].

Among stories that should just be ignored as nonsensical is the *karāmah* of Shaikh Luqmān Parindā being able to fly like a pigeon and disappear in space[29], and Shaikh Safīyuddīn Karzūnī rising from his seat in the air to give a better performance in levitation than a *yōgī* who had come to challenge him[30].

The genuine *ṣūfī's* reaction to those who expected him to exercise his spiritual powers for their benefit, whenever asked to do so, is expressed in the following story.

There was a drought in Ghaznī. People came to Shaikh Ajall Shīrāzī and asked him to intercede with God for rain. The Shaikh immediately got up and took the people to a garden. The gardener was sleeping under a tree; the Shaikh woke him up and asked him to water the trees. Naturally, the gardener got annoyed and told the Shaikh to mind his own business; the garden belonged to him and he knew best when the trees needed water. The Shaikh then asked in a loud voice why people came to trouble him when God owns the earth, and knows best when and how to provide sustenance. He said this and went home[31].

Stories of *karāmah* which circulated among the people were a

[25] The smallest coin of the time.

[26] *Niyāz* is food or sweets over which certain short chapters of the Qur'ān, collectively known as the *fātiḥah*, have been recited for the spiritual benefit of a dead person. The food or sweets are then distributed, generally among the poor.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[28] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 39.

[29] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 160.

[30] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 50.

[31] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 226.

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means of enabling them to decide which particular *shaikh* they should go to for their needs and were really no part of ṣūfism. It was felt necessary to become a *murīd* because of the belief, which gradually became stronger and more current, that the *shaikh* would intercede for his *murīd* with the angels, *Munkir* and *Nakīr*[32], in the grave and with God on the Day of Judgement. This belief was propagated in *ṣūfī* literature[33], but had no theological basis. It was an aim of the *ṣūfī* movement to raise the status of the *shaikh* as high as possible, and though the general belief that on the Day of Judgement the Prophet would intercede for his people was not disturbed, the *shaikh's* intercession for every individual *murīd* was held out as the strongest hope for God's forgiveness and the reward of heaven. This made the *shaikh* and the institution of discipleship all-important in the eyes of the religious-minded who were filled with fears of what would happen after death and on the Day of Judgement, and of worldly men who were stricken with a consciousness of sin.

The *shaikh* or *pīr* was a spiritual guide to whom the *murīd* entrusted himself completely and without reservation; it was, therefore, Shaikh Niẓāmuddin's opinion that a *murīd* should not have more than one *pīr*[34]. 'The *murīd* must obey the *pīr*, but the *pīr* must be one who knows the commandments of the *sharī'ah*, so that he does not command what is forbidden. If he commands something about the legality of which there is a difference of opinion, he should be obeyed'[35]. But Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn is also reported to have said, 'A command of the *pīr* is like a command of the Prophet'[36]. There were, indeed, extreme cases in which the *pīr* claimed equality with the Prophet in the eyes of the *murīd*. 'A person came to Shaikh Shiblī and said that he wanted to become his *murīd*. Shiblī said, "I

[32] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh Dihlī relates how these two angels come and ask a dead person who has just been laid in the grave three questions: Who is your God? What is your religion? and Who is your Prophet? The man who has lived righteously answers the questions without hesitation—Allāh is my God, Islām is my religion, and Muḥammad is my Prophet, and the way towards heaven is opened for him. The worldly man, who has given no thought to religion, hesitates and fumbles when answering, and the angels open the grave on the side that leads to hell. *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 34-5.

[33] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 300. Someone asked Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn whether it was a *hadīth* that if anyone did not have a *pīr* the devil would usurp that position. He replied that this was not a *hadīth* but a saying of the *ṣūfīs* (*Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 165). A rather crude example of how the *pīr* interceded for his *murīd* is given in *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 45.

[34] This was not, however, a rule, and a person could become the *murīd* of one *pīr* after another until he found the one his soul was looking for. A person could also seek to derive benefit from the spiritual discipline of more than one *Silsilah* or Order, and therefore have more than one *pīr*.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

[36] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 231.

shall accept your declaration on the condition that you do whatever I command you to do." The (prospective) *murīd* promised to do so. Shiblī asked, "How do you recite the *kalimah* of the Faith?" The man said, "I recite it in this way: 'There is no god but Allāh; Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allāh' ". Shiblī said, "How do you recite the *kalimah*? Recite it in this way: 'There is no god but Allāh; Shiblī is the prophet of Allāh' ". The *murīd* recited it in the same way without any hesitation. Thereupon Shiblī said, "Shiblī is one of the meanest of the servants of the Prophet. It is he (indeed) who is God's Messenger. I was (only) testing your faith" '[37].

There were, however, *ṣūfīs* whose explanations of their actions were even more extravagant than the actions themselves. In the *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, the anecdote just related is followed by another about Shaikh Abu'l Ḥasan Khurqānī. Some intending travellers came to him and asked him to pray for their safety on the journey. He said, 'Set out (on your journey) in the name of God—Honoured be His Name—but if any danger or risk threatens you on the way, call out my name, Abu'l Ḥasan Khurqānī, so that you are freed from the danger and the risk'. Some of the travellers had faith in him, others had not. On the way, they were attacked by robbers. Those who called to Shaikh Abu'l Ḥasan Khurqānī for help escaped with their lives and property; those who asked God for help lost their property, and some their lives as well. One of those who had called on God for help later went to the Shaikh and asked him to explain how this had happened. The Shaikh said that those who appealed to God used the name of someone whom they did not know, and that was as good as appealing to no one at all, while those who called out to him for help used the name of someone who knew God, and therefore in reality they appealed to God. 'But this explanation,' Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, who relates the anecdote, adds, 'will be accepted only by one who has tasted the joy of reality and beheld the secret of the business.'[38] Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn himself was willing to eat a piece of melon because his *shaikh* offered it to him, although he was fasting and it is a grave sin to break a fast deliberately before the proper time[39]. Shaikh Badruddīn Isḥāq, another disciple of Shaikh Farīduddīn, was praying when his *shaikh* called to him, and he interrupted his prayer to answer the call[40]. The *ḥajj* is one of the fundamental obligations of Islām for those who are at all in a position to fulfil it. Shaikh Farīduddīn once set out for the *ḥajj*, but he had gone only as far as Uch when it occurred to him that his *shaikh* had never gone

[37] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 338.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 338
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 337
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 337

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for the *ḥajj*, and rather than do something which his *shaikh* had not done, he abandoned his plan[41]. Even among *ṣūfīs* who insisted on the observance of the *sharī'ah*, the spiritual status and authority of the *shaikh* had, for the genuine *murīd*, an overriding character, though it was not proclaimed as a doctrine and was not too openly expressed in practice. Even a *ṣūfī* so careful of his words and acts as Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn declared that the *murīd* who just said his prayers five times a day and repeated some *waẓīfah* (litany) for a while, but had absolute faith in his *pīr* and was intensely devoted to him, was better than the *murīd* who spent his time in prayer, fasting, and the repetition of litanies and who performed the *hajj*, but was wanting in faith and devotion to his *pīr*[42]. 'He (Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn) said, "After the death of Shaikh al-Islām Farīduddīn, I had a strong desire to go for the *Great Ḥajj*. I said to myself, Let me go to Ajōdhan for a pilgrimage to the *shaikh*. When I had accomplished the pilgrimage to (the tomb of the) Shaikh al-Islām, my desire was fulfilled, with something added on. Again I had the same desire, and again I went on pilgrimage to (the tomb of) the *shaikh*, and my need was fulfilled".'[43]

III

We now come to the *murīd*. It is quite intelligible that the *shaikh* or *pīr*, who undertook to give spiritual guidance and at the same time put himself and all that he said and did under the constant scrutiny of the *murīd* should, in return, demand steadfast and unquestioning loyalty. But *murīds* of whom this was expected were few. The vast majority of the people who came to the *ṣūfī* desired to exploit his spiritual powers to cure an ailment or to fulfil a wish. We cannot blame them, specially those stricken with some illness, for whom the prayers of the *ṣūfī* were the only hope of relief or cure. The writing of *ta'wīdhs*[44] for this purpose began very early. Shaikh Farīduddīn asked his *pīr*, Shaikh Quṭubuddīn, what he should do about the large number of people who came to him asking for a *ta'wīdh*. Shaikh Quṭubuddīn replied, 'The matter is neither in your hands nor in mine. The *ta'wīdh* bears the name of God. Write it

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 407. The question why Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn did not perform the *ḥajj* was also raised. P. 143.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[43] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 155.

[44] A verse of the Qur'ān, or one or more of the names of God, or some prayer was written in words or figures—each letter of the Arabic alphabet has a numerical value—on a piece of paper. This was called a *ta'wīdh*. A hair of Shaikh Farīduddīn's beard, wrapped in paper, was as related above, also used as a *ta'wīdh* for curing ailments by Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. The directions for the use of the *ta'wīdh* differed.

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out and give it'[45]. Shaikh Farīduddīn in his turn once placed the inkpot before Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and asked him to write out *ta'wīdhs* for people who had come for them. Seeing that his disciple was looking depressed because of the number of *ta'wīdhs* he would have to write, Shaikh Farīduddīn said, 'You are distressed already by having to write out prayers (*du'ā*). What will your condition be when large numbers of needy people come to your door and ask you for a prayer?'[46].

The *ṣūfīs* could not, in practice, turn their backs on any who came to them for blessings and guidance. Shaikh Farīduddīn intensely desired isolation, but could not keep people away. An old *farrāsh*[47] told him that he would be evading his duty if he avoided people. 'Shaikh Farīd,' he said, 'you are getting sick of people. Learn to show gratitude to God in a better way.'[48] Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn put no restrictions on visitors, and it is reported that when once it happened that a beggar was turned away while he was taking his mid-day rest, Shaikh Farīduddīn appeared to him in a dream and admonished him, 'If there is nothing in the house, the visitor should be treated as courteously as possible. Where is it stated that a man so weary and worn (as the beggar) should be turned away?'[49]. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn desired to devote himself to God in complete seclusion from the world, but was commanded by his master, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, to stay in Delhi. 'You must remain among the people and bear the hardships they inflict on you, and repay them with generosity and self-sacrifice.'[50]

We shall discuss later the social service which the *ṣūfīs* performed as a matter of principle or unintentionally. They were able to gauge, as a rule, the motives of the people who came to them not only for some favour or assistance but also to become their *murīds*. According to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, *murīds* were of two kinds, the formal and the real. The formal *murīd* was he whom the *pīr* exhorted to consider as unseen whatever he had seen and as unheard whatever he had heard and follow (the practice of) the *ahl-i-sunnah w'al-jamā'ah.*[51] Typical of the guidance given to this type of *murīd* is Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh Dihlī's injunction to a Sayyid, who was superintendent of the jewellers' market and had become his *murīd*, to follow the *sharī'ah*, to do what is commanded and abstain from what is forbidden, not to speak a falsehood and never to make a profit by

[45] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 429.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 348.
[47] A person whose business it was to spread out carpets and also dust them.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

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exploiting the desires or the needs of the customers[52]. A degree more earnest, because he had learnt the Qur'ān by heart, was another Sayyid, who also became a *murīd* of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The Shaikh enjoined him to say his prayers with the congregation (*bā jamā'ah*), specially the Friday prayers, to consider fasting on the bright days —*ayyām-i-bīḍ*, the 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month— obligatory, to do what is commanded and abstain from what is forbidden. 'If one is reciting the Qur'ān all the time,' the Shaikh added, 'whether at home or on the way, and is engaged in *dhikr*, then his occupation is not a hindrance, he is a *ṣūfī*'[53]. It was particularly for the benefit of this type of *murīd* that the *ṣūfīs* insisted that adherence to the *sharī'ah* was a principle of the *ṭarīqah*. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn said that he did not restrict the number of his *murīds*, because even the least curious among them became conscious of religious and spiritual values and abstained from positively sinful living[54]. This consciousness of values was maintained through expressions of opinion and appropriate anecdotes. 'It has been held that missing a prayer is equal (in seriousness) to death.'[55] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn relates the story of a person who lost his gift of eloquence because he missed saying his prayer with the congregation just once[56]. The importance of maintaining an established routine of prayers or litanies was also emphasized. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn refers to the example of Maulānā 'Azīzuddīn Zāhid, who fell from his horse and broke his arm on a day when he missed reading the *sūrah Yāsīn*, which he had made into a daily practice[57]. But it was a distinctive feature of *ṣūfī* methods that they did not attempt to terrify people into righteous living. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn one day began talking of the heat of the hell-fire. 'Then he went on to relate the story of Maulānā Shihābuddīn 'Ushī, who delivered sermons for years under the *mīnār* of the Jāmi' Masjid of Dihli. He was always talking of punishments and tortures and never spoke of mercy. People once got together and asked him why he never spoke of mercy, but only of punishment. "Let us hear something about (God's) mercy also." The Maulānā replied, "I have talked of punishment for years and you have not turned towards God. What would have happened if I had talked of mercy?" '[58]. The difference between the attitude of the *ṣūfīs* and the orthodox could not have been more delicately conveyed. But the *ṣūfīs* also gave a more drastic reply to men of the type of

[52] *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 94-5.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 242.
[54] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, pp. 346-7.
[55] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 224.
[56] *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 32-3.
[57] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 441.
[58] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 180.

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Maulānā Shihābuddīn 'Ushi by suggesting that the fervour of the repentant sinner carried him further towards God than the plodding piety of a lifetime[59].

Between the formal and the real *murīd* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn we must postulate *murīds* of an intermediate type. These were persons who possessed a moral and spiritual sensitivity which placed them far above the formal *murīd*, but who could not, for various reasons, become real *murīds* in the sense of attaching themselves completely to a *pīr* and giving up the world. To such persons the *ṣūfīs* offered ideas and practical suggestions that would refine and enrich their life. It is not necessary, they said, to become a *ṣūfī* in order to attain spiritual fulfilment. 'Giving up the world does not mean that a person should divest himself of all clothing except a loin-cloth, and sit down at some place; giving up the world means that a man should wear clothes and eat food, but should be satisfied with what he gets and not have an inclination to amass it.'[60] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn said, 'Earning one's livelihood does not mean that one does not put one's trust in God. If a person with a family earns something and his heart is turned towards God, not set on his earnings, then he is one who trusts in God; but if he earns and his heart is in his earnings, then (we would say) this relationship is based on foolishness and ignorance'[61]. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn mentions a butcher in Delhi who was recognized as one of the saints[62]. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn tells of one 'Abdullāh, a door-keeper of the palace who, in spite of being a government servant, was found to be a saint of eminence. The account 'Abdullāh gives of his routine is interesting.

> 'The austerities and devotions which the *ṣūfīs* perform in the seclusion of the *khānqāh*, I perform in the street and the bazar, at my house and in the palace. I get up after the third watch of the night, perform the ablutions, and occupy myself with reading the Qur'ān and with *dhikr*. In the morning I perform the ablutions afresh, say the *sunnah* of the *fajr* prayers[63] at home and go to the mosque for the obligatory prayers. On returning from there I sit

[59] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 211.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[61] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 56.
[62] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 224.
[63] The Muslim has to pray five times a day, once before sunrise (*fajr*), the second time after midday (*ẓuhr*), the third time before sunset ('*aṣr*), the fourth time at dusk (*maghrib*) and the fifth time between dusk and midnight ('*ishā*). The prayers consist of *rak'ats*, some obligatory (*wājib*), some enjoined but not necessary (*sunnah*), some optional (*nafl*). The *ishrāq*, *chāsht* and *bain al-'ishā'ain* prayers mentioned later in the text are all supererogatory. The time for the *ishrāq* prayers is after sunrise, of the *chāsht* about two hours after sunrise and of the *bain al-'ishā'ain* (also called *awwābīn*) between dusk and night.

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on the prayer-carpet facing the *qiblah* and repeat litanies till the sun has arisen. Then I say the *ishrāq* prayers and go to the palace. On the way to the palace my tongue is constantly repeating some *dhikr*. When I enter the palace, I say, "O my God, I see no one but Thee; I stand, as it were, before Thee". Then I go and stand in front of the *Amīr*[64]. I have a covenant with God that I shall help anyone who has business with the *Amīr* by every means that God has placed within my power. At the time of the *chāsht* prayers, I come home again, perform the ablutions, say the *sunnah* part of the *ẓuhr* prayers at home and the obligatory in the mosque. Then I go to the palace, remaining engaged in *dhikr*. I go home at the time of the *'aṣr* prayers and say it and the other (*maghrib*) prayers in the mosque. Then I come home from the mosque and say the *bain al-'ishā'ain* prayer. In continuation with that I say the *'ishā'* prayers and remain occupied with devotions till midnight'[65].

This was the general routine of the *ṣūfīs* who followed the *sharī'ah*, and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn's object in giving this example was probably to show that a man could do all that a *ṣūfī* who has dedicated himself to God does, attain spiritual eminence and still remain 'in the world'. It was sincerity of purpose that made all the difference.

> 'In all matters sincerity of motive is essential. . . . If one says prayers with the intention of being seen by people and called pious, his prayers, according to some, will be irregular, and according to others he will have become a *kāfir*, because in his worship he has associated others with God'[66].

Murīds of this kind were assured that prayer, fasting and the repetition of litanies was only one aspect of the *ṣūfī* conception of the spiritual life. Shaikh Ajall Shīrāzī is reported to have asked a person who became his *murīd* and expected to be told something for his guidance, not to tolerate for others what he would not tolerate for himself, and to desire for others what he desired for himself. The *murīd* went away. After some time he returned and reminded the Shaikh that he had become his *murīd* and waited to be told what litanies to recite, but had not been told anything. The Shaikh in his turn reminded the *murīd* that he had been given a lesson to learn and had not learnt it. He could not be taught the next lesson till he had learnt the first[67]. Another *shaikh* asked a *murīd* not to do two things, one, claim to be God, and two, claim to be a prophet. The

[64] Probably the *Amīr* referred to here is the *Amīr-i-Hājib*, the Chamberlain.
[65] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 14.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 157.
[67] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 325.

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murīd was at his wit's end, not understanding at all what the *shaikh* meant. He requested the *shaikh* to explain. The *shaikh* said, 'Claiming to be God means that you demand that everything should happen according to your wish, and claiming to be a prophet means that you expect everyone to desire your interest and attention and look upon you as his friend'[68]. Among Shaikh Farīduddīn's precepts, meant for the educated and morally sensitive *murīds* are the following: 'Invent excuses for doing good', 'Acquire vision through your faults' and 'Do not consider anything a substitute for faith'. But perhaps the most typical expression was given to the *ṣūfī* values by Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn:

> 'There is a form of obedience of the law (*ṭā'at*) which is intransitive and a form that is transitive. The intransitive form is that the benefit of which remains limited to the one person who performs the acts of obedience, which are prayer, fasting, *ḥajj* and the repetition of litanies. The transitive form, on the other hand, consists in providing benefit or solace to another. The merits of this are beyond limit and conjecture. Acts of intransitive obedience have to be performed with sincerity in order to be acceptable (to God), but acts of transitive obedience are acceptable, of whatever kind they may be. . . . People asked Shaikh Abū Sa'id abu'l Khair how many paths there were to God. He replied, "There are as many paths to God as there are particles in the universe, but no path is shorter than that of bringing solace to hearts. Whatever I have attained I have attained on this path".'[69]

We come now to the *murīd* whom Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn called real, who himself desired dedication to the spiritual life. The *pīr* considered him, generally at first sight and intuitively, as worthy of his trust and personal attention, as one whose personality he could adorn with virtues as the *mashshāṭah*[70] decks out the bride. To him the *pīr* said, 'Remain in my company or let me remain in your company, for 'what the '*ulamā* exhort people to do with their tongues, the *ṣūfīs* exhort them to do with their actions'[71]. The whole of ṣūfism is comprehended within the relationship of the master and this type of disciple, based on their walking together in the flesh and in the spirit towards the goal.

The relationship was established formally through the *bai'ah*, and the *murīd* had his head shaved in earnest of his resolve to dedicate

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 411.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 187. The *mashshāṭah* was a woman whose profession it was to adorn women, in particular, brides.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

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himself to the spiritual life. He took no vows. He was responsible to his *pīr* and to his conscience, but this responsibility was not given any outward form. There was no systematic course of instruction. The *murīd* followed a routine of gradually increasing supererogatory prayers, litanies and fasts. He also practised contemplation (*murāqibah*). The *ṣūfīs* of the orthodox orders were generally learned men, and sometimes, at the *murīd's* request, the *pīr* would take him through a particular book. But this was far from being a general rule[72]. If the *murīd* felt that his devotions were not producing in him the exaltation he desired, he would consult the *pīr*. At an appropriate time, and if he had shown himself worthy, the *pīr* would make him a *khalīfah*, and give him a *khilāfatnāmah* authorising him to make *murīds* of his own. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn imposed on each of his *khalīfahs* the way of life for which he appeared most suitable. He told one, 'Keep your mouth and your door shut'; another, 'Try and make as many *murīds* as possible', and a third, 'You must live among the people, bear all the hardships they inflict on you and deal courteously and generously with them'[73]. Only one among the *khalīfahs* of a *pīr* would receive the *khirqah* and other insignia—prayer-carpet, staff etc.—as the spiritual successor.

That a *murīd* had chosen to lead the spiritual life was symbolized by his *taubah*. 'When a *sālik*[74] sets his foot on the path', said Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, 'he pronounces the *taubah*. This has two forms, *taubah* of the common people and *taubah* of the elect. *Taubah* of the common people consists in repentance from sin; *taubah* of the elect is turning (away) from everything except God. The *sālik* should be steadfast in his *taubah*. He can reach the end of the way only if he possesses steadfastness, and is free from the desire for prestige and *karāmah*. His steadfastness must be like that of the Prophet, and he must not commit breach of any practice or rule'[75]. It is further stated that

[72] Some *murīds* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn were learned men, according to the standards of the day. Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn Multānī knew both volumes of *Hidāyah*, *Qūt al-Qulūb* and *Iḥyā'al-'Ulūm* by heart; Shaikh Fakhruddīn Zarrādī was a master of the Law. There were others, equally eminent. *Ibid.*, p. 238 and p. 256 ff.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

[74] Literally, 'traveller'.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 328. There were particular litanies which Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn recommended for strengthening the resolve made in the *taubah*. These litanies were: 'O Allāh, grant me the grace to pronounce a *taubah* that will establish love for Thee in my heart, O Thou Lover of those who repent', and 'O Allāh, grant me out of Thy mercy a place where I shall have friendship, sincerity and steadfastness, O Thou most Merciful'. They were to be recited three times in prostration (*sijdah*) after the *bain al-'ishā'ain* prayers. This is followed immediately by a litany of a completely different kind: 'And he (Shaikh Niẓā-

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'the fulfilment of the *taubah* is attained in three ways, one being related to the present, one to the past and one to the future. *Taubah* of the present consists in repentance, that is, in a feeling of shame for whatever (wrong) one has done; *taubah* of the past consists in being reconciled with one's enemies. . . . The third kind, which is related to the future, consists in forming the resolution never again to come near sinfulness'[76]. It is evident that turning away from everything except God was not just a step on the path, it was an endeavour to which there could be no conceivable end. The *sirr* or 'mystery' of the *taubah* embraced all other mysteries.

A *murīd* who, because of his *taubah*, detached himself from worldly pursuits, had to depend on God for his physical survival. He had to practise *tawakkul*. The orthodox and correct Islamic concept of *tawakkul* is to do one's best to earn one's livelihood, to utilize all available means for sustaining life and to depend on God for success in one's efforts. The *ṣūfī* doctrine of *tawakkul* is absolute and unconditional dependence on God for sustenance[77]. The accounts of three outstanding *ṣūfīs* of the early period, Shaikh Farīduddīn, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn show that fasting occupied a very important place in their self-discipline. The purpose of this fasting was not to subdue the flesh. Self-mortification being forbidden in Islām, the *ṣūfīs* did not practise austerities for the subjugation of what, in religious slang, is called the lower self. Sex was not a problem at all, because the *ṣūfīs* could marry; celibacy was the exception, not the rule. The devil was believed to exist, but it is remarkable how very seldom he is mentioned in the three most important books of the early period, the *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, the *Siyar al-Awliyā* and the *Khair al-Majālis*. It would not be wrong to assume, therefore, that the fasting of the *ṣūfīs* of this period did not have the basically negative object of crushing the appetites of the body. It was not due to lack of means[78]. It seems to have had

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muddīn) said, 'Shaikh Abū Sa'īd abu'l Khair told a *murīd* that if he wished to be near to God he should recite these verses till he had attained his end:

I cannot rest except in thought of Thee,
Thy favours to me are beyond all reckoning;
Even for one favour 'tis poor recompense,
If every hair upon my body turned
Into a tongue, and sang Thy praise. *Ibid.*, p. 433.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 330.

[77] There were, however, *ṣūfīs* who supported themselves by cultivating small pieces of land, or carrying on some business. But they reduced their wants to an absolute minimum and did not save for emergencies.

[78] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn came of a well-to-do family.

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the positive object of intensifying enthusiasm, of liberating, not the spirit from the flesh, but the human personality from what the *ṣūfīs* regarded as the petty aims of worldly life. Fasting for the cultivation of *tawakkul* not only gave strength to the *ṣūfī* but created an intense and pure feeling of love for God. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn recollected all his life the joy he felt when, in his youth, his mother told him there was nothing to eat and they were 'the guests of God'[79]. Later, when Shaikh Farīduddīn had made him his *khalīfah* and successor, and *murīds* had begun to collect around him, he said on one occasion: 'There is still much good in what we are doing, for we are kept hungry'[80]. But the desire for spiritual joy through fasting could transform itself into asceticism and had occasionally to be checked. Shaikh Farīduddīn once asked his *pīr*, Shaikh Quṭubuddīn, for permission to practise severer austerities. The *pīr* did not approve. 'There is no need to do this,' he said, 'one becomes notorious because of such things[81].' Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn was told that his successor-elect, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, was fasting too much and eating too little. The Shaikh sent for him, asked for a breadcake and a large amount of *ḥalwā* to be placed before him and ordered him to eat it[82]. The fasting—or starvation, as it was also called—whether deliberate or due to actual lack of food, had to be performed in such a way that it was not noticed, otherwise it lost its value and exposed the person fasting to the accusation of trying to attract attention.

Those who dedicated themselves to the spiritual life inevitably had to face a great deal of criticism from relatives and friends. This criticism put their resolution to a severe test, because they could not show that they had gained anything in the spiritual world as compensation for what they had lost or deprived themselves of in the physical. There is an example of this in the *Siyar al-Awlīyā* which is noteworthy because it is also an example of *ṣūfī* refinement. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who had recently become the *murīd* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, was once standing under a tree in the *khānqāh*. The Shaikh saw him and sent for him. 'Tell me what is in your heart, and what is your aim in taking to this life. What is your father's occupation?' Shaikh Naṣīruddīn replied that he had no other aim than praying for the long life of his master and performing humble acts of service of the *dervīshes*. As regards his father, he was a wool merchant. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn talked to him affectionately and related an incident of his own life:

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[82] *Ḥalwā* is a well-known sweetmeat prepared in different ways. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

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'When I had become a servant of Shaikh Farīduddīn at Ajōdhan, a scholar who had been a friend and a fellow-student with whom I discussed all sorts of questions, came there and saw me in my tattered clothes. He asked me, "Maulana Niẓāmuddīn, what has happened to bring you to this condition? If you had taken to teaching in the town you would have become a *mujtahid*[83] of your time, and been very well off". I listened to these remarks of my friend and made some excuses and apologies. Then I went to my *shaikh*. He said, "Niẓām, if any of your friends comes and asks you what misfortune has befallen you that you have given up teaching, which is a secure means of livelihood and of prosperity, and taken to this life, what answer will you give?" I replied, "I shall say what the master of the world desires me to say". He said, "You reply:

> We cannot walk together, you and I,
> You go your way, let me life's lesson learn.
> May God grant you the good that you desire
> And me the lowliness for which I yearn.[84]"

'Thereafter the Shaikh said, "Go to the kitchen and ask for a tray filled with choice dishes to be brought". When this tray had been brought, the Shaikh said, "Niẓām, carry this tray on your head to the place where your friend is putting up". In accordance with the command of the Shaikh, I put the tray on my head and proceeded to the *sarā'e* where that friend was living. When his eye fell on me, he ran towards me crying, took that tray off my head and began to ask me what the matter was. I said, "The fact of my meeting and talking to you was revealed to the Shaikh by means of his inner light. He asked me about it, and when I had told him everything, he was pleased to send this to you and to answer your question with a verse". The scholar said, "God be praised that you have such a great *shaikh* and that he has so disciplined your mind. Now take me to him so that I may acquire the merit of kissing his feet". When he had finished the meal, the scholar asked his servant to carry the tray on his head and come along with us. But I said, "No, I shall take this tray just as I have brought it", and the scholar and I walked together to the presence of the Shaikh'[85].

[83] A scholar entitled to give his own opinion in matters of law and correct practice.

[84] Shaikh Farīduddīn also advised the *murīd*: 'Do not leave your ardent desires to the mercy of the cold conversation of the people'. *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 75. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn later enunciated the principle 'In Love there is no consultation'. *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 244.

[85] *Siyar al-Awlīya*, pp. 239-40.

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After criticism, the *murīd* had to overcome temptation. If he was well regarded by the *pīr*, he began to attract the attention of all kinds of people. If they were well-to-do, they wanted to acquire merit by inviting a *shaikh* and his *murīds*, or the prominent *murīds*, to meals and assemblies at their homes and to send gifts. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn once complained to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn that when he came from Oudh to Delhi, he hardly ever got the chance to meet him because of the number of invitations that were pressed upon him[86]. Normally, this would be the stage when the popularity and influence of the *murīd* would be judged on the basis of his acceptance by the public, and the temptation to win social esteem and honour would have been far greater than any trick Satan could devise to make him do forbidden things. The *murīd* who became a *khalīfah* and a successor-apparent was in the greatest danger. It was believed that he would inherit all the spiritual powers of his particular *pīr* and all of the *pīrs* of his order or *silsilah*. People would send him gifts, pay him visits and do him honour or talk against him with all kinds of motives. This was the stage at which the *ṣūfī*'s spiritual character was formed; when he selected, according to his disposition, the road along which he was to travel through life, and the moral and material equipment for his journey.

[86] *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 186-7.

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CHAPTER VII

ṢŪFĪS AND ṢŪFISM (Continued)

I

THE four Orders, Chishtī, Suhrawardī, Qādirī and Naqshbandī differed among themselves. The Chishtīs, for instance, believed in *samā'*, in listening to song and music as a means of stimulating the spiritual urge, but they insisted that it was allowed by the *sharī'ah*. Many of the orthodox *'ulamā* and adherents of the other orders believed that it was not allowed. The common standard was the *sharī'ah* and judgement was based on the methods it recognized for ascertaining what was permitted and what was not. The *sharī'ah*, as the spiritual guide, was given the same status by all the four Orders, but the Chishtīs transfigured the reverence and implicit obedience due to the *shaikh* by introducing an element of personal, absolute dedication, because of which the relationship of master and disciple became a poetic image. All the four Orders believed that the *ṣūfī* should not have any worldly possessions, but while the Suhrawardīs held that there was no harm in possessing and disposing of wealth if the heart was detached, the Chishtīs, at least of the earlier generations, regarded utter dependence on God for sustenance a spiritual necessity, and sometimes even longed for the excruciating joy of starvation. All the four Orders believed that the *sharī'ah* must be followed, but while the Qādirīs and Naqshbandīs were almost legalistic in their strictness, the Chishtī attitude ranged from a basic inclination to forgive and forget deviations and delinquencies to exhortation by word and deed to follow the *sharī'ah*.

The Suhrawardīs played a leading part in the north-west and symbolically asked the Chishtīs not to dispute possession with them[1]. But apart from this north-west corner, the Chishtīs spread themselves all over the country. Shaikh Farīduddīn sent one of his

[1] Multān was the seat of Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakarīyā, and an acknowledged centre of learning and of spiritual life in the thirteenth century. Shaikh Farīduddīn went there for his education and became a disciple of Shaikh Quṭubuddīn. Once, when master and disciple met Shaikh Bahā'uddīn in the mosque, the latter set right their shoes as they were leaving. This was a hint that they should go elsewhere and leave Multān to Shaikh Bahā'uddīn. Accordingly, both came away to Delhi. *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 61.

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khalīfahs to Siwistān and the surrounding region[2], his sons remained at Ajōdhan and his principal *khalīfah*, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, settled at Delhi. It was Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn who gave the Chishtī order an expansive character, his disciples having settled at various places throughout northern and central India. The practice was for a *murīd* who had been given the status of *khalīfah* to be assigned some city, generally his native place, and to be sent there with those *murīds* of his own or of the *shaikh* who were willing to go with him. The *khalīfah* thus acquired spiritual guardianship of the city or, to use the technical term, the city was placed under his protection. This practice was not confined to the Chishtīs, but they followed it most consistently and successfully. Therefore, when Muḥammad Tughlaq asked outstanding *khalīfahs* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn to settle where he thought they were needed, it created deep resentment. But that was because the sulṭan was not considered entitled to interfere.

Before we proceed to discuss the functions which the *ṣūfīs* performed, we must consider their attitude towards the rulers, as this could have a decisive influence on them and their mission. The question was of accepting or not accepting the status given to the ruler by orthodoxy. The Suhrawardīs appear to have been in full accord with orthodoxy, and to have believed that they could perform their own function more effectively if they cultivated relations with the political authority. Shaikh Baha'uddīn Zakarīyā addressed a petition to Iletmish against Qubāchā, the ruler of Sindh and Multān, and participated otherwise also in political affairs. His grandson, Shaikh Ruknuddīn, was a frequent visitor to the court at Delhi. The roof of his palanquin (*dōlā*) used to be loaded with documents of needy people[3], whose cases he wanted to recommend for consideration, and in fact he was doing in a systematic way what every *ṣūfī* with any influence had to do. He had the humility proper to a *ṣūfī* and was aware that in acting as he did, he was exposing himself to the contamination of worldliness. Once he met Shaikh Farīduddin's grandson, Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn, at Ajōdhan. They embraced each other. Shaikh Ruknuddīn was told later that, after he had left, Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn bathed and changed his clothes. Shaikh Ruknuddīn replied that it was the right thing to do, as he reeked of the world and Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn was unpolluted by it[4]. He refused to become a party to Quṭubuddīn Mubārak Shāh's crude attempts to undermine the prestige and influence of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. On two occasions, when Multān became involved in rebellions, the influence of the Suhrawardīs was exercised effectively to mitigate

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

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punishments. But being in the world to this extent and still not being of it required a strength of character and a spiritual self-confidence which only few are endowed with. Shaikh Ruknuddīn was an efficient administrator, besides being a genuine *ṣūfī*. One of his immediate successors, Shaikh Hūd, was a notorious spendthrift and lived in princely style. This was brought to the notice of Muḥammad Tughlaq, who ordered an investigation into his affairs, and ultimately Shaikh Hūd was disgraced and executed. Still the Suhrawardīs did not change their practice. In the reign of Fīrūz Tughlaq, Shaikh Jalāluddīn Bukhārī, called also *Makhdūm-i-Jahānīyān*—one served by the peoples of the world—was kept as a state guest when he came to Delhi. His influence on the political policy of the day was no doubt healthy. But this did not reduce the spiritual or even organizational risks of the Order. The right of appointment to the Suhrawardī seat of Multān and the administration of its estates came virtually into the hands of the government.

The first five generations of the Chishtīs consistently maintained an attitude in line with that of the righteous *'ulamā*, regarding the political authority as an influence to be avoided, like the influence of evil company, without attempting to define what they would have considered a just political order. They declined to accept honours and titles or to visit the court, though officers of the government came to their assemblies and princes could regard themselves as their disciples. A good deal depended, naturally, on the officers or the rulers themselves. Iletmish (1211-1236) was a ruler who could be regarded as a righteous person, and he was accepted for that reason by the *ṣūfīs*. But Ghiyāthuddīn Balban (1266-1286) was not. We have related how Maulānā Kamāluddīn Zāhid refused to become his Imām. Shaikh Farīduddīn refused to accept gifts of land from him. A letter from the Shaikh making a recommendation reflects a feeling of hostility, proud, though helpless. 'I have placed the matter before God and then before you. If you are able to grant something to this man, the real giver is God, and you will be thanked; if you are unable to give him anything, it is God who has held it back, and you are excused.'[5] Even during his last years, when his fame must have been at its height, the relations of his sons with the local officers were strained, as appears from the story of the revenue officer's punishment which has been related[6].

It must not be imagined that there was nothing to be said on behalf of the political authority. The state wielded power and could enforce obedience. But its power was not stable and widespread enough. The *ṣūfī* in his *khānqāh*, cultivating contacts with people

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[6] See above, p. 122.

from all strata of society, could, if he so desired, endanger the security of the ruler.

Sayyidī Maulā, who does not seem to have been held in much esteem by the *ṣūfī* fraternity, became a popular figure in Jalāluddīn Khiljī's reign, and began to dabble in politics. His tragic end may have been an example to the *ṣūfīs*; his misuse of influence was a warning which rulers could not forget. It is no wonder, therefore, that 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī became suspicious of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and was with difficulty convinced that the Shaikh would not concern himself with the affairs of the government[7]. Quṭubuddīn Mubārak inherited his father's suspicions, and was mortified to find that he could do nothing at all. When he was murdered, and the usurper Khusrau Khān gambled for popularity by scattering the royal treasure, a large amount was sent to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn also. According to our standards the Shaikh should either have returned the gift or kept it in safe custody till power had been assumed by a legally constituted government. But he accepted the money and had it distributed immediately among the poor, holding that it came from the *bait al-māl*, the people's treasury, and should go back to the people. This was an indictment of the whole system of government. So was the refusal of several of the eminent *khalīfahs* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn to consider objectively Muḥammad Tughlaq's proposal to co-ordinate missionary activity with political expansion. They went to the court only when they could assure their conscience that it was under duress. On one occasion, Shaikh Fakhruddīn Zarrādī asked Muḥammad Tughlaq to control his anger. 'What anger?' the sulṭān asked. 'The anger of wild beasts,' replied the Shaikh. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn also admonished the sulṭān in the same tone. When Muḥammad Tughlaq once passed by Hāṇsī, the seat of Shaikh Quṭubuddīn Munawwar, it was mentioned to him that the Shaikh had not paid him a visit, and he was sent for. He consented to visit the sulṭān only when it was made clear to him that he had no choice, and he thanked God that he was going under compulsion, not of his own accord. The sulṭān took him to Delhi. He was, on his side, deeply impressed by the Shaikh when they met at Delhi and he offered him a gift of 200,000 *tankas*, of which the Shaikh only took 2000, again under pressure from friends and admirers, who were afraid of what the sulṭān might do if the Shaikh persisted in his refusal to take anything at all.

But the Chishtīs also could not entirely escape the meshes of this world. Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn's sons owned land, which may have been granted to them directly or been accepted by the Shaikh for their sake. They were involved in disputes with the local officers, and once

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 132 ff.

the Shaikh had to make a journey to Delhi on their account[8]. Shaikh Farīduddīn was for a time so destitute that his children almost died of hunger and he felt quite helpless[9]. But later, though the Shaikh did not relax his own austere discipline, the circumstances of his family improved, as appears from the story quoted above. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and, after him, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn did not marry, and could face squarely the question of having or not having any possessions whatsoever.

We have mentioned the state of bliss Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn felt himself to be in when, as a young man, he had nothing to eat and was 'the guest of God'. When Shaikh Farīduddīn had appointed him his *khalīfah* and he came and settled down at Delhi with other *murīds* of Shaikh Farīduddīn and his personal *murīds*, he passed through a period of utter destitution. Once, when he and the people with him had had nothing to eat for two days, Sulṭān Jalāluddīn Khiljī sent him gifts and the offer of a grant of land. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn declined to accept anything. His *murīds* gathered around him and told him that though he might subsist on water indefinitely, they could not endure starvation and misery any longer. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn thought it a good opportunity to separate the wheat from the chaff, and strengthened by the moral support of fellow-*murīds* of Shaikh Farīduddīn, he remained firm in his decision. But circumstances changed. Later, poor people were fed from the Shaikh's kitchen, feasts were held in his honour, and he was joined at meals by large numbers of invited and uninvited guests. It became his custom to present something in return for the gifts and offerings brought to him[10]. His *khānqāh* became an institution in which money, food and goods circulated freely. Two anecdotes of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn are related in the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, which show that the charity of the Shaikh was not limited to those who came to him in the *khānqāh* asking for help.

> 'One day the Shaikh saw a woman drawing water from a well near the bank of the Jumna. He went and stood near her and asked, "My good woman, why do you impose on yourself the labour of drawing water from a well with the river so near?" The woman replied, "What am I to do? My husband is a *faqīr*, we have not enough to eat and the water of the Jumna makes one hungry very soon. I take water from the well and not from the Jumna so as not to feel hungry soon". The Shaikh heard this and tears came into

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 66. The account given of Shaikh Farīduddīn's sons and their descendants shows that they did not regard poverty as obligatory (p. 186 ff.).

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 139. *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 159.

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his eyes. (On returning to the *khānqāh*) he said (to his *murīd*, Iqbāl, who managed the affairs of the *khānqāh*) 'Lālā[11], in our Ghiyāthpūr there is a woman in the house of a *faqīr* who does not drink the water of the Jumna for fear of becoming hungry soon. Ask her how much would suffice her for the day. That much should be sent to her each month". She was asked, and the calculation made. The Shaikh sent the (required) amount himself, saying, "Tell her to take that much of victuals (from me) and drink the water of the Jumna".'

'Once there was a fire in Ghiyāthpūr. It was the height of the hot season. The Shaikh stood in the sun barefooted with his *ṭāqīyah* (cap) on his head till the fire subsided. He sent for (his servant) Khwājah Iqbāl and said, "Go and count the houses (destroyed in the fire). Then take two silver *tankas*, two portions (*zallah*) of food, and one caraffe (*subū*)[12] of cold water for each house". The houses had been burnt down and the people living in them were distressed and perplexed; all of a sudden the trays of food and the cool water sent by the Shaikh arrived. In those days two silver *tankas* not only sufficed for essential (household) goods, but some amount would even be left over. Two portions of food would have been enough to feed a whole family, and at such a time a caraffe of cold water is most welcome indeed[13].'

This extensive charity was possible because of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn's personality and influence, but 'he used to weep because of this worldly prestige, which did not please him at all, and if at any time he received valuable gifts, he wept all the more and intensified his spiritual endeavour'[14]. Some gifts did not involve any liability except that something of equal value—in merit or exchange—might have to be given, some gifts carried inevitable obligations. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn declined to accept gifts of land, income from which might have supported his *khanqāh*. He maintained to the end his principle of not acquiring property that he could not give away as it came. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, his principal *khalīfah*, followed in his footsteps. Muḥammad Tughlaq sent an order for the grant of two villages to Shaikh Quṭubuddīn Munawwar, a disciple of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, through the *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*, Qāḍī Kamāluddīn. The Shaikh and the Qāḍī, who was anxious about the consequences of the royal gift being refused, had a long argument. Finally, the Shaikh asked the

[11] A term of address. It means 'incomparable, a chief servant, major domo' etc. It would be best translated here as 'brother'.

[12] What is most probably meant here is the *ṣurāḥī*, a pot of baked clay, generally with a longish neck, in which water is kept cool in the summer.

[13] *Jawami'al-Kalim*, p. 123.

[14] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 131.

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Qāḍī if he wanted him to break the tradition of his teachers, and the Qāḍī had nothing more to say.

II

Ṣūfīs of the orthodox orders were all agreed that their primary and real function was to offer spiritual guidance. Some took a comprehensive view of this function, and concerned themselves with the values both of this world and the next; some took a less comprehensive view. From indications given in the recorded sayings of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, it appears that they did not disguise their esteem for means of livelihood where a man subsisted on his own labour, or their lack of esteem for service under the government[15]. It is related in the *Fawā'id al-Fuwād* that a young man who had just completed his studies came to see Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. The Shaikh asked him what he proposed to do, and he replied that he was trying to get some post under the government. The Shaikh said nothing. When the young man had taken leave, he said, 'A verse is something fine, but when people compose odes of praise and take them to all sorts of people, it becomes quite disgusting. Similarly, knowledge in itself is something very noble, but when it is made a profession, and takes one from door to door, it loses all dignity'[16]. He was deeply annoyed when one of his learned *murīds*, Qāḍī Muḥīyuddīn Kāshānī, was offered his hereditary post of Qāḍī of Oudh, and did not conceal his suspicion that the Qāḍī must have hankered after it. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, in his conversations, propagated the same attitude towards means of livelihood. When an elderly soldier looking for service came to him for blessings, the Shaikh replied in a noncommital way that at the time people were being employed, and there was no harm in obtaining service, if one kept an eye on oneself[17]. On the other hand, he gave encouraging assurance to a farmer and to a merchant that the morsel they earned was a good morsel, which meant that they were engaged in an honourable profession[18]. We do not have many accounts of highly-placed people meeting *ṣūfīs*. But the author of the *Khair al-Majālis* relates how an *amīr* came to visit Shaikh Naṣīruddīn in all his pride, going into the *khānqāh* without saluting the author and his friends, who were sitting outside the gate, and coming out, humble and courteous, after his interview[19].

[15] This was called *Shughl*. Honest means of livelihood was termed *Kasb*.
[16] P. 182.
[17] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 206.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 156 and p. 182.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-8.

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But the *ṣūfīs*, however painful the social injustices of the day may have been to them, could not take sides. Their function was the 'discovery' (*daryāft*), the 'stringing together' (*ta'līf*) of hearts, by sharing the sorrows of those who came to them for solace. 'All my life my condition has been as yours is at the moment, only I have not told anyone about it,' Shaikh Farīduddīn said to a man who had come to him because his brother's condition was critical and he was feeling deeply distressed[20]. The Shaikh was of an ascetic and retiring disposition, but also very sensitive to the needs and wishes of the people. He left Delhi for Hāṇsī because one Sarhaṇgā, a native of Hāṇsī, where the Shaikh had lived before, complained that it was very difficult to meet him at Delhi[21]. Ultimately, Shaikh Farīduddīn's prestige rose so high that his *dargāh* at Ajōdhan became a sanctuary where people took refuge from injustice[22]. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn made the consolation of the people his lifelong mission. 'In truth,' he said, 'they gave me a book in which was written, "As far as you can, bring comfort to hearts, for the heart of a believer is the seat (*maḥal*) of the mysteries of Providence (*asrār-i-rubūbīyah*)"'.[23] There was no limit to the people who came to him, no limit to his graciousness and his endeavour to heal the wounds inflicted by the political and economic system. 'No one in the world,' he is reported to have said, 'has to bear as much sorrow as I have to, because so many people come to me and relate their tales of grief and suffering. These are like a burden on my mind, and I feel hurt and irritated. It must be a strange heart, indeed, that is not affected by the sorrows of a brother Muslim'[24]. He found it difficult to take any food, though he was constantly fasting. 'So many miserable and poor men sit in the corners of mosques and shops, hungry and starving; how can I get this food down my throat?'[25]. His successor, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, scrupulously followed his example. 'The person who comes to me,' he is reported to have said, 'is either a man of the world or a man who has given up the world. If he is a man of the world, he is absorbed in worldly things. When he comes, I look at him and ask him about his affairs. He tells me something, but I discover what he has in his heart, because it is reflected in my own. For this reason I feel pained and restless.' 'Some people,' he went on to say, 'are so unrestrained and crude that they begin blaming and quarrelling unless what they want is done at once. They do not know that a *dervīsh* has to be patient. . . . Khwājah 'Aṭā, the grandson of

[20] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 86.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 196.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[24] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 105.
[25] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 128.

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Shaikh Najībuddīn Mutawakkil, was a person of unruly disposition. Once he came to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, took out his pen and ink-pot, and placing it before the Shaikh, asked him to write to a certain nobleman to give him something. The Shaikh excused himself, saying that this nobleman never visited him; how was he to make such a request to a complete stranger? But he asked Khwājah 'Aṭā to tell him what he expected, and he would provide it. Khwājah 'Aṭā replied, saying that the Shaikh could give him as much as he thought fit, but that he must also write the letter of recommendation. The Shaikh said, "Peace be on you, it is not the way of *dervīshes* to write letters, specially to people whom they have not seen and who have not seen them or come to them" '. At this tears came into the eyes of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. He said, 'That good man began to abuse the Shaikh, saying, "You are the *murīd* of my grandfather, you are my slave, and I am the grandson of your master. I ask you to write a letter, and you do not write". Thereupon he threw the ink-pot on the ground and got up to go, but the Shaikh stretched out his hand and caught the lapel of his cloak, saying, "Do not go away displeased" '[27]. Another example, showing the predicament in which the *ṣūfī* could find himself, is the case of the *dānishmand* who was anxious to become a *murīd* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. There was something about him which made the Shaikh suspicious, and in spite of the *dānishmand's* entreaty, he was not satisfied. 'Tell me truthfully,' he said, 'with what motive you have come.' The man ultimately confessed that he owned land at Nāgōr, and the officer to whom the village had been assigned was creating difficulties. 'Supposing that I write a letter and give it to you, will you give up the idea of becoming my *murīd*?' The man said he would, and was given the letter, which was all he wanted[28].

Poverty, rejection of any political or social support, constant contact with the needs and the sorrows as well as the weaknesses and vices of the people were the anvil on which the *ṣūfī's* personality was hammered out. From whatever aspect he is viewed, he stands out as an example. If dedication to prayer and fasting is regarded as the highest expression of the spiritual life, the *ṣūfī* came nearest to it. If constant concern for those in need of solace and assistance is looked upon as a still higher value, he endeavoured to realize it with a singlemindedness not disturbed by personal or even ideological considerations. The traditional approach to the *ṣūfīs* and their function has already been indicated. They were believed to have acquired supernatural power because of their supernatural gifts. This is a simplification which obscures the reality, or at least the

[27] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 106.
[28] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 148.

significant reality, quite as much as a judgement based on the consideration whether their acts or sayings were or were not in conformity with the *sharī'ah*. One of their very important functions, to which we shall be drawing attention later on also, was a direct or implicit revaluation of values. Their supererogatory prayers and fasts undermined the idea, with which those who aimed at following the law might have been content, that the ordained observances could provide all the spiritual sustenance that was needed. On the other hand, they created a healthy doubt as to whether all that could be done by way of prayer and fasting was really enough. 'Fasting is half the way, and other things such as prayer and *ḥajj* are but half the way,' Shaikh Farīduddīn told his favourite disciple[29]. He, in turn, told his murīds,

> 'Anyone can say prayers, repeat litanies and keep fasts a large number of times, and read the Qur'ān. Even an old woman can fast, pray at night and read a few chapters of the Qur'ān. The vocation of the men of God is different. That comprehends three things. First, anxiety as to what they shall eat and what they shall wear does not enter their heart. A *dervīsh* into whose heart concern for what he shall eat and what he shall wear has entered is no good at all. Secondly, in private and in public they remain absorbed in God: that is the essence of all spiritual striving. Thirdly, they never utter anything with the idea of pleasing people and attracting them towards themselves'[30]

This is the essence of ṣūfism. It is also a very significant definition of the morally free person, who imposes on himself duties and aspirations which raise him above all theological limitations. 'Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn said, 'Whoever wishes to be secure against the tribulations of that Day should perform that act of obedience (*ṭā'at*) than which no act is better in the eyes of God.' People asked, 'What act of obedience is this?' He replied, 'To answer the call of those in distress, to fulfil the needs of the helpless, to feed the hungry'. He also said, 'If anyone has these three qualities, you may know that God holds him to be His friend: First, a generosity like the generosity of the river, secondly, a benevolence like the benevolence of the sun, and thirdly, a hospitality like the hospitality of the earth'. . . . He also said, 'The man whose sorrows and endeavours are derived from those of the people is the one who really puts his trust in God" '[31]. It should be noted that neither the *sharī'ah* nor the *ṭarīqah* is mentioned in this context.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 450.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

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III

All the *ṣūfīs* did not feel that they needed to settle down at a particular place in order to perform their functions, or agree about the form they should give to their public life if they did settle down. But the advantages of working over a long period in a particular community were obvious. The *khānqāh* or *dargāh* thus became an institution among those *ṣūfīs* who belonged to an Order. As an institution, it lasted longer than the lives of its founder and individual inmates, and was liable to develop characteristics that did not harmonize with the principles and ideals for the service of which it was founded. It must, therefore, be judged by itself.

An institution inevitably becomes a vested interest. The Suhrawardīs of Multān, as we have seen, were quite frank about this. They even reserved the right of admission to their *khānqāh*, and on one occasion Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakarīyā closed the gates against a group of Jawāliqs, who tried to force an entry[32]. The inmates of their *khānqāh* no doubt followed a crowded routine of prayers and fasts, but they could be suspected also of living in ease and comfort, to the detriment of their souls. The Chishtī *khānqāhs* developed gradually. Shaikh Farīduddīn, apart from practising very severe austerities, also made experiments in community living. During phases of utter destitution at Ajōdhan, he and his *murīds* divided the work among themselves, some providing water, some collecting dry wood and wild fruits, some cooking. Ultimately, his *khānqāh* acquired a permanent character. It must have expanded in course of time. We know that Shaikh Farīduddīn was destitute to the end of his days, but we also know that gifts were received and distributed. It could be said generally of every *khānqāh* that even in the bad days a person who waited long enough was sure to get some sort of a meal and, with luck, a share of money or goods distributed as charity that would tide him over the next crisis. It was the *shaikh* and those dedicated to the spiritual life who starved; inmates of the *khānqāh* got what they wanted, sometimes less than was sufficient, sometimes in abundance. The small group that collected round Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn at Delhi began with courses in starvation, but gradually the physical conditions improved. The Shaikh continued his practice of 'concealed' starvation to the end of his days; his chief *murīds* did the same. But food and charitable gifts became an attraction of his *khānqāh*, as of every other. We may sum up by saying that in every *khānqāh* ideals of austerity fought against satisfaction of physical needs. The general and commanders were

[32] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 48. The Jawāliqs were a sect of the Qalandars, generally disliked for their propensity to use coarse language and to behave insolently.

victorious in their personal combats; they could not ensure the victory of their armies. In other words, a feature of *khānqāh* life which is by no means admirable is the opportunity it provided to large numbers of people to live on the generosity of well-to-do admirers of the *shaikh*, and thus introduce into the *khānqāh* the odour of parasitism. We can explain and excuse this by pointing to the economic and social conditions, and prove that the provision of physical relief was needed even for those whose spiritual urge was not strong enough to draw them towards the religious life. In fact, it can hardly be imagined that the influence of a *shaikh* would have extended beyond a small, select group if the institution of the *khānqāh* had not been created. The degeneration which came in course of time was not due to the character of the *khānqāh* as an institution but to the head not being spiritually dynamic enough.

The material condition of the *khānqāh* depended on the influence of the *shaikh* and on his willingness to accept gifts and endowments of land. Its working had two aspects, the routine of the *shaikh* and the routine of the inmates of the *khānqāh*. Food or some form of charity would not, as far as possible, be refused to anyone, but a person who came with the motive of becoming a *murīd* and was, at first sight, acceptable to the *shaikh* or was recommended to him by one of his leading *murīds* would be allowed to put up at the *jamā'at khānah* along with other similarly chosen *murīds*. All the inmates came together at the times of prayer; otherwise each one followed his own routine of study, litanies and contemplation. Each *murīd* hoped that he would find favour in the eyes of the *shaikh* and become an object of his personal attention. Brotherly feeling among the *murīds* must, therefore, have been tinged at least occasionally with rivalry, and together they must have constituted a community which looked for guidance to the *shaikh* and to which the *shaikh* looked for the signs of his own success as a spiritual instructor. If none or too few among the *murīds* came up to his expectations, he would regard himself as a failure; if he found response among his *murīds*, he would feel satisfied. But collectively his *murīds* were a body distinct from himself, and he had his own routine with which the *murīds* were not concerned.

An interesting sidelight on the organization of the *khānqāh* is provided by the position and functions of Iqbāl, the personal attendant of Shaikh Niẓāmuddin. He served all the meals which the Shaikh had by himself, and remonstrated with him when he ate too little. He reported to the Shaikh matters which no one else would have ventured or possessed the opportunity to bring to his notice[33].

[33] Such as a *murīd*, Shaikh Shihābuddīn's earnest desire to lead the prayers. *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 290.

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He collected and stocked the presents and gifts received, and gave the presents and gifts which the Shaikh desired to make. Other *khānqāhs* must also have had such managers, and for many purposes they must have served as the link between the *shaikh* and the community of the *murīds*.

The routine of the *shaikh* was the central feature of the life of the *khānqāh*. It was his endeavour to remain constantly absorbed in God, but he had to perform the duty of meeting and talking to people as well. His prestige was estimated by the generality of the people according to the number and social standing of his visitors, and it was the ideal of the *shaikh* himself as well as those who came to him that he should be always available. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn lived up to this ideal as much as was physically possible, and they were quite exasperated by the individual demands made on them. Not many of the other *ṣūfīs* were willing to face such distraction. They appeared in public only at fixed times, mostly from sunrise to midday, and attempted to combine this public appearance with attention to the needs of individuals.

It is possible that reverence and excessive faith in the supernatural powers of the *ṣūfīs* heightened the colours, but the picture one forms of the public appearance of a *shaikh* is very much like that of a royal court. There are no trappings, no exhibition of worldly power and wealth, but the assembly is dominated by the same feeling of awe, the same compulsion to follow the set pattern of behaviour. The *shaikh* comes and takes his seat. He looks around. There are some at whom he smiles; they feel honoured. Some he passes over. If they are newcomers, they are sad that they fave failed to attract his notice; if they are already known to the shaikh, they are distressed, and wonder what they could have done to be considered unworthy of recognition in public. Some fortunate ones are invited by the *shaikh* to come and sit near him; some are so overpowered by their need that they press forward towards the *shaikh*. Most come only to listen to what he says and desire spiritual benefit; some are bold enough to ask questions and start a conversation. His spiritual power being as obvious to his *murīds* as the physical power of the earthly ruler, the *shaikh* gradually comes to be called *shāh*, king, and apart from hoping to get from his bounty what courtiers ex-

Further light on Iqbāl is thrown by the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, where it is related that Iqbāl put in irons a man who owed the *khānqāh* 700 *tankās*. When Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn discovered this, he was very angry, and had the man released at once. It appears also that Iqbāl sometimes took for himself money and goods offered to the Shaikh and pretended they were lost or stolen. If he found him out, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn would say, 'I thought of distributing the money among a few persons; now I find God has given it to one man only. Why do you run about so much looking for it?' P. 59.

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pected of kings, people looked to him for a personal interest which no one else could take in them, and for a benevolence and a graciousness to which kings could not attain.

IV

We have already indicated that the types of *ṣūfīs* were almost as many as the forms of self-expression. The *ṣūfīs* have been classified by themselves into two main categories. There were, first, the *aṣḥāb-i-ṣaḥw*, the 'sober' ones who believed in systematic discipline, in patient and sustained spiritual effort, in generally restrained expression of enthusiasm and exaltation. They kept the *ṭarīqah* as close as possible to the *sharī'ah*. Then there were the *aṣḥāb-i-sukr*, the 'intoxicated'. They were different, but when and why and in what way they became different varied in almost each individual instance. It cannot be said that they did not undergo any discipline or practise severe austerities; nor can it be said that they denied the value or necessity of sustained spiritual effort. What distinguished them primarily was an emphasis, in Christian terminology, on grace as against good works. They evinced a lack of concern with forms which amounted sometimes to a repudiation of all the recognized, 'academic' methods of training, all standards of intellectual and spiritual attainment. They were intense and sometimes reckless in the expression of their views. They created the impression that the realization of God, the consummation of spiritual endeavour, was so unpredictable that no system, no ordering of values could be of much use. But while it would be possible to give examples of *aṣḥāb-i-sukr* who went through courses of severe self-discipline or who enjoined adherence to traditional forms and methods and observance of the *sharī'ah*, it would also be possible to quote examples of *aṣḥāb-i-ṣaḥw* who did or said things that were patently heterodoxical, like Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn saying that a visit to his Shaikh's tomb was spiritually more exhilarating than a pilgrimage to Mecca. An interesting anecdote of Maulānā Badruddīn Isḥāq, son-in-law and disciple of Shaikh Farīduddīn, provides another illustration. He heard a Persian couplet which he liked so much that he kept on repeating it. When Shaikh Farīduddīn asked him, as usual, to lead the prayers, he recited the couplet instead of verses of the Qur'ān, and went on repeating them till he fainted. The Shaikh waited patiently till he had recovered and then asked him again to lead the prayers[34]. Thus a classification into even these two categories of *saḥw* and *sukr* would not be quite correct. We have to be content

[34] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 172.

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with saying that while ṣūfism implied a particular system of discipline and organization, any *ṣūfī* who advanced spiritually beyond this discipline and organization became a type by himself.

We propose now to consider briefly a few types. We shall begin with Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn of Nāgōr, who was also called Ṣūfī and Siwālī (i.e., of Siwāl), to distinguish him from Qāḍī Ḥamīduddīn, who was also of Nāgōr and also an eminent scholar.

Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn has said that he was the first child born to Muslim parents after the conquest of Delhi, and he appears to have lived for about a century. His interest in the academic and intellectual aspect of ṣūfism shows that he must have received all the education that was generally imparted in those days, and then become a *murīd* of Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn. He passed almost the whole of his adult life at Siwāl, a village near the town of Nāgōr, his means of subsistence being a plot of land about the size required for pitching a tent. The Shaikh cultivated this himself, in what appears to have been a scientific and intensive way, and did not desire anything more than what the land produced. His *shaikh* had told him once to ask for anything he desired, for the moment was auspicious, but he said he was a seeker after God and desired nothing else. His grasp of *ṣūfī* metaphysics was such that people wrote to him to resolve their difficulties or clear their doubts[35], and his knowledge as well as his austere living made him famous. When the governor of Nāgōr heard of his straitened circumstances, he requested the Shaikh to accept a gift in cash and a grant of rent-free land, for the cultivation of which he would make arrangements. The Shaikh refused. The governor mentioned the matter to the sulṭān, and was asked to press the Shaikh to accept 500 silver *tankas* and the grant of a village. When the governor came with this offer, the Shaikh said nothing and went inside his house. At that time his own loin-cloth, which was all the covering he had, was in tatters, and his wife had nothing with which to cover her head. He told his wife about the sulṭān's offer, and asked her whether he should accept it. His wife asked him in return if he was willing to have the merit of a lifetime of poverty wiped out because of this offer. For her part, she could assure him that they would not be in want. She had herself spun two *seers* (4 lbs.) of yarn, and that would suffice to weave a piece of cloth out of which a loin-cloth for him and a covering for her own head could be made. The Shaikh was overjoyed at this reply and went out and told the governor that he would not accept the sulṭān's offer.

The *Siyar al-Awlīyā* and the *Akhbār al-Akhyār* quote a number of questions put to Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn and the answers given by him.

[35] According to the *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 73, his son, Shaikh Farīduddīn, collected his sayings and named the collection '*Surūr al-Ṣudūr*'.

They appear to have been published, and the authors of both the works have quoted the questions and answers that seemed to them most significant. We give first a few examples from the *Siyar al-Awlīyā*[36].

'It was asked: The promptings of the devil, the ideas and thoughts of human beings, the communications made to the traveller (on the path of ṣūfism), and the revelations from God have, in the physical world, the same character and the same quality: how is one to distinguish between that which comes from the devil and that which is human, how is one to recognize the appearance of the (mystic) communication and the quality of the divine (revelation)?—He replied: The seekers are of three kinds, those who seek God, those who are concerned with the life to come and those who are men of this world. Those who seek after (the things of) this world cannot acquire (true) knowledge of minds (and motives), for all these appear alike to them . . . those concerned with the life to come can discriminate between this worldly and other-worldly minds (and motives) . . . and the seekers after God—the Great and the Holy—separate the other-worldly from the God-oriented minds . . . the God-oriented mind is holy, being free from (desire for) vain pleasures, and pure (because it is unaffected) by the afflictions of wealth. In other words, the men of the world have dissipated minds, the men (who think) of the hereafter are at peace within themselves, and the seekers after God have no "mind" at all, for the mind requires concepts, while God—glory be to Him, the Exalted—is beyond conception and beyond everything that can be comprehended by the mind. . . .'

'What is the difference between *murūwwah* and *futūwwah*?—*Murūwwah* is a branch of the tree of *futūwwah*, which grows in the garden of friendship, and the fruit of it is that one should take and give, without considering oneself honoured thereby. The fruit of *murūwwah* is that one should abandon (the idea of) giving and taking, wipe off all thought of the universe from the heart and not look to any pleasure or share in it.'

'The pious (i.e. *ṣūfīs*) very often use the terms "tavern" (*kharābāt*) and "monastery" (*sauma'ah*). We do not understand their meaning. Please explain.—You may have heard, "We were brought from the tavern", and other such sayings. Listen. You may not have heard anything more illuminating. The "tavern" means: You were not; without you they[37] made an agreement

[36] P. 160 ff.

[37] This is the literal translation. 'They' should here be taken to mean God, the Creator.

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with you; or rather, they played the chess of pleasure without you. They brought you from the "tavern" of non-existence into the "monastery" of existence, giving you something which they had not given to anyone else. When you left the "tavern" of non-existence and entered the "monastery" of existence . . . and in this "monastery" you drank the wine promised to you and you became drunk and forgot the "Am I not your Lord"[38] of the time when you were in the "tavern", the primeval Beloved who brought you into existence out of eternal non-existence sent to you a demand (after the manner) of creditors and appointed people to call you from the "monastery" of existence to the "tavern" of non-existence, and raise the cry for the fulfilment of the solemn promise that "God invites (you to come) to the house of safety and well-being" . . . '

The following questions and answers are taken from the *Akhbār al-Akhyār*[39].

'How are we to understand that the *sharī'ah* and the *ṭarīqah* are one?—Just as you think that body and soul are one. *Ṭarīqah* is the soul of *sharī'ah*'.

'There is this world (*duniyā*) and there is faith (*dīn*). Please tell us what is meant by the world and by faith.—The faith of the ignorant (*ẓālim*) consists in fleeing and in meeting, that is, fleeing from sins and coming together with acts of obedience (*ṭā'at*); the faith of those who follow the middle path (consists) in separating themselves from the world and taking comfort in the life to come; and the faith of the ancients (who were near to the source) in cutting themselves off from what is not God and seeking God alone.'

'This statement shows that there is difference between the (various) faiths.—There is only one faith, and there are no differences in it. The difference you have observed is due to the disparity among (types of) men, not to the diversity of faiths. The faith is in any case one and only one. As a phenomenon it exhibits itself in a different form to these three types, and (to) those who look at it with the inner eye (it is evident that) "whichever way you turn there is the Face of God" . . .'

'I understand what faith means. Now please tell me what is meant by the "world", and by "hell" and "heaven".—"Heaven" and "hell" are your actions. "Therefore, whoever does an atom's worth of evil shall see it, and whoever does an atom's worth of

[38] Quotation from the Qur'ān. The meaning is, 'You forgot the fact that at one time you were face to face with God'.

[39] P. 32 ff. The order of the questions and answers as given here is not the same as in the text.

good shall see it". Whatever your actions are today, tomorrow you will see them objectified. If you have done good works, they will appear to you in that form, and if you have done evil you shall behold the evil consequences.'

In continuation of the questions and answers, Shaikh Ḥamiduddīn says:

'Well, listen. The path and the goal of those who follow the *sharī'ah* is release from the (physical) self and from worldly goods . . . and the path and goal of those who follow the *ṭarīqah* is release from (physical) life and the heart . . . and the attainment of the lofty condition of Unity . . .'.

Although Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn lived in a remote village and avoided people, he was not left alone. While some wanted answers to their questions, others must have come to pay their respects. His fame as a man of learning aroused the jealousy of the *'ulamā*, and once a grandson of Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakarīyā came with a noisy crowd to interrogate him about the reasons why he did not attend the congregational Friday prayers. The Shaikh was offended, and at first would not reply; then he convinced his interrogators that they were not going about the business in the right way[40]. He did not undertake any missionary activity, but it is related that whenever he saw a certain Hindū at Nāgōr, he said that he was one of God's chosen men, and prophesied that he would become a Muslim before his death. What he prophesied ultimately did happen.[41]

A *ṣūfī* of quite a different type was 'Alī Maulā[42] of Badāyūn. Before his conversion he sold milk and curds and also practised highway robbery. One day he passed by the door of a house in which Shaikh Jalāl Tabrīzī[43] was staying, carrying a pot of curds on his head. The Shaikh was sitting at the threshold and their eyes met. 'Alī Maulā placed the pot of curds before the Shaikh and then put his head on the Shaikh's feet. The Shaikh accepted his offering. He collected his friends; a cup and a spoon were brought and all ate of the curds. When they had finished, the Shaikh gave 'Alī Maulā permission to leave. 'Where shall I go?' 'Alī Maulā asked. 'Recite the *kalimah*; I shall become a Muslim.' The Shaikh recited the *kalimah* and 'Alī Maulā became a Muslim. Then he said, 'I have a lot of

[40] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 158. As a matter of law, it was irregular to have congregational Friday prayers in Nāgōr, because at the time it was not under Muslim rule.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[42] There were two 'Alī Maulās at Badā'yūn, Senior and Junior. This account is about 'Alī Maulā Senior.

[43] Shaikh Jalāl Tabrīzī has been referred to above. He was one of the outstanding *khalīfahs* of Shaikh Shihābuddīn 'Umar Suhrawardī.

wealth. Command me to go, give a part of it to my wife and offer the rest to you to do as you please with it.' The Shaikh replied, 'Good. Go and get it', and he had a meal prepared and a robe provided. 'Alī Maulā went to his wife and said, 'I have become a Musalmān. Will you also agree to be converted?' His wife abused him and refused to change her religion. Thereupon 'Alī Maulā collected all the cash he had and gave a part of it to his wife, saying, 'Now you are to me as a mother and a sister. We shall have no other relationship with each other'. Then he took all his money to the Shaikh, who asked him to keep it and give away as much as he was asked to. 'Alī Maulā kept it in trust, and the Shaikh began to give of it to people who came to him. To each he gave twelve *jītals* or more, but not less than twelve, till all but eleven *jītals* was spent. 'Alī Maulā wondered what he would do if the Shaikh asked him to give the next person twelve *jītals*. Just then a man came. The Shaikh said, ''Alī, give this man what you have', and did not ask again for any money to be given. Soon after, the Shaikh decided to leave Badāyūn, and all the people came out to bid him farewell. The Shaikh would walk a few steps, express his regrets and ask people to return. This continued till all had gone, only 'Alī Maulā was left. The Shaikh asked him also to go back, but 'Alī said, 'Where shall I go? You have made me your devotee; you have made me mad about yourself. I am now a prisoner in your hands. Where shall I go now?' The Shaikh walked rapidly the distance of a bow-shot then waited till 'Alī Maulā walked up to him. Again he asked 'Alī Maulā to return and got the same reply. The Shaikh walked ahead again, stopped for 'Alī Maulā and asked him to go back. 'Alī Maulā gave the same reply. Then the Shaikh said, 'I leave the people of Badāyūn under your protection'. 'Alī Maulā went back weeping.

> ''Alī Maulā possessed no knowledge. He performed the five daily prayers, and that was all. The *shaikhs* and the *'ulamā* and all the other people renounced the world at his hands and kissed his feet. There were apparent in him signs of his having been acceptable (to God), and whoever looked at him knew him at once as a man of God.' When the young Niẓāmuddīn had completed his studies under Maulānā 'Alā'uddīn 'Uṣūlī, and the turban was to be tied round his head, the Maulānā invited 'Alī Maulā to be present. First they had a meal together, then the turban was tied, Niẓāmuddīn placing his head on the feet of his master each time the turban was wound once round his head. When 'Alī Maulā saw this, he said, 'O Maulānā, this (young man) will be a big fellow . . . a really great fellow'. The Maulānā wanted to know why he thought so. 'For two reasons,' he replied. 'When a man has had

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the turban tied round his head, he does not fall at any one's feet, but this young man has done it. In addition, there is no silk in his turban. It is simple cotton'[44].

'Alī Maulā's conversion, as given in this account, was no doubt sudden, but it is not incredible. His remaining illiterate and confining his devotions to the normal prayers five times a day makes the story plausible. There have been village *ṣūfīs* of this kind[45] whose simplicity, directness and sincerity created a deep impression. 'Alī Maulā is not credited with any miracles; nor would he have given any instruction. He must have looked and talked like one who had found favour with God because of his perfect peace of mind. And people would have desired that his peace of mind should be communicated to them.

A somewhat similar character was Maulānā Waḥīd, a description of whom is given in the *Jawāmi'al-Kalim*[46]. The Maulānā lived in Jahāṇpanāh, an irregularly populated area between the old city around the Quṭub Mīnār, Kilōkhrī and 'Alā'uddīn's new city of Sīrī, 'above the bridge on the Ḥauḍ of Qutlugh Khān', in what was probably a small courtyard containing a thatched hut and an awning stretched on poles. He had an old woman servant called Lakhman, and two friends, one a grocer (*baqqāl*) and the other a tailor. He was a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Farīduddīn, and therefore whenever Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn paid a visit to Shaikh Quṭubuddīn's tomb, he came to see Maulānā Waḥīd also. This made the Maulānā very happy. If Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn wanted a *samā'*, the Maulānā asked his servant to cook lots of *khichrī*[46] and bring oil. He himself went and called his two friends and a singer or two. Then the door of the courtyard was closed and the small group gave themselves up to the ecstasies of the *samā'*.

Once, when Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn came to see him, he was not at home, and the servant directed the Shaikh to a grove at an unfrequented spot. There he found the Maulānā engaged in *samā'* with his two friends. The Maulānā was annoyed. He said that now his retreat had been discovered, and because of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, *maliks* and *khāns* and princes would begin coming there. He complained that the Shaikh had spoilt his mood. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn offered sincere apologies, promised not to visit the Maulānā at this spot again and begged him to continue the *samā'*. The Maulānā was pleased and permitted the Shaikh to join the *samā'*.

Here again we have a *ṣūfī* who is very genuine in spirit, but

[44] *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 191-3.
[45] The author knew of one some thirty years ago.
[46] P. 341.
[47] Rice and one of the pulses cooked together.

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without any remarkable spiritual aspirations. Freedom from worldly care, from distracting social relationships and the ecstasy of the *samā'* were enough for him. People would not come to him with problems and requests or expect him to perform acts of *karāmah*, and he would be thankful to God for having bestowed on him peace and anonymity.

These are some types of *ṣūfīs* who, in spite of their spiritual discipline and concentration on devotions, were normal in their behaviour. They are all to be classed as *aṣḥāb-i-saḥw*. A few types of the *aṣḥāb-i-sukr* and of those who sought to conceal their existence as well as their spiritual powers will now be mentioned. The information about them is naturally very meagre. They accepted no disciples, though people may have flocked to them because of their reputation for *karāmah*. They do not seem to have had any teachers or spiritual guides.

Among the first of this type mentioned in the early literature was Shaikh Badhnī. *Badhnī* is a clay water-pot with a short spout, and according to one account, the Shaikh was given this name when he was taken prisoner by the Mongols and gave all his thirsty fellow-prisoners water to drink from his *badhnī* without needing to refill it. What we know definitely about him is that he spent his days and nights in a particular mosque at Kaithal, constantly engaged in prayer. He wore no clothes, but no action seems to have been taken to induce or force him to cover his nakedness, though large numbers of people came to venerate him, among them also *dānishmands*, or worldly *'ulamā*. He is stated to have asked a group of these whether prayers would be offered in heaven also. On being told that praying would not be necessary there, he said he would not like to be in such a heaven. Shaikh Badhnī may have asked the question for the sake of information; it is more probable that he desired the *dānishmands* to realize that prayer was not an act of obedience but a means of union with God.

It is curious that while there was constant and sometimes violent discussion about the permissibility of *samā'*, Shaikh Badhnī's nudity was not even objected to in principle by the official *'ulamā*. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn did not approve of it, but said nothing against it. His guess that Shaikh Badhnī did not have a *pīr* was an indication that the Shaikh's nudity was a matter of personal choice and could not become part of a discipline. Shaikh Badhnī had, therefore, no predecessors and no successors. He must have impressed people so much that they were willing to believe that his nudity did not offend against the dignity of the mosque, just as his actual or feigned ignorance had nothing to do with his spirituality or acceptability to God.

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Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn refers in his usual respectful manner to a *ṣūfī*, Khwājah Aḥmad Ma'shūq, who did not offer the obligatory prayers, and proved through a *karāmah* that he was exempt. He once went into a river at the height of the cold season and asked God to tell him what his status was. He did not come out of the water till a voice from heaven assured him that while other *ṣūfīs* were the lovers, he was the beloved (*ma' shūq*) of God[48]. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn also relates the story of Shaikh Maḥmūd Nakhkhāsī of Badāyūn. A scholar went and asked him for spiritual guidance. He said, 'Get some wine'. A servant was sent for it and it was placed before him. Then he asked the scholar to come with him to the river-bank, and when they got there, he desired the scholar to pour out the wine and offer it to him. After he had got drunk, he said, 'Let us take off our clothes and bathe'. When they had bathed, he said, 'It is necessary for you to cultivate five habits. First, keep your door open, so that anyone who wishes can enter your house; secondly, greet everyone with a smile, a welcoming look and a happy face; thirdly, give unstintingly of whatever you have, whether it is much or little; fourthly, do not be a burden on others; and fifthly, offer your body for carrying the burden of others'[49].

In the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* we have somewhat more detailed references to two persons, one a eunuch called Rāḥat, and the other an anonymous *dervish* who used to lie on a terrace behind a mosque with nothing but a dirty rag to cover his nakedness. In both instances, the spiritual powers of the *ṣūfī* are sharply contrasted with the miserably ineffective knowledge and spirituality of the academic theologian.

The first story is about Maulānā Badruddīn Samarqandī. People thought very highly of him, and on one occasion, when there was a drought in Delhi, they told him that the next day there would be a congregation to offer prayers for rain (*namāz-i-istisqa'*), and requested him to lead the prayers. The Maulānā, of course, had to agree, but he was distressed because he feared that the prayers would produce no result. As time passed, his nervousness increased, and he was prepared for the most desperate remedies when a man came and told him that he could take him to a person who, if he desired, could without doubt cause rain to fall. To safeguard his own reputation, the Maulānā agreed upon a rendezvous in the evening after dark, and he was taken to the door of a eunuch called Rāḥat. The eunuch was naturally astonished to see the Maulānā come to his door as a suppliant. When he was told about the purpose of the Maulānā's visit, he had water for ablutions and his prayer-carpet brought to him. After offering prayers, he asked the Maulānā to offer

[48] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 462.
[49] *Akhbār al-Akhyar*, p. 281.

the drought prayers in the usual form the next day. Then he tore off a small piece from the corner of his garment, and told the Maulānā that if the prayers had no effect, he should squeeze the bit of cloth that he was giving to him, and pray to God to send rain in order to vindicate the sanctity of the eunuch Rāḥat's garment, which had been worn only in His name and for His sake. The Maulānā reverently put the bit of cloth in his turban and took leave.

The next day he offered drought prayers with the congregation. Nothing happened. Then he squeezed the cloth given to him by Rāḥat, repeating what he had been told. No sooner had he done this than clouds began to gather and there was a heavy shower[50]. 'What do you say now?' Shaikh Gēsū-darāz asked his audience after relating this story. 'What sort of a "eunuch" was Rāḥat? He was one of those near to God . . . one cannot depend on outward appearance'[51].

The other story is of a tailor of Delhi who had joined a class of Maulānā Burhānuddīn Balkhī. One day, while his fellow-students were discussing a question among themselves, he innocently repeated the remark of a *dervish* he used to visit. He was immediately taken to task, 'as is the custom among the *dānishmands*, who tell the *ṣūfīs*, "First become Muslims, then present your credentials (for participation in a learned discussion). You are ignorant, irreligious, atheistic, and so on" '. The tailor went to the *dervish*, and as innocently as he had made his remark among the *dānishmands*, he related to the *dervish* what had happened at the discussion. The *dervish* was angry. He clapped his hands and said, 'We have closed the Maulānā's book'. The next day, when the Maulānā came to give instruction, he found that he had lost all his knowledge. He used his intelligence to get out of the predicament that morning, but he felt distracted and fearful at the thought of losing both his prestige and his occupation. Ultimately the tailor, guessing what had happened, went to the *dervish*, offered apologies on behalf of the Maulānā, and asked for permission to bring him to his presence. When he had got the permission, he went to the Maulānā and suggested what could be done to restore his knowledge.

The Maulānā was not in a position to stand on his dignity. He agreed to present himself before the *dervish* and take a piece of paper along with him in his sleeve, as the tailor had advised him to do. The tailor then took him to the terrace behind a mosque where the

[50] It has been the practice in Delhi to appeal to the eunuchs to pray for rain when there is severe drought. The eunuchs go out beating drums to the 'Īdgāh or some open place, lie in the sun, and threaten to lie there till it rains.

[51] P. 229.

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dervish used to lie. When they got there, the tailor offered humble apologies on behalf of the Maulānā and pleaded for him. The *dervish*, without getting up, looked sternly at the Maulānā, upbraided him for his insolence and then asked him to offer the prayers usually offered when praying to God for a favour. This did not restore the Maulānā's knowledge, and the *dervish* made him admit that he was totally ignorant. Then he asked the Maulānā to produce the paper he had brought with him, took a bit of dust off his body and rubbed it on the paper. The Maulānā recovered the knowledge he had lost. The comment of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz, after he had narrated this, was that the paths which appear irregular but in reality are not so cannot be enumerated[52].

The outlook of the *ṣūfīs* was broad enough for them to recognize without inhibitions and reservations the possibility of there being many paths to God. 'God has a different secret, a different mystery, a different relationship with each person.'[53] The insistence of the 'orthodox' *ṣūfīs* on conformity with the *sharī'ah* was in reality an assertion of the general importance of discipline and system in the spiritual life. There is, in fact, so much to be said for this point of view that we cannot consider it a prejudice if the *aṣḥāb-i-ṣaḥw* were in theory considered superior to the *aṣḥāb-i-sukr*. This theory was modified whenever necessary in the interest of a fair judgement and also in the interest of ethical standards[54]. To the category of the *aṣḥāb-i-sukr* belonged the *aṣḥāb-i-nāz*, those to whom God showed such indulgence that He overlooked all that they said and did and was Himself anxious to please them. Such persons were, according to Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, superior to those who sought the favour of God through obedience and service[55]. But the significance of the *aṣḥāb-i-nāz* is a mere tradition because so little is known about them.

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Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn died in 1325, and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who succeeded him at Delhi, in 1356. One has the feeling that a spiritual

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-2.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

[54] As in the story Shaikh Gēsū-darāz relates of an ascetic who was asked by God in a dream to save himself from an imminent visitation by fire upon the city in which he lived by taking refuge in a courtesan's house. He went to the courtesan's house and took refuge there, although the courtesan told him about the immoral life she was leading and the disreputable and disorderly visitors she had. The city was destroyed by fire but the house of the courtesan was saved. The ascetic found out that the reason for this mercy being shown was that the courtesan once gave food and shelter to a mangy dog which had been driven away by everyone. *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 238.

[55] *Khair al-Majālis*, p. 189.

empire, founded towards the end of the twelfth century, rose in power and grandeur, reaching its zenith in the personality of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awliyā. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn held this empire together for over thirty years, and succeeded in saving it from disintegration and external attack. But the great spiritual urge, the upheaval which throws up lofty mountains is gone. After passing through foothills we emerge upon a plain, which stretches as far as the eye can see, a hillock here and there only emphasizing its flatness.

This feeling is confirmed by the fact that Shaikh Naṣīruddīn ordered the symbols of *khilāfah*, or succession, which had been given to him by his *pīr*, to be buried with him. He did not pass them on to any *khalīfah* of his own. But still this feeling cannot be easily justified. Like jurisprudence and religious knowledge, ṣūfism had brought over all its Turkish, Iranian and Arab traditions into India. No fresh approach to spiritual life was attempted. There is also no evidence of such large-scale attempts at converting Hindūs as would necessitate a restatement of Islāmic beliefs to suit the mentality and spiritual traditions of the Hindūs.

There are no paradoxical, epigrammatic or startling utterances to match the boldness of *ṣūfīs* like Shaikh Abul Ḥasan Khurqānī. If we find a staleness in the *ṣūfīs* and ṣūfism of the later half of the fourteenth century, it should not strike us as something new. At least we cannot prove it was not there from the beginning.

We cannot justify the impression of a spiritual decline having taken place by pointing to the course of political events. The Chishtīs, who are our main index of rise and decline, did not associate themselves with the administration. They rejected rulers like Balban and 'Alā'uddīn. Muḥammad Tughlaq tried to break up the main group of the *khalīfahs* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn by insisting on sending them where he thought their presence was most required. But he did not succeed entirely either in dispersing them or in associating them with his policy. His death, the disintegration of his empire and the rule of a weak king like Fīrūz Tughlaq at Delhi should have brought relief and stimulated rather than suppressed or discouraged spiritual effort. If there was loss of fervour among the *ṣūfīs*, it was not because of changes in the political situation.

On the other hand, as already stated, the ideas of the *ṣūfīs* were being rapidly disseminated. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn quotes a statement of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn that he had not written anything himself, nor had any of the Chishtī *shaikhs* before him, and books purporting to be collections of their sayings were apocryphal. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn must have said so because a large number of books were in circulation which misrepresented both outstanding *ṣūfīs* and ṣūfism itself. But if these books contained incredible accounts of *karāmah*

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and other apocryphal material, it means that they did not have any historical or spiritual value. They must, however, have been read by a large number of people; they should have led to all kinds of spiritual experiments and adventures. But the responses seem to have less of ardour and depth; like the *shaikhs*, the *murīds* appear to have shrunk as personalities. A study of the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* may help us to understand the transformation that had come about between 1325 and 1400, between the time of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz.

We can discount such statements in the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* as 'Now-a-days he also is (considered) a *dervish* who desires that people should come to him and watches other *dervishes* to see what great men go to them'[56]. They are found also in the *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, written almost three hundred years earlier[57]. 'People have been getting further away from the light of the Faith. Now they see it (only) as a lamp in the distance'[58] is also not a new note in religious pessimism. 'People are now born Muslims. They inherit Islām as a set of fixed habits and customs' is a realistic appraisal of the situation, holding out the promise of reform. 'Escape from the snares of Satan is not possible without a *pīr*'[59] indicates, however, a subtle change of attitude: following the Path is not an act of courage or a spiritual resolve but a means of escape. 'The obligation to obey the *pīr* is on the same level as the obligation to obey God'[61] is an exaggerated form of 'A command of the Prophet'[61]. But the statement attributed to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn that anyone who had offered *bai'ah* to him, or seen him or even passed through Ghiyāthpūr would be saved makes nonsense of ṣūfism[62]. The *pīr* is no longer an exalted personality guiding the disciple but a magical symbol producing results without any effort on the part of the *murīd*. If we connect this with the fact that succession to the *pīr* was becoming hereditary, and sons of *shaikhs* were assuming the position of successors without realizing that their fathers had undergone spiritual discipline[63] it will be apparent that the *khānqāh* had become a vested interest, and spirituality, to put it bluntly, was becoming a source of fame and worldly influence, an honourable profession. 'No one in the world

[56] P. 342.
[57] Tr. by R. A. Nicholson, Luzac and Co., London, 1936. P. 7.
[58] P. 33.
[59] P. 80.
[60] P. 173.
[61] Fawā'id al-Fuwād, p. 231.
[62] Shaikh Farīduddīn is reported to have gone even further and extended the assurance of salvation to those who were in any way connected with those who were connected with him by *bai'ah*. *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, pp. 314-5.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

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has to bear as much sorrow as I have to', Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn had said, 'because so many people come to me and relate their tales of grief and suffering. These are like a heavy burden on my mind and I feel hurt and irritated. It must be a strange heart, indeed, which is not affected by the sorrows of a brother Muslim'. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz is by contrast almost complacent. Discussing the question of the *ṣūfī's* intercourse with the world, he says it is best for the *ṣūfī* to remain aloof. Since he cannot cut himself off from it completely, he should concern himself with it only so far as he can do any good. He should be like the bird drinking water from a stream, which takes up water in its beak but keeps its body dry[64]. A more serious change in attitude is to be deduced from the concept of the fortunate person. Hunger and deprivation are no longer symbolic of God's favour. According to Shaikh Gēsū-darāz, the most fortunate man is he who is endowed with the good things of the world and also has a pure mind turned towards God. He is the measure by which self-restraint has to be judged, for the *dervish* who has nothing can only knock his head against a wall to suppress his desires[65].

That a subtle change had come over *ṣūfīs* and ṣūfism cannot be denied. But it would be rash to conclude from any one aspect of the evidence that there was a general decline. Political authority, orthodoxy and ṣūfism established themselves at about the same time, and an adjustment had to be made that would allow each of the three adequate freedom and room for expansion. The Chishtī *ṣūfīs* rejected the religious and moral claims of both the state and of orthodoxy, and had to fight for their position. This battle was not lost but won in the time of Muḥammad Tughlaq. He may have thrown Shaikh Shihābuddīn *Ḥaq-gō* from the wall of his palace fort, but he could only gnash his teeth in impotent anger when Shaikh Fakhruddīn Zarrādī told him not to behave like an angry beast[66].

He had to force his favours upon Shaikh Quṭubuddīn Munawwar of Hānṣī[67], and it appears from the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* that he had fixed an allowance of 2000 tankās a month for Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who put all the money away without utilizing it[68], as too polluted to be spent in the *khānqāh*. These matters could not have been kept secret, and people would not have been slow to attribute the losses and misfortunes of Muḥammad Tughlaq to his ill-treatment of the *'ulamā* and the *shaikhs*. If Fīrūz Tughlaq was meek and mild, it was

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[65] P. 268.
[66] See above, p. 140.
[67] See above, p. 140.
[68] P. 106.

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not only because of his disposition. He had to behave like one vanquished in an encounter[69]. The state and the ruler, however, had not been really deprived of any of the advantages of wealth and power, and the *ṣūfīs*, having won the tug-of-war, could not prevent themselves from losing their balance and falling backwards unless they established some kind of a relationship with the state. The result was an alliance based on goodwill and an acceptance of each other's position by the *ṣūfīs* and the rulers. The *ṣūfīs* could not be spiritually militant because they were no longer faced with a challenge, and if they ceased to be militant they would inevitably appear to have lost in enthusiasm.

As the 'orthodox' *ṣūfīs*, that is, the only *ṣūfīs* who formulated their views, insisted on conformity with the *sharī'ah*, they did not come into acute conflict with the orthodox except on the question of the *samā'*, and here they carried the day against the orthodox. The moral and spiritual standards of the *ṣūfīs* were indubitably higher, and once the rulers had changed their attitude, the official *'ulamā* were no longer in a position to take any action. Ṣūfism had, therefore, no opponent to contend with.

We have already expressed the view that orthodoxy failed to fulfil the functions of an integrating force. The *ṣūfīs*, because of their individualistic approach, their organization in separate Orders and *khānqāhs* could not act as a unifying force for the whole Muslim community. But the *murīds* of one *silsilah* did develop among themselves the relationship of a fraternity, the *murīds* of a particular *shaikh* holding most closely together. In the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* we have an instance of two *murīds* of the same *shaikh* regarding their loyalty to this brotherhood as overriding other obligations and loyalties. Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn issued orders for the eyes of a *mutaṣarrif*[70] at Jālōr to be put out because of offences he was alleged to have committed. The officer who took this order to Jālōr was a *murīd* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, and he found that the *mutaṣarrif* was also a *murīd*. He refused to deliver the order and declared that he was ready to suffer the consequences. Finally, as the *mutaṣarrif* also was

[69] 'Sulṭān Fīrūz once came to pay his respects to the Khwājah (i.e. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh Dehli). The Khwājah was taking his mid-day rest. Maulānā Zain al-'Ābidīn was in his house. (The sulṭān) came. He stood in the courtyard of the *khānqāh*. It was raining, and he remained standing in the rain till Maulānā Zain al-'Ābidīn had come from his house to inform the Shaikh and the Shaikh had got up, performed his ablutions and offered the *dogānah* prayers. The sulṭān became annoyed and said to Tatār Khan, 'We are not the king. It is he who is the king'. When the Shaikh had come down from the upper storey (to receive him), he did not go upstairs with him. A carpet was spread where he was. He sat for a while and then left. He was annoyed and displeased when he left.' *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 219.

[70] An officer of the audit department.

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anxious that a brother *murīd* should not get into trouble, they agreed to proceed together to Delhi and present themselves before the Sulṭān[71]. Not many *murīds* would have been willing to take such risks for each other's sake, but common allegiance to a *shaikh* was perhaps more of an integrating force than *taqlīd*.

Finally, if ṣūfism appears to have lost in spiritual intensity, it became more missionary in character. One aspect of its missionary activity was the attempt to propagate higher religious and spiritual standards. This is well represented by the correspondence of Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn Siwālī, the works of Khwājah Ḍiyā' Nakhshabī, the *Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Sharafuddīn Yaḥya Munērī and the works of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz[72]. The other aspect is the appraisal, assimilation or rejection of the spiritual and moral values of Hinduism. Visits of yōgīs are mentioned in accounts of Shaikh Farīduddīn and Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. The latter, in particular, had a very open mind. He believed, apparently, that the acceptance of Islām by the Hindūs should be a by-product of the spiritual endeavour and self-discipline of the Muslims, and on one occasion he definitely refused to say anything to induce the brother of a convert to accept Islām[73]. We do not know whether Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn studied the principles or the practice of yōgā or Hindū metaphysics. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn may have studied them. He refers to Sidhs, the gurus of the yōgīs, who take a fixed number of breaths; he says that the *ṣūfī* must keep an eye on his breathing, and must be able to hold his breath in order to concentrate. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz went much further. 'Many times their learned men have come to me, challenging and disputing . . . I have read their Sanskrit book[74] and know their mythology. I first spoke to them about it. They accepted freely what I told them as being their belief. Then I began to expound my own faith. I put one argument against another; then I gave the preference. They were astonished; they wept; they prostrated themselves before me as they do when worshipping their idols. I said, "This is useless. We had agreed that the beliefs of the party which appeared to be in the right should be adopted by the other party". One said, "I have a wife and

[71] Pp. 136-7.

[72] Shaikh Sharafuddīn Yahyā Munērī belonged to the Firdausī Order, established by Shaikh Najmuddīn Kubrā. He was a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Najībuddīn Firdausī, a contemporary of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awliyā.

[73] A slave who had accepted Islām brought his brother to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and requested him to use his spiritual influence to induce his brother to accept Islām. This brought tears to the Shaikh's eyes. 'Nothing anyone can say will change the hearts of these people. But if this person is placed in the company of a virtuous man, it is possible that he may become a Muslim because of his (ennobling) influence'. *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 182.

[74] Most probably the *Mahābhārata*.

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child and a household to support". Another said, "What am I to do? Our elders have followed this (belief); what was (good) for them is also (good) for us"[75].

Shaikh Gēsū-darāz made the dissemination of the teachings of ṣūfism an important part of his activity. The *Mi'rāj al-'Āshiqīn*, one of his pamphlets, is still extant and widely studied as the first (or second) book written in Urdū. It begins with a statement about five forms of existence, which are equated with five stages of knowledge and spiritual insight, and further with the body, the *nafs*, the heart, the soul and the essence (*dhāt*). Love is the means of union with God, and is, therefore, given the highest importance. What is meant by Love is explained with the help of references to the Prophet's *mi'rāj*. The qualities and attributes of a real Muslim are then given, and the pamphlet ends with an enumeration of the virtues of a *pīr*, without whom moral and spiritual fulfilment cannot be attained. According to our standards, this is not a simple or easily intelligible presentation of ṣūfism, but we might perhaps have felt differently if we had before us the whole series of pamphlets to which the *Mi'rāj al-'Āshiqīn* belongs.

Though there can be no question that Shaikh Gēsū-darāz was typically orthodox in the sharp distinction he makes between Muslim and Hindū beliefs, there are some indications also of his mind being responsive to other influences. "The human seed is just the same. Prophets, saints, *abdāls*, *autāds* are from this one seed; so are *kāfirs*, hypocrites, thieves, *chandāls*, *dhērs*"[76]. The metaphysical approach of the *Mi'rāj al-'Āshiqīn* can be traced to other influences also, but Shaikh Gēsū-darāz has used the terms *nirgun* (without attributes or qualities) and *sagun* (possessing attributes or qualities) which have obviously been taken from Hindū philosophy. They point to an infiltration of ideas and concepts that could ultimately lead to an assimilation without Muslim thought losing its character or identity.

By the end of the fourteenth century, though the philosophic concepts of Hinduism had evoked little or no response in the Muslim mind, the devotional character of Hindī songs and the appeal which the language made to the *ṣūfīs* brought Hindūs and Muslims closer together than any other influence. Several instances are recorded in the *Siyar al-Awliyā* and the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* in which Hindī songs and refrains brought a feeling of ecstasy. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn was very sensitive to the music of words and to the tender charm of the Hindī of those days. Sometimes Hindī songs moved him where

[75] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, pp. 118-19.
[76] *Dhērs* are outcastes, like the *chandāls*. *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 70.

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Persian *ghazals* left him cold. In the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*[77], there is a discussion which indicates that by the time of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz Indian music had been studied and Hindī devotional songs had come to occupy a very significant position in the *samā'*. We shall discuss later the development of poetry and music. Here it should suffice to point out that the *ṣūfīs* made an intuitive choice of the common ground of spirituality between Hindūs and Muslims and opened the way for a mutual appreciation of aesthetic values which could revolutionize the whole cultural attitude of the Muslims.

[77] Pp. 131, 178.

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CHAPTER VIII

POETS AND WRITERS

The evolution of a language that served as a means of communication between the Arabs and the Turks and the population of those areas of India where they settled began as soon as relations of any kind had been established. We find from the notices of Arab travellers and writers of the ninth and tenth centuries that the languages spoken in Sindh were Arabic and Sindhī[1]. The extension of Turkish rule to the north-west Panjāb promoted the knowledge of languages in the same way as it provided opportunities for exchange of goods. One of the earliest works in Hindī, the *Prithvī Rāj Rāsō* of Chand Bardā'ī, contains such Arabic and Persian words as *salām* (greetings), *bādshāh* (king), *parwardigār* (God, the nourisher), *dunyā* (the world), *mast* (drunk), *khalk* (*khalq*,, the creatures of God), *pagām* (*paighām*, message), *pharmān* (*farmān*, command, decree, order). On the other side, Minūchihrī, a poet of Sulṭān Mas'ūd's (1030-1040) court, and the *ṣūfī* poet, Ḥakīm Sanā'ī (d.*c.* 1050), who is not known to have ever come to India, have used Hindī words in their verses[2].

An analysis of any of the Indian languages spoken by the Indian Muslims reveals a mixture of Arabic, Persian and Turkish in varying degrees, with the particular Indian language as the grammatical base and the major ingredient. The theological terms everywhere are Arabic; Turkish was never a literary language in India; its words will be found, if at all, among the names of articles of household use, food and dress. Persian was used for centuries as the official language in all parts of the country which came under Muslim rule, and was also the common literary medium for almost the whole of north India and a large part of the Deccan. Its contribution is generally the largest; and having the same origin as Sanskrit, its assimilation was also easier.

The official language of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire was Persian, and service under the government required a

[1] *Hindustān 'Ārabōn kī Naẓar meṇ*. Dār al-Muṣannifīn, A'ẓamgarh, 1960. Pp. 375, 386.

[2] Ḥāmid Ḥasan Qādirī, *Dāstān-i-Tārīkh-i-Urdū*. L. N. Agarwāl, Āgrā, 1941. Pp. 10-11.

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knowledge of Persian. But it was never assumed that there must be a common language, and no attempt was made to impose Persian universally. The general tendency, on the contrary, was towards a free admixture of local terms with Persian. An even stronger tendency was to accept positively and wholeheartedly the diverse languages spoken. Indian Muslims could never hope to speak or write Arabic like the Arabs or Persian like the Iranians, and while most recognized their disadvantage and endeavoured to come up to the standard of the *ahl-i-zabān*, or those for whom the particular language was the mother tongue, there were not a few who looked upon their local or regional language as something equally worthy of cultivation with Arabic or Persian. Till the end of the nineteenth century, the Indian Muslims did not believe that they all had the same language because they were Muslims, and even then it was not possible to advocate an Indian Muslim language except as a policy or an ideal. This policy or ideal is inconsistent both with reality and with historical fact. The principal medium of literary expression has, in fact, been a matter of choice for the Indian Muslims and, as we shall see, they have exercised this right of choice without prejudices and inhibitions.

The orthodox Indian Muslim theologian has never been concerned with the development of language. He learnt Arabic in order to study the basic theological texts and he studied these texts in order to be able to declare the law. The acceptance of the principle of *taqlīd* made it risky for him to indulge in independent criticism or exegesis; his knowledge consisted in the number of authorities he could quote. The administrator was interested only in conveying the orders of the government in the most intelligible form. He was not interested in the chasteness or the refinement of the language used. Merchants and their customers used the jargon of the bazar; their interest was limited to the particular bargain. Every bazar must have had its own jargon, but the bazar of the royal camp enjoyed preeminence, and set the fashion for proper conversation between buyer and seller. The merchants of this bazar had to pay visits to all their well-to-do customers to display and discuss their goods, and the merchant with the most elegant manners was sure to have the largest and most distinguished clientele. The most well-known singers, dancers, musicians, buffoons had their establishments in this bazar, and those who visited or employed them would have had to excel in the art of conversation and in their appreciation of the fine arts. The colloquial language of the royal camp thus inevitably set the standard of conversational style. On the other hand, all those who possessed literary aptitude and, above all, the poets looked to the sulṭān for patronage, and they could attract the attention of the sulṭān only if one or more

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of the important *amīrs* became interested in them. The royal camp was thus also the public which adjudged poetic and literary talent. Apart from the royal camp the only institution in which language played a significant part was the *khānqāh* of the *ṣūfī*. As ṣūfism gradually acquired a missionary character the *khānqāh* became a centre for experiments in the dissemination of *ṣūfī* doctrines through the language most widely understood among the common people. It was also the *ṣūfī* who divested language of that artificiality and tendency to extravagance which it was bound to acquire in the hands of courtiers. What was more, he imbibed and revealed the spirit and the musical values of the language of the common people.

There is direct evidence of Shaikh Farīd having spoken Hindī[3], though couplets embodied in the Sikh scripture, the *Granth Ṣāḥib*, and others which are attributed to him were not his compositions. We have no instance of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn using Hindī, but it is stated both in the *Siyar al-Awlīyā* and in the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* that he loved to hear Hindī songs in the *samā'*. Once the *qawwāl* (singer) began a Hindī song. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn was so deeply affected that he began to dance. The exaltation remained even when the *samā'* had been formally concluded, and the *qawwāls*, sensing his mood, began to sing it again[4]. On another occasion, when Persian verses failed to make any impression, the *qawwāl*, Ḥasan Maimandī, began a Hindī song, and roused the emotions of the audience. On yet another occasion, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn became ecstatic on hearing a refrain sung by a man drawing water from a well[5]. This is something much more significant than the mere use of a language. It means that the sounds of Hindī words affected Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn in the same way as the words of a mother-tongue, and the taste for Hindī songs was so common that singers learnt them and were able to display in them the same virtuosity as in Persian *ghazals*. By the end of the century, Hindī appeared to be threatening to take the first place in the estimation of the connoisseurs. 'Someone among those present asked why the *ṣūfīs* were more fond of Hindvī than of (Persian) melodies, *ghazals* and songs. He (Shaikh Gēsū-darāz) said, 'Each one of these has a quality peculiar to it. But Hindī is generally soft and touching; its expression is more direct, and in keeping with this quality, the melody is also soft and clear, and stimulates a feeling of despondency, meekness and humility. . . . There are

[3] The correct philological connotation of Hindī or Hindvī is a matter of controversy. Perhaps the philologist would give a different name to the dialect spoken in southern Panjāb or by Shaikh Farīd. All that concerns us here is the name given to it in the *ṣūfī* literature of the period. Sentences spoken by Shaikh Farīd are given in the *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 367.

[4] *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 512.

[5] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 150.

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sentiments that can be expressed only in Persian; in the same way, some things can be expressed only in Arabic. There is a tenderness, a delicacy, a suggestiveness which finds expression only in Hindī. This can be realized by experience'[6]. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz seems to have accepted the myth, certainly not Muslim in its origin, that music has been derived from the movement of the heavens. 'Wise men have reached that far. They saw (the heavens), they heard (the music); they returned (to the earth) and established it here. They laid down laws for it and invented flutes and (other) musical instruments'[7].

We now know that a *ṣūfī*, Shaikh 'Abdur Raḥmān, had settled in Ajmēr even before Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn, and was the author of the first work in Hindī. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn did not write anything himself, but permitted two of his *murīds*, the poets Ḥasan Sijzī and Amīr Khusrau, to record some of his conversations. These were published, and soon attained a wide circulation. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn also allowed his *murīd*, Hamīd Shā'ir Qalandar, to take notes of his conversations for some time. This was clearly a method of disseminating his ideas. Later, as we have seen, Shaikh Gēsū-darāz and Shaikh Sharafuddīn Yaḥyá Munērī took up the dissemination of *ṣūfī* doctrines directly and deliberately. It is now believed that the first work written in a language that is recognizable as Urdū was a treatise on ṣūfism and morals by Khwājah Sayyid Ashraf Jahāṇgīr Samnānī (1289-1405). It was published in 1308[8]. But it is Amīr Khusrau who has acquired a legendary character in the history of language, music and culture, and any discussion of poetry and writing must begin with him.

Amīr Khusrau was born at Patiyālī in 1253. His father, Amīr Saifuddīn Maḥmūd, was an upright but not very educated army officer, and was very anxious to give his sons the best education. Khusrau, however, was not amenable to academic discipline. His genius for versification unfolded itself very early, and no one was more conscious of it than Khusrau himself. He would accept no guidance; he did not follow the general rule and submit his compositions to someone with knowledge of literature and a mature taste for purposes of revision and correction. He learnt much, but he learnt it himself in a haphazard, unsystematic way, relying upon his native intelligence and not on accepted method. After the death

[6] *Ibid.*, Pp. 172-3.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[8] Khwājah Samnānī was an outstanding *ṣūfī* and a prolific writer. He came to India with Shaikh 'Alī Hamadānī, joined the circle of *murīds* of Shaikh 'Alā'ul Ḥaqq, and settled at Kichhauchha, in Oudh. His life and work has not been discussed in detail because he was not born in India, and does not come within our definition of an Indian Muslim.

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of his father, he came under the guardianship of his maternal grandfather, 'Imādul Mulk, whose extravagance was notorious. But he occupied a very important post in the army, being in charge of recruitment and review, and thus persons of all kinds and from different parts of the country came to him. Khusrau had opportunities of meeting them too, and this intercourse enabled him to learn, as he says, 'several' languages. Living with 'Imādul Mulk also gave him the opportunity of learning the art of pleasing people, of becoming accomplished as a courtier. When 'Imādul Mulk died, Khusrau was a fairly well-known young poet of about eighteen years, with all the artfulness and charm that was required to make him a courtier and fired with the ambition to earn fame as a poet.

Khusrau first attached himself to Kishlī Khān, Sulṭān Balban's nephew. Then he was for over five years a courtier of Prince Muḥammad, Balban's heir-apparent. When Prince Muḥammad was killed in a Mongol attack, he went to Oudh for some time, but was soon back in Kaiqubād's court. With Jalāluddīn's accession he became a favourite, appearing every evening at the old Sulṭān's parties with freshly composed poems. That the old Sulṭān doted upon him did not make any difference when 'Alā'uddīn murdered him and marched upon Delhi. Khusrau composed a congratulatory ode in anticipation of 'Alā'uddīn's triumphal entry into the capital and accession to the throne. 'Alā'uddīn was not only illiterate but as utterly indifferent to literature as he was to piety and learning. Khusrau was given a post at the court and a fixed salary. The Sulṭān, however, exacted full service in return for what he gave, and Khusrau was a dissatisfied but helpless man so long as 'Alā'uddīn ruled. He had become a *murīd* and a favourite of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn as early as 1272, about the time 'Imādul Mulk died. 'Alā'uddīn's eldest son, Khiḍr Khān, was also a great admirer of the Shaikh, and this common allegiance brought the two close together. Khiḍr Khān's life ended very tragically, but Khusrau had no scruples about accepting Quṭbuddīn Mubārak, the brother and murderer of Khiḍr Khān, as the subject of his panegyrics. Very soon after his accession, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak developed an intense dislike for Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, and the Shaikh might have lost his life if the Sulṭān had not been murdered by his favourite, Khusrau Khān. Amīr Khusrau tided over this crisis also, and enjoyed welcome and honour at the court of Ghiyāthuddīn Tughlaq. This sulṭān also was somewhat hostile to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn who, he thought, had done wrong in distributing among the poor money from the public treasury sent to him obviously as a bribe by the impostor, Khusrau Khān. There was disagreement over the question of the legality of the *samā'*, in which the Sulṭān seemed to be inclined to the view-point of the Shaikh's opponents. Finally,

the Sulṭān suspected that the Shaikh was involved in a conspiracy against him, and untoward things might have happened if the Sulṭān, on his way back from Bengal, had not perished in an accident just outside Delhi. Amīr Khusrau, again, because of his charm, maintained his relations both with the Sulṭān and the Shaikh. But the Shaikh's death in 1325 seemed to deprive him of all zest for life, and he died a few months after.

Amīr Khusrau survived six sulṭāns and four revolutions. It is impossible not to be impressed by his adaptability to circumstances. But there is something unedifying in this very adaptability, in this art of making talent work independently of conscience, or of detaching the conscience completely from persons and events. True, once Amīr Khusrau had become a courtier and something of a favourite, it was impossible for him to remain neutral when there was a change of government. He could not even take refuge in obscurity, because that also would have been considered suspicious. But then one cannot escape the feeling that the poetic compositions of a person who changed with the times as spontaneously as Khusrau did cannot be distinguished by any sincerity. If Khusrau had written only panegyrics and odes of praise, he could have been dismissed as a sycophant. Such compositions form, however, only a fraction of his work. He expected favours to be shown to him because he was a poet, not a panegyrist, and as a poet he could lay claim to a remarkable versatility and competence. He was not the creature of kings and noblemen, even though in his actions he did not give evidence of that pride or that consistency of conduct which are associated with self-respect. He was a victim of compartmentalized thinking, a phenomenon which we shall have occasion to refer to later also. It was a psychological disposition that made consistency of conduct and opinion irrelevant. We may overlook the fact that Khusrau congratulated the murderer of his patron and admirer on the ground that duplicity and murder were taken for granted in the struggle for political power. But it hurts us even now to see that when he wanted to praise India and the Hindūs he could be discerning as well as generous, while his numerous references to the Hindūs in a political context betray a fanaticism, arrogance and crudity that is difficult to explain away.

In one of his historical *mathnawīs*, the *Nuh Sipahr*, or the Nine Skies, written to celebrate the glories of Quṭubuddīn Mubārak's reign, Khusrau has devoted a whole section, the Third Sky, to the description and praise of India and the Indians. He likens India to Paradise, and shows that because of its fruits, flowers and climate it is better than any other country. The Indians excel in science and wisdom; they are the inventors of numerals, the creators of the

Panchatantra, the great book of worldly wisdom that has been translated into Persian, Turkish, Arabic and Darī; their music surpasses the music of any other country. . . . Also, 'there is a thing of which you cannot deny the reality—the dying of Hindūs out of devotion either with sword or with fire, a woman dying willingly for her dead (husband) and a man for an idol or a rich man. This is, no doubt, forbidden in Islām, but behold what a noble thing it is! If the law permitted it, many a blessed one would die eagerly like that . . .'[9]. Quite the contrary attitude is revealed in his *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* and in other works, so that one does not feel quite sure about the genuineness of his sentiments.

In allowing prejudices to pervert his judgement and write things in bad taste, Khusrau only showed that he belonged to his age. There were other weaknesses also which he shared with his contemporaries. Most significant was the desire to imitate what were considered the classics, to rival if not surpass the acknowledged masters in their particular style. Khāqānī, Anwarī, Niẓāmī Ganjwī, Ẓahīr Fāryābī and a now forgotten poet, Kamāl Iṣfahānī provided the challenge to Khusrau's genius, and instead of being himself and disdaining to imitate others, he wasted much of his energy trying to improve upon what they had written. A whole series of his works, the *Khamsa*, was a deliberate attempt to take up Niẓāmī Ganjwī's themes and show that he could write better. Many of his *qaṣīdahs* (odes) closely follow those of Khāqānī. Critics of his day would put the original and the imitation side by side, and discuss both to adjudge which was better. Critics of our days would dismiss the imitation as an act of impudence or senseless vanity.

Khusrau was not only a prolific writer, he composed verses with an amazing ease and speed. These are qualities that are creditable in a craftsman, and one cannot avoid feeling that Khusrau was a craftsman rather than an artist. His originality is seen in minor details, such as that of writing the component parts of a *mathnawī* in different metres. One looks in vain for a really striking metaphor or poetic image, or for epigrammatic expression. He is at his best when he is most artless, when he discards his ornate style and becomes simple and direct. There are many of his *ghazals* where he has, perhaps inadvertently, achieved excellence by writing down what came into his mind. But posterity has not been mistaken in making his *ghazals* the stock-in-trade of the *qawwāl* and in going into raptures when they are sung. Sa'dī and Ḥāfiẓ and many others after them were undoubtedly greater poets than Khusrau. But they wrote for lovers of poetry and literature, for aesthetes. Khusrau, on the

[9] *Life and Works of Amīr Khusrau*. By Dr Waḥīd Mirzā. Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1935. Pp. 182-6.

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other hand, was not only a poet but an accomplished musician and singer as well; he composed his verses with the *samā'* in mind, intending that they should be sung. His imagination, in spite of being placed in the strait jacket of contemporary taste, went far beyond that of his contemporaries. 'I am an Indian Turk', he said proudly, 'my answers are in Hindwī'. They were, alas, too few, and scholars are still doubtful about the Hindī verses attributed to him being really his. He confirmed the fact that he had written in Hindvī. 'I have offered to my friends bits of Hindī poetry also, but I content myself here only with the mention of this fact'[10]. He would not have been a pioneer in this field, as other poets are reputed to have preceded him. But what is attributed to him by tradition is fascinating, and fully accords with the picture we form from his life and writings of his wide interests, lively wit and amazing competence.

One of his verses, written in what may be called amorous admiration of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awliyā, has happily lent itself to translation.

> I see the rapture's frozen glow
> Thy countenance illumine.
> Where didst thou pass the night, my friend?
> Where drank thy eyes this wine
> That still within their depths they hold
> A lingering, drowsy ecstasy?

Amīr Khusrau represents the writer interested primarily in the literary quality of his production, and not even incidentally in passing judgements. A young contemporary of his, Ḍiyā'uddīn Baranī, held a point of view diametrically opposed to this. For him judgement was all-important, and it would be difficult to name a book written with the aim to record events which contains more or severer judgements than Ḍiyā'uddīn Baranī's *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī*. His *Fatāwā'-i-Jahāndārī*, a manual of politics, is even more intransigeant. But the attitude of the 'worldly'—not secular—Indian Muslims of this period has not found more incisive and more typical expression in the works of any other author.

Baranī was born in the 1280's, and died about 1360. His adult life covered the reigns of four sulṭāns, two of them among the most important in the history of the Sultanate. Professor Ḥabīb is of the view that 'Baranī belonged to a family the noble origin of which could not be questioned, and he was brought up to believe that aristocratic birth was the primary fact for the social order. But the failure of his class and his personal frustrations had embittered his

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

feelings'[11]. Baranī's bitterness is too obvious to be denied; he never disguised his feeling of personal frustration. But did his bitterness and frustration express the failure of a class, of an aristocracy by birth? It would be difficult to give a straight answer. The Indian Muslims as a political community comprised Muslims, Hindūs, Turks, Tājīks. They were distinct units of which the Turks, Tājīks and Hindūs wished to maintain their separate identities, and the 'Muslims' consisted of an unassorted mass of (a) converted professional communities and tribes or sections of tribes, (b) converts who had only a personal or family status, and (c) persons of mixed origin. The sulṭāns, as we have seen, aimed at creating a ruling class on the basis of loyalty and efficiency, and even under a sulṭān like Balban who, according to Baranī, regarded noble birth as an indispensable qualification for government service, loyalty to the sovereign would have to take precedence over loyalty to race and class. Balban had no scruples about destroying persons and families whom he suspected of disloyalty. Even if Baranī had the purest Turkish blood in his veins, he would not have thought himself entitled to employment and honour because he belonged to a class, but because his family and he had distinguished themselves through loyalty and efficient service of a ruling dynasty. Baranī's views force us to consider him as the archetype of snobbishness. 'Blue blood' takes itself for granted. The aristocrat does not abuse the low-born; he dismisses them and their claims and aspirations with a frown. In fact, Baranī's frustration has a far deeper significance; it does not express the feelings of race and class, but the floundering of the Indian Muslim mind in its search for political, intellectual and moral security.

Baranī begins his *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī* from the accession of Balban in 1266, and concludes his record of events with the accession of Fīrūz Tughlaq in 1351. He is not precise; his desire to judge often interferes with his presentation of a problem. Generally, he narrates events in a chronological order, but he also attempts to interpret policies, and he gives the impression that he regards his function to be more that of an interpreter than a chronicler. His style is vigorous, often vehement. He is more anxious to educate than he is to inform. If he had been a moralist, he could not have found a better storehouse of good and bad examples than the history of the Sultanate, and he could, in the end, have felt satisfied that he had found means of instruction and guidance for every conceivable person and situation. If he had been a cynic, he would have found excellent opportunities for turning men and ideas upside down. If he had possessed the courtier's mentality, he could have easily selected all

[11] M. Ḥabīb, *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*. Kitāb Maḥal, Allahabad. P. i.

that there was to praise in the sulṭāns, and left those who were so inclined to discover for themselves what there was on the other side of the medal. But Baranī was not a moralist, a cynic or a flatterer. He was intensely concerned with the maintenance and welfare of the Sultanate, and being of a fanatical type of mind, he became rhetorical and violent too easily and too often. It was intensity of feeling that created a turmoil in his mind, for he found little to inspire confidence and hope. There were basic contradictions between the *sharī'ah* and the state which Baranī could not resolve in his own mind and, therefore, could not expect the sulṭāns to resolve in their policy. His attachment to orthodoxy was almost as fanatical as his attachment to the state, and if he ever revised what he had written, he would have felt exasperated to find that in trying to give the *sharī'ah* and the state their rightful position, he had made the contradictions and conflicts of principle more glaring. He is almost masochistic in his determination not to spare himself or those of whom he writes. He misses no opportunity of abusing the Hindūs, but if all that he says about them is put in the balance against what he says of the Muslims and their tendency to relapse into vicious living as soon as they get the chance, his attitude towards the Hindūs will appear mild indeed.

For Baranī does not seem to have had much confidence in the Muslims, whether sulṭāns or *amīrs*. He could not have it, in view of what he knew and what he has stated, frankly and unsparingly. The sulṭāns were guilty of excesses; and though Baranī does not consider any form of government other than monarchical rule possible, there is no sulṭān who seems, in his opinion, to have followed a really wise policy. Balban was needlessly cruel, Kaiqubād a lecher, Jalāluddīn Khiljī senile and impotent, 'Alā'uddīn illiterate and irreligious, Quṭubuddīn Mubārak a pervert, Muḥammad Tughlaq pig-headed and ruthless. And none of them was willing to listen to wise counsel. 'Alā'uddīn was, indeed, saved by 'Alā'ul Mulk and other advisers, but then he put himself completely in the hands of Malik Kāfūr. Muḥammad Tughlaq had no less an adviser than Baranī himself, but he turned a deaf ear to all words of wisdom. To what could Baranī turn except the ideal of noble birth, of an upbringing inspired by a healthy sense of moral values, of a conduct in which strength was combined with wisdom and ambition disciplined by virtue? It is unfortunate, almost pitiable, that even among men of noble birth he does not seem to have found anyone whom he could wholeheartedly admire. He could do no more than create a myth of aristocratic blood and fall madly in love with it.

And what of moral and spiritual self-confidence? Baranī believed, like all Muslims, in the surpassing excellence of the Muslim way of

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life, the ideal standards of which were represented by the Prophet and his Companions. But these standards were in fact not regarded as attainable, and by implication not binding, by those responsible for administration and political guidance in Baranī's time. On the other hand, Baranī was aware that persons possessing great social influence were seeking to realize the values of the Islāmic way of life. He attributes to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn an almost revolutionary change in the religious attitude of the people. But these were the low-born, the mass, whom Baranī did not regard as of any consequence, and whose leadership, such as it was, he desired to be kept away from all positions of authority and influence. This was not all. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn disowned the state and all that its policies implied. He refused to meet Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn, refused to advise him, refused to express any opinion in political matters. In fact, he thought the sorrows of the common people were his only concern. If this was the attitude of morally the most sensitive and spiritually the most exalted person of the age, what was the moral status of the Sultanate?

Baranī showed all reverence for Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, and must have attended his assemblies fairly frequently, for he is mentioned among the pious ones in the *ṣūfī* chronicles. But for him the mystic life and the spiritual values of the *ṣūfī* were a category by themselves; they could not and did not need to be harmonized with political values. Baranī, like many others, was a victim of compartmentalized thinking. Though he bowed in reverence before the spiritual, he was a man of the world, deriving more consolation from complaints of having been unfairly treated by fate than from the thought of giving up the world entirely and following the *ṣūfī* path. We could even say he was a hypocrite, and while he pretended to believe in piety and abstinence, his imagination enjoyed sinfulness, such as the singing and dancing of beautiful women which it was possible to behold in Sulṭān Jalāluddīn's private parties. That was where he would have liked to be—but not liked to be seen. Baranī had all the zest for living typical of the Indian Muslim, and all the willingness to condemn what he enjoyed. The virtues of family life, of companionship between man and woman, of educated and disciplined desire were beyond his horizon. He could find no middle path, intellectually or morally, between the self-denial of the *ṣūfī* and the self-indulgence of the sinner. He might have achieved some happiness if he had been a poet; but the limit of his capacity was spicy and violent prose.

As a historian, however, Baranī must be ranked very high. The political events and activities with which he deals have for him a supreme significance. He is sometimes vulgar and abusive, but there is an honesty in him which forces him to tell the whole truth,

without partiality and without disguise. And as he suffered from knowing too much, he forces his reader to share his thoughts, his anger and his disgust.

The Sultanate whose history Barani relates was supposed to be the creation of believers in the true religion. This inclines us to ignore the fact that these true believers also possessed a superior competence in what was immediately most important—military science. One of the earliest and most instructive works, in what for this period would count as an example of technical literature, is the *Ādāb al-Ḥarb wa'l Shujā'at,* by Muḥammad Manṣūr Sa'īd[12]. Unfortunately, we know very little of the author beyond the fact that he was born at Lahore and passed his life in north-west India. He belongs to the earliest period, when Iletmish was sulṭān and the Delhi Sultanate was being consolidated. His book does not refer to contemporary events to any significant degree, but Manṣūr Sa'īd must have had the idea of formulating some kind of a policy at the back of his mind, and felt that the success of the policy would depend on a sound grasp of military science.

The *Ādāb* devotes the first four chapters to the character and duties of the sulṭān, the fifth to ministers and the sixth to relations with foreign states. The soundness of its approach is proved by a discussion on how to avoid war. Then it goes on to deal with horses, arms and armour of the cavalry, muster of the army, encampment and guarding of camps, night attacks, ambuscades, choice of the field of battle, battle order, engaging the enemy and religious and ethical questions relating to warfare. Methods of conducting a siege are also considered. Towards the end there is reference to gymnastic exercises, but those are for the individual soldier. Mass drilling does not seem to have been practised and is, therefore, not described.

There are principles laid down in the book which flatly contradict all that the court historians and eulogists of this period say about the numerical strength of the armies of the sulṭāns. 'Nothing can be achieved with an army that is a concourse of men from here and there'[13]. 'If the army is large and collected from here and there, they (the soldiers) will not be anxious about (the successful conclusion of) the war, they will be anxious about their own lives, false rumours can spread easily and create confusion, the different parts of the army do not know each other and are not concerned with each other's fate'[14]. 'What can be done with 4000 men united and of one kind (*jins*) cannot be done with 400,000 ill-assorted men'. 'An army of

[12] Ms. in British Museum. The author has consulted a rotograph copy at the Muslim University, Aligarh.

[13] F. 146 (b).

[14] F. 147 (b).

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more than 12,000 is difficult to control and direct'[15]. The numerical strength of an effective fighting force has thus been scientifically determined: the ideal strength of an army is 4000; a force less than that will be too small. Nothing has defeated a solid army of 12000[16], but if it is more than that it will be difficult to employ the tactics required in the various situations in which a commander might find himself. Though it is an obligation to fight for the Muslims and for Islām, war does not cease to be policy or the army an instrument that is to be used for specific ends in a manner that entails least loss of life. 'Avoid seeking a victory by the shedding of blood. Seeking victory by means of artifice and resourcefulness is better'[17].

The general methods which the *Ādāb* recommends and emphasizes are swiftness and secrecy of movement for scouts[18], silence and watchfulness for one's safety[19], keeping the enemy guessing as to one's own plans and finding out what the enemy has in mind[20], not offering battle except in case of assured superiority and advantage, and even then using all artifices to deceive and overawe the enemy[21]. If the enemy has to be engaged, the whole of one's force should not be brought into play at once; a part should rest while the other fights[22]. If the number of men is plentiful, 4000 selected men may be posted on a height to cover a retreat or deal with a surprise attack[23]. The proper use of scouts at all times is essential. They are the eyes and ears of the army, and the best possible arrangement should be made to convey to the commander all that they discover[24]. The commander should possess complete authority, for nothing can be worse than a divided command[25].

Manṣūr Sa'id has considered the question of the encampment of the army, and given plans of the 'Ajamī (meaning probably Sassanian), Khitā'ī, Hindū, Roman and Dhu'l Qarnain (Alexandrian?) methods. He considers the Khitā'ī arrangement most defective, and in a surprisingly unscientific spirit says that 'it is unseemly that Muslims should follow the methods of unbelievers'. He also discusses the question of the order of battle, classifying the different orders as *maṣāf-i-parwīn* (that followed by Turkī Khān and Arkī Khān in the

[15] F. 147 (a).
[16] F. 115(a).
[17] F. 177(a).
[18] F. 115(a).
[19] F. 145(a)
[20] F. 176(b)
[21] F. 145(a) and (b).
[22] F. 146(a).
[23] F. 133(b) and 134(a).
[24] F. 115(a) and (b).
[25] F. 189(a).

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battle of Haitlam or Baitlam), *maṣāf-i-hilālī* (of the shape of the new moon, the Iranian), the *maṣaf-i-dāl* (of the shape of the letter *dāl*, the Grecian battle order used against the Persians), the battle order of the Humairites and that of the ancient Indians. It would be interesting to compare these statements with information which we have from other sources. Most probably it would be found that Manṣūr Sa'īd has repeated traditional and inaccurate accounts. Nevertheless it is obvious that he had a concept of military science in which historical examples and the need to adapt strategy to circumstances both had their proper place. In the discussion of the actual fighting, he says that combatants should advance and challenge the enemy, but the decisive contest could take the form of the mass attacks of the Turkish or the Tājīk (guerilla) style, adopted by the Sassanians, with archers on the right, javelin throwers on the left and men with (various kinds of maces) swords and battle-axes in the centre.

The *Ādāb* enumerates and evaluates the various weapons used, beginning with the bow and arrow, and the types of arrow-heads to be employed against the different kinds of armour and shields and in the siege of forts. It declares the Indian swords to be the sharpest because of the particular method of smelting used. It mentions *katārah*, a sword of a shape used only in India; a short, two-pronged spear, which it calls *zūpin*; and the lance with a bamboo shaft used in India, 'than which no lance is better'. Other weapons listed are *qalāchurī*, the curved Turkish sword, *nāchakh* and *dashnā*, types of battle-axes, *shīl*, a kind of spear, *pīl-kash*, a weapon used by foot-soldiers and the *nīm-nezah*, or short spear. Like the horseman, the horse was also to be protected by armour.

There was no system of drilling, as we have already stated. The accomplishments of the soldier were based on individual aptitude and training. He had, of course, to be expert in swordsmanship, in the use of other weapons and in riding. He was expected to know, besides, boxing, wrestling, scratching with nails and throwing dust in the opponent's face[26]. Any horseman who is to fight must be able to look after his saddle and bridle and weapons. If anything goes wrong while he is on active service, it should not render him helpless. 'A horseman must be such that if his saddle and bridle are taken to pieces he should be able to put them together and set them right again. Anyone who cannot do this should not aspire to be a horseman; he should become a weaver instead'[27].

The *Ādāb* makes suggestions also in regard to provisions and transport. Before engaging in a battle, every soldier must be given

[26] F. 180(a) ff.
[27] F. 130(b).

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some cash. He must always have with him food sufficient for a day, a vessel for washing, and a nose-bag of hay and oats. In large armies there should be a camel between five to ten horsemen or ten to twenty foot-soldiers, in order to carry their necessary equipment. In no case should soldiers be overloaded with provisions and articles of use[28].

Although an extremely useful work, the *Ādāb* does not seem to have been widely or continuously studied. The maxim, 'Let there be no haste'[29] is all too easily forgotten, and the defeats of Shihābuddīn Muḥammad Ghōrī and his commanders were due to neglect of the principles and methods which they knew and usually practised. Perhaps the worst development, from the point of view of tactics and strategy, was the use of elephants. The *Ādāb* quotes an example of an archer of Bukhārā who shattered the plate protecting an elephant's forehead with his arrow, which pierced the animal's head. The elephant took to flight and trampled down those behind it[30]. This may have been intended as an object lesson. The *Ādāb* does not discuss the value of elephants in attack or defence. It was also obvious that dependence on elephants would deprive the army of mobility, one of the qualities essential for success. The elephant, none the less, was too imposing to be ignored, and no military scientist could be enthusiastic about the consequences.

[28] F. 144(a).
[29] F. 145(a).
[30] F. 100(a).

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CHAPTER IX

ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS

I

THE house of worship and the tomb first exercised the imagination and the creative power of man, and thus architecture became a means of expressing beliefs, hopes and aspirations. Civic structures —the forum, the amphitheatre, the baths, the large tenement houses —appear at the height of civilization in Greek and Roman cities, in Alexandria, Byzantium and Baghdad, but the house of worship and the tomb remain predominant till the beginning of the modern age. The palace also was invested with majesty and a certain degree of sanctity; it represented the splendour, the power and the remoteness of the ruler, but could never acquire a status other than the worldly, and therefore never succeeded in drawing upon resources other than those of mundane art and precious structural and ornamental material. The tomb was a symbol unifying life, death and eternity; primitive beliefs associated with kingship gave the royal tomb a mysterious significance, which survived in the subconscious even when the king was recognized as being a mortal, like other men. Similarly, the aura surrounding a house of worship persisted even in the days when worship had dropped many—and, in Islām, all—of its magical rituals. In Indian Muslim architecture our interest centres perforce around the mosque and the mausoleum, though palaces, towers, gateways and civic structures also have great aesthetic and architectural value.

For Muslims any place that is clean, clear and even enough can be a place of worship. But congregational prayers held five times a day in all weather conditions made a structure of some kind necessary, and mosques began to be built from the earliest times. As the number of Muslims grew and it was believed that the Muslim community would ultimately embrace all mankind, any mosque that was meant to possess political and social significance had to be planned so as to express the idea of an infinity of worshippers and an infinity of space. The tomb of the ruler had no magical or religious import. It represented rather the movement of the mind away from literal adherence to the *sharī'ah*. But it was the expression of personality,

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of a force which the community needed to maintain its self-confidence in a world of conflicts, where much depends on imaginative, powerful leadership. The mausoleum was generally planned within a garden, where man must work in co-operation with nature and depend on the climate and the physical environment. It also had gateways as a distinctive feature, and these aligned it as an idea with palace forts, cities, houses. The two basic architectural forms, the mosque and the mausoleum, thus led to and defined each other, and constituted an organic whole in which the concepts of truth, beauty and power were realized. The building of *madrasahs*, bridges, tanks, large wells, *sarā'es* where travellers could find food and shelter for the night, and of hospitals was considered an act of piety, and it was a way by which rulers as well as private philanthropists sought to earn the goodwill of God and mankind.

Many attempts have been made to isolate the values embodied in Indian Muslim architecture. The general tendency has been to relate it with the architecture of the Muslim world on the one hand and with Buddhist and Hindū architecture on the other, and to prove that it is a synthesis. In this synthesis some have emphasized the non-Indian Muslim element and some the non-Muslim Indian. In fact, this architecture is above all things positively Indian Muslim, with its own 'personality', its own expression; its debt to Muslim and Indian traditions is no greater and no less than that of a literary style to philology. Architecture is the field in which the Indian Muslim mind has operated with complete freedom, and revealed itself most fully. The means it has used to attain this end are all incidental; we should not allow them to divert our attention from the reality. This reality does not need to be discovered. It is the first thing that strikes us, and would remain impressed upon our mind if we did not attempt to force it to accord with preconceived notions.

Indian architecture represents the evolution of the wood worker's, the stonemason's and the sculptor's art. Buddhist *chaityās* and *vihāras*, unless chiselled out of the rock, belong to the general architectural tradition, but when the Muslims settled in India, *chaityās* and *vihāras* were no longer being made, and the tradition they embodied was dormant, if not dead. The temples that were built in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries were inspired by an attitude towards the divine which was the exact antithesis of the Muslim attitude. Whatever the size of the temple—and many were planned magnificently—the central feature was the image, the idol, and this was always placed in a small dark chamber, called the *vimān*. The approach to the idol was personal; the relationship between the idol and the worshipper was personal. The courtyard,

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the tank, the *mandapa*, where the worshippers gathered before going into the *vimān*, were all adjuncts that added to the grandeur of the temple but did not at all affect the basic principle of individual worship. There could, therefore, be no reconciliation between this principle and the congregational prayer of the Muslims, no adjustment or harmonization of basic ideas. The temple, if built according to traditional concepts, would be a multitude of sculptural forms on the outside, meant to condition the mind so that it could concentrate on worship of the idol inside, where there was no sculpture, no architectural device, nothing that would remind the worshipper of the external world. Everything was done to stimulate introspection. The mosque was beauty without mystery, as obvious as the universe, compelling the mind to bow in reverence before a power and a majesty that could not be ignored. The proportions of the mosque derived from the concept of all mankind together worshipping one God; the number of worshippers who were expected to congregate thus became an integral part of the plan. The mausoleum also was completely unrelated to any Indian tradition. If these premises are granted, no undue significance should be attached to the ornamental details in which a resemblance to or even a continuation of Indian tradition is found. To connect the Indian Muslim arch with the Buddhist window, which was a sculptured reproduction of an original pattern in bamboo is to misinterpret both historical and architectural development. The trabeate arch of the Hindū temple appears in Muslim monuments of the earliest period[1]. It could not serve the structural functions of the arch, and is used as a variation and an ornament.

The continuity of beliefs, ideas, aesthetic principles among the Turks and other Muslims who came and settled in India makes it more difficult, however, to isolate the specifically Indian Muslim element in the architecture of this and later periods. But all the same there is something distinctive about it. This may be due to the influence of the natural environment, to the Indian stone-masons who were the only skilled labour available, to a deliberate choice of Indian ornamental motifs. But more than anything else, the distinctiveness is to be attributed to a subconscious reaction of the Indian Muslim mind to the political, social and moral problems that it had to face. Indian Muslim monuments embody a degree of self-assertion that is not evident either in the political or the religious

[1] Corbelled arches are found in the earliest structures, such as the screen (*maqṣūrah*) of the *Qūwwatul Islām* Mosque of the Quṭub ensemble. They are technically imperfect, however satisfying they may be aesthetically. The earliest roofs also reveal a rather makeshift arrangement, the technical faults of which were soon overcome.

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sphere, and an aspiration to supremacy over men and circumstances that is but palely reflected in other fields of activity.

We have stated already in other contexts the basic contradictions from which the Indian Muslim mind suffered. It found release from them in poetry and in architecture. So long as Persian was the language of poetry, freedom consisted in the use of poetic symbols and images—the beloved, the *sāqī*, wine, intoxication, the unity of existence, the self—to evade the obligation to live and think in accordance with a uniform, stereotyped pattern, but the embarrassment of Persian being a foreign language remained. It was only with the adoption of Indian languages, Hindī, Bengālī, Sindhī, Gujarātī, and finally by the creation of Urdū that the Indian Muslim could shake himself free from a tradition which did not accord with his environment. In architecture he was free from the beginning, free from fear and hatred, from law and custom, from the conflicts of ideals and interests. There were no limits fixed except those of his own aptitude and means, and the nature and availability of structural material.

Architecture was already a developed art when the Turks came to India. The use of concrete and mortar was known and the techniques of building true arches and domes had been evolved. The problems that faced the earliest Indian Muslim builders were to discover suitable structural material, master-builders possessing the necessary experience and skill, and styles in which patterns known to them could be adapted to the physical environment in India. It was most unfortunate that, in spite of religious prohibitions, temples were pulled down to provide building material. This vandalism cannot be excused even if we admit the fact that stone of suitable quality was scarce, and that it was almost normal practice to use the material of old buildings to construct new ones. As regards master-builders, there would have been no great scarcity, but the Indian master-builders were primarily stone-masons, and it must have taken several generations for them to acquire the skills and the proficiency necessary to utilize fully the new architectural techniques. The adaptation of these techniques to the physical environment is the determining factor in our estimate of the aesthetic quality of any particular specimen of the architect's art, because it was in the forms of the adaptation that Indian Muslim culture found its expression.

The Qūwwatul Islām Mosque was the first of its kind to be built. Circumstances made it necessary to improvize, and it looks more like a political revolution than a place of worship, more like a demonstration of how force can be used to achieve the transformation of attitudes and the shift of emphasis in religious values than a confident

expression of these values themselves. It was built out of the material of temples, and if additions had not been made later and the structure had survived in its original form, the harshness of the change would have been more obvious. Quṭubuddīn Ībak, the conqueror of Delhi, also built a *mīnār* that was probably intended to serve as a *mādhnah*, a lofty place from which to give the call for prayer. But the structure inevitably became a political and cultural symbol, with a name that could associate it with the builder or with the aspirations of the community to which he belonged. As an idea, therefore, the Quṭub Mīnār is essentially Muslim, but those who gave physical form to the idea were steeped in a particular tradition of soft and sensuous beauty. The *Mīnār* has nothing assertive, hardly anything positively masculine about it. Its mass is cleverly concealed by variations in the surface of its several storeys, by calligraphic and floral bands across its tapering length, by balconies supported on clusters of miniature arches; its slenderness creates an illusion of impressive height, while the pyramidal distribution of weight gives it great stability. The two topmost storeys of the *Mīnār* as it stands now are, however, later additions, and do not harmonize with the original plan. Quṭubuddīn, who had both taste and ambition as a builder, also added a *maqṣūrah*, or facade, to the covered part of the Qūwwatul Islām Mosque. This consisted of a tall, central arch, 45 feet high, flanked by low arches, two on each side, of which the central and two flanking arches have survived. The proportions of the tall arch have a fascinating quality; it seems that some harmony has been achieved here that is beyond plan and design, an accident of art that draws us towards worlds unknown. The surface of the facade is a blending of Qurā'nic inscriptions, floral devices and mouldings in a sculptural harmony, so that the word of God seems to have been revealed to man by clinging creepers and whispering leaves. The inspiration that guided the workmen here is not in evidence anywhere else. The Aṛhā'ī Din kā Jhōpṛā, a mosque built later by Quṭubuddīn at Ajmēr, which was planned on a grand scale and not improvized like the Qūwwatul Islām, has all the characteristics of an architectural creation. Quṭubuddīn's successor, Iletmish, added a *maqṣūrah* to the Ajmer mosque, built a large mosque at Badāyūn, along with an *'Idgāh* and a tank, and a lofty gateway at Nāgōr. But his most artistic achievement was his own mausoleum, which has lost its dome, and probably also its external facing. Its inner surface is completely covered with inscriptions, in the Hindū tradition of avoiding empty spaces, and the variety of scripts, of which the *kūfic* has almost the quality of geometrical designs, shows that architecture had not yet released itself from the enfolding arms of sculpture. The mausoleum built by Iletmish for his

son, Nāṣiruddīn, has a touch of the fortress in its external appearance, while inside it is all gracefulness and peace. Originally, there was probably a pavilion, surrounded by a courtyard which had the delicate suggestion of a mosque on the western side. Of the pavilion only the floor remains, and this serves as the roof for the chamber in which the tomb lies, the entrance to this chamber being through a stairway on the south side of the platform. The intention to create an atmosphere of sorrow and mystery has been successfully achieved.

By the time of 'Alā'uddin Khiljī, though nothing of much significance had been built, Indian Muslim architecture had come under the influence of Seljuk techniques and styles. Of this the 'Alā'ī Darwāzah of the Quṭub mosque is the most beautiful and convincing evidence. It stands very near the *Mīnār* on the south side of the mosque enclosure, which had been considerably enlarged to accommodate the vast congregation of the capital. There seems to have been no underlying conception of harmony and proportions in this enormous composition, and perhaps even when it was built the 'Alā'ī Darwāzah suggested a sparkling diamond set in a steel ring. But the 'Alā'ī Darwāzah still holds the gaze in such a way that all other considerations seem irrelevant.

As a structure it consists of a domed chamber, 36 feet side and 60 feet high, pierced by four arched entrances, three of which are alike, the fourth, leading into the mosque courtyard, being entirely different in style. The arches of the outer entrances are tall, slender and exceedingly well-proportioned. They are of the kind known as pointed horse-shoe or 'keel', which does not appear in any of the later buildings. They are outlined by a band of inscriptions carved in white marble, and on the under side there is a 'fringe' of spear-heads. Carved and moulded nook-shafts support the arch, and the whole is contained within a rectangular frame-work of repeating patterns and inscriptions in marble. There is a skilful balance in the coloured plastic scheme; the surfaces are most intricately carved, but do not fatigue the eye. Many of the borders and repeating designs are clearly of Indian origin, and the doorway leading into the courtyard has an arch of a semi-circular shape, with a shallow trefoil forming its outline, quite 'contrary to Islāmic convention'[2]. Though it is obviously an adaptation of different styles, the 'Alā'ī Darwāzah possesses all the individuality and uniqueness of an original conception.

In a sense this gateway symbolizes a situation in which strength and self-confidence create the desire for delicate forms of beauty. Ghiyāthuddīn Tughlaq's tomb is the reaction to circumstances in

[2] Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, (The Islāmic Period). Taraporevala, Bombay, 1943. Pp. 14-15.

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which the whole social and political fabric seemed about to disintegrate. Any leaning towards the delicate, the graceful, even the ornamental would have seemed like exposing civilization to attack, or like undermining the spiritual organization of security. Tughlaq's tomb of red sandstone and marble is built on an irregularly shaped outcrop of rock, and there is no attempt at any kind of symmetry in the enclosing wall. The gateway into the enclosure is a death-trap, but also an outstanding example of a severely beautiful structure. The mausoleum is a square, with walls having a batter of 75°, and a large dome as the apex of the pyramid. It is an expression of power, rough-hewn out of the elements of life. In the three doorways, the forms of the arch and the beam have both been employed, and the finial of the dome follows the typically Indian vase and 'melon' motif. Percy Brown has pointed to certain defects—the projection of the central bays framing the archways is weak, the extension of these above the parapet is timid, the merlons are small, the decorative rectangular marble panels are mean and featureless[3]. But attention to these details may have modified the effect of the stark combination of pyramid and dome, and produced a building somewhat more beautiful but much less robust.

There are monuments of the Tughlaq period which present variations and departures and experiments. Mosques like the Khirkī and the Kalān Masjid are distinguished by their lofty plinths and fortress-like appearance, the palace-fort of Fīrūz, known as the Kōṯla Fīrūz Shāh, set the pattern for the palaces of later days, the tomb of Khān-i-Jahān Tiliṇgānī has interesting structural features. But Fīrūz Tughlaq, in spite of his architectural ambitions, was too poor in human and material resources to achieve anything remarkable, and after his death the kingdom disintegrated. Apart from a few monuments, Amīr Tīmūr destroyed the buildings in the four cities of Delhi, and nothing of much architectural merit was built till the time of Shēr Shāh Sūrī (1540-1545).

The decline of the Sultanate was followed by the rise of provincial styles in Bengal, Jaunpūr, Mālwā, Gujarāt and the Deccan. The tombs of Shāh Bahā'ul Ḥaqq (d. 1262) and Shāh Rukn-i-'Ālam (d. *c.* 1320) in Multān, however, are evidences of a style which, though technically provincial, influenced the imperial style of Delhi in several ways[4]. These tombs are imposing monuments, with many original features, but they did not establish a tradition, and there does not seem to have been a local or regional style for the Muslim architects to assimilate. All the other provincial styles had their own character and course of development.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

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In Bengal, the climate, the natural environment, the building material and indigenous styles had a profound effect on Muslim architecture. Its evolution can be divided into three periods, the first extending from 1200 to 1340, the second from 1340 to 1430, and the third from 1442 to 1576. Very little of the first period has survived. A mosque at Tribēni, barely recognizable, seems to have served as the model for the Ādīnah mosque, built in 1364 by Sikandar Shāh (1358-1389); there are also the remains of a tower which appears to have been inspired by the Quṭub Mīnār. Most of the surviving monuments which possess architectural significance are found at Pāndua and Gaur and belong to the second and third periods.

The Ādīnah mosque at Pāndua, seventeen miles north of Gaur, and the Dākhil Darwāzah, at Gaur, built in 1465, are monuments that exhibit the greatest degree of imagination and architectural ambition. The Ādīnah mosque was built for a large congregation, and even in its present ruined state gives an impression of great power. The numerous arches of the interior, radiating from low, massive pillars, are unique. There is a striking elegance in the *miḥrābs*, in whose ornamentation the architects have drawn upon many concepts and traditions of beauty. The Dākhil Darwāzah, built of brick, is magnificent in conception, its enormous mass—75 feet across, 113 feet from front to back, 60 feet in height—broken up by angular and circular projections and recesses, with prominent, rounded and tapering bastions at the corners, and pylon-like buttresses on each side of the frontage connected by an archway and providing a deep and wide portico for the arched opening. The alternation of the surfaces of the Dākhil Darwāzah's facade produces remarkable contrasts of light and shade, and in the ornamentation a harmony has been achieved between the classic and the romantic.

The Sōnā Masjid (Golden Mosque), the Chhōṭā (Small) Sōnā Masjid, and the Nathū or Dancing Girl Mosque of Gaur and the Golden Mosque of Pāndua are all distinctive creations, in which grace and delicacy of ornamentation and lightness of touch were aimed at rather than size. The Qadam Rasūl Mosque and Fatḥ Khān's tomb are extremely significant as attempts to introduce into brick and stone structures the curved roof of the bamboo hut.

The Sharqī dynasty of Jaunpūr has quite outstanding architectural achievements to its credit, the principal ones being the Aṭālā Dēvī Mosque, built in 1408, and the Jāmi' Masjid, built in 1470. The obvious implication of the name Āṭālā Dēvī is that it took the place of a temple, but its design has many original features. The *maqṣūrah* and the central dome seem to exude power and an almost barbaric splendour. The exterior rear wall on the west side, which in most mosques presents a monotonous, flat surface, has here been

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broken up by three bold projections, corresponding with the three principal compartments of the interior. Each of these projections has been further emphasized by tapering turrets, a large replica of which is attached to the two main angles of the building itself. The whole arrangement of the different features gives the mosque an appearance of compactness, of beauty realized in strength. The Jāmi' Masjid is a reproduction of the Atālā Dēvī on a larger scale, but with the notable difference that on each side of the central hall there is, in place of a transept, a hall 50 feet long, 40 feet broad and 45 feet high, the roof of which is a wide, pointed vault supported on the walls and leaving the interior completely open.

A feature found in most Jaunpūr mosques is the arrangement made for ladies in screen enclosures that form a part of the main structure of the 'sanctuary'. There is an interesting arrangement for this in the wings of the central hall of the Jāmi' Masjid.

The architectural concepts that distinguished the imperial Delhi style are closely reflected in the monuments of Mālwā, where a provincial dynasty that achieved nothing else of any significance has left behind embodiments of a vast architectural ambition. We see here the battering walls, the pointed arch with the spear-head fringe, the arch-lintel bracket, the low dome and even the pyramidal roofs with which the Lōdīs experimented. Combined with these features are lofty plinths and, what is hardly in evidence at Delhi or elsewhere during this period, stately flights of steps built for their ornamental value and for bringing what is essentially artificial into closer harmony with nature. Mālwā has a climate very different from Delhi, and an abundance of vegetation on its low hills that must have been a challenge to the architects. Māndū, where the principal monuments of this style are found, has an enthralling natural beauty, and the desire to make it a city of joy must have proved irresistible even to those monarchs who shared the propensity to warfare common among their contemporaries. The structural material or the technical competence of the architects was not in keeping with their aspirations, and many roofs and several buildings have fallen, but what survives is enough to convince us of the sensitiveness of the architect to the physical environment and of his capacity to blend the awe inspired by massive construction with the desire for beauty.

The first examples of the Mālwā style are mosques built at Dhār, of which the most notable is the mosque of Malik Mughīth. It is somewhat hybrid in character, half Muslim, half Hindū. This preliminary period of construction was followed by a classical phase, formal and substantial. The last phase is fanciful and buoyant, reflecting a life dedicated not too wisely to aesthetics and ease.

The Jāmi' Masjid of Māndū, built in the middle of the fifteenth

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century, is the first and in many ways the finest building of the classical style. Its main gate is on the east, where a magnificent flight of steps leads up to a porch, which has doorways with marble jambs and exquisitely carved sides. The porch projects about 55 feet from the facade, which has a stern, if not grim aspect, toned down by bands of carved masonary and borders of ornamental arches. The spacious courtyard has double colonnades with domes on three sides; the fourth, on the west, measuring 268 feet in length and 82 feet in depth, is divided into a series of bays by rows of pillars which serve as supports for fifty-eight domes. Apart from these there are three large domes roofing spacious halls, the largest in the centre and two smaller ones on the sides. The ornamentation has been used with reserve and becomes, therefore, all the more striking. The architectural effect of the Jāmi' Masjid depends on 'the simple broad treatment of the constituent elements, on the value of plain surfaces judiciously disposed in relation to one another and on the graceful lines, curves and planes with which it is fully endowed. It is an assemblage of solemn silences, of muted passages with only an occasional articulation, of rhythmic but soundless movements'[5].

The builder of the Jāmi' Masjid, Hōshaang Shāh, also constructed his own mausoleum, which had, however, to be completed by his son. Like Tughlaq's tomb at Delhi, Hōshaṇg's mausoleum impresses because of its very simplicity, but though it is equally assertive and very much larger in dimensions, the expression of power is considerably more refined than in Tughlaq's tomb. It is a square building, standing upon a broad plinth, and surmounted by a large, flat, central dome. Cupolas at the four corners with conical domes relieve the austere lines of the upper structure and give the massive central dome an almost political significance. The marble of which the mausoleum was built is of very inferior quality, but the planning of the Jāmi' Masjid and the mausoleum and the fine sense of proportion which is evident in the composition made these monuments subjects of study for Mughal and Deccan architects.

The Jahāz Maḥal and Hindōlā Maḥal, built by Ghiyāthuddīn, whose love of pleasure was a by-word, are interesting curiosities of architecture, but they also have features that make them unique. They follow the tradition of simplicity, and display a vigour that is toned down to something pleasant by being brought into harmony with the natural surroundings—the lake and the landscape of low, green hills extending into the far distance.

In Gujarāt, Muslim architecture seems to have been more under the spell of traditional Hindū craftsmanship than anywhere else. This is evident in the slow and reluctant adoption of the arcuate

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

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system and the realization of its advantages. After about a century of experimentation in Aḥmadābād and elsewhere Hindū artisans became skilled in the construction of the pointed arch, and were able to adopt a mode of artistic expression in harmony with the spirit of Islām. But even in the Jāmi' Masjid of Aḥmadābād, built in 1423, the idea of an open space in which the congregation stands shoulder to shoulder has not completely replaced the Hindū concept of a sanctuary in which the individual worships by himself, and the central hall of the mosque is crowded with pillars that would inevitably break up the congregation into smaller units.

Mosque architecture in Gujarāt began with the Jāmi' Masjid of Paṯan early in the fourteenth century. The first period of Muslim architecture lasted for about a century. With the reign of Aḥmad Shāh (1411-1442) began an age rich in aspiration and fulfilment, and his capital of Aḥmadābād ranks among the towns with the largest number of beautiful monuments. The Jāmi' Masjid of Aḥmadābād is generally considered the high water mark of mosque design in western India. But, at the same time, 'it represents a living, growing and expectant style, . . . the silent flowering in stone of the souls of men whose ways of life and thought had flowed into the things made by their hands'. The system of lighting in this mosque is a study in itself, for the light is first deflected, then reflected and skilfully diffused throughout the building. The nave and aisles reveal an artistic solution of the problem of an upward trend and better illumination by means of vertical lines, and almost everything in the planning and adjustment of the different features would rouse the admiration of a student of architecture. The Tīn Darwāzah, a triumphal gateway, now robbed of its original dignity by mean surroundings, adorned the processional highway from Aḥmad Shāh's palace to the Jāmī' Masjid, and its arches are strikingly graceful.

The long and prosperous reign of Maḥmūd Bēgharā (1459-1511) and his building a new capital at Champānēr provided a fresh stimulus to architectural activity. Though designed on the same lines as the Jāmī' Masjid of Aḥmadābād, the Jāmi' Masjid of Champānēr shows that great architecture can dispense with marble and precious stones, for here the mason's chisel suggests the glow of colour, gold and inlay before they were added to the building. In the construction, the pointed arch has been combined very attractively with the trabeate motif of the region, the proportion of the covered area to the forecourt is very pleasing and the lighting arrangement by means of double clerestory windows below the ribbed ceiling of the main dome is excellent. An outstanding feature is the upper structure of the nave, which rises in three storeys to a height of sixty-five feet, with galleries that provide retreats for those desirous of

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peaceful meditation. The mosque of Sīdī Sayyid, though a small structure, has become famous because of its exquisite perforated stone screens, one of which, representing what may be called the 'palm and parasite' motif, has been recognized as a masterpiece throughout the world. Rānī Sīparī's mosque is a gem of architecture, but as utterly sculptural in conception and execution as a mosque could be.

Among the tombs the most outstanding are those of Shaikh Aḥmad Khatū, Sayyid 'Uthmān and Sayyid Mubārak; and Bā'ī Harīr's garden, mosque and well, built about 1550, is a composition of great architectural merit. The sluices of the tanks which abound at Aḥmadābād are also considered remarkable productions, and evidences of the general desire to make every object as ornamental as possible.

The principal monuments of the Deccan are found at Gulbargā, Bīdar, Gōlconda (Gōlkundā) and Bījāpūr. The first architects and craftsmen, who migrated or were exiled from the north, carried their traditions and tastes with them; the civilization of Iran also exercised considerable influence. But in spite of all that it owes to traditional and contemporary techniques and styles, the architecture of the Deccan has its own character.

The Jāmi' Masjid at Gulbargā is the most notable among the early monuments. Its peculiar feature is that there is no open court, the whole area being covered, and presenting to the eye a multitude of domes above which towers the great dome of the main hall, raised on a clerestory and 40 feet in diameter. To balance this, there are domes a little more than half its size at the four corners of the enclosing wall. The entrance is on the northern side, where a lofty archway relieves the symmetry of the arches which form the facade. The interior offers a perspective of square bays traversing in both directions, their solid piers and vaulted ceilings impressing the observer with their strength and dignity. The Jāmi' Masjid may, on the whole, be more of an intellectual than an aesthetic achievement, but it is a fine example of boldness in design and originality in technique.

The capital of the Bahmanī kingdom was transferred to Bīdar in 1425, and after 1488 it was split up into four independent states. The most important of these from the point of view of architecture is Bījāpūr. The Madrasah of Maḥmūd Gāwān at Bīdar is an example of a style quite foreign to India, and the mausoleums of the Quṭub Shāhī kings follow the Iranian practice of concentrating on the use of coloured tiles for effect. The Chār Mīnār of Ḥaidarābād, built in 1591, is the only monument of distinction apart from the architectural achievements of Bījīpūr. This *Mīnār* is a triumphal archway of considerable size, being a hundred feet square, and the towers at

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its four corners rising to a height of 186 feet. It is imposing in design and elegant in its ornamentation, but with more than a touch of the decadent.

The buildings of Bījāpūr have a remarkable individuality which cannot be traced to any particular source. The four outstanding examples, the Jāmi' Masjid, the Ibrāhīm Rauḍah, the Gōl Gumbad and the Mihtar Maḥal also differ considerably among themselves, and we cannot point to any pronounced characteristic which is common to them all, apart from the desire and the competence to achieve something unique. The dome tends to be spherical, the arch is of the four-centred variety, but the Bījāpūr architects do not seem to have got into any habits. They had the ability to adapt all styles to suit their purpose.

The Jāmi' Masjid is simple in design, without any obtrusive overlay of applied art, but deeply impressive. It was begun by 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh (1558-1580), and could not be completed till the fall of the dynasty about a century later. But there is an air of perfection about it. The first features that strike the eye are the graceful spherical dome, raised on an arcaded clerestory, and the *līwān* with a double-storeyed arcade. The 'sanctuary' rouses both the religious and the aesthetic sense because of its simple spaciousness and restrained ornamentation. The Ibrāhīm Rauḍah consists of two buildings, a mausoleum and a mosque, which stand balancing each other on a terrace 360 feet long and 150 feet broad, in a garden setting. It is obvious that the aim was to achieve something exquisite and perfect in conception, and there are very few buildings in which every little detail has been treated with such conscientiousness and artistic competence. The mausoleum, which is the more elaborate structure, rises on graceful arches to a second storey where slender minarets and mīnārs surround a clerestory which supports a lovely spherical dome. Inside, there is a profusion of ornamentation, but the organization of the whole is so tasteful that nothing appears overdone or superfluous. The aesthetic values of architecture and carving could not have been better combined.

It was probably the unsurpassable excellence of the Ibrāhīm Rauḍah that induced Muḥammad 'Ādil Shāh (1627-1657), the successor of Ibrāhim, to design for himself something so radically different that the question of comparison would not arise. His mausoleum, popularly known as the Gōl Gumbad, is therefore massive and elemental, an enormous spherical dome with an outside diameter of 144 feet on a square structure of 200 feet side, and the whole building is 200 feet high. The dome is single, and covers an area larger than that of the Pantheon in Rome. It is about the largest single cell in the world. The ornamentation has been reduced to the minimum, even

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the purely architectural elements consisting of a broad cornice, heavy merlons and turrets at the four corners of the square, whose length has been so cut up as to make them look squat and heavier than they really are. Nothing could provide a stronger contrast to the Ibrāhīm Rauḍah, but the Gōl Gumbad is an even more impressive example of sheer technical skill, specially in the manner in which the weight of the massive dome has been divided between the supporting arches and the walls. 'Whether one stands thrilled before its noble mass or humbled under the vast void of its vaulted roof, one cannot fail to be impressed by the gifted imagination which conceived this great monument and to marvel at the supreme genius which enabled it to be so splendidly realized'[6].

The building known as Mihtar Maḥal is in fact only the gateway to a mosque. Both belong most probably to the time of Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh, and are excellent examples of the architectural style and the taste of the period. The facade of the Mihtar Maḥal is contained between 'two slender buttresses rising up into graceful turrets, while the outstanding feature is a window, its balcony projected on brackets and shaded by an expansive eave.... Every detail is decoratively shaped and sumptuously carved ... the stone being manipulated as if it were plastic clay'[7].

The provincial styles came to end with the provincial dynasties. In the meantime the Sayyids and Lōdīs developed the imperial style at Delhi, but with very inadequate resources. The consummation of this style, which also opened the way for further technical and aesthetic exploration, is seen in the monuments of Shēr Shāh Sūrī (1540-45), the outstanding examples of which are his mausoleum at Sassarām and the Mosque in the Old Fort.

Shēr Shāh's mausoleum has a base 250 feet wide and it stands 150 feet high, in the centre of an artificial lake that is a square of 1400 feet side. It is thus a vast mass chiselled into a particular form without its massiveness being affected. The octagon of the main structure rises above the square base and plinth, the curve of the dome springs out of the surrounding kiosks and is capped by a very substantial finial. The whole monument radiates sheer physical power, a kind of manliness that is self-evident and overwhelming. It is built of a fine grey sandstone, and originally it was ornamented with passages in the primary colours, its dome a glistening white and the finial a brilliant gold. Now it looks sombre, if not grim, but is perhaps more in keeping with the personality of the builder whose remains it enshrines. The Gōl Gumbad may be more extraordinary as a technical achievement, but its cultural value lies in its technical

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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and aesthetic aspect. It is an expression of artistic genius, not a blending of man and monument. On the other hand, Shēr Shāh's character, his aspirations, his actual attainment can be deduced from his mausoleum in the clear subordination of the aesthetic to the elemental, of the powerful and massive to the elegant and the appealing. Shēr Shāh was not 'a king, the son of a king', he was a commoner, not particularly helped by circumstances, who rose through sheer ability from insignificance to being the leader of the Pathān reaction to Mughal rule. He drove out Humāyūn and became undisputed ruler of north India. He asserted, in a general atmosphere of Pathān defeatism, the superiority of the Pathān to the Mughal, and during his five years of rule introduced a large number of changes that made his administration the starting point of subsequent policies and reforms. He was also a general whose strategy completely neutralized the artillery of the Mughals, which had helped Bābar to win his victories. Shēr Shāh's mausoleum embodies his soaring ambition, his indomitable spirit, his dazzling success. And it is probable that this purpose of the mausoleum was in Shēr Shāh's mind. He trained his generals to fight according to his plan; he trained his architect to build according to his will.

Shēr Shāh's mosque in the Old Fort presents another aspect of his personality. The mosque was not meant for the general public; it was a chapel, a private mosque. It had no political significance; it was not a symbol. It was, therefore, planned as a small place of worship. But its smallness in area still further emphasizes the enormous strength and durability so evident from its design. Architecturally it represents the consummation of the style of mosque construction whose development is seen in the Moth-kī-Masjid, the Jamālā Mosque, the Khirkī Masjid. Though infinitely more graceful than any of its predecessors, it is cast in the same mould. It has the quality of a fortress, whose strength is not meant to impress an imaginary enemy but to represent the unshakable faith, the irrepressible power and the exquisite aesthetic sense of the believer. Its facade consists of five arched openings, each within a larger, recessed archway, and contained within a rectangular frame; the interior consists of five well-proportioned bays, with tastefully arranged arches and arcades, and apart from other qualities that produce harmony and unity, there is a repetition of certain motifs that suggests unity at a spiritual level, achieved through intuition and personal exaltation.

II

Both Muslims and non-Muslims generally believe that Islām has forbidden the cultivation of the fine arts, and it is supposed that one

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reason for whatever excellence Muslim architecture possesses is due to its being the one field of artistic activity to which the prohibition did not apply. The question whether *samā'* was permitted or not was, as we have seen, hotly debated, but there has not been any Muslim society in which singing and instrumental music was not cultivated. When the art of painting was introduced from China, and earlier also, painters and painting were admired. The making of jewellery and ornaments has also been continuously practised. The strict theologian was justified in condemning 'frivolity' (*lahw-o-la'b*), in which he could include as much as he wanted to personally, and he could create an atmosphere in which those who practised the fine or the minor arts would be regarded as necessarily lesser in virtue than those who followed other professions. Sculpture, especially of the human figure, has not been practised among Muslims, because of the danger of relapse into idolatry. But otherwise Muslim society has not been different from any other in the appreciation and practice of the fine arts.

A deep-rooted tradition makes Amīr Khusrau the fountain-head of a new movement in music. There is ample evidence in his writings of his study of this art, both of what was brought over from Persia and what was indigenous to India. He participated in musical contests, a favourite pastime in his days. It would be reasonable to presume that he made some attempts to combine the Persian and Indian systems and evolve melodies that would present the values of both. The *Rāgdarpan* of Faqīrullāh lists a number of styles that owe their origin to him. Wājid 'Alī Shāh's *Ṣaut al-Mubārak* also gives a list, but materially different from that of the *Rāgdarpan*. There seems to be little doubt, however, that the popular melodies, *qaul* and *ghazal*, were first introduced by him into Indian music. He may have also been the originator of the *Khayāl* style which was further developed in the court of the Sharqī rulers of Jaunpūr. The invention of the *sitār* is also ascribed to Amīr Khusrau, and the tradition is again very deep-rooted. But there is no historical evidence for this, and we must assume that it is a myth in which a process of development has been simplified by its association with a particular person. The *sitār* is probably a Middle Eastern instrument introduced into India during the early period of Turkish rule[8]. Amir Khusrau was not alone in his study of music. According to the *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, Khwājah Muḥammad, the grandson of Shaikh Farīd was proficient in this art[9]. Faqīrullāh says in the *Rāgdarpan* about Shaikh Bahā'uddin, a *ṣūfī* of the Deccan, that 'in the science of music he had no peer, even in the Deccan'. This *ṣūfī* had disciples

[8] Dr Waḥīd Mirzā, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-9.
[9] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 200.

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who carried on his tradition. 'Ali 'Ādil Shāh of Bījāpūr composed a number of songs in praise of the Hindū goddess Saraswatī and the elephant-headed god, Ganēsha, and replied to the remonstrances of the orthodox by saying that he derived all his inspiration from these deities[10]. And if, as is apparent from the *Siyar al-Awlīyā* and the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, singing of Hindī songs had become common in *ṣūfī* circles, it is safe to assume that Indian Muslim society as a whole appreciated Indian music to a degree that made it worth while for musicians to aspire to excellence.

As we shall see later, there were dancers at the court, and dancing formed a part of the education of courtesans. Arab travellers have noted the practice of temples having *dēvadāsīs*, virgins dedicated to the service of the temple deity[11]. Their service must have consisted of singing and dancing as required by ritual. We do not know to what extent this dance was identical with what are now recognized as classical styles. Apart from the *dēvadāsīs*, there were tribes and family groups for whom singing and dancing was an established ancestral profession. They would, very largely, have accepted the religion of their patrons in a formal or informal way, and this must have given a secular character to their dance, and led to an emphasis on its pantomimic element.

About 1375, a book entitled *Ghunīyat al-Munīyah*[11] was written by a person connected with Malik Shamsuddīn Abū Rajā, whom Fīrūz Tughlaq appointed governor of Gujarāt. When Malik Shamsuddīn 'felt the strain of hard work, he found relaxation in listening to Persian *samā'* and Indian *sarōd'*, and he could elaborate with great ability on the intricacies of music'. *Ghunīyat al-Munīyāh* was written at his instance, and the author was able to consult the following standard books on Indian music: *Bhāratā*, *Saṇgīt Ratnākār*, *Saṇgīt Ratnāwalī*, *Saṇgīt Binōd*, *Saṇgīt Mudrā*, *Satānak* and *Rāg Arānavā*. He had already translated a work on music from Arabic into Persian, and, therefore, in *Ghunīyat al-Munīyah* the author confined himself to a discussion of Indian vocal and instrumental music and dance. He gives a list of 42 *rāgas* in vogue in his time, briefly explaining the characteristics of each, and he further describes the principles and classification of *tāla* (timing), the various movements and forms in vocal music, the different types of instruments (none of which seem to be the same as those in use now), and the

[10] Art. by A. Ḥalīm in *Islāmic Culture*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, Oct. 1945.

[11] *Hindūstān 'Arabōṇ kī Naẓar meṇ*, pp. 187 and 395.

[11] A paper on this book, of which the only known mss. is in the India Office Library, was presented at the XXIV Session of the Indian History Congress (1961) by Mrs Khurshīd N. Ḥasan, Head of the Department of History, Bārahsēnī College, Alīgarh. The account of the book which follows is based on that paper.

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principles and movements of dance. It is clear from this work that taste for music and dance was cultivated, and there was not only widespread interest in these arts but also a desire to study them scientifically.

No evidence of the cultivation of painting has survived, though it is difficult to believe that an art which entered so much into textile design and architectural ornamentation was not practised independently.

A well-planned project of excavation would undoubtedly bring to light considerable material from which the development of the minor arts and of crafts could be deduced, as there are mounds filled with artifacts near almost every large habitation in northern India. From the scanty evidence available, it seems that the designs on painted pottery followed Chinese patterns. For the following period, more material is available, and that will help us to reconstruct the position of the applied arts in the early period also.

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CHAPTER X

SOCIAL LIFE

THE survey we have made of the political system, the orthodoxy, the religious thought and the ṣūfīsm of the Indian Muslims provides us with the main factors determining their social life. The records we have hardly ever present social conditions directly, and a continuity such as we find in the narration of political events would be too much to expect. For the study of social life it seems most appropriate, therefore, to take our stand at particular moments in history, and look backwards and forwards in order fully to understand all that presents itself to our view. For the early period, the year 1350, when the Delhi Sultanate had been in existence for about a century and a half, and the Muslims had established themselves politically and socially, appears to be the most suitable observation point.

In spite of the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, all the Indian Muslims could not, in 1350, be regarded as one homogeneous unit. The settlements in South India, with which their history begins, had no continuous and living contact with the centres of culture in the north, though the Bahmanī kingdom, which became independent in 1347, and the somewhat older but very shaky kingdom of Madurā could be regarded as likely to form a bridge. The old settlements in ports on the Gujarāt coast were brought into the main stream of traffic between India and the Muslim world through the annexation of Gujarāt to the sultanate, but it appears from Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's account of Khambāyat (Cambay) that the eyes of the predominant merchant communities were turned to the lands across the seas in the west rather than towards the mainland and Delhi[1]. The ports of Bengal and the Coromandel coast carried on a brisk trade with the countries of South-east Asia, and trade inevitably promoted cultural relations. But these relations did not bring Delhi into touch with the capitals or cultural centres of South-East Asia. The seaports of Sindh formed a part of the commercial network of the Indian Ocean; the mainland, from Multān to the estuary of the Indus, lost its commercial importance after the decline of the 'Abbāsī Khilāfat and the shift of power to northern Iran and Central

[1] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

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Asia. The Khyber Pass was the main artery of overland traffic between India and the Muslim world. In our study of social life we have to deal separately with the territory directly under the Delhi Sultanate and the outlying areas, where different circumstances prevailed.

After what has been said in the previous chapters about the position and powers of the sulṭān, it should be obvious that his personality would determine the social and moral tone of the court, and its influence would permeate social life in general through the hosts of people whose ambition, employment, or needs brought them to the court. But there were also established ideas about what the sulṭān should and should not be, and these in their turn influenced the sulṭan.

It was a tradition that the sulṭān should be generous; hardly any excuse would be accepted for a sulṭān not being large-hearted and imaginative in his gifts. He was expected to appreciate and reward excellence, whether this consisted in conscientious and successful performance of duties, in the composition of odes of praise, in attainment in the world of scholarship or technique, in being a Sayyid or an Arab, or in the exercise of a ready wit. Rewarding of excellence or achievement could be made into a system, and no doubt it was, to some extent, but it had also to possess some quality of a surprise, otherwise it would fail to impress those who were not government servants.

It was a tradition that the sulṭān and his court should be an example of such pomp and magnificence as would overawe the people. This tradition could never be safely ignored, because it had an important economic aspect. It made the sulṭān the biggest customer and his court the store-house of the rarest and most valuable goods. It stimulated the merchant to collect and the craftsmen to produce the best; it made the provincial governors look for all that was rare and precious. It set very high standards for the *amīrs*, whose demands helped to support, if they were not the mainstay of most industries.

The sulṭān was expected to appreciate talent of all kinds and not to be so selective as to deny his patronage to any variety of talent. Musicians, singers, dancers, jugglers, acrobats believed they had as much right to his patronage as poets and scholars, and could claim that they had dedicated all their time and energy to the achievement of excellence in their profession only for his sake. The sulṭān's patronage, therefore, was not necessarily a reflection of his own likes and dislikes. He could have his preferences, but he would be regarded as unjust if he denied to any type of talent or profession the benefit of his generosity.

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It was thought proper that, being the guardian of the *sharī'ah*, the sulṭān should attend the Friday and *'Īd* prayers, show proper reverence for piety and learning, listen occasionally in silence and humility to the admonitions of the preacher, and pay visits to the graves of saints and to the houses of pious men.

It was assumed that there would be something mysterious and unpredictable in the nature of every sulṭān, and his actions should not be judged by ordinary standards of reasonableness or justice. It was not considered ugly or incongruous that executioners sat outside the palace gates, and that the heads of those executed by the orders of the sulṭān were hung up there for all to see. The naked swords of the bodyguard were regarded as the natural aura of royalty. Those who sought access to the sulṭān, and even more those who aspired to positions that would keep them near him knew that they were taking risks with life and happiness. The sulṭān succeeded in being recognized as true to type if he created the feeling that, so far as this world was concerned, all roads led to him, and the road which did not lead to him did not lead anywhere.

The palace used in 1350 was probably in the large fort at Tughlaqābād. It had three gates. Musicians seated on platforms flanking the first gate announced the rank of the visitor with *shahnā'īs*, kettle-drums and *surnās* as he passed through. He proceeded across a big threshold to the second gate. This also had its guards and musicians. Inside it there was a big hall where the ordinary visitors sat and waited till they were called. Between the second and third gates there was a large platform where the head chamberlain (*Amīr-i-Ḥājib*) sat with his subordinates. The head chamberlain was distinguished by his gold-embroidered cap with peacock feathers, and he carried a golden rod. His subordinates wore waistbands of gold cloth and embroidered caps. They carried scourges with gold or silver handles. The head chamberlain took charge of the visitors as they arrived, and conducted them inside the third gate, after the clerks stationed there had taken down their names and full descriptions. This gate led to a wide, open space, and to the audience hall, which gave its name to the palace because its wooden roof was supported on a multitude of pillars. Within the hall there was a raised platform on which the sulṭān sat, as Muslims sit during prayers. His bodyguard stood behind him, and princes of the blood, ministers and officials on his right and left. The visitor was announced by a chamberlain and conducted to the sulṭān's presence by the head chamberlain. As he performed his obeisances in the prescribed manner, the presents he wished to offer were brought forward in such a way that the sulṭān could see them. This was the great moment. The sulṭān's response could take any form, from a mere glance of

indifferent or pleased recognition to an affectionate embrace and questions expressive of his solicitude. This attitude was confirmed by what the sulṭān bestowed on the visitor by way of return for the presents that had been offered to him, and the position on his right or left that he assigned to him after the interview was over.

At other types of assemblies the procedure was less formal, and there were also quite intimate parties. The organization of these functions was the duty of a special officer, the *Mīr-i-Majlis*. At the public parties, guests came and took the seats assigned to them in accordance with their rank or the esteem in which the sulṭān held them. They all rose when the sulṭān arrived, and were permitted to sit down after the sulṭān had done so. The sulṭān, of course, could ask a person whom he wished to distinguish by showing a special regard, to come nearer. If an eminent divine was invited to deliver a sermon, he was seated on a pulpit (*mimbar*), while the sulṭān sat near him on his throne. At meals, a cloth was spread, each guest had a plate to himself and all the various dishes in front of him. After the sulṭān had arrived, a *sharbat* was served, then the chamberlains said *Bismillāh* aloud and the guests began to eat. The sulṭān usually kept looking around, invited guests to try particular dishes and sometimes put a choice morsel in the plate of a guest as a mark of honour and of his personal concern in the guest enjoying his meal. Sometimes he would send a portion of a dish to a guest on a plate. At the end of the meal, some unfermented drink was served and *pān*[2] and betel-nut was passed around.

Baranī says that Balban never sat down to a meal unless some *'ulamā* were present with whom he could discourse on religious matters, that he visited the *'ulamā* in their houses and went to the tombs of saints[3]. 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī never attended the Friday prayers and never showed any regard for the *'ulamā* or the *ṣūfīs*. Muḥammad Tughlaq claimed to be so punctilious about the law that when it occurred to him that his own occupation of the throne was irregular because he had not obtained the sanction of the Khalīfah, he ordered the suspension of the Friday prayers. Evidently he thought that musicians, singers and courtesans could not consider themselves exempt from prayer and fasting because of their profession, and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah notes that there were Jāmi' Masjids in the quarter where persons practising these professions lived at Delhi and Daulatābād[4] and prayers were offered there regularly. The

[2] The *pān* consists of betel-leaf with slaked lime and *katthā* (powdered bark of *acacia catechu*) spread on it, bits of areca nut and white cardamoms. A clove is used to 'seal' the *pān*.

[3] *Baranī, op. cit.*, p. 46.

[4] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9 and 171 ff.

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sulṭān's indifference towards religious injunctions would not necessarily affect persons outside the court, but there can be no doubt that his observance of these injunctions would be a material inducement to others to do the same. The sulṭān did not go to the mosque altogether as a private person, but his retinue was not very large, and persons who would otherwise have found it impossible to appeal to him for justice had an opportunity of attracting his attention when he went out of the palace to pray or to visit a pious man. Thus it was a means of bringing him somewhat nearer to the people. On the occasion of the *'Īd* festivals, however, he went in all his glory, surrounded by his *khāns* and *maliks*, each with his own retinue. A grand darbār was held the same day, and festivities continued for seven days following. Marriages of relatives of the sulṭān were celebrated on the third day, slaves were set free on the fourth, slave-girls on the fifth day, marriages of slaves and slave-girls were celebrated on the sixth day and alms distributed on the seventh[5]. The Iranian festival of *Naurōz* was also observed at the court.

Apart from occasions when the sulṭān went out of the capital to lead his army against an enemy or to suppress a rebellion, he also toured the country to make his subjects aware of his presence, of his concern with their affairs and of his power. On such occasions he carried a mobile city with him. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has described how the sulṭān went out to hunt. It was a picnic on a vast scale. Tents, provisions, cooks were sent on in advance, for the sulṭān had to find everything ready when he arrived. Anyone who accompanied him had to make his own arrangements, and make them so carefully and so much in advance that he did not get lost in the multitude. The sulṭān's tents were red, those of his officers white, but embroidered in different colours[6]. Some sulṭāns were more interested in hunting animals than in enjoying the picnic, and 'Alā'uddīn nearly lost his life by putting himself at too great a distance from the army accompanying him. Hunting could be combined with military projects also, but the 'Style of the Hunt' was a manner in which the sulṭān and his courtiers enjoyed themselves.

We have referred to the private and intimate parties of the sulṭān. The character of these parties differed with the tastes and habits of the sulṭān. If he was given to drinking and debauchery, these parties would be dominated by clowns, eunuchs and prostitutes, and courtiers who had any regard for decency and refinement would avoid them as far as possible. There could be drinking parties where the object was to get drunk. There could also be parties where the guests drank, indeed, but the main purpose was the enjoyment

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 60 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 134 ff.

of music and dance. At the intimate parties of Jalāluddīn Khilji 'Muḥammad Sinha[7] the lute-player played the lute, and Futūḥā and the daughter of Faqa'ī and Nuṣrat Khātūn sang ... and Nuṣrat Bībī's own daughter and Mihr Afrōz ... danced in the sulṭān's assembly'[8]. The names of musicians, singers and dancers are very rarely mentioned in any account and the nostalgia with which the historian Baranī makes this all too brief reference shows that the sulṭān's refinement could raise the status and character of artists. We can safely presume that accomplished artists were attached to the sulṭān's court, and the treatment they received in the court and their reputation outside—for such as were allowed to leave the court—depended entirely on the personal character of the sulṭān and his intimates.

The private life of the sulṭān was his own business. It was an accepted principle that he was responsible only to God for his actions, which may have been another way of saying that only God could bear to see all that the sulṭān did. Some sulṭāns, like Iletmish and his youngest son, Nāṣiruddīn, were believed to have had private lives that were an example to the pious. But this was probably a legalistic view of piety. Iletmish had a sufficiency of wives and concubines, and the mother of his successor, Ruknuddīn Fīrūz, was a domineering slave-girl who had many rivals on whom to practise her vindictiveness. Jalāluddīn Khiljī's queen was ambitious as well as aggressive, and the glimpse of the sulṭān's *ḥaram* which we get in connection with 'Alā'uddīn's plot to plunder Dē'ōgīr and escape to some place beyond the reach of his mother-in-law shows us another facet of the sulṭān's *ḥaram*. Most of the sulṭāns drank wine, some made a secret of it, others did not. Some sulṭāns gambled away their chances of living their normal span of life by giving themselves up entirely to drinking and debauchery; their court became a scene of rampant eroticism and wild dissipation. They were not condemned for their excesses. The relish with which the thin-lipped Baranī relates how a beautiful girl, accomplished in all the arts of allurement, made Mu'izzuddīn Kaiqubād break the vow he had made to his father to abstain from drinking and sexual indulgence is an indication of the envy he and thousands like him felt for the opportunity a sulṭān had of unrestrained enjoyment[9]. But in fact the sulṭān's freedom was a curse, and almost every sulṭān who took undue advantage of this freedom sank to a level of morbidity and perversity where genuine pleasure became unattainable. The *ḥaram*

[7] This is either a calligraphic error which cannot now be rectified or the name of a convert.

[8] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[9] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-8.

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of the sulṭān was so far removed from family life that often the mothers of the sulṭān's sons could not be identified. For purposes of succession the mother did not matter, because the law regarded the children of 'free' women, slave-girls and concubines as equally entitled to inherit.

Between the sulṭān and the people stood the *khāns*, *maliks* and *amīrs*. It was assumed that, as government servants, they would obey the sulṭān's orders, without examining their legality or their moral implications. They were, therefore, placed in a category by themselves. The worldly *'ulamā*, or *'ulamā* in the service of the government, regarded them as exempt from the laws of the *sharī'ah*, in practice if not in principle. The righteous *'ulamā*, according to whom the sulṭān and his court were to be avoided, applied the same criteria of judgement to the sulṭān's officers as they did to the sulṭān himself, and advised good Muslims to avoid them. To bridge the gulf between the ethical standards of the *amīrs* or officers of the government and the generality of Muslims, the social values of generosity and lavishness were cultivated. They threw a veil over the public conduct and private life of the *amīrs*, just as the sulṭān's liberality helped to compensate for his excesses.

The first characteristic of the upper strata of Indian Muslim society which strikes us is recklessness with life and resources. The service of a despot such as the sulṭān was involved risks that would have gradually converted the steadiest person into something of a gambler. As this service precluded the accumulation of heritable wealth, even those who were cautious in political matters did not care how narrow the margin was between their income and expenditure, or how often their expenditure exceeded their income. Just as they rebelled against the sultan because of ambition or some deep grievance, they rebelled against the laws of economy because of a passion to spend.

What were the main items of expenditure? In justice to those whom we accuse of not possessing healthy economic sense, it must be said that not only the whole pattern of Muslim culture but the political system in particular undermined the possibilities of planned, frugal living. Presents had to be offered to the sulṭān on his birthday, at the festivals of *'Īd* and *Naurōz*, on getting a promotion or a reward for distinguished service, on coming from the province to the court, on the occasion of such celebrations in the officer's own family to which he desired to draw the sulṭān's attention, on return after absence from court, on recovery from illness; in fact, it was to the officer's advantage to seek opportunities for offering presents, and to offer such presents as would assure the sulṭān of his surpassing loyalty and gratitude. No doubt the sulṭān generally gave more than

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he received, but a gift from the sulṭān increased the liabilities of the officer in proportion to its value, because it became an occasion for happiness and congratulation. It had to be celebrated in the most spectacular manner possible. At the same time, the value of the sulṭān's gift, apart from what was immediately awarded, was largely fictitious. Payment of gifts of cash was made after deducting 10 per cent, and a procedure had to be gone through that was always exasperatingly slow, the donee sometimes having to appeal to the sulṭān in order to get the payment made at all[10]. Gifts of land took an equally long time to realize, and often enough were found to yield much less income than was supposed. Besides, the conditions of service were such as to promote uneconomic expenditure. The court was an appanage of the sulṭān's person, and wherever he went, most of the establishment of the central government went with him. All the officers of the government, apart from revenue officers of the lower grades and those who were recruited locally for local service, had to maintain two establishments, a permanent or semi-permanent one for the family, and another mobile one for the camp. The mobile establishment was in tents, and a large number of servants, some on a permanent and some on a daily wage basis[11] was needed to maintain it. We can imagine the consequences. Every officer would have to see that his retinue of servants was of a size and his tents and other equipment of an excellence equal if not superior to that of officers of the same rank, and this standard would be set by those who aimed too high rather than those who desired to be reasonable and thrifty. Entertainment was another essential item of expenditure which constantly induced extravagance. Those who wished to cultivate the good opinion of their equals or superiors could not do so without entertaining them. Marriages, births, the *'aqīqah*, the *bismillāh*, birthdays, celebrations of festivals, the *sēyum*[12] were some of the occasions when an officer had to show that he was capable of

[10] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 134 ff.

[12] *'Aqīqah* is the name of the sacrifice on the seventh day after the birth of a child. According to religious law it is commendable (*mustaḥabb* or *sunnah*) on the day to give a name to the new-born child, to shave off its hair and to offer a sacrifice (for a boy two rams or two he-goats; for a girl one of these suffices). If the offering of the *'aqīqah* has been neglected on the seventh day, it can be done afterwards, even by the child itself when it has come of age. The greater part of the flesh of the sacrifice is distributed amongst the poor and indigent.

The *bismillāh* is the name of the first lesson a child received, usually at the age of four years, four months, four days.

The *sēyum* is the ceremony on the third day after death, when each of the participants reads one or more chapters of the Qur'ān and the merit of so doing is offered for the benefit of the departed soul. The reading of the Qur'ān is usually followed by distribution of food to the poor.

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a lavishness that would give people something to talk about with admiration. On the other hand, if he wished to maintain his status, he did not have the option of spending on a modest scale. Baranī, in his own way, gives a very convincing appraisal of the situation. 'All their rivalry and envy was concerning deeds of generosity. If a *khān* or *malik* heard that five hundred persons dined at the *dastar-khwān* ('table') of a certain *malik* or *khān*, he felt jealous and tried to feed a thousand. Again, if one of them came to know that such and such a *malik* gives as charity two hundred *tankāhs* when he rides out, he was envious, and determined to give away four hundred *tankāhs* when he himself rode out. If one of the nobles bestowed fifty horses in his wine party and gave robes to two hundred persons, another noble hearing this would feel jealous, and would try to give away a hundred horses and to bestow robes on five hundred persons. Consequently, the *maliks*, the *khāns* and the *amīrs* of that age were always in debt on account of their lavish gifts, expenditure and charities. Except in the halls in which they entertained guests, there was no trace of gold or silver in their houses, and because of the excess of gifts and largesses they had no capital or buried treasure. The two things, their gifts and their charities, were equal to their pay. If the Multānīs and moneylenders of Delhi rolled in money, it was because of the wealth of the old *amīrs* of the city, who borrowed from these people up to the limit, and made gifts to their creditors in connection with their *iqṭā*'s by taking loans from the Multānīs and moneylenders. As soon as a *khān* or a *malik* gave a party to which eminent men were invited, his agents ran to these Multānīs and moneylenders to borrow money on interest, giving receipts in their own names'[13].

This reckless spending kept most of the eminent officers of the government on the brink of insolvency. It also demoralized society by making large numbers of people dependent on them and their generosity, and creating an enormous number of parasites or of people who expected full maintenance in return for little or no work. Amīr Khusrau's maternal grandfather had fifty or sixty slaves for bringing betel-leaf alone to his assemblies, and two hundred Turkish and two thousand Indian slaves and servants for attending to his person. He was just one among several *amīrs* noted for such extravagance. It was even worse in the *laṇgars* or kitchens for the distribution of free food, where anyone who was willing to stretch out the beggar's hand got a full meal. These *laṇgars* were sometimes attached to the *khānqāhs* of the *ṣūfīs*, sometimes they were independent charitable endowments established by *amīrs* as an atonement for their sins or for the sake of fame. Almost everything was done to

[13] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-20

make the temptation to live on the generosity of the rich irresistible.

The practice of the sulṭān and the court was inevitably the criterion for all officers of the government, as well as for others who wished to display their desire and their ability to follow the fashions of the court. If this was ruinous financially for the upper class families of the Indian Muslims, the sulṭān's *ḥaram* and the inordinate sexual indulgence of some of the sulṭāns was a menace to family life itself. It would be unfair to lay the whole blame on the sulṭāns, who were exposed to all the temptations of power. A larger share of the responsibility rests on the law, which removed all restraint through a number of misinterpretations of the injunctions in regard to slavery, causing great harm to the Muslims. Islām had grudgingly accepted slavery in Arabia as an evil that could not be immediately eradicated like idolatry, but made its abolition a moral aim by regarding the release of slaves as an act of great merit and preventing increase in the number of slaves by requiring that prisoners of war should be ransomed or liberated[14]. That this injunction of the Qur'ān was overlooked was a portentous omission. Its evil consequences were magnified tenfold because the slave and the slave-girl came to be regarded as property to which laws regarding ownership, possession, gift, transfer and sale could be applied, and a system of trading in slaves was developed which is abhorrent to the basic principles of Islām. It is true that the law also gave a contractual aspect to the relationship between master and slave. The slave could appeal to the qāḍī against cruelty and ill-treatment, he could contract with the master for buying his freedom, or enter into partnership with him for profitable enterprises. The situation could vary according to the nature of both master and slave, and it could be argued that the slave was in reality not much worse off than the domestic servant of later days. But both slaves and slave-girls could be bought and sold, and it was sheer brazenness of the legalistic mind to consider cohabitation with a slave-girl as different from other forms of adultery. It is also strange that the slave-girl should have been denied the position given to woman, although if she became a mother she could not be disposed of as property, and her children were entitled to inherit. The *ḥaram* of every sūlṭān was filled with slave-girls, and there was nothing to prevent any high officer from following the sulṭān's example. On the other hand, apart from women seized in war and slave-girls imported from other countries, it became a profession to buy and train girls for dancing and singing, and since competition was keen and every means had to be used to attract attention, some girls were also taught riding, playing polo

[14] Surah XLVII, 4. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 123, gives an idea of how captive women swelled the number of slave-girls.

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and brandishing the lance with skill and dexterity, like dashing young men[15]. But ultimately most slave-girls who were physically attractive in their youth would go to swell the ranks of prostitutes. The existence of such women did not cause any misgiving to at least one preacher, Shaikh Nūruddīn Mubārak Ghaznavī. 'If immoral women and those who hire themselves for money are thrown in the corners of degradation and do not go about openly, one should not prohibit them (from practising their profession), for if there are no women of this kind, many of the wicked persons will attack respectable women in the heat of their passion[16].'

If we consider Indian Muslim society as a whole about the middle of the fourteenth century, we find it split up socially into well-defined and in some ways exclusive communities and groups, and ideologically into self-contained and self-sufficient ways of thinking, with the spiritual ideals of Islām, the religious law and ṣūfism exerting their influence to establish homogeneity and solidarity. The most significant social division was that between the ruling class and the rest of the community, who were subjects. These, the subjects, were in their turn divided into small and large groups on the basis of professions and trades. Baranī mentions a *ra'īs*, an *amīr-i-bāzāryān*, the head of the bazar people, or the merchants[17]. We do not know what his rights and duties were, but evidently he felt entitled to ask the sulṭān for an audience. The singers and musicians also seem to have had a chief or head, who probably was a master of the art and controlled those who got training in and practised this profession. The institution of guilds is found almost everywhere in the civilized world in the Middle Ages. Among the Muslims of West Asia it was known as the *ṣinf*; in India it took the form of professional castes, and most probably in the cities conversion to Islām, when it did take place, was of the particular professional caste as a whole, the caste retaining its hierarchy and its professional customs and code.

Law and custom made further divisions on the basis of *kufw*, which signifies similarity of status, culture, vocation, way of living. It governed the contraction of marriages. The Sayyids, for instance, could practise any profession, they could be rich or poor, but it would be considered unfortunate if a Sayyid girl married someone who was not a Sayyid. There were thus families which, for purposes of marriage, sought to maintain the standard of their *kufw*. Anyone who adopted the *ṣūfī* way of life acquired a status that was independent of his family profession or status. 'The earliest *ṣūfīs* were

[15] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

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sons of people practising trades for their livelihood'[18], and though it helped considerably in establishing a *ṣūfī's* position if he was also a Sayyid, it can be said that ṣūfism exercised a profound levelling influence. Ideological divisions represented the particular traditional philosophy of life, the beliefs and practices of each group, which had their own identity, even though they professed to be in consonance with the *sharī'ah*, or at least not inconsistent with it. An example of this is the tradition of the bangle-makers of Jaipūr in regard to the origin of their profession. The tradition cannot be dated, but it must be as old as the profession itself, because it is evidently the product of a subconscious desire to provide a legal and moral justification for the 'frivolity' of making and selling bangles[19]. The tradition says:

The Prophet's daughter, Bībī Fāṭimah, had come of age and her marriage was to be celebrated. Everyone was bringing presents. The prophet Idrīs brought glass bangles. The Prophet asked, 'What are these?' He replied, 'They are bangles. They signify happiness in married life'. The Prophet graciously accepted the present, and blessed the profession of making glass bangles. A Muslim was looking on while this happened. He at once set out for the forest, collected a sufficient amount of lac from the trees, made bangles out of it and wrapping them in a piece of paper, brought them as a present. The Prophet graciously accepted the present and asked, 'What is in this paper?' The Muslim said, 'It is a means of promoting happiness in married life'. The Prophet unwrapped the package, admired the bangles, and blessed those who practised the profession of making lac bangles.

This tradition has no historical foundation. But the law-books said that a profession which fulfilled a real need, like making shoes or paper, was worthy, while that which only satisfied vanity was unworthy. No lawyer, however, would dare to class as unworthy a profession which had been blessed by the Prophet himself. The bangle-makers could, therefore, carry on their profession with an easy conscience and pray to God for prosperity.

We must assume the existence of many such traditions and imagine the role they must have played in making the numerous adjustments that were necessary between law and life.

In the mosque, at assemblies where people came together to listen to a preacher, in the *khānqāh* of the *ṣūfī*, social divisions were for the time being forgotten. But only for the time being. The divisions, the compartmentalized social thinking remained firmly established. In other words, the *sharī'ah* was never operative as a common social

[18] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 44.

[19] The story that follows was related to the author by a ninety-year-old head of a family of bangle-makers of Jaipūr.

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and moral code. In political and administrative matters, the decrees or commands of the sulṭān had overriding authority. The *sharī'ah* and the laws of the sulṭāns differed in the matter of punishments, the sulṭāns disregarding altogether the penal code of the *sharī'ah*. The appointment of a *Shaikh al-Islām* and a *muḥtasib* or superintendent of public morals was no more than a formal acknowledgement of the existence in theory of a common code of behaviour. The commandments of the *sharī'ah* could never be enforced. Drinking could never be prohibited or prevented or sexual indulgence controlled. The laws regarding commercial transactions could not be applied, because trade and commerce was largely in the hands of non-Muslims. Even in the very important field of the law of inheritance, the converted professional classes and tribes could not be forced to follow the *sharī'ah* rather than their custom. Apostasy and heresy were sometimes punished; mainly they seem to have been left unchallenged. It was only in questions of theology that the existence of a *sharī'ah* became apparent, and theology was of interest only to the *'ulamā*. The realities of social life lead one inevitably to the conclusion that for the generality of Muslims the *sharī'ah* was only an object of reverence, not a body of law that was, or could be, enforced.

Those who were earnest about following the *sharī'ah* themselves and making others follow it were generally at a loss what to do. 'A person had brought a piece of paper and the Khwājah was reading it. Then he said, "These Traditions are fabricated. They are not found in the well-known collections". One of the Traditions was that people (i.e. Muslims) should not sit and eat with a person who had given up saying his prayers; another Tradition was that people should not greet Jews and Christians and a person who drank wine. The Khwājah said, "Such a person should be greeted and one should eat with him, but should also tell him to say his prayers. But if he is intoxicated they should not treat him with respect, and should not wish him in return, so that he may feel disgraced and give up his habit" '. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn went on to relate a story of how Shaikh 'Uthmān Ḥairī had converted a young man whom he saw coming out of his house drunk, eating *pān* and playing on the tambour, and how, after his conversion, this young man attained within a very short time the spiritual state which Shaikh 'Uthmān himself had reached after years of endeavour[20]. This was the typical ṣūfī way of stating what was laid down in the law and at the same time indicating their idea of refined conduct and effective means of reform. But there were also *ṣūfīs* who could—at least at times—be uncompromising[21]. Except for short periods and under the influence of a few personali-

[20] *Khair al-Majālis*, pp. 173-4.
[21] As Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs Gaṇgōhī. P. 297 below.

ties, the statement that the *sharī'ah* did not operate as law is true.

After this rough indication of the factors governing social life, we may proceed to make a survey of it about 1350. We shall begin with the cities.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭah arrived in Delhi in 1333. He noted that there were four cities, the old city, Sīrī, Tughlaqābād and Jahān Panāh. The old city had a thick wall around it, which contained also rooms for the storage of grain. There was a corridor within it which ran around the whole city. The wall was pierced by twenty-eight gates. The most important of these was the Badāyūn Gate. The Māndū Gate came next, the corn market being adjacent to it. The Gul Darwāzah (Gate of Flowers) led to the orchards, the Ghaznā Gate to the 'Īd-gāh and the graveyards around it, the Bajālsā Gate to the main cemetery. It is surprising that tube-roses, jasmines, wild roses and other flowering shrubs had been planted there, and some flowers were to be seen there all the year round[22], as graveyards are traditionally regarded as pointers to the vanity of this world and should have an appearance of desolation. There were two large tanks, the Ḥauḍ-i-Shamsī, and the Ḥauḍ-i-Khās, which was much larger. But Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has not given many details. He was more interested in the personality of the sulṭān and the etiquette of the court, in the high officers and the foreigners whom the sulṭān delighted to honour. Descriptions of Delhi in the late thirteenth century are not at all flattering. There was so much smoke and stench and congestion in old Delhi that Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn agreed that it was better to stay in the Camp[23]. He himself settled at Ghiyāthpūr, several miles to the north-east of the old city. Here also he did not have peace, for Mu'izzuddīn Kaiqubād established his capital and built a palace on the banks of the Jumna near by at Kilōkhṛī. His *amīrs* had to build themselves houses around the improvized palace, and the whole area was filled with the crowd of ruffians and profligates who surrounded the young sulṭān. Kilōhhṛī was not abandoned after the Khiljī revolution. There was still much noise and bustle, and pleasure-seekers who went along the river in barges were a disturbing element. Between Ghiyāthpūr and old Delhi the area was fairly thickly populated, and at least along a part of the main road to the old city there were tents and huts of prostitutes on both sides, and inevitably the riffraff of the city collected here. Neither the old city nor any of those that sprang up later had been built according to any plan; there were no arrangements for sanitation and wells, tanks and the river were the sources of drinking water. Even the construction of bridges and of *sarā'es* for travellers was an act of private philanthropy rather than

[22] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[23] *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, p. 113.

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government planning. Land was given to the trusted *amīrs* to build their houses around the palace when a new capital was established, and this had already been done three times. But every new dynasty destroyed the supporters of the old, and while there were within the cities of Delhi houses and gardens of *amīrs* that were being lived in, there were also deserted ones which needy persons gradually encroached upon because the owners had disappeared. The tendency among those who had the means was to build outside the populated area, where the air was fresh and the lack of sanitary arrangements did not cause discomfort. Within the populated area, people were generally grouped together according to their professions and trades, though there was no exclusiveness. We have already mentioned the quarter where musicians and singers lived, along the banks of the Ḥauḍ-i-Khāṣ. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah states that there were big bazars there and a Jāmi' Masjid where women who were professional singers also joined the congregation to offer the *tarāwīh*[24] prayers during Ramaḍān. This quarter was called Ṭarabābād. Other quarters were named after the trade or profession of the majority of the inhabitants. There were also shops in which the goods produced by the inhabitants or their main articles of trade were sold. The bazar in which cattle and slaves were sold was generally called *Nakhkhās*, but there is no evidence of a market with this name at Delhi. The cloth market was inside the Badāyūn Gate, and that was the quarter where the Hindū cloth merchants, called Multānīs, lived.

When we talk of bazars in this context, we must remember that there was little, if any, display of goods, except of fruit and eatables. Customers who had any status did not themselves come to the shops; they asked the dealer to come to them with the kind of goods they required. A merchant would, therefore, only invite thieves and robbers if he displayed expensive wares openly. Advertisement of goods took the form of the merchant himself going round paying his respects to old customers and getting to know new ones. Knowledge of manners and understanding of situations was essential, apart from the shrewdness which every man of business must possess. The wealth of a city was, therefore, never visible in the bazars. It was seen in the houses. Guests who admired anything at their host's house would enquire from whom it was available. Goods, apart from cloth, would generally be made to order, as everyone wanted something 'different' and the manufacturer himself would have found it difficult to reproduce anything exactly according to sample.

[24] These are supererogatory prayers, offered in continuation with the '*Ishā*' prayers, in which the whole of the Qur'ān is recited once or even twice. They begin from the evening of the first of Ramaḍān and generally conclude before the last Friday of the month.

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In reconstructing the domestic architecture of the period we must remember that the Turks, who set the style, were basically nomads, that the women were segregated, that the proper reception of guests was a very important social duty, and that protection of his property was the business of the householder as well as the city administration. The perfect pattern of the house was the sulṭān's palace. Its main features were the surrounding wall and its gates, the hall of public audience and the *ḥaram*. The political significance of the palace was embodied in the wall and the gates, the social significance in the hall of public audience, and the right of the sulṭān to lead his private life as he liked in the *ḥaram*, which no one could enter who did not belong to its establishment. It was the exclusive privilege of the sulṭān to have a red curtain at the door of the palace, to keep and ride on elephants and to have a red canopy above his head when he gave public audience. The *amīr* modelled his house on the pattern of the palace. There was a surrounding wall, a gate whose proportions corresponded with the *amīr's* rank and his idea of himself. The gate led into a courtyard, on one side of which would be a platform, partly covered and partly open, and a door or perhaps a gate for entrance into the women's quarters. The provision of water for cooling and as an ornament was considered essential, and the courtyards and halls of every *amīr's* house had pools and channels of flowing water. Tents and *shāmiyānās* of various sizes and shapes were put up to supplement the rooms, which were used mainly for retiring into during the heat of the day. It is more difficult to reconstruct what could be called a middle-class house. It had a gate, a reception hall, and probably rooms at the back of the hall, one or more of them opening into the women's quarters. We have fuller descriptions of *khānqāhs* and their residential arrangements. The *khānqāh* had a gate, which was generally the only entrance. People who came at the time when the head of the *khānqāh* received visitors could pass through unchecked, otherwise they would have to wait till they were announced. The *khānqāh* always had a courtyard, on one side of which there was the *jamā'at khānah*, used both as prayer-hall and as dormitory. The Suhrawardī *khānqāh* at Multān had separate rooms for guests. In the *khānqāhs* of Shaikh Fariduddīn Ganj Shakar and Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā, most of the inmates slept on the floor, the provision of a bed being regarded as a mark of special favour. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn's *khānqāh* had a *bālā khānah*, an upper storey consisting of a cell and some open space in front. From this we gather that the normal plan of a house in the city was a courtyard with a room or two on one side, with a second storey consisting of a room and a terrace. The size of this type of house would vary according to the means of the owner. The poorest type consisted of a

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room with a thatched roof and a courtyard. There were no separate rooms for women in the two latter types of houses. They had to seclude themselves in the rooms when visitors came, or the visitors would be received outside in the street. Even the poorest kind of house had a wall surrounding the courtyard to provide some degree of privacy, and entering a house without permission amounted to misconduct and was forbidden by the *sharī'ah*.

The account of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn's attempts to find accommodation give a vivid picture of the living conditions.

'When he came from Badāyūn he got down at a *sarā'e* in a bazar which was also called the Sarā'e of Salt. His mother and sister stayed there; he himself put up in the hall of Fulān[25] the Bow-maker, which was in front of the gate of this *sarā'e*. Amīr Khusrau had a house in the same *muḥallah*. After some time, the residence of the Rāwat of the Muster became vacant, because his sons went to their *iqṭa'*. Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh [Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn] occupied the residence through the mediation of Amīr Khusrau, for the Rāwat was his maternal grandfather. He lived there for about two years. This residence was adjacent to a bastion of the Delhi Fort wall, near the Māndū Gate and the Bridge, so that the bastion had become a part of it. It had lofty buildings and galleries. . . . It had three storeys. On the ground floor, Sayyid Muḥammad Kirmānī lived with his dependents; Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh lived in the middle storey and the friends [that is, *murīds*] on the top floor. . . . Then the sons of the Rāwat returned from their *iqṭā'* and began to get the house vacated. They took advantage of their official status and did not give Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh time enough even to find another lodging. He was obliged to leave the building. We brought his books, apart from which he had no other possessions, to the Mosque of the Thatched Awnings, in front of Sirāj the Grocer's house. Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh spent the night in the mosque. . . . The next day, Sa'd the Paper-merchant, a *murīd* of Shaikh Ṣadruddīn, heard of this. He came to Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh, and with the greatest humility begged him to come to his house. He had a hall and courtyard on the first floor of his house, and he put up Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh there. After spending a month here, he moved to a house in the middle of the Sarā'e of the Rakābdār, adjacent to the Qaiṣar Bridge'[26].

Delhi was apparently a city parts of which were congested and parts desolate. 'Alā'uddīn set up his cloth market, called Sarā'-i-'Adl, in a stretch of wasteland inside the Badāyūn Gate, near the Green

[25] There appears to be a calligraphic error in the name.
[26] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, pp. 108-9.

Palace. There were deserted houses where a person content with a few comforts could somehow accommodate himself, ownership of house property being a complicated matter and possession depending upon actual occupation.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has given brief descriptions of some other cities also. He found Daulatābād to be almost as large as Delhi. It consisted of three parts, Daulatābād proper, in which the royal Camp was situated, another part, called Kathatā, and the old fort, called Dē'ōgīr. Most of the Hindūs were merchants, the most prominent being jewellers. Like Delhi, there was a musicians' quarter in Daulatābād also, called Ṭarabābād. It had a broad, well laid-out bazar with many big 'shops'. Each of these had a door opening into the street, and another leading into the house. A fine carpet was spread in the shop, and in the middle there was a beautifully decorated swing on which the singer sat or lay down, while her maids gently moved the swing. In the middle of the bazar there was a domed building, very ornamental, its floor covered with carpets. The Chief of the Musicians came there every Thursday after *'aṣr* prayers. All his slaves and servants were present, and courtesans came by turns and sang before him. After the *maghrib* prayers he retired. There were mosques in this bazar where *tarāwīḥ* prayers were offered during Ramaḍān. Rājās who came to visit the bazar frequented the domed building; so did some Muslim kings[27]. At Khambāyat the atmosphere was totally different. It was a town consisting mainly of foreign merchants who vied with one another in the construction of palatial buildings and mosques. One of the houses had a gate almost as large as a city gate, with a mosque by its side. Sāgar was situated in a fertile area. It had many sugar-cane fields, banana plantations and mango groves, and among them *khānqāhs* and *takyās* where travellers could put up. Wood was used as structural material all over the country, but more in central, eastern and southern India than in the north.

City life depends on the supply of food-grains from the countryside and raw material for industries and manufactured goods from wherever they are available. In other words, it depends upon roads and means of transport. The roads during our period were mainly tracks and clearings in the forest, and it was not unusual for travellers to go astray. As far as possible, people travelled together in large groups, and arranged for protection of some kind against highwaymen and robbers, whose tribes lived in the forests and were very difficult to catch. Even around the capital, the forests were infested with robbers. In the middle of the thirteenth century, the Mē'ōs who lived in the hilly area west and south of Delhi not only plundered

[27] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 171 ff.

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people on the highways around Delhi but even stole into the town. 'They came up to the Ḥauḍ-i-Shamsī, molested water-carriers and maid-servants who came to draw water, stripping them and walking away with their clothes'[28]. Balban, as we have seen, took very vigorous measures to make travelling safe. Still, in the middle of the fourteenth century, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, who was travelling from Multān to Delhi almost as a state guest, was attacked soon after he had left Abōhar. Some years later, when he left Delhi as Ambassador-designate for China, and had armed troops to guard him and the rich presents he was carrying, he was plundered eighty miles south of Delhi and was lucky to escape with his life. Persons who travelled alone or in small groups were in even greater danger. Nevertheless, there was considerable movement of persons and goods.

The chief means of transport were bullocks and bullock-carts. For passengers who did not ride on horses there were various kinds of open and closed palanquins, *ḏōlās* and *ḏōlīs*, open for the men and closed for women. It appears that the choice of transport depended to some extent on the type of racial group to which a person belonged, and it took several centuries for women of Turkish families to give up riding on horseback. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah mentions how, after a marriage ceremony, the bride was taken away in a richly adorned *ḏōlā*, the Begums who had come to participate in the ceremony left on horseback and the poorer women on foot[29]. The palanquins and *ḏōlās* were carried by slaves or, for those who did not have slaves, by porters, large numbers of whom were available for occasional and permanent employment 'in the bazars, in front of the sulṭān's palace and in front of peoples' houses'.

The food and the method of serving it varied, of course, according to the means of the persons concerned. In the palace and the houses of the rich it was served in china dishes and plates, each person having a plate to himself, all laid out on a long cloth, the *dastarkhwān*, along both sides of which people sat. The number of courses was generally large. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's account makes it appear that one course was served after another, but generally most of the dishes were placed on the *dastarkhwān*, though they may have been eaten in a particular order. A sweet drink preceded the meal, and sweets of some kind were taken at the end. At the first dinner to which Ibn Baṭṭūṭah was entertained, the appetizer was followed by bread with mutton, fried bread filled with a mixture of almonds, honey and sesame oil, *ḥalwā* with a kind of sweet fried bread, called *khishtī*, on top, *qalyah* (meat with sauce), *samōsās* (pies filled with minced meat, almonds, pistachio, onions and condiments), rice cooked in

[28] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[29] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

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clarified butter with chicken, then two more sweet dishes. The number of courses in the meals of persons with average resources would be three or four, though the tendency was towards extravagance, especially in feasts, and towards making the food as rich as possible. The food of the poor was unleavened bread, baked in the form of a thick disc, and a little vegetable or meat.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭah gives an interesting account of how food was served in a town in Malābār, Hinaur. A slave-girl dressed in silk placed metal trays, each with a plate in it, before each guest. Then she brought pots of food along with big metal spoons. As a first course, she put a big spoonful of rice in each plate, poured clarified butter over it, and put pickles of various kinds on the side of the plate. When this had been consumed, she again put a spoonful of rice in each plate, and served chicken cooked in vinegar along with it. The same order was followed with courses of chicken, fish and vegetables cooked in different ways. Then all drank curd mixed with water, and the meal ended with a glass of hot water, considered necessary for proper digestion.

Probably the skill of the potter and the glazier was exercised most in the manufacture of wine-cups and caraffes (*ṣurāḥī*), but china plates, cups and bowls of elegant designs were in general use. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz said on one occasion that he had a cup made of glass[30].

The dress of the Indian Muslims of this period is very difficult to describe, as we have just the names of the various articles of dress and can only make guesses about their form. There were, as we have stated, some types of dervishes who wore nothing at all, and others were content with just a rag in front. But the rules of prayer required full covering of the body. A turban, a tunic and a *luṇgī*, wound around the lower part of the body was the minimum clothing that would fulfil the demands of the *sharī'ah*. A *mirza'i*, probably a short, tight-fitting tunic, and a large kerchief thrown across the shoulder could be an addition to this minimum. The observations of the Arab travellers show that the climate induced the Muslims of the Indūs valley and the western coast soon after their settlement to adopt the same dress as the Hindūs. Or, it might be that Indians of these areas did not give up their dress after conversion. Iṣṭakhrī, who came to western India about 951, noticed that the dress of the people in *Manṣūrah*, the Muslim headquarters in southern Sind, was like that of the 'Iraqis, but the appearance of the kings was like that

[30] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 122. Till recently anyone taking a walk around the archaeological sites of Delhi would have found innumerable pieces of china lying around. A bowl of exquisite proportions painted in a style strongly reminiscent of Chinese patterns was excavated at a site near the Jamia Millia.

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of the Indian rājās. They grew their hair long, and wore *kurtās*, or long, loose tunics. In the coastal towns, Muslims and Hindūs wore the same dress. All kept their hair long; it was very hot, so they wore a *luṇgī* and a *kurtā*[31]. Fresh settlers, or merchants whose business made it necessary to travel between Arabia, Iraq, Iran and India, seem to have retained the particular dress of their country. The Turks had their own dandyish headgear and coiffure, which seems to have been imitated by the non-Turkish Muslims. 'For a while there was talk of ringlets and ribbons for tying the hair. The Shaikh (Gēsū-darāz) said it was not a Muslim custom, but a practice of the Turks. When they conquered Delhi it was inevitable that it should become the (general) custom'[32]. The Turks wore a *shalwār* or *izār*, a kind of loose trousers, one or more tight-fitting undergarments, a longish, tight gown (*qabā*), and over it a loose cloak (*'abā*), a waistband and a turban. This may also be regarded as the official dress. The dress of the Turkish women was in the main the same as that of the men, the difference being in the quality and texture of the material. The varieties of cloth were numerous, and the texture could be of a transparent fineness. Embroidery and weaving with gold and silver thread was quite usual. The dress of the Muslim women of Malābār consisted of a single, long piece of cloth draped around the body. They did not wear tailored clothes[33].

Types of dress that had become symbolic tended to retain their form. The ṣūfis wore an *'abā* of coarse cloth, generally patched, and the *ṭāqiyah*, a four-cornered skull cap. The *'ulamā* distinguished themselves by means of an unusually large turban that was both a head dress and one of the insignia of knowledge.

The chief means of interior decoration were carpets and hangings and ornate cushions. The *takht*, a low seat with a wooden top, could be made in many sizes, and offered ample opportunities for display of wealth and good taste in the mattresses, covers, carpets and cushions used. The general custom of sitting on the floor made the chair irrelevant, but low stools seem to have been used. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah states that when he arrived at the house prepared for him under orders from the sulṭān, he found there all the necessary things, such as bedding, carpet, mats, utensils and cots. The cots, he says, were portable, and a single man could carry one. Every traveller had to have his cot with him, his servant carrying it on his head. The cot consisted of four tapering legs, on which were stretched four sticks, and between them was made a net of silk or cotton. It was soft and springy of itself, one did not need to make it so. Along with the cot,

[31] *Hindustān 'Arabōṇ kī Naẓar meṇ*, pp. 368-75.
[32] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 170.
[33] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

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Ibn Baṭṭūṭah was provided with two mattresses, two pillows and a quilt, all of silk. It was the custom to cover the mattresses and blankets with white sheets of linen or cotton. When the covers became soiled they were washed; thus the inner parts were kept clean[34].

In considering the organization of the household, we have again to think in terms of classes, the *amīrs* on the one hand and on the other the common people, among whom would be included all those whose means did not enable them to live like the *amīrs*. The distinction, however, is less important for its economic than for its moral aspect. The household of the *amīr*, like the *amīr* himself, did not have the solid foundation of those loyalties out of which real family life is created. Marriage may have meant restraint for the wives of the *amīrs*, and there is every probability that it did. But where the number of slave-girls who could be purchased and kept was not limited, and their offspring enjoyed the same rights as the children born of regular marriages, marriage and even motherhood tended to be deprived of their rightful significance, even though the love of mother and child was as strong among Indian Muslims as anywhere else. The wife or wives of an *amīr* would not lose class or status except through some political accident which brought ruin upon them, but surrounded as they were with eunuchs and slave-girls, they could not have had real personalities. Beauty, clothes, jewellery and social status do not make a woman, and the women of an *amīr's* household had nothing else. The number of exceptions to the rule of having several wives and concubines must have been both large and important, because healthy standards of family life were maintained. But it is a remarkable fact that talent and virtue can seldom be traced in any family of *amīrs* after the first or second generation; the good in most persons belonging to the ruling class was buried with their bones. It was very different with those who did not belong to the ruling classes. Contracting more than one marriage was not considered reprehensible; even a person like Shaikh Farīduddīn had 'many' wives. But Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh Dehlī were celibates, and Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn Nāgōrī's wife was an example of almost ideal constancy and self-respect. One cannot generalize from individual cases, and since it was considered improper to write of intimate matters of family life, the historical material is quite insufficient to form judgements based on a consideration of a large and varied number of cases. It seems to be the wisest course to assume that marital relations among the Indian Muslims ranged, as among other peoples, from conditions of deepest affection to incompatibility resulting in conflict and violence, and

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

then to guess how far these relations would have acquired peculiarity and a typical character because of current opinions and beliefs.

It is quite evident that, in spite of the Islāmic doctrine of the equality of man and woman before God, certain changes crept in when Islām spread outside Arabia. Among the Arabs, divorce and remarriage were not considered of much consequence and did not cause much concern. Arab civilization was, no doubt, masculine in character, but the women were assertive enough not to let the men dominate absolutely. Sexual life was regarded with frankness and without inhibitions. In India, with the large admixture of races that must have taken place, and because of the influence of the sentiments with which the environment was permeated, a civilization that was masculine in character became a civilization that was dominated by the male. There were no formal changes in the law regarding the rights and duties of women, but there was considerable change in the attitude towards these laws. Marriage, so far as the woman was concerned, gradually assumed a finality that does not seem to have been intended by Islāmic doctrine. Shaikh Niẓāmuddin's mother consulted with him about the advisability of asking for *khula'*, or dissolution of the marriage contract of his sister, whose husband was not treating her properly, but finally both decided to wait and see how the relationship developed. There are no instances of divorce or the remarriage of widows in the chronicles of the *ṣūfīs*, and incompatibility does not seem to have been considered a social problem requiring attention. On the other hand, the duty of a woman to guard herself and her reputation was emphasized. Girls could only meet members of their own family, even grown-up women were expected to avoid talking to or even being seen by strangers. Bashārī Muqaddassī, writing in 985, noted that in Multān women did not go out decked in fine clothes, they were not to be seen in the bazar, and women did not talk to men in public[35]. Mixed gatherings, even of members of the same family, apart from occasions of marriage or other family festivities were rare. As the circumstances did not exist in which attachment could develop and find expression in various forms of affection and loyalty before marriage or without marriage, conjugal relationship was governed by a concept of justice. Man and wife were expected to respect and fulfil each other's desire[36]. Other things were by no means incidental or secondary, and the husband who did not show proper regard for his wife could not

[35] *Hindustān 'Arabōṇ kī Naẓar meṇ*, p. 389.

[36] 'There was a *dervish* called 'Īsā who performed personal service. He informed the wife whose turn it was and sent her to the Shaikh-i-Shuyūkh-i-'Ālam (Shaikh Farīduddīn). He was careful about observing this routine, so that in this matter regard was paid to *justice*'. *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 194.

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hope to earn social esteem. But women were not generally considered full persons whose advice was to be sought and experience relied upon, and conclusions were drawn from this belief by men according to their temperament and culture.

The main interest of the women was the celebration of marriages, births, the *'aqīqah*, the circumcision of boys, their first lesson (*bismillāh*) and the observance of customs in regard to mourning for the dead. The description we have of a marriage by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah already shows considerable Hindū influence. The bride and bridegroom were segregated in their own houses, their hands and feet were dyed with henna. Muslim law only requires four witnesses to a marriage, two signing on behalf of the bride and two on behalf of the bridegroom. This law continued to be observed, and the drawing up and witnessing of a marriage contract to which the bride and the bridegroom agreed in the presence of witnesses or, among the Shī'ahs, through *wakīls*, or authorized representatives, remained the chief feature of the marriage ceremony. But it had become the custom by the middle of the fourteenth century for the bride and the bridegroom's people to form two opposite parties. When the bridegroom went with his party to the bride's house, he wore garlands of flowers that covered his head and fell to his waist, so that his face became invisible. His party carried short sticks. On their arrival at the entrance to the bride's quarters, they found her party in array, determined to resist their entrance into the house. When the bridegroom's party had broken through, he rode up to a pulpit with three steps, on the highest of which the bride was seated, surrounded by women. As the bridegroom approached, they stood up and began to sing and recite the *takbīr*[37], while drums were beaten outside. The bridegroom alighted from his horse and bowed to the ground. Then the bride stood up, and offered the groom a *pān* with her own hands. The bridegroom sat down on the pulpit, a step lower than the bride, and coins were showered on both. Finally, the bridegroom stood up, took his bride's hand and helped her down the pulpit. He led the way out and she followed, getting into her *ḏōlā* as he got on his horse[38].

Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has described a marriage arranged by the sulṭān, and he was so absorbed in the unusual part of the proceedings that he omitted to state exactly when the legal, Islāmic part of the marriage, the recitation of Qur'ānic verses by the qāḍī, and his questioning the man and the woman in regard to their agreement to the marriage, took place. This is also an instance of the ceremony where Turkish customs must have predominated. The Indian

[37] *Takbīr* means glorifying the name of God by saying 'Allāh-o-akbar', God is great.

[38] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 78 ff.

Muslim marriage ceremony must have had many more features borrowed from the Hindūs. Tradition ascribes to Amīr Khusrau the composition of the songs known as *Bābul*, which were sung later at the time when the bride left her parents' house. They represent the most un-Islāmic feature of the Indian Muslim marriage, because they embody the concept that when the daughter left her parents' house she left it for good, breaking old relationships in order to establish new ones in her husband's home. This concept was not realized in practice. The parents of the girl never considered themselves absolved from their obligations of love and solicitude, and cases where the wife left her husband's home because of incompatibility and her refusal to return was supported by her family must have been as frequent earlier as they were later. As the proper marriage was that which took place within the *kufw*, that is, within families that possessed the same social status and cultural forms, and cousin marriages were preferred, because they kept the girl within the same family, the question of a married daughter breaking off old relationships generally did not arise.

Marriage was a ceremony in which the women of the family had the decisive voice, and it was through them that practices which might be crudely described as un-Islāmic crept in. It was probably because women who were singers by caste were engaged to sing at all kinds of ceremonies and give advice as to what was generally considered auspicious or proper that un-Islamic customs were adopted. The *'aqīqah*, the circumcision and the first lesson were occasions when a sermon by some well-known preacher was arranged. Those who were inclined towards the *ṣūfīs* invited a *shaikh* and his *murīds*; *samā'* was arranged if the particular *shaikh* had a liking for it. Social gatherings of different kinds were an outstanding and significant feature of Indian Muslim life, and provided an opportunity for the persons who organized them to bring into prominence the ideas and values to which they professed allegiance. One type of host would invite the fanatical preacher to deliver a hair-raising sermon, another would invite women singers. The privilege of being the host enabled a relaxation of otherwise binding rules. 'Shaikh Naṣīruddīn never of his own will listened to women singers, but when he was asked as a guest to a party and women sang there, he did not object'[39]. At marriage parties, of course, the women singers provided most of the music and the noise.

The social relations between men and women were, in all their aspects, the result of compartmentalized thinking, which had become established as a tradition and gave a stereotyped character

[39] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, pp. 263-4.

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to the behaviour of both. The 'free' woman was entitled as a child to a proper upbringing, to affection and such instruction and education as would enable her to maintain the cultural standards of her family; as a girl she would be protected from such influences as were likely to mislead her. It was her right to have a suitable husband found for her, and to die unmarried was considered a misfortune not only for the young woman but also for her family. It was believed that the law of inheritance and the *mihr* provided her economic security. But even if the law of inheritance was strictly followed, which most probably was not the general rule, women did not have the opportunity of gaining that experience of the world and its affairs which was essential for enabling them to administer their property. *Mihr* was money given to the woman by her husband as a part of the marriage contract. In pre-Islāmic Arabia it was a kind of bride-price paid to the father of the bride. It was taken over in Islām in its later, but still pre-Islāmic form of money payable to the bride herself and belonging to her absolutely. Its amount could be as low as one *dīnār*; as a rule it was not significant. It could not serve as a means of subsistence to a woman who was divorced, and in fact merely indicated her status. After marriage, a woman's position was governed by the idea of 'justice' which we have mentioned above. A woman could, no doubt, remonstrate with her husband if he went to other women. She could object to his marrying for the second time, and induce her parents and her family to exercise such pressure on her husband as would dissuade or prevent him from taking this step. But there was no legal means of prohibiting a second marriage, or a third or a fourth, unless the husband bound himself in the marriage contract not to marry again during the life time of his wife. Suspicion does not form the proper beginning for a relationship in which everything depends on adaptation and adjustment, and though there may have been marriage contracts in which obligations other than those in regard to the *mihr* were included, the general practice must have been to avoid everything that savoured of a formal approach or a legal determination of rights. The women were, therefore, the losers whenever marital relations became unpleasant. Opinion, both legal and social, obliged the wife to give her husband his rights, just as they obliged the husband to be 'just' towards his wife. But the idea of social life was different for both. It was considered proper for women to associate with women, and for men to associate with men. There was no ideal of companionship in married life. The wife, if she wanted friendship, would have had to look for it among women of her own class and status. The man, if he wanted companionship, would have had to look for it among men or among such women as were technically classed as courtesans, but were

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often given an education which was much wider both as regards knowledge as well as experience than that of the 'free' women. They could, if they had the disposition, be friends and companions, because the restrictions which kept the free woman within her house did not apply to the courtesan. Of course, courtesans were brought up in a certain way. They were taught to distrust men, to take advantage of all their weaknesses and use every possible means to accumulate resources in the form of cash or jewellery that would enable them to pass their old age with as much freedom from care as possible. There were courtesans of all types, but whatever the type, they were expected to fulfil the needs of what we understand today by social life. They could converse, they could amuse, in their houses they could provide men with opportunities of coming together and talking freely. Though because of their profession they were not considered a part of respectable society, the compartmentalized thinking we have mentioned above did not consider it wrong or reprehensible even for respectable men to enjoy the company of courtesans. There is hardly any story or anecdote in the literature of this period with love of man and woman as the theme in which the heroine is a 'free' woman. The beauty and the sentiments of a 'free' woman may have been considered too pure to be the subject of description or discussion in poetry or prose; in any case, a taboo is noticeable. On the other hand, a poet or a writer had complete freedom if his subject was a slave-girl, a non-Muslim woman or a mythical person or a fairy. There is a touching story in the *Jawāmi'al-Kalim* about the love of a man and a slave-girl, and obviously the object in relating the story is to show how intense and edifying love can be[40]. But there was a growing tendency to regard woman as a temptation and a snare. This was a reaction against the evil consequences of having a society infested with courtesans and slave-girls, which is well illustrated in an anecdote in the *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, related by Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. A man set out from Delhi for Ajōdhan in order to perform the *taubah* in the presence of Shaikh Farīduddīn. On the way a singer joined him. She developed a desire for him and was thinking of ways and means of having intercourse with him. But the man was of a pure mind and felt in no way inclined towards the lewd woman, until during a stage of the journey they travelled in the same cart and the singer came and sat next to him. Now there was no distance between them, and the man's heart was somewhat moved, so that he talked to her and stretched out his hand towards her[41]. The story ends on a pious note, a mysterious figure

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[41] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 85. The manner of relating the anecdote suggests that it was autobiographical.

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appearing and reminding the man of the resolution with which he had started from Delhi, but there are several interesting facts of social life and ideas of the relationship between man and woman that are revealed in the story.

In the first place, the kind of women classed as singers seem to have moved about freely, and it was the look-out of the men concerned to see that they did not get involved in any way. Secondly, it was assumed that a woman could want only one thing from a man. Thirdly, a man was deemed to be incapable of controlling himself, and the sight or touch of a woman set in train emotional and physiological processes which could have only one result. It is for this reason that in books of *fiqh* we find endless speculations on the consequences of a man seeing or touching the hands, arms, face etc. of women who are related to his wife. It followed logically that 'free' men and women should, even in their own homes, strictly regulate their behaviour. This tended to heighten susceptibility to an unnatural degree, and to prevent the creation of those emotional defences in women which are the guarantees of adult freedom and true morality. The men were not subject to any kind of control. It became important, therefore, to protect 'free' women, to see that they did not find themselves in situations where strangers could take advantage of them or where the exercise of self-control became necessary. They were secluded not only from the company but from the sight of those who were strangers, as well as those among their relations with whom marriage was theoretically possible.

This did not mean, however, that they were confined to their homes. They visited each other, they attended fairs and the celebration of the death anniversaries of saints, they went to recite prayers (*fātiḥah*) at the tombs of their dead relatives. They used *dōlīs* of various shapes and sizes for conveyance, but women of Turkish families also rode on horse-back. They were covered from head to foot, with only a slit in front of the eyes to enable them to see the way. But their going about by themselves created law and order problems, specially because they had often to pass through quarters of the city inhabited by women of loose character, and their being 'free' and respectable women did not make any difference to the type of men that hung around such places. In Delhi, Firūz Tughlaq took the extreme step of prohibiting women from going out unaccompanied.

An impression one gets from reading the chronicles is that the people were fond of the spectacular and would collect in multitudes to witness any spectacle, whether it was the triumphal entry of a sulṭan, the execution of a rebel, a bull-fight, an acrobatic performance or some form of sports. The *'urs*, or death anniversary of a *ṣūfī* was

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a great occasion, because the supernatural powers of almost every *ṣūfī* became a myth, and people from far and near collected at his tomb to obtain the particular benefits a visit to it was believed to confer. There were some *ṣūfīs* who were known to have disliked the idea of women coming to them and were believed to have left behind instructions that women should not be allowed to approach their tombs; generally an *'urs* was an occasion when women singers, like 'free' women, gathered at the *ṣūfī's* tomb in large numbers to offer *fātiḥah* and receive benefits in return, and social restraints which kept people of the various classes and professions away from each other were lifted. The *'urs* was, therefore, a means of democratization, much more than the congregational prayer. It was also an occasion for the practice of large-scale charity, and at the *'urs* of many well-known saints thousands of poor people were fed. It is related in the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* that whenever Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn went to visit Shaikh Quṭubuddīn's tomb, the courtesans who had their tents pitched along the road used to stand and wait for him and saluted him when he passed by. The Shaikh distributed money among them. Some received stipends from him. On the occasion of every *'urs*, he always sent trays of food and money to the women, two silver *tankās* and two trays of food to some, one silver *tankā* and one tray of food to others. Once Iqbāl, the manager of his *khānqāh*, sent one silver *tankā* and one tray of food to a courtesan 'who had taken to seclusion', that is, given up her profession. The courtesan told the servant, 'Abū, who had brought the money and food, that her allowance was *two* trays of food and *two* silver *tankās*, and roundly accused him of theft. 'Abū got away with great difficulty. In the *khānqāh* he complained loudly to Iqbāl against the courtesan. The Shaikh happened to overhear him and said, 'The poor woman is telling the truth. Her allowance is two trays of food and two silver *tankās*[42].

We have referred in an earlier chapter to the belief that it was necessary to become the *murīd* of some *shaikh* in order to escape from the torment of the grave and to have an intercessor on the Day of Judgement. This belief had, no doubt, a spiritual aspect. But it was also the reflection of a superstitious attitude. People believed in magic, and this belief gained strength in course of time, as will be seen from the increasingly serious references to it in the *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*, the *Siyar al-Awliyā*, the *Khair al-Majālis*, the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* and the *Ma'dan al-Ma'ānī*. It appears that by the end of the fourteenth century anyone who refused to believe in the power of magic would have been considered crazy, if not positively heretical. There was also widespread belief in astrology. In the time of

[42] *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 122.

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'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, people talked as never before—and perhaps never after—of prayer and fasts and litanies; they read books on ṣūfism, and there was a *miswāk*[43] and a comb stuck in every turban. This was due entirely to the influence of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā. Some preachers and 'reciters' were also very popular. But astrologers were in great demand too. Horoscopes seemed necessary for guidance through life. No ceremony would be performed in any respectable family, and no work of any importance undertaken by any individual without consulting an astrologer. As a result, almost every street had its astrologer, who could be a Hindū or a Muslim, and in this profession were some who 'performed almost miraculous acts by way of discovering secret motives, interpreting the commands of the Unseen and finding things lost'[44]. Muḥammad Tughlaq had great faith in *yōgīs* who performed wonderful feats, such as levitation and breath control, and treated them with the utmost respect. A very unpleasant aspect of the belief in magic was the fear of witches and witchcraft. Women suspected of practising witchcraft had to undergo an ordeal, and were burnt to death if found guilty[45].

There are no accepted traditions which justify and provide a legal basis for the actual relationships between Muslims and Hindūs, though many practices borrowed from the Hindūs which became a part of the ceremonies of marriage, childbirth and death were furnished *ex post facto* with a legal basis. Among these may be mentioned the *sāchaq*, or gifts sent to the bride by the bridegroom's parents, before the *nikāh*, the *sēyum*, the *niyāz* and *fātiḥah* after death. How they became typically Muslim observances is a matter of conjecture, but it can be assumed that women were the means of introducing them. There are a few instances in recorded history of Muslims marrying Hindū women. The mother of Fīrūz Tughlaq was the daughter of a Hindū rājā. But Baranī mentions converts and Muslims of mixed parentage aspiring to government service as early as the reign of Balban. Converted women would naturally combine Islām with their traditional practices. An equally strong influence must have been those castes and professions which depended on the patronage of the rājās and smaller chiefs, and which transferred their services to the Muslim *amīrs* who had displaced the Hindū gentry. The domestic servants, the barbers, the singers, the astrologers, the different kinds of craftsmen must have found it easy to

[43] A thin branch of a tree, generally the *nim*, cut to a size of about nine inches, with one end crushed with the teeth so as to form a tooth-brush. The use of the *miswāk* was encouraged for hygienic reasons, but also given a ritualistic character.

[44] Baranī, *op. cit.*, pp. 343 ff., 355, 363 ff.

[45] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, p. 164 ff.

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play upon the superstitions or the vanity of the newcomers to establish themselves in the new order.

The larger question of the relationship between Muslims and Hindūs has, as we have seen, three aspects, the political, the theological or legal, and the actual. The political and the theological have already been referred to. It is the actual social aspect that has to be visualized, particularly in order to see the political and theological aspects in their proper perspective.

We have no certain knowledge of how far Muslim traders had infiltrated by the beginning of the eleventh century. It is reasonable to suppose that Sulṭān Maḥmūd would not have led his armies towards distant and specific objectives unless he knew sufficiently about them, and not only from hearsay. He made Lahore into an outpost of his dominions; it became an outpost of Muslim culture, because of the scholars and *ṣūfīs* who found refuge there, and it provided for further infiltration by traders. When Muḥammad bin Bakhtiyār Khiljī attacked Lakshman Sēn's capital, Nuddiā, in Bengal, he was able to enter the city with his advanced guard of eighteen men because they were mistaken for horse-dealers[46]. Their appearance, therefore, would not have been an unusual phenomenon. When traders went so far afield, it is not a matter of surprise that there were small Muslim settlements at Badāyūn, Ajmēr and Qannauj before the Sultanate was established at Delhi. A famous scholar and theologian, Raḍī'uddīn Ḥasan Ṣaghānī, who later went to Lahore and then to centres of learning in Arabia and Iran, was born at Badāyūn. Shaikh 'Abdur Raḥmān, who preceded Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī at Ajmēr, must have had a Muslim settlement serving as a base for his missionary operations. The change of government in north India was not quite an unexpected event.

The accounts as we have them are most inadequate for a reconstruction of what happened in the different cities because of the change of rulers. But the process seems to have followed a pattern. The ruler's palace was occupied; the main temple was destroyed. As soon as possible a *jāmi' masjid*, or chief mosque, was built where the *khuṭbah* was read proclaiming the new ruler. New coins were struck. These were all symbolic acts; they were the sum total of what the victors could do on their own. Law and order had to be enforced as soon as the fighting was over, and once this responsibility had been assumed, the influence of the environment would begin to be felt. The sulṭān, or the commander and the *amīrs* attached to him would be provided with all that was necessary to meet their daily requirements, but the soldiers would need to dispose of the prisoners of war and the booty. These would be thrown on the market, and the

[46] Minhājuddīn Sirāj, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-1.

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merchants assured of security in buying and selling. The army had to carry its own market, but this market could not perform its function of being a place for the purchase or exchange of goods unless it established relations with other markets and attracted merchants from outside. The soldier who thought himself entitled to everything he could lay his hands on when he attacked a city found himself in a poor bargaining position when the fighting was over. He had to sell or risk the loss through robbery or theft of what he had acquired; the merchant, on the other hand, could not be forced to buy. We have evidence later of soldiers selling to brokers the orders they received assigning them as their pay land or cash out of income from land at places to which they could not go without taking long leave, and it would be logical and correct to assume that from the very beginning there were large numbers of men serving as intermediaries between the merchants and the soldiers who helped to conclude all kinds of transactions. It was not only the soldier who found himself caught in the net of economic laws. The ruler and the administrator had also to recognize the fact that the necessities of life could not be provided unless dealers in grain and cloth and capitalists who invested money in large-scale transactions were guaranteed security. Artisans and craftsmen of all types would have to be protected to supply local needs. Some language would have to be learnt to establish communication between the rulers and the ruled, and language being about the most important means of expressing the spirit, the thoughts, the whole attitude of the people towards life, the Muslims exposed themselves almost immediately to influences whose nature and extent was incalculable.

The pattern of war and conquest has been the same throughout the world and almost throughout history. Victors have very seldom been kind to the vanquished, and the immediate consequences of a change of rulers as the result of war have everywhere been a calamity. However, the ultimate results of the mingling of races and cultures have to be judged by a different standard, in which the vanquished are not considered entitled to unqualified sympathy or the victors to reckless condemnation. It is only by the adoption of this different standard that we can purge our minds of the prejudices which prevent an objective study of historical forces and processes.

The conquest by Muslims of any Indian territory was never complete. In Sindh, the recall of Muḥammad bin Qāsim was followed by a Hindū reaction which almost wiped out the results of the first victories. When Ḥakam bin 'Awānah was appointed governor of Sindh, he found that the Indians had 'rebelled and apostasized'. He built two cities, Maḥfūẓah and Manṣūrah, in the north and south of Sindh, to provide places of security for the Muslims. Bashārī

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Maqdasī, who wrote in 985, found the Hindūs preponderant in Manṣūrah, although Islām was a living religion there. In Qannauj and Waihind also the Hindūs were in a majority, 'but the Muslims have a separate king of their own'[47]. The precarious position of the Muslims in Sindh was due to internal conflicts. There was continuous risk of the Delhi Sultanate being overturned for the same reason, and the instances of ambitious converts like Malik Kāfūr Hazārdīnārī, Khusrau Malik and Khān-i-Jahān Tiliṇgānī show what course a reaction could have taken. Jalāluddin Khilji, who was inclined towards realism because he became the sulṭan in his old age, said to one of his advisers: 'During our rule the enemies of God and the enemies of the Prophet live under our eyes and in our capital in the most sophisticated and grand manner, in dignity and plenty, enjoying pleasures and abundance, and are held in honour and esteem among the Muslims'[48]. Since they did not generally aspire to political power, they were not affected by political revolutions, and the Muslim habit of borrowing to cover extravagant expenditure must have placed them in a position of great advantage. We have seen that when 'Alā'uddīn decided to deprive as many people as possible of cash and easily convertible assets, he left the Multānīs and moneylenders alone. They controlled the cloth trade and were made responsible collectively for maintaining supplies and selling cloth at the fixed rates. There is no evidence that the situation changed later, and we may assume that while the administration at the higher levels and the army was in Muslim hands, the Hindūs also had a share in it, but the economy was controlled by the Hindūs. In the sphere of religion the domination of the Muslims was largely fictitious. Temples were destroyed as a mark of conquest, and those that survived the conquest were continuously at the mercy of fanaticism. Images were defaced, to mark the Muslim's righteous horror of idolatry. But exactly the contrary was also happening. The famous idol of Multān and another of Bhairavā in a neighbouring town were 'a permanent source of mischief. I met a Muslim (writes Bashārī Maqdasī), who said that he had apostasized and begun to worship them, and fallen into great distress. Then he went to Nīshāpūr and reverted to Islām'[49]. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah found a Muslim who was a disciple of the *yōgīs*, and in a town in central India he

[47] *Hindustān 'arabōṇ kī Naẓar mēṇ*, pp. 385 and 399.

[48] Baranī, op. cit., p. 217. A statement he makes earlier (p. 108) about 'everyone from among the Muslims and Hindūs and Turks and Tādjīks who possessed any status or fame or property or gifted land' shows that Hindūs were not excluded from privileges. There are instances of Hindūs being appointed to responsible posts. In his *Fatāwā-i-Jahāṇdārī*, Baranī is even more explicit and bitter about the actually superior social position of the Hindūs.

[49] *Hindustān 'Arabōṇ kī Naẓar meṇ*, p. 395.

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came across Muslims who went around with *yōgīs*, hoping to learn things from them. The *Futūḥāt-i-Fīrūzshāhī* mentions sects that had sprung up as the result of Hindū missionary effort, and had gathered Hindūs and Muslim men and women within their fold. With the growth of the *bhaktī* movement, the number of Muslims seeking spiritual fulfilment in accordance with the Hindū tradition became very marked. In Sikandar Lōdī's reign, while we have an instance of a Brahman being executed for saying that Islām was a true religion and still refusing to accept it, we have also the instance of a Hindū named Brahman who offered instruction in their traditional sciences to Muslim students[50]. The *Futūḥāt* records the destruction of many temples that had been built at places around Delhi without permission, the implication being that they would have been allowed to remain if the correct procedure had been adopted. But if temples could be destroyed, habits and institutions were beyond the reach of the political ruler. We do not know to what extent untouchability was practised in the north. But it must have been prevalent and the Muslims would not have known what to do about it. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's account shows that it was practised in Malabār. Describing the road from Sandāpūr to Quilon, he says that

> 'at every half mile there stands a wooden house in which there are benches on which the wayfarers, infidels as well as Muslims, sit. Near each of these houses there is a well from which drinking water is taken, and which is entrusted to the supervision of an infidel. He gives the infidels water in vessels, and if one happens to be a Muslim, he pours water into his (cupped) hands. . . . It is the custom among the heathens of the Malābār country that no Muslim should enter their house or use their utensils for eating purposes. If a Muslim is fed out of their vessels, they either break the vessels or give them away to the Mussalmans. When a Muslim enters a place in this country in which there is absolutely no house of the Mussalmans, the heathens cook his food for him, place it before him on banana leaves and pour the soup on it; what is left over is fed to the dogs and the birds'.

But for Muslim houses along this road, it would not have been possible for Muslims to travel in this country. 'We used to meet infidels on this road at night; but as soon as they saw us they got out of the way until we had passed. The Muslims are the most respected people in this country except that, as before mentioned, the natives do not dine with them or admit them into their houses'[51]. Hindū institutions were not interfered with under the Sultanate. Hindūs

[50] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 323.
[51] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-3.

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could worship idols openly. There were no restrictions on pilgrims and the observances in regard to bathing etc., on the holy days continued uninterrupted. Sikandar Lōdī's desire to destroy an old temple and to stop the gathering of pilgrims at Kurukshētra could not be fulfilled, because he was told that such interference in religious practices was against the *sharī'ah*. It seems unhistorical to consider that Muslims followed a straight or distinct course in matters of religion; on the other hand, it is equally unhistorical to hold that Hindūs or Hinduism were stifled or suppressed. We get an entirely wrong picture of life if we look at just one part of it and draw inferences in regard to the whole. If we attempt to visualize the whole, we shall find each of the parts fitting into its proper place. Prejudices, exclusiveness, tolerance, understanding, zest for living and detachment all play their part in the creation of a pattern that is complicated but still intelligible.

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Part III

CHAPTER XI

ORTHODOXY AND THE ORTHODOX

THE SHARĪ'AH AS LAW

THE position of orthodoxy was not affected by the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. Orthodoxy only required that a ruler should have the power to enforce his commands; the assumption that the Indian Muslims were all members of one religious community did not lead the orthodox to the conclusion that they should all be citizens or subjects of one state. That would have been a logical conclusion, and given strong support to statesmen who believed in unifying the country under one government. The failure of the orthodox to realize this had very serious consequences for the Indian Muslims, but it would be unfair to judge them too severely for their lack of political insight. The individual kings took care to satisfy the demands of orthodoxy, many of them obtaining recognition from the 'Abbāsī Khalīfah. The plurality of rulers in the country did not restrict the jurisdiction of the *fiqh*, which operated through concurrence of opinion and not political affiliation. This became very evident from the widespread and continuous persecution of the Mahdavīs and those suspected of agreeing with or even of not categorically rejecting their doctrines.

An account of this sect has already been given in a previous chapter. Sayyid Muḥammad's claim to be a Mahdī—which means no more than 'the rightly guided one'—or the Mahdī, whose advent was traditionally believed to herald the approach of the Day of Judgement, and certain exaggerations and extravagances in the beliefs of the Mahdawīs gave the orthodox an excellent opportunity of bringing the wrath of God and kings and fanatical Muslims down upon this sect. Their method of dealing with dissidents is well illustrated in a Mahdawī tract, '*Majālis-i-Haḍrat Bandgī Miyāṇ Muṣṭafā Gujarātī*'.

'After this the eminent men in the assembly besought the ruler[1],

[1] Probably Akbar is meant here, as he had ordered the Shaikh to be brought from Gujarāt to his court at Ajmēr.

saying, "Oh Mirzā, there is no need to argue with this Mahdawī *shaikh*. . . . The *fatwā* of the *'ulamā* of Mecca is a sufficient ground for us . . . and on the basis of that we should execute the *shaikh*". The ruler asked this wretched one (i.e. Shaikh Muṣṭafá Gujarātī), "Did you go to Mecca?" This wretched one replied, "No". Then he asked, "Have the *'ulamā* of Mecca come to Gujarāt?" This wretched one replied, "They have not come". The ruler said, "What kind of people are these? They have given a *fatwā* for the execution of the Mahdawīs without coming here and without any discussion in regard to the aims of the Mahdawīs, and without any admonition, merely on the statements of their enemies. This is not the way righteous *'ulamā* should act". After this the eminent men of the assembly said, "Oh Mirzā, we are ignorant of what the *'ulamā* of Mecca know; we must follow their opinion". Thereupon the ruler turned to Mullāzādah[2] and said, "Mullāzādah, what is that story that your father went to Mecca, taught there for a number of years and became famous as a teacher and a spiritual guide, and after that the *'ulamā* of Mecca issued a *fatwā* against him, declaring him to be a *rāfiḍī*, an enemy of the faith and deserving of death. Would you say now that the *fatwā* of the *'ulamā* of Mecca was just, or would you say they issued it because they were jealous of your father?" The Mullāzādah replied, "Sir, if you put the *'ulamā* of the true faith to shame in this manner in the presence of heretics, then who else is there to support the *'ulamā* of the true faith?" The ruler said, "This is a most absurd argument to use in a learned discussion. . . . If the *'ulamā* of Mecca issued an unjust *fatwā* because of jealousy for your father, then what grounds have you for asserting that they would not have been jealous of the Mahdī?" '[3].

It is evident from this very tract that the Mahdawīs developed a tenacity that could face the terrors of the witchhunt organized against them. It is also evident that the orthodox *'ulamū* were primarily interested in the eradication of deviation (*fisq*), innovation and heresy. The spiritual ferment which to us now appears to have characterized the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and found expression in the lives and teachings of Kabīr Ṣāḥib and Gurū Nānak does not seem to have disturbed them. Non-Muslims who

[2] 'Mullāzādah' would mean 'Son of a *mullā* or scholar'. The account does not indicate which particular person was meant.

[3] *Majālis-i-Haḍrat Bandgī Miyāṇ Muṣṭafā Gujarātī*. Maktabah Ibrāhīmiyah, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1367 A.H. A short account of Shaikh Muṣṭafa Gujarātī is given by Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 50-51 and it is also stated that he was brought to the court at Ajmēr by the order of Akbar. A discussion Mahdawī creed was also arranged.

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were confirmed in their own beliefs, and those who rejected the orthodoxy of both Muslims and non-Muslims, like Kabīr Ṣāḥib and Gurū Nānak, could escape persecution if they avoided open conflict, but the orthodox *'ulamā* would take action against anyone who professed to see truth both in Islām and Hinduism. A typical case is that of the Brahman of Kathan, who declared before an assembly of Muslims that Islām was a true religion. This raised a controversy. It was finally decided by a conference of the *'ulamā*, called together by Sikandar Lōdī, that the Brahman should be called upon to accept Islām; if he refused, he was to be executed. The Brahman refused, and suffered the penalty[4]. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the orthodox *'ulamā* were alarmed by the responsiveness of the Emperor Akbar to those who represented the tradition of freethinking and to the growth of Shī'ah influence.

The horror of freethinking has a history behind it. Baranī relates that in the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn a master of the *ḥadīth*, Maulānā Shamsuddīn Turk, came from Egypt to India in order to establish the science of *ḥadīth* at Delhi, and 'redeem the Muslims from acting according to the traditions of clever men who are without faith'[5]. The same historian says later of Muḥammad Tughlaq that 'during his youth and the period of the development of his intelligence and sensitivity this king got into the company of an irreligious fellow like Sa'd Manṭiqī, a false believer like 'Ubaid the poet, a philosopher like Najm Intishār; and Maulānā 'Alīmuddīn, the father of sophists, began to frequent his intimate gatherings. These shameless men who were absorbed and entangled in the rational sciences and put faith in them' turned the Sulṭān away from the right path[6]. There must have been successors to these 'heretics' and 'philosophers' about whom no information has been handed down to us, and Faiḍī and Abul Faḍl, the advisers and supporters of Akbar belonged, without doubt, to this line of intellectuals.

There could be peace between the intellectuals and the representatives of orthodoxy, but never any genuine understanding. The *ṣūfīs* also were aware of the gap between themselves and the official *'ulamā*. The general acceptance of the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* by the intellectuals and the *ṣūfīs* added to their spiritual strength, but did not enable them to give to their ideas and beliefs the form of dogmas embodied in and supported by law and ritual. The power of the orthodox, official *'ulamā* lay in their being able to assert what was true belief and correct practice, and to insist on precision in both these spheres of religious life. They concentrated

[4] Firishta, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 262.
[5] Baranī, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 465.

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on *taqlīd*, on believing and saying and doing exactly what had been believed and said and done by the rightly-guided orthodox *'ulamā* of the previous generations. But insistence on *taqlīd* was a source of weakness also. No deviation could be permitted, and every difference of opinion could be regarded as deviation. There was no authority competent to decide, in any particular instance of disagreement, as to which party was in the wrong, and even trivial issues could lead to dissension. The official *'ulamā*, represented in the court and the royal councils by the *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*, were therefore very anxious to have the ruler on their side and use his authority to suppress those who disagreed and those who were likely to subvert their influence. Even personal pique, such as that of Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī for the Mahdawīs, could lead to persecution and violence.

The leading men among the orthodox *'ulamā*, whom Akbar inherited along with his crown, were Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī. The historian Badāyūnī, himself a learned and orthodox person, has given short sketches of their lives, and found this an excellent opportunity for indulging his caustic humour. To us they serve as an illustration of how the character and behaviour of a few persons could transform the clarification of a purely theological point into a grave religious and political problem.

Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī was a very eminent scholar, and, as Badāyūnī says, 'a fanatical Sunnī'. He came into prominence during Humāyūn's reign, and had his first taste of power under that monarch, who showed him great reverence. When Shēr Shāh ousted Humāyūn, Maulānā 'Abdullāh was able to retain his position in the court. Evidently he had so established himself that Shēr Shāh's successor, Islām Shāh, though he regarded the Maulānā as 'the fifth son of Bābar', felt obliged to treat him with particular deference and respect. The Maulānā, on his part, so cunningly mingled political issues with his own desire for religious supremacy that he was able to persecute all those whom he chose to consider heretics. After Islām Shāh, when Humāyūn reoccupied his throne, Maulānā 'Abdullāh intrigued to retain his position, but was for several years under a cloud. However, he succeeded again in entering the court, and was in charge of the redistribution of lands to the deserving among the learned and the religious in 1572, when Badāyūnī had his first encounter with him. The Maulānā was seated on a high platform, and when the time for prayer came, he performed his ablutions without any regard for the people standing below, whatever their age or rank. His manner, if Badāyūnī is to be believed, was haughty beyond measure, but his religious eminence was such that none dared to protest. He would have held, and probably improved his position at the court but for his violent conflict with Shaikh 'Abdun

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Nabi. The two abused each other so profusely and made such vulgar imputations against each other that both lost all respect in the Emperor's eyes. Maulānā 'Abdullāh held large estates around Lahore which had been gifted to him by the various rulers, and was reputed to be a rich man. But it was known that he evaded payment of the *zakāt* by making over to his wife all cash and property assessable for *zakāt* before they had been in his possession for a full year, and having them returned again to him before a year had passed. It was also known that he declared the *ḥajj* to be no longer obligatory, because one could go to Mecca only on Christian ships or through the territories of a Shī'ah ruler[7]. Once the courtiers had seen that the Maulānā was losing favour, they began to attack him from all sides. He and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī were both asked to sign the Manifesto regarding Akbar's Imamate, but after they had done so, they shut themselves up in a mosque, claiming that it was a sanctuary. They declared that they had signed the Manifesto under duress, that the Manifesto was unlawful and ought to be disregarded, that the Emperor had become irreligious and gone astray. Their protests were not without effect, and the only action Akbar could take against them was to send them on pilgrimage, with orders not to return till they were permitted (1580). A large sum of money was also given to them for distribution among specified persons and institutions in Arabia.

Akbar's Manifesto and rumours that he had abandoned the true faith created unrest and probably prompted his half-brother, Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm, to make another bid for the throne. The exiled *'ulamā* on their part had been creating disaffection among the pilgrims from India, and before two years had passed they thought it was time for them to return and negotiate for the recovery of their power. To their horror they found that they had misjudged the situation completely. When they reached Aḥmadābād, they received orders to stay there. Representations through sympathetic ladies of the court had no effect, and Maulānā 'Abdullāh died of chagrin. Allegations that he had amassed great wealth were investigated, 'Qāḍī 'Alī was deputed from Fatḥpūr Sīkrī to make an inventory of his properties. He came to Lahore and unearthed so much buried treasure that its lock could not be opened with the key of the imagination'[8]. The solid gold bricks stored in what were given out to be the graves of his ancestors, other valuables and all the lands assigned to him were confiscated.

[7] This was not only Maulānā 'Abdullāh's opinion, but in fact the orthodox position. The obligation to perform the *ḥajj* had to be asserted and proved early in the nineteenth century, when Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd led a band of pilgrims to Mecca. Pilgrimages, however, continued to be made all the time.

[8] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 311.

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Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī's career, apart from illustrating the power and prestige of orthodoxy, also throws light on Akbar's attitude towards religion. The Shaikh, who came from a family of scholars and mystics, was first inclined towards ṣūfism. But several visits to the Holy Cities for purposes of study made him a strict follower of the *ḥadīth*, and he gave up his ṣūfistic ways in favour of a meticulous observance of injunctions regarding cleanliness, prayer, fasting and abstinence. He found his way into the court in 1566, and Akbar fell so completely under his influence that he called the *adhān*, led the prayers, swept the mosque and behaved towards the Shaikh with the utmost humility. The Shaikh's presumption, however, was such that once in open court he hit at Akbar with his stick because his robes had been sprinkled with saffron, tearing off a piece of his robe. Akbar was deeply hurt. When he went inside the palace, he complained to his mother, saying that the Shaikh could have admonished him in private, but should not have disgraced him before the court. The queen mother urged him not to take this to heart, as it was a means of salvation in the life to come. People would relate to the end of time how a penniless *mullā* beat a king and the respectful king suffered it meekly[9].

But Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī and Maulānā 'Abdullāh between them made it impossible for Akbar to continue being meek. The Shaikh's decision, as the Chief Qāḍi (*Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*), to execute a Brahman who was alleged to have used insulting words about the Prophet when restrained from building a temple with material collected for a mosque deeply offended Akbar and gave the Shaikh's opponents and enemies an excellent opportunity for undermining his position. When the discussions in the 'Ibādatkhānah began (1575), these people used every artifice to irritate him into saying and doing offensive things. Ultimately, when the Shaikh repudiated his signature on the Manifesto, he was, as already related, exiled to the Holy Cities. On his return he did not, like Maulānā 'Abdullāh, die at an opportune moment and escape personal disgrace. He came from Aḥmadābād to Fatḥpūr Sīkrī, and on one occasion used such violent language that Akbar hit him on the face. Shortly after, the awards of land and moneys he made as *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* were investigated, and it was found that he had been grossly partial and unfair. He was called to account for the money given to him for distribution when he went on pilgrimage, and was also found guilty of embezzlement. He was thrown into prison like a criminal and died there[10].

The characters and careers of Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī and Shaikh Abdun Nabī are sufficient reasons for explaining Akbar's

[9] Shāh Nawāz Khān, *Ma'āthir al-Umarā*, Bibliotheca Indica. Vol. II, p. 561.
[10] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 311 and Vol. III, p. 79 ff.

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decision to declare himself empowered under religious law to act as arbiter in cases where the *'ulamā* were in disagreement. The claim was formulated on his behalf by Shaikh Mubārak of Nāgōr, a scholar who had suffered at the hands of Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī, and by his sons, Faiḍī and Abul Faḍl, both of whom were learned and broadminded men. Badāyūnī has given the text of the *Maḥḍar* or Manifesto.

'Whereas Hindūstān is now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and benevolence, so that numbers of the higher and lower orders of the people, and especially learned men possessed of divine knowledge, and subtle jurists who are guides to salvation and travellers in the path of the diffusion of learning have immigrated to this land from Arabia and Persia, and have domiciled themselves here; now we, the principal *'ulamā*, who are not only well versed in the several departments of the law and the principles of jurisprudence, and well acquainted with the edicts based on reason and testimony, but are also known for our piety and honest intentions, have duly considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Qur'ān, "Obey God, and obey the Prophet, and those who are invested with authority among you"; and, secondly, of the genuine Tradition, "Surely the man who is dearest to God on the Day of Judgement is the just leader; whosoever obeys the *Amīr* obeys Me, and whosoever rebels against him rebels against Me"; and, thirdly, of several other proofs based on reason and testimony; and we have agreed that the rank of the Just King is higher in the eyes of God than that of the *Mujtahid;*

'Further, we declare that the King of Islām, the Asylum of Mankind, the Commander of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the world, Abu-'l-Fatḥ Jalāluddīn Muḥammad Akbar, Pādishāh-i-Ghāzī (whose kingdom God perpetuate!) is a most just and wise King, with a knowledge of God,

'Should, therefore, in future, religious questions arise regarding which the opinions of the *mujtahids* are at variance, and His Majesty, in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom, be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and in the interests of good order, any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and should he issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on all his people and all his subjects.

'Should His Majesty in his own discretion promulgate a command from among the commands which is not opposed to an explicit injunction (of the Qur'ān) and is calculated to benefit the people at large, acting in accordance with it shall be obligatory

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and absolutely binding on all, and opposition to it will involve damnation in the next world, and loss of religious privileges and property in this.

'This document has been written with honest intentions and for the glory of God and the propagation of Islām, and has been signed by us, the principal '*ulamā* of the Faith, and leading Theologians, in the month of Rajab, A.H. 987 (August-September, 1579)'[11].

There was nothing revolutionary in this proclamation. No person existed who could be called Khalīfah on the ground of descent from the 'Abbāsīs after Sulṭān Salīm's capture of Cairo in 1517, and the Khilāfat was no longer a symbol of Muslim unity. It was quite reasonable for Akbar to dispense with the tradition of there being a power superior to the Sulṭān or Emperor of Hindustān. Nor did he claim an authority which previous rulers had not possessed. Orthodoxy could be enforced only through the secular arm, which meant that a person accused of holding heretical views could be punished only by the order of the sulṭān, and the sulṭān could give the accused a chance to explain his beliefs or his conduct. There had been numerous cases in which rulers called upon those accused of holding heretical opinions to offer explanation. The only innovation was that statutory form was given to a convention. There was no challenge to orthodoxy involved in this measure. Still it was resisted, and mainly by the independent '*ulamā*. They could not acknowledge a person like Akbar, who was ignorant of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, as an *Imām* and a *Mujtahid*, and rebellions in various parts of the country showed that Akbar's assumption of authority in religious matters was resented. But the Manifesto was not revoked by Akbar or any of his successors.

The protest of Akbar and his freethinking courtiers against the manner in which the *shari'ah* was interpreted and applied did not create a new atmosphere or induce a new attitude; and orthodoxy gave evidence of resilience soon after the freethinking of Akbar and some of his courtiers had exhausted itself by the end of the sixteenth century. The outstanding figures in this revival are Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh (1563-1603) and his disciple, Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind (1564-1624). Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh was not an Indian, and passed only the last four years of his life in Delhi. It was Shaikh Aḥmad who gave wide and vigorous expression to his ideas and made the revival of orthodoxy something of a movement.

Shaikh Aḥmad began his reformist activities with a number of pamphlets, of which one, *Radd-i-Rawāfiḍ*, was written against the Shī'ah creed. He was then at Agra, and on good terms with Faiḍī

[11] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 270-71.

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and Abul Faḍl, having, according to one account, assisted the former in the writing of his *Tafsir*[12]. The intellectual movement, however, of which these two brothers were the representatives, did not interest him. He became a disciple of Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh in 1008/1600. After Jahāngīr's accession, he was able to utilize the Khwājah's influence among the nobility to strengthen the Naqshbandī order, to which he belonged. Jahāngīr himself was inclined towards the purification of beliefs and practices; he went to the extent of asking Murtaḍā Khān to recommend four *'ulamā* to serve as preachers in the court[13]. Shaikh Aḥmad was well acquainted with Murtaḍā Khān, and wrote to him pointing out that this would mean employing four men to quarrel with each other, peace-loving and upright *'ulamā* not being available. He suggested that only one *'ālim* should be appointed, and the inference would not be unjustified that he was thinking of himself. By this time he had many *khalīfahs* established in different parts of the country, and one of his most enthusiastic disciples had been assigned the task of preaching in the royal army. But his influence suffered a setback because of the publication of a letter where he had described to his teacher a mystical experience in which he saw himself in a position above that of the four Orthodox Khalīfahs[14]. The *'ulamā* raised such a storm of protest that Jahāngīr had to call him to the court for explanation and confine him in the Gwalior Fort. After about a year he was released. Jahāngīr gave him a robe of honour and a thousand rupees for his expenses. He, on his part, said that his confinement had been a source of guidance, and that his real aspiration was to be of service[15]. He was given the freedom to carry on his work, and he was in a most advantageous position to lead a movement of reform. During this phase of his career he modified considerably his aggressiveness towards the Shī'ahs and the Hindūs.

Shaikh Aḥmad believed it was supremely important, morally and spiritually, to conform to the *sharī'ah* in every detail. 'The smallest coin given as *zakāt* (with intent to act) in accordance with the injunctions of the *sharī'ah* and thereby suppress evil desires is better than a thousand silver coins given to please one's self. Eating on the day of *'Īd al-Fiṭr* in accordance with the command of the *sharī'ah* is better than fasting for years because of one's own desire'[16]. 'The mid-day rest, taken with the motive of following the example of the

[12] M. Ikrām, *Rūd-i-Kauthar*. Tāj Office, Karachi. P. 148.

[13] See below, Ch. XII, p. 270.

[14] *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow, Vol. I, Letter No. 11.

[15] *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*. Tr. by Rogers. Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1909. Pp. 272 and 308.

[16] *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, Letter No. 52.

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Prophet is superior to keeping awake a thousand nights, if this (act) does not possess the honour of being an attempt to follow the Prophet's example'[17]. This rigid adherence in practice was to be a reflection of an equally strict conformity in the spiritual life, and all experiences and 'conditions' were to be examined in the light of the *sharī'ah*. Shaikh Aḥmad condemned the worldly *'ulamā*, 'who desire only this unclean world, whose company is poisonous and whose degeneration is infectious. In the past, all ills have befallen (the Muslims) because of the accursedness of these people. It is they who mislead kings, and the seventy-two sects that have walked the path of falsehood are the followers of these worldly *'ulamā* '[18]. He was equally, if not more, critical of the *ṣūfīs*, not only because of their visions and dreams which, being taken as intimations of a higher reality than that within ordinary experience, upset all standards of judgement, but also because of those devotions and austerities which struck the imagination of the people and minimized the significance of the prayers and the fasts enjoined by the *sharī'ah*[19].

Shaikh Aḥmad did not possess the temperament or the outlook characteristic of the mystical type, though he professed to have derived spiritual benefit from fourteen Orders, in particular from the Naqshbandī. This did not prevent him from saying that Shaikh Junaid and Shaikh Bāyazīd Bustāmī were 'poor fellows who could not reach the heart of the matter, the source, and therefore got entangled in shadows', that Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī performed many miracles because the manner in which spiritual powers descended upon him (*nuzūl*) was defective, that Ibn 'Arabī was a *kāfir*, and much else about the *shaikhs* of the past which caused offence. For himself he claimed, on the basis of the states to which he had attained, that he had been created for the purpose of combining the perfections of the Prophets Abraham and Muḥammad, that his attainments were due to his being a follower and hanger-on of the Prophet Muḥammad, but that all the perfections of the Prophet were present in him without disparity (*tafāwut*), that he was both the *murīd* and the desired one (*murād*) of God, and that his allegiance (*irādah*) to God had no intermediary[20]. We have given later instances

[17] Maulānā Muḥammad Miyān, *'Ulamā'-e-Hind kā Shāndār Māḍī*. Al Jam'iyat Press, Delhi.

[18] *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, Letter No. 47.

[19] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Letter No. 52.

[20] *The Ma'ārij al-Wilāyah*, in the account of Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, quotes a long letter written by him in protest against the claims made for himself by Shaikh Aḥmad. 'Haḍrat Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh supported you very much, and people know about it, I even more than anyone else. I am sure if he were still confined in his bodily form, he would not have been agreeable to such words and no one will be agreeable to them.' Vol. II, p. 622 ff.

of *ṣūfīs* who made extravagant assertions about the eminence to which they had attained and the visions and meetings that had been vouchsafed to them. But they observed certain restraints of courtesy and respect, and they did not make it their mission to get their doctrines accepted by the generality of the Muslims. Shaikh Aḥmad did so. He could not reject the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* (Unity of Existence) altogether, so he declared it to be the expression of a spiritual state that was a stage in the progress of the seeker after truth. The final stage was *waḥdah al-shuhūd* (Unity of Phenomena), and the proof of the finality of this stage was his own spiritual experience. This is an argument which can be judged only on the basis of the conclusions drawn from it, and the conclusion which Shaikh Aḥmad drew was that adherence to the *sharī'ah* and the fulfilment of its injunctions, if inspired by a supreme and unconditional devotion, was the means to the highest form of self-realization. The *sharī'ah* was from the beginning regarded by the *ṣūfīs* as having an external form and an inner reality, and this inner reality ṣūfism attempted to emphasize. What Shaikh Aḥmad had in mind, however, were the externals, the rules as regards prayer and fasting as well as abhorrence of immanentists, Shī'ahs and Hindūs. He preached *waḥdah al-shuhūd* with a motive which he does not disguise.

> 'At this time there are many people . . . who believe in this Unity of Existence[21] and consider everything to be "from God"[22] or "God". They release their necks from the noose of the obligation to follow the *sharī'ah* by means of this subterfuge; they are hypocritical towards the commandments of the *sharī'ah*, and are quite cheerful in their minds about their hypocrisy. Even if they acknowledge the commandments of the *sharī'ah*, they consider them only as the means; the end they have in mind is something other than the *sharī'ah*. . . . *Ṭarīqah* and *sharī'ah* are completely identical; they do not diverge even by a hair's breadth. The difference between them is only the difference between what is summarily indicated (*ijmāl*) and what is elaborated in detail (*tafṣīl*), between what is reasoned out (*istidlāl*) and what is revealed (*kashf*). Whatever is opposed to the *sharī'ah* deserves to be repudiated, and every (so-called) truth (*ḥaqīqah*) which is inconsistent with the *sharī'ah* is heresy (*zandaqah*). It is unbecoming of (brave and upright) men to put the *sharī'ah* aside and look (elsewhere) for the truth'[23].

[21] *Waḥdah al-wujūd.*
[22] *Haq* in the original.
[23] *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, Letter No. 43.

Shaikh Aḥmad's assumption that the *sharī'ah* could be put forward in a philosophical discussion as a term possessing a precise connotation vitiates his whole argument. In fact, he asserted earlier in this very letter that those who believed in the Unity of Existence had not attained the fullness of knowledge, and Muslims who did not wish to be led astray should follow him and believe in the Unity of Phenomena. In other words, he claimed a spiritually higher position for the doctrine of Transcendance than for the doctrine of Immanence. But this forced alliance between a dogmatic interpretation of the *sharī'ah* and mystical speculation does not acquire the quality of an organic relationship.

Shaikh Aḥmad's attitude towards the court and the courtiers was typically orthodox. He believed that the power of the state was essential for the maintenance of the *sharī'ah*, and urged its use for that purpose. He had no personal motives, perhaps, other than the desire for recognition, but his letters to the nobility do not show any of that dignity of spirit which distinguished the independent *'ulamā*. It was necessary, no doubt, to use certain forms of address, and to praise noblemen at the right time and for the right things. But quite often his praise borders on flattery, and one has the feeling that the canvassing he did for the *sharī'ah* reduced it to the level of a mundane interest.

The tradition that Shaikh Aḥmad eradicated the godlessness of Akbar's reign, forced the court to reform its etiquette and made large numbers of Muslims in the army and the court religious-minded seems to have been carefully fostered. He has been given the grandiose titles of 'Reviver of the Second Millennium' and the 'Godly Imām'. But all that one can really give him credit for is that he made a vigorous attempt to rescue orthodoxy from the embarrassment caused by the worldly *'ulamā*, that he put up a fight for the Sunnīs against the Shī'ahs, and formed an open and mutually beneficial alliance between spirituality and religious conservatism, and between the state and the Naqshbandī order.

After the death of Akbar, orthodoxy gradually got the upper hand and maintained its position in spite of Dārā Shikōh's liberal and mystical predilections. Auraṇgzēb definitely had the ambition to govern in accordance with the *sharī'ah*, and had his own views about what this implied. He had the *fiqh* codified in the *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīri*, without, however, making any additions or changes that could be traced to the influence of circumstances or to the particular customs or way of life of the Indian Muslims. His reign was the final phase of the system in which orthodoxy supported the state, and the state, as the secular arm, used its power to maintain and enforce orthodoxy. However, we must reiterate that what is meant by

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orthodoxy is the particular interpretation of Islāmic doctrine and its application to various problems and situations of life which appears in the works of *fiqh* recognized by the *'ualmā* in India. It should not be assumed that most Muslims were 'orthodox', or that the claim of this juristic orthodoxy to be the only valid interpretation of Islām was not challenged in principle and disregarded in practice.

We have not so far discussed the beliefs of the Shī'ahs, because Indian Muslim orthodoxy had not needed to concern itself about them, except theoretically. The Ismā'īlīs, an extremist Shī'ah sect, began their propaganda in Sindh in the tenth century, and established an independent state with Multān as its capital[24]. Maḥmud of Ghaznī conquered Multān and slaughtered and dispersed the Ismā'īlīs early in the eleventh century. After Maḥmūd's death, when his dynasty had become weak, they recovered and re-established themselves in Multān and Sindh. Muḥammad Ghōrī, as a part of his campaigns to conquer north India, again massacred them, and as a result lost his life at the hands of an Ismā'īlī assassin. The majority of the Ismā'īlīs now went underground, living in the guise of Hindūs. But they organized an attack on Delhi during the reign of Raḍīyah Sulṭān. The Mongol invasion forced a fresh wave of Ismā'īlī refugees into India. Their amalgamation with the older community, and a development in their doctrines because of which they became a link between Ismā'īlīsm, ṣūfism and Hinduism considerably widened their influence and increased their numbers[25]. They seem to have been actively propagating their ideas, as Fīrūz Tughlaq had to suppress them and burn their books.

According to the orthodox Sunnīs, the Ismā'īlīs had become open enemies; they could be destroyed without argument and without hesitation wherever they were found. The main body of the Shī'ahs, the Ithnā' 'Asharī, or believers in the Twelve Imāms, could not be so summarily disposed of. In the sixteenth century, Iran became a Shī'ah state under the Ṣafawīs; in India, Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh of Bījāpūr in 1502[26] and Burhān Niẓām Shāh of Aḥmadnagar in 1537 declared the Ithnā' 'Asharī creed to be the religion of their states, the kingdom of Golconda was founded in 1512 by Sulṭān Qulī, who was

[24] For a study of Ismā'īlī history and doctrines, see the publications of the Ismā'īlī Society of Bombay.

[25] W. Ivanow, *Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismā'īlism*. Published for the Ismā'īlī Society by E. J. Brill, Leyden, 1952. Pp. 19-20. For an account of the Ismā'īlī sects in India, see J. N. Hollister, *The Shī'ah of India*. Luzac and Co., London, 1953.

[26] Yūsuf 'Ādil Shāh (1489-1510) avoided anything that savoured of persecution. His son, Ismā'īl 'Ādil (1535-1557) was a Sunnī, his son, 'Alī 'Ādil (1557-1579), was a Shī'ah of a fanatical type and began the public pronouncement of *tabarrā*, or dissociation with and disowning of the first three Khalīfahs, and those responsible for supporting or acquiescing in their election.

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already a Shī'ah, and in the middle of the century the Chaks, who were Shī'ahs, established their rule in Kashmīr. The Mughal emperors had Shī'ah wives, and Humāyūn spent over fourteen years as the guest of the Shāh of Iran, with constant pressure being exercised to make him a Shī'ah. The Mughal court had many Shī'ahs in high offices, and Shī'ahs were constantly coming over from Iran. The orthodox were deeply disturbed over these developments, and controversy became more and more acute in course of time.

Like Sunnī Ḥanafī orthodoxy and ṣūfism, the evolution of the Ithnā' 'Asharī doctrines took place outside India. Cultivated forms of suspicion and prejudice and memories of conflicts make it almost impossible to bring the differences between the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs —may God have mercy on both of them!—within the limits of a reasonable discussion. For an objective judgement it would be useful to remember that the question of succession arose immediately after the death of the Prophet and soon became a scramble for power. 'It seems that the development of the legal system and of religious doctrine was always more or less left to private initiative, sometimes moderately patronized, but also sometimes restricted. The Shiites developed the legend of Ghadīr Khum where, they say, the Prophet appointed 'Alī as his successor. As time passed, and discontent increased, the Shiite dream of righteous government by the scion of the house of the Prophet, who would 'fill the earth with equity and justice, even as much as it has always been filled with oppression and injustice' exercised an enormous appeal on the population. . . .

> 'Early Shiism . . . presented a chaotic and amorphous body in which the most varied shades of opinion were found. On the "right" flank stood the groups which were only distinguishable from the Sunnites by their acceptance of the dogma of *Imāmah*, in other words, of the theocratic ideal. And on the extreme left were found popular extremist sectarians who chiefly combined the early Christian and Gnostic tendencies with a new Islāmic form'[27].

By degrees, Shī'ah doctrines crystallized. Of course, there was disagreement with the tenets of the majority on all matters; even as regards the Qur'ān, Shaikh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin 'Alī ibn Bābawayhī al-Qummī, known as Shaikh Ṣadūq (d. 991), says in his *Risālah al-I'tiqādāti'l Imāmīyah*[28] that the Qur'ān, which Allāh

[27] Ivanow, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

[28] Translated and edited by Asaf A. A. Fyzee, under the title, '*A Shi'ite Creed*'. Published for the Islāmic Research Association, Bombay, by the Oxford University Press, 1942.

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revealed to His Prophet Muḥammad is 'that which is in the hands of the people, and is not greater in extent than that'. But 'so much of revelation has come down, which is not embodied in the present Qur'ān'. There are many traditions, 'all of which are revelations, but do not form part of the Qur'ān; if they did, they would surely have been included and not excluded from it'[29]. But the crucial question is that of *Imāmah*. 'We believe that Allāh . . . created the whole of creation for him (the Prophet) and for the People of his House'. 'Our belief regarding them (the *Imāms*) is that they are in authority (*'ulu-l-amr*). It is to them that Allāh has ordained obedience, they are the witnesses for the people and they are the gates (*abwāb*) of Allāh and the road to Him and the guides thereto, and the repositories of His knowledge and the interpreters of His revelations and the pillars of His unity. They are immune from sins and errors, . . . they are possessed of the powers of miracles . . . and they are for the protection of the people of this earth. . . .' Ultimately, God will make His faith manifest and truth will triumph through the twelfth Imām, called the Qā'im, the Muntaẓar, when he appears as the Mahdī[30]. He who denies the infallibility of the Imāms 'in any matter appertaining to their status is ignorant of them, and such a one is *kāfir*'. And those, too, are *kāfirs* who exceed 'the bounds of belief' (the Ghulāt, who declared 'Alī to be God or prophet) and 'those who believe in delegation' (the Mufawwiḍah, who held that God created the Prophet and 'Alī, and then delegating all His power to them, ceased to function)[32]. Besides the *kāfirs*, there are also wrong-doers (*ẓālim*). 'He who claims the *Imāmah*, not being an *Imām*, is an accursed wrong-doer. And he who ascribes *Imāmah* to those who are not entitled to it, he too is an accursed wrong-doer. And the Prophet said: He who denies 'Alī his *Imāmah* after me, verily denies my apostleship (*nubūwwah*). And he who denies my apostleship has denied Allāh His divinity'[32].

The world being constituted as it is, and men being what they are, the possession of political power and the right and freedom to

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 85-7.
[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-8.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 107. For a seventeenth century discussion of the Imāmah, see D. M. Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion*. Luzac & Co., London, 1933, p. 306 ff. 'All the recognized Shi'ite scholars hold that the appointment of the Imāms was an actual necessity for God Himself, and that this is demonstrable by reason and by the traditions.' 'The verses of the Qur'ān are stated briefly and most of the commands are not obvious. An authoritative interpreter from God is, therefore, needed to make the legal deductions or conclusions from the Qur'ān.' 'The Imāms are mediators between God and mankind. Except by their intercession it is impossible for men to avoid the punishment of God' (p. 344).

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exercise it becomes all-important. The *Risālah* of Shaikh Ṣadūq, after stating that the Prince of Believers was assassinated and Imām Ḥasan, his eldest son, was poisoned by his wife, gives the list of nine Imāms who were victims to the misuse of power, the martyr of Karbalā, of course, heading the list[33]. That the Umayyad ruler in one instance, and 'Abbāsī rulers in the others deliberately committed a crime, and none of the Imāms died a natural death, has been made a part of the Shī'ah creed for the obvious reason that those who, according to the Shī'ahs, usurped power, deprived Muslims of the opportunity of living according to Islām. They are the enemies of religion, and, therefore, no compromise can be made with them. It is unfortunate that the first three Khalīfahs are included among the wrong-doers. This is not fair to them, and what is much worse, it prevents the ordinary non-Shī'ah Muslim from realizing that the Umayyads and 'Abbāsīs did in fact deprive the general body of Muslims of all political and social rights, and though they expanded vastly the limits of the Muslim world, they also sacrificed many of the spiritual and moral values of Islām at the altar of dynastic interests. The Shī'ahs, insisting on the absolute and divine rights of the Imāms, disown and dissociate themselves from all who were active in depriving the Imāms of their divine rights, and by implication also from those who did not positively repudiate and, therefore, acquiesced in this act of injustice, regardless of the passage of time. This principle is known as *tabarrā*. Another principle, on the observance of which the survival of the Shī'ahs as a rebel minority depended, was dissimulation (*taqīyah*). Shī'ahs could conceal their religion out of fear, but that would mean inculcating an attitude that would ultimately sap their moral strength. They avoided this course. 'Until the Imām Qā'im appears, *taqīyah* is obligatory, and it is not permissible to dispense with it. He who abandons it before the appearance of the Qā'im has verily gone out of the religion of Allāh . . . and the religion of the Imāms, and disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and the Imāms'[34].

The *Risālah* of Shaikh Ṣadūq, in its exposition of the Unity of God (*tauḥīd*), indicates two differences with the orthodox Sunnī point of view, holding that God cannot be seen, and that man is not utterly powerless because of God's omnipotence and omniscience. But it does not lay the same emphasis on *'adl*, Justice, which Shī'ah doctrine of later days placed upon it, making it the ground for postulating a degree of free-will. The martyrdom of Imām Ḥusain also came to acquire a meaning later on which is not so evident earlier, when he was not regarded as the helpless victim to political

[33] Fyzee, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

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interest; he knew what was going to happen and deliberately accepted suffering and death to redeem the sins of the Muslim world.

Some Sunnī Ḥanafī Muslims, known as the Tafḍīlīs, believe in the pre-eminence of 'Alī among the Companions of the Prophet; the vast majority have had great reverence for the Prophet's family and for Sayyids in general, and have participated in the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusain without mental reservations. The orthodox, of course, have had strong objection to almost every article of the Shī'ah creed. They could not say anything against the family of the Prophet, against 'Alī, Ḥusain or any other of the Imāms, and therefore selected the question of succession to the Prophet and the status of the Companions as the point of attack—or counter-attack. They argued that all the Companions, but meaning, in particular, the first three successors to the Prophet, were equally entitled to reverence; that their election, as recorded in history, was both just and proper, and that no Muslim should endure anything said in disrespect of the Companions. Their reply to the *tabarrā* of the Shī'ahs was, therefore, fervent affirmation of the righteousness of the Companions. If the issue of succession was thereby raised to the level of a fundamental doctrine of Islām, it did not matter. According to the orthodox, also, since the Shī'ahs believed in *taqīyah*, they rendered themselves, on their own showing, utterly false and untrustworthy.

Open controversies and conflicts between the Shī'ahs and the Sunnīs belong to a later age. We have stated that Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind began his career by writing a pamphlet against the Shī'ahs, and that must have helped to establish his position. A contemporary, Shaikh Yāqūb Ṣarfī of Kashmīr, is venerated beyond measure for his defence of the Sunnī Ḥanafī community, which induced him ultimately to persuade Akbar to occupy Kashmīr. But the Mughal Emperors, not excluding Aurangzēb, consulted their own interests in the choice of the higher officers, and were not unduly influenced by the warnings of the orthodox *'ulamā* against putting faith in the Shī'ahs.

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CHAPTER XII

STATESMEN AND ADMINISTRATORS

I

AKBAR

THE Delhi Sultanate disintegrated in the fourteenth century, and after considerable conflict, the Lōdīs (1451-1526) emerged as the strongest power in north India. They were not strong enough in organization and resources to establish themselves firmly, and Bābar, with a small army but new tactics of warfare, was able to overwhelm the Lōdī kingdom. Bābar himself did not live long enough to lay a sufficiently strong foundation for the Mughal power, and his son Humāyūn reigned longer outside his kingdom (1540-1555) than inside it (1530-1540 and 1555-1556). He was driven out by Shēr Shāh Sūrī (1540-1545), who was a remarkable statesman, general and administrator, and occupies a place of high honour in Indian Muslim history in spite of his very brief reign. His successors proved unworthy of their heritage and Humāyūn was able to return and recover what he had lost.

One of the desperate measures Humāyūn took when he was fleeing from his kingdom in 1541 was to marry Ḥamīdah Bānō, the daughter of the spiritual preceptor of his brother Hindāl. A son, named Akbar, was born to him at 'Umarkōṯ, in Sindh, in 1542, when he was suffering all the privations of a refugee in flight. Perhaps this brought a gleam of joy to an incompetent man in distress, and it is easy to read an auspicious character into the event. But Akbar's birth must no doubt have added to his father's worries, and his survival was as much due to accident as to the care of the ladies of the *ḥaram* and in particular to the devotion of his nurse, Māham Aṇgā. We would expect a child brought up in an atmosphere of uncertainty to be weak, selfish and treacherous, or hard, wilful and opportunistic, knowing that he had to make his way through life as one crosses a turbulent stream. Forces were at work that could develop in Akbar qualities of the one or the other type. But he grew up to be himself, not a creature of circumstances. He was in boy-

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hood impatient of 'the usual apparatus of learning' and preferred riding and hunting and manly exercises to the acquisition of literacy. He came to the throne in 1556, when he was a little over thirteen, and Bairam Khān kept him under his tutelage for about four years. He was a darling of the ladies, who married him to his uncle Hindāl's daughter when he was only fifteen.

Akbar was a king 'through his grandfather and father', and had the most loyal of his father's men to look after the affairs of his 'kingdom'. But he had little else. Sikandar Sūr in the Panjāb, Hīmū at Delhi and Agra, 'Adalī at Chunār were determined to cross swords with him; and the winner would not win much. For Shēr Shāh's empire had disintegrated completely, and whoever aspired to possess it would have to conquer it afresh for himself. Sikandar Sūr and 'Adalī were not empire-builders, Hīmū was brave and ambitious, with a larger army than any of his rivals. But whether he had the gifts of statesmanship was not known, and it was doubtful how long his Muslim supporters would remain loyal to him. As it turned out, he was mortally wounded and his army dispersed at Pānīpat (November 5, 1556), Sikandar could not collect sufficient forces for a decisive battle, and 'Adalī lost his life fighting another rival. Akbar's future now depended entirely on his ability to make use of his chances. His character developed and unfolded itself rapidly. He cut himself loose from his tutelage in 1560, and soon asserted himself against his foster-brothers and their supporters in the *ḥaram*. By 1562 he was firm in the saddle.

The course of Akbar's conquests and annexations followed the old and strategically inevitable pattern. His armies marched along the trade-routes eastwards and southwards. Gwālior (1556), Mālwā (1561), Chunār (1561), the Gōnd Kingdom (1564), Chitōr (1568), Ranthambōr (1569), Kālinjar (1569), Gujarāt (1572), Sūrat (1573), Bihār (1574), Bengal (1576), which constituted the Sūr empire, were conquered by him. An expedition had to be sent against the Gakkhars in the northwest in 1563. With Kābul, Qandhār and Hirāt, these territories formed a considerable dominion. But the expansion continued. To the north, Kashmīr was annexed in 1586, to the west, Sind, in 1590, to the east, Orissa, in 1592. In the Deccan, Berār was ceded to Akbar in 1596, Gāwilgarh and Narnālā were conquered in 1598, Aḥmadanagar in 1600, and the fortress of Asīrgarh in 1601. But it would be wrong to imagine that Akbar spent all his life fighting, or that he hungered after more and more territory. The kingdoms he annexed were not, and some could not remain, orderly and independent. They were pools left over by the drying up of the central source of authority, and they vanished with the revival of the source.

Akbar's rule did not begin, like 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī's, with an original sin. There were rebellions and misdemeanors among his officers, but they did not have a fatal character. Akbar had a better opportunity than any of the Indian Muslim rulers before him to concentrate on strengthening the administration, improving its procedure and introducing changes that would reinforce the whole structure of the state. Shēr Shāh, who was a master-builder, had just preceded him, and his own character and personality were entirely suited to the task. He was extremely conscientious, devoting about twenty hours daily to the performance of his duties. He was strict in judging the work of his subordinates, and while not inclined to punish them for their mistakes and even anxious not to hurt them, he seldom failed to make changes when and where they appeared to be necessary. His reforms make it obvious that he was fully aware of the problems of administration, and was both determined and patient in his search for solutions. We may discount the praise bestowed on him by his biographer, Abul Faḍl, as we must ignore the thrusts made at his character and ideas by Badāyūnī, but it is quite apparent that Akbar was able to arouse in a large number of his advisers and officers sentiments of loyalty that amounted to dedication to his person and his ideals. For it is clear that Akbar was a man of ideals, and the noblest aspect of these was a sincere and fervent desire that men should be just and considerate towards each other. His statesmanship was an expression of personal ambition. He could not cultivate loyalty towards the state without making it a sentiment of loyalty to himself. But there was a deep, altruistic, mystical element in what constitutes his life's endeavour, and if we bear in mind the prejudices, the shortsightedness, the unsocial habits of thought and action that he had to encounter, Akbar will appear to us not only as one of the greatest of rulers but also one of the most admirable and lovable of men.

The Mughals inherited and maintained the structure of the government as it was under the Sultanate. Under Bairam Khān the office of the *Wakīl-i-Sulṭanat* became very much like that of a Malik Nā'ib, who exercised the powers of the king on his behalf, but after his removal in 1560 it was shorn of all its power and, therefore, became just a high title. The position of the other ministers vis-a-vis the ruler did not change. The emperor could appoint and dismiss ministers at will; he was not bound to consult them or follow their advice, and he could invite anyone he liked when he took counsel. The division of functions among the ministers also depended on the emperor's discretion, but we observe that the *Mīr Bakhshī*, the counterpart of the *'Āriḍ-i-Mamālik* (Muster Master-General) of the Sultanate, was invested with functions that were civil in nature, as

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assignments of land and offices were given through him, and apart from being in charge of the army organization, he became also the head of the civil service. The procedure for the issue of orders and the execution of decisions became more intricate and the balance of power as between ministers and departments more elaborate. But as the emperors were consistently anxious to fulfil their routine duties, action could be taken, when necessary, with quite remarkable promptitude.

The great change made by Akbar in the royal routine was to appear at sunrise for the *Jharōkā darshan*[1]. The purpose of this was to provide the people direct access to the ruler, eliminating the delays in the normal procedure and also enabling a case to be brought before him which might otherwise have been suppressed or shelved by interested parties at the court. There was always a multitude of people coming to behold the royal person, but we must not imagine that there was a rush to place all sorts of matters before the emperor. Those who adopted this course took some inevitable risk, for if there was not sufficient reason for their not following the usual procedure they were more likely to suffer than to gain by taking it.

In the administration, the different types of service were unified and systematized in the form of *manṣabs*, each of which was distinguished by the *dhāt* and *sawār* attached to it. The lowest *manṣab* was 10 horse, and there was what might be called an efficiency bar for the lowest grades at 400 horse, after which the *manṣab* holder was called *Amīr*. Those *manṣabdārs* whose families had been in the imperial service for more than two generations began to be called *khānzādahs*, and became an important force within the service. What is notable in this system is the promotion, which fell due annually and which the low-grade *manṣabdar* could hope to get even if he had no particular talent or influence. In the higher *manṣabs* the rise would be exceptional as well as normal, but even here those who desired could opt for a career not disturbed by the success or failure of ambitious designs. The system of *manṣabs* was introduced in 1573, and probably Akbar's intention was to pay the salaries of all *manṣabs* in cash, because this was done to begin with. But six years later the method of giving *jāgīrs* or assignments of land was restored.

An examination of the changes made in the *Dīwāns* shows that 'during the period of about forty-two years, there were ten *dīwāns*, who held the office in turn, and at times as colleagues with one another. . . . There was no fixed period for the office. The changes were made in accordance with the needs of the time or the death of

[1] Appearance of the Emperor at the *jharōkā* or projecting balcony, in order that people might see him.

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the office-holder'[2]. There were rivalries and quarrels that sorely tried Akbar's patience, Rājā Ṯōdar Mal in particular being both jealous and ill-tempered, but it was possible nonetheless to inspire officers with the confidence that outstanding work done by them would be recognized, that their mistakes would not be punished too severely and that removal from an office would not disqualify them permanently. The office of the *Mīr Bakhshī* was equal in dignity and responsibility to that of the chief *dīwān*; there seem to have been only four *Mīr Bakhshīs* appointed during Akbar's reign. Khwājah Shāh Manṣūr was the only *dīwān* who was executed, but that was on grounds of high treason. Akbar was filled with deep regret when he found that the evidence had been insufficient. There does not seem to have been any other instance of an officer being executed for a political offence during Akbar's long reign. He seems, in fact, to have evolved a system of graded punishments. He rebuked his ministers, advisers and officers if they said or did something he did not like. More serious mistakes or lapses led to continued displeasure. An officer in a province who was guilty of mismanagement or injustice was recalled to the court, and transferred elsewhere if it appeared that he would change his ways. If he was suspected of disloyalty he was kept under surveillance. A form of demotion was to post an officer in Bengal. If an officer was too senior in the service to be punished even in these ways and could not be retained in service, he was asked to perform the pilgrimage.

The most vexatious problem was that of land revenue. In 1566 Akbar resumed all assignments and grants of land, because in course of time the value of assignments had become fictitious, the productivity of the land and the market price of the produce both being calculated on the basis of statements that were long out of date. Akbar had all the land measured and revalued, and made a series of experiments in the methods of assessing and collecting land revenue. The state's share was fixed at one-third of the produce, and this was determined by calculating the average yield of every crop grown in the country, and then it was converted into cash rates representing one-third of the average yield for ten years. The system 'operated, on the one hand, to increase the peasant's interest in the success of his undertaking and, on the other, to minimize seasonal fluctuations in the imperial revenue, and while it did not amount to the establishment of a regular system of rents, it marks a definite step towards the transformation of the peasant into what is known as the cash-paying tenant'[3].

[2] Ibn Ḥasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*. Oxford University Press, 1936. P. 167.

[3] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*. Macmillan, London, 1920. Pp. 99-100.

The most memorable feature of Akbar's rule is the attempt at an emotional integration of the Indian people. This has been judged by most writers of his own time and of today on the basis of their own predilections and prejudices, and a number of misunderstandings have to be cleared before we can form a correct idea of Akbar's real objectives.

We must assume that Akbar was not a statesman who would deliberately undermine the basis of his own authority. He must have known that he could rule only as a Muslim, and as the leader of a minority that was in power. In spite of all the loyalty he had been able to cultivate, not only mischievous but even wise and sincere people were inclined to challenge his proclamation that the Just King is higher in status than the *'ulamā*. On the other hand, though he was sure that he could find Rājpūt princes who would support him to the limit, Rānā Pratāp of Mēwār had proved himself to be a bitter and uncompromising opponent, and Akbar could depend on Rājpūt princes no more than he could on the Muslim *amīrs*. It is preposterous to imagine that he would please his Hindū subjects by contracting marriage relationships with Rājpūt princely families. In fact, they must have resented this. But Hindūs who associated themselves with the Muslims lost their caste, and Rājā Bihār Mal, when he married his daughter to Akbar, must have felt that in this way he would acquire in the Mughal court a status that would compensate for what he had lost in the eyes of his own people[4]. It was not Akbar who demanded, but Rājā Bihār Mal who desired the alliance. And Akbar, whatever his relations with the Rājpūts, would have had to be very cautious in giving high offices to Hindūs, as this would be a sure means of alienating his Muslim officers and supporters. He could balance the Indian with the foreign element among his officers, but using Hindūs against Muslims would have been a transparent device. Akbar was not pro-Hindū or pro-Iranian. He faced facts and selected his officers on the basis of merit; and his confidence in persons was seldom misplaced.

Since contemporary and later opinion has had a Muslim or an anti-Muslim bias, Akbar's views in regard to religious and social reform have been generally misunderstood. The prevailing misconceptions can be attributed to three sources, (1) the account of Badāyūnī, who was a contemporary, but whose judgements were vitiated by an obvious relish for sarcasm and malicious exaggeration,

[4] The marriage took place early in 1562, when Akbar could not have risked imposing his will in this particular way on a fairly powerful Rājpūt ruler.

One aspect of Akbar's relationship with the Rājpūts is that his name occurs frequently in Rājasthānī folk songs in the form of Jalla, Jallāl and Jallālo, as a term of endearment for husband or lover. *Maru Bhāratī*, Year 6, Vol. 3, Oct. 1958, quoting from Jagdīsh Singh Gahlōṭ's book, *Mārwār kē Grām Gīt*.

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(2) the general opinion that there is no intermediate stage between orthodoxy and free thinking or, in the language of theology, between true belief and heresy, and (3) the formation of an inner circle of fervent loyalists who were extravagant in disparaging all that Akbar did not approve. As a result, Akbar is made to appear as an apostate who made a half-hearted attempt to establish a new religion.

Badāyūnī was an orthodox Sunnī who seems to have found emotional satisfaction in bewailing or castigating the sinfulness or errors of those who deviated from the true path. He has never a kind word to say about the official representatives of orthodoxy, Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī. He ridicules mystics and also praises them. He abuses the Shī'ahs. He abhors all non-Muslim beliefs. He is careful, when mentioning what he considers to be Akbar's innovations, to give prominence to those that would most offend Muslim sentiment, some of which he dates by giving the chronogram, *Kufr shā'i' shud*, '*Kufr* was propagated'[5]. It would be unsafe to regard Badāyūnī as consistent, or to take him at his word when he is writing in a spiteful vein. Unfortunately, when translating him, Blochmann made the confusion worse by reading his own views into the text. A few examples will show what difference this can make.

> 'Hence His Majesty cast aside the Islāmitic revelations regarding resurrection, the day of judgement and the details connected with it, as also all ordinances based on the traditions of our Prophet. He listened to every abuse which the courtiers heaped on our glorious and pure faith, which can be so easily followed; and eagerly seizing such opportunities, he showed in words and gestures, his satisfaction at the treatment which his original religion received at their hands'[6].

The text[7] in fact says:

> 'And they set aside resurrection, judgement and other related matters and traditions, the source of which is the lamp of the Prophet, and (his) associates were constantly repeating (to him) the censures and sharp attacks on the simple and pure, firm and noble faith, of which some are mentioned in the eminent books on metaphysics, and tempted and prompted (him) with the tongue of knowledge and the heart[8] to follow their path'.

[5] Vol. II, p. 304.

[6] Abul Faḍl, '*Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, translated by Blochmann. Bibliotheca Indica. P. 180. The extracts from Badāyūnī have been given in a Note added by Blochmann to the text of the *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*.

[7] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 257.

[8] That is, after the manner both of intellectuals and mystics.

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'Soon after, the observance of the five prayers and the fasts, and the belief in everything connected with the Prophet were put down as *taqlīdī*, or religious blindness, and man's reason was acknowledged as the basis of all religion'[9].

The correct translation would be: 'Soon after, the observance of the five prayers and the fasts, and everything important was put down as *taqlīdī*, that is, not based on reason, and they (or His Majesty) made faith depend on reason, and not written tradition'[10].

Badāyūnī's statement that wearing gold (ornaments) and silk became an absolute duty[11] has been translated: 'Wearing of gold ornaments and silk dresses at the time of prayer were considered obligatory'[12]. 'Prayer and fasting and pilgrimage had themselves already become obsolete'[13] has been rendered by Blochmann as 'The prayers of Islam, the fast, nay even the pilgrimage, were henceforth forbidden'[14]. It is only too easy to misinterpret Badāyūnī if the translator has already decided for himself that Akbar had resolved to uproot Islām.

But with all his bitterness and extravagance, Badāyūnī can also be fair and objective, and a reasonable statement of Akbar's religious attitude can be pieced together from his account.

'And very often his nights were enlivened with the praise of the Glorious God and repetition of His names, *Yā Huwa* and *Yā Hādī*, about which he had been instructed, and his heart was full of reverence for Him, who is the true Giver. From a feeling of thankfulness for his past successes, he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and melancholy, on a large flat stone of an old building which lay near the palace in a lonely spot, sunk in deep thought and gathering the bliss of the early hours'[15].

This was an early phase. Then came the clash with the fanaticism and crude behaviour of Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī. Some instances of this have already been given in a previous chapter. One of the first questions to be brought up when Akbar began religious discussions at the court was the number of free-born women a man could marry. He had spoken privately to Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī about it, and the Shaikh had satisfied him by

[9] Abul Faḍl, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
[10] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 211.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 306.
[12] Abul Faḍl, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
[13] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 306.
[14] Abul Faḍl, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
[15] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 200 ff.

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saying that there was a difference of opinion among lawyers on this point. But in the public discussion the *'ulamā* said that a man could not marry more than four free-born women. Akbar had exceeded this limit, and he was much perturbed. He felt, quite justifiably, that the *'ulamā* of the court should either have told him at the proper time that he was doing something not permitted by the *sharī'ah*[16], or should now advise him as to what he should do to regularize his marriages[17]. They had obviously betrayed him, and were now passing judgement on his action while being themselves guilty of neglect of duty[18]. Akbar could do nothing about the law on which their judgement was based, and it was natural, therefore, that he should look for sincere and upright people and for a more reasonable attitude towards law and religion. He was not fooled or easily persuaded. Speaking of false pretenders, Badāyūnī says that a large number of *shaikhs* and *faqīrs* were sent by Akbar to Qandhār, 'where they were exchanged for horses', and members of a sect known as the Ilāhīs were sent to Bhakkar and Qandhār, to be given to merchants in exchange for Turkish colts[19]. The preaching of the Jesuit missionaries made no impression upon Akbar, and the Shī'ah *'ulamā*, though their refinement was a striking contrast to the boorishness of the official *'ulamā*, also failed to convert him. But a large number of learned men of all religions and sects came from various countries to the court, and Akbar discusssed questions with them personally. He listened to everyone, and selected what seemed to him significant. Thus 'the vague outline of a faith traced itself on the mirror of his heart and the treasury of his ideas[20]. He had found deeply spiritual men professing different religions and could not accept the view that truth was to be found exclusively in Islām. About the same time he came under the influence of a *ṣūfī*, Shaikh Tājuddīn, who was a believer in immanence, or *waḥdah al-wujūd*[21], and must have given Akbar an indication of the unlimited horizons of Islāmic belief. 'Other great philosophical writers of the age expressed opinions for which there is no authority. . . .'[22]

Badāyūnī has no scruples about passing strictures on opinions

[16] We must remember that Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī had great influence on Akbar. See *supra*, p. 241.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[18] Apparently the *'ulamā* thought that it was not their business to look to the spiritual welfare of the king. They were concerned primarily with their own right to declare the law.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[21] 'Which idle *ṣūfīs* will talk about, and which generally leads them to denial of the law and open heresy.' *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 256 ff.

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expressed lightly and flippantly[23] and confusing them with genuine beliefs, but his basic objection to Akbar's attitude was that he 'assigned to theories the validity of self-evident truths'[24]. The fundamental question which Akbar and the thoughtful men around him set out to answer was, 'Have the religions and the worldly tendencies of men no common ground?'[25] They attempted an answer. It was not binding on anyone to accept this answer as correct. Shahbāz Khān, the *Bakhshī*, roundly abused Bīr Bal in Akbar's presence for talking disrespectfully about Islām[26], Mīr Fatḥullāh, 'even in the state-hall said, with the greatest composure, his Shī'ah prayers'[27], and Mān Singh openly told Akbar that he would become a Musalmān if he was so commanded by his sovereign, but saw no reason otherwise for reconsidering his inherited beliefs[28]. While it may have been true that 'people who had sold their religion were busy collecting all kinds of exploded errors, and brought them as if they were so many presents'[29], Akbar was tolerant of all those who did not share his spiritual unrest or agree with the view that an enlightened civic attitude needed to be given a religious foundation.

It was different, however, with what Akbar deemed to be necessary in the interests of political and emotional integration and with customs that appeared to him cruel, unjust or harmful. He knew that the Muslim practice of meat-eating, and still more of sacrificing cows created a gulf between the Muslims and the Hindūs that could not be bridged, and he used both his personal influence and his political authority to reduce the eating of meat and to prohibit cow-sacrifice. He abolished the *jizyah* in 1564. Intermarriages were forbidden[30]. 'Hindūs who, in childhood or otherwise, had from pressure become Musalmāns, were allowed to go back to the faith of their fathers. No one should be interfered with on account of his religion, and everyone should be allowed to change his religion, if he

[23] Such as, for example, on p. 305, Vol. II.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[25] Abul Faḍl, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
[26] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 273-4.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 364.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 307.
[30] 'If a Hindū woman fall in love with a Muslim and change her religion, she should be taken from him by force and given back to her family' (Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 391). The *Dabistān-i-Madhāhib* adds, 'but so should a Musalmān woman, who had fallen in love with a Hindū, be prevented from joining Hinduism'. (Newal Kishore Press, Kanpur, p. 328). The story of Sayyid Mūsā and Mōhinī, a goldsmith's daughter, shows that a marriage between a Muslim and a Hindū was almost impossible under ordinary circumstances, even when both parties were willing. Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 109 ff.

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liked'[31]. A secular attitude was adopted to the extent that the practice of saying prayers five times a day in the court was given up[32].

Such changes would have been most unwelcome to the Muslims, but only those who identified Islām with *fiqh* could say that Akbar was in the wrong. The same held true of reforms in Muslim customs. Akbar prohibited the marriage of boys before the age of sixteen, and of girls before they were fourteen, and marriages between cousins and near relations[33]. 'No one was to marry more than one wife, except in case of barrenness. . . . If widows liked to remarry, they should not be prevented'[34]. Such decrees would be difficult to enforce under any government unless the public gave its full co-operation, and Akbar could not have had any considerable success. But they are an indication of what he held to be the reasonable attitude. He would have been happy to abolish *satī* altogether as a cruel custom, but could not take any effective action for fear of offending Hindū sentiment, and had to content himself with publicizing the fact that no woman need burn herself if she did not want to, and making it a duty of the kōtwāl to assure himself of the fact that the *satī* was voluntary[35].

We now come to the third reason for misconceptions in regard to Akbar's religion. It is clear that he had lost confidence in the *'ulamā*, that his outlook became more and more rational and secular, that without exercising undue pressure he wished to form a body of men who shared his outlook and were willing to attach themselves to him. This outlook cannot be called *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*. This term is not used by Abul Faḍl, and occurs only once in Badāyūnī. But Akbar did have the desire to combine freedom of thought and discussion and a constant search for what was true in reason and religion with loyalty to himself. The implication of this in terms of religious belief can be deduced from what Badāyūnī says about the declaration made by the 'mean fellows' and 'apostates': 'I, so and so, who am the son of so and so, have willingly and out of my own inclination and the desire of my heart sought release from and disavow that external and imitative aspect of the Islāmic faith which I have seen my forbears practice and speak about, and have entered into the *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* of Akbar Shāh, and have accepted the four degrees of sincerity,

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 391. But 'Shaikh Bhawan, a learned Brahman from the land of the Deccan, having willingly and of his own inclination, received the honour of (conversion to) Islām, was included among the close associates' (*Ibid.*, p. 212).

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 306. The reason was purely biological.

[34] Abdul Faḍl, *'Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*. Jarret's translation, Vol. II, p. 42.

[35] *'Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Persian text, edited by Blochmann, Calcutta, 1822. *'Ā'īn-i-Kōtwāl'*, p. 284.

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which are the abandonment of property, life, honour and religion (for his sake)'[36]. This appears as extravagant and irreligious in this context, but in poetry religion was surrendered for the sake of the beloved with even greater joy than property, life and honour. It is only on the assumption that Akbar had disavowed Islām while other sulṭāns and emperors who expected and allowed the most extravagant expressions of submissiveness and loyalty had not done so that we would be justified in distinguishing between the 'mean fellows' and 'apostates' of Badāyūnī and the *maliks* and *khāns* who took the oath of allegiance to Fīrūz Shāh[37]. All that Abul Faḍl states in the *'Ā'īn*, under the head of *Rules for Aspirants to Discipleship* is that those who aspired to serve the emperor with all the loyalty due to him should greet each other by saying *Allāhu-Akbar* (which cannot possibly mean Akbar is Allah) and responding with *Jall-a-Jalāluhū* —Exalted be His glory!—, that they should celebrate their birthdays with almsgiving, abstain from meat, from using the same vessels with butchers, fishers and bird-catchers, and observe certain sexual restraints. There is nothing repugnant to Islām in this declaration and also nothing extraordinary if we remember what the general practice of courts and courtiers had been.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that intellectually and to some extent politically Akbar rejected the Muslim orthodoxy of his day. In practice he did not go beyond refusing to be a partisan of the *'ulamā* of the court, and promulgating the few decrees that we have mentioned above. He could not go beyond this because the identification of Muslim orthodoxy and Muslim political power was too close and too real, and they would stand or fall together. Akbar would have found no support whatsoever if he had attempted to establish a secular state based on the equality of all religions, and until the state became secular there was no alternative to orthodoxy. But as a Muslim, as a ruler and as an Indian he looked deeply into the nature of religious and social problems and indicated, even if he could not fulfil, the demands of absolute justice.

II

SHAIKH FARID BUKHARĪ MURTAḌĀ KHAN

Stories about the Nine Jewels of Akbar's court, the wit of Bīr Bal and the culture and lavish generosity of such noblemen as 'Abdur

[36] Badāyunī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 304. *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* could here also mean 'pure monotheism', and not be regarded as a name. The abandonment of religion makes sense only if we consider it to mean the externals and traditional aspects of religion.

[37] Quoted in Ch. II above.

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Raḥīm Khān-i-Khānān have made the nobility of the Mughal Empire into legendary figures. On the other hand, the reaction to such innovations as the discussions of Akbar's 'Ibādat Khānah would today make some indignant at religion being made a sport of politicians and courtiers, while others would regret the meagreness of the opportunity given to free-thinking to lend a secular character to the state. The more deeply we study the controversies of the period, the more conscious we become of their fundamental significance, and it appears essential for that reason to get ideas and personalities in a proper perspective. We have discussed Akbar's attitude towards religious problems, and towards the harmonization of religious law with political realities and social ideals. We have described a type of the *'ulamā* to which all this was anathema, and dealt with Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind as the representative of a particular line of orthodox thought which embodied an ideal diametrically opposed to that of Akbar and of the believers in immanence. The study of a personality following the middle path with sobriety, confidence and perseverance would act as a corrective, and also illustrate what was in fact the principle and the practice of the majority of thoughtful public men. Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī appears to be the best subject for this purpose.

Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī's ancestors were probably learned men and had been given rent-free lands for their subsistence. But one of them, Sayyid 'Abdul Ghaffār of Delhi, enjoined his descendants to adopt the military profession and give up living on charity. Shaikh Farīd's uncle, Muḥammad Bukhārī, was one of Akbar's trusted men, and was appointed superintendent of the *dargāh* at Ajmēr; his brother, Sayyid Ja'far, died fighting in Gujarāt in 1573. Shaikh Farīd himself entered Akbar's service early in life, and he must have been near enough to Akbar for his loyalty and his aptitudes to attract notice. Akbar seems to have both liked and trusted him. He is first mentioned in the *Akbarnāmah* as one on whom Akbar conferred the honour of visiting his house at Salīmgarh, on the banks of the Jumna near Delhi. This house had been presented to him by Akbar, and besides this he 'had many seats in that delightful neighbourhood'[38]. He was sent with other high officers to quell rebellions in Bihār and Bengal. In the 28th year of Akbar's reign, when engaged in operations against the rebel, Qutlū Lōhānī in Orissa, he was nearly trapped and killed, but the outcome of the expedition was satisfactory, and in the 30th year he was given the rank of 700. In 1598-9 he was asked to organize famine relief measures in Bihār, and in 1600 he participated in the Asīrgarh campaign. Shortly after, he was appointed *Mīr Bakhshī*, one of the highest positions in the

[38] Abul Faḍl, *Akbarnamah*, Tr. by Beveridge, Bibliotheca Indica, p. 322.

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government. When Prince Salīm had Abul Faḍl murdered, no one in the court was willing to perform the unpleasant task of conveying the news of the tragedy to Akbar, but Shaikh Farīd elected to do so.

These were the last years of Akbar and the question of succession was agitating the minds of people. Akbar loved his eldest son, Salīm, but he had been wayward and thoughtless enough to entertain ideas of rebellion, and even if that were overlooked, he had given no evidence of a genuine sense of responsibility. Possibly for this reason, but more probably because Salīm's grown-up son, Khusrau, was closely related to them by marriage and would, therefore, be under their influence, Rājā Mān Singh and Mirzā 'Azīz Kōkā began manoeuvring to place him on the throne when Akbar was lying on his death-bed. Shaikh Farīd did not belong to any party and does not seem to have made any efforts to win Salīm's favour. But at this critical moment, when as Mīr Bakhshī he had command of the army and was guarding the Khiḍrī Gate, he exercised his initiative to ensure a peaceful succession to the throne. He came out of the Fort, went to Salīm's house and offered him his congratulations on having become Emperor. This bold move decided the course of events. *Amīrs* who heard of it followed Shaikh Farīd's example, Salīm became confident enough to enter the Fort and ascend the throne and received thereafter the blessings of his dying father.

The outstanding feature of this episode is that Shaikh Farīd did not do anything out of a personal interest. He was not attached to Salīm, who as Emperor styled himself Jahāṇgīr, and not opposed to Khusrau. He had no means of knowing Akbar's wishes, apart from the fact that Akbar, just before his last illness, had raised Khusrau's rank and made Jahāṇgīr Governor of Gujarāt. Jahāṇgīr had sent away the army under his command towards Gujarāt, and if Shaikh Farīd had wanted to play safe, he could have kept quiet and let things happen. But he intervened judiciously and effectively. His sense of duty appears all the more admirable because at this critical moment he had given refuge in his house to Akbar's physician, Ḥakīm 'Alī Gīlānī, whom the ladies of the palace were accusing of being so incompetent or disloyal as to have shortened Akbar's life by his treatment. That Shaikh Farīd was bold enough to give shelter to the royal physician is an indication of his personal integrity and the reputation he must have enjoyed for being just and impartial.

Jahāṇgīr on his accession gave Shaikh Farīd the title of 'Master of the Sword and the Pen', raised him to the rank of 5000, and confirmed him in his office of Mīr Bakhshī. He was entrusted with the organization of the coronation festivities, and shortly after, when Khusrau raised the standard of revolt, Shaikh Farīd was sent against him as being obviously the person whose loyalty could be most

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trusted. Jahāṇgīr himself followed with another army. People around him whispered that Shaikh Farīd would possibly not be as quick and resolute as the state of affairs required him to be. But before Jahāṇgīr caught up with him, Shaikh Farīd had defeated Khusrau near Lahore. When Jahāṇgīr met him near the field of battle, he embraced him, conferred on him the title of Murtaḍá Khān and spent the night in his tent. But in spite of all that he had done for Jahāṇgīr, it does not appear that Shaikh Farīd expected any demonstrations of the royal gratitude and favour. Jahāṇgīr first appointed him governor of Gujarāt, then recalled him. 'As it was again represented to me', he writes in his memoirs, 'that oppression was being committed by the brethren and attendants of Murtaḍá Khān (Shaikh Farīd) on the ryots (peasants) and people of Aḥmadābād in Gujarāt, and that he was unable properly to restrain his relations and people about him, I transferred the *sūbah* (province) from him'[39]. In the tenth year of Jahāṇgīr's reign, Shaikh Farīd was appointed governor of the Panjāb. One of his assignments as governor was the reduction of the fort of Nagarkōṭ. A Rājā, Sūraj Singh, had been deputed to serve with him, and Shaikh Farīd was forced to report against him because of his behaviour. But before anything substantial could be achieved, Shaikh Farīd fell ill and died (1616). 'He was one of the ancients of this State', wrote Jahāṇgīr. 'My revered father had brought him up and raised him to a position of consequence and trust. . . . I was much grieved in mind at this news'[40].

'The Shaikh was adorned with outward and inward excellence. No one who approached him saw the face of disappointment in the mirror of his thoughts. On the way to the darbar he distributed *qabās*[41], blankets, sheets and shoes to the poor passers-by. He distributed small gold and silver coins with his own hands. One day a *dervish* received alms from him seven times. The eighth time he whispered to him, 'Hide what you have taken seven times, so that the other *dervishes* do not take it from you'. Recluses, pious men, needy persons and widows received fixed allowances daily or yearly, both in his presence and privately. . . . The children of those who had been in his service had all fixed monthly allowances, and they sported, as if they were his own children, in his arms. He appointed teachers to teach them. In Gujarāt he had the names of Sayyids, male and female, written down, and gave them from his own establishment wedding clothes for their chil-

[39] *Tuzuk-i-Jahāṇgīrī*, Roger's Translation, Vol. I, p. 153.
[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 324-5.
[41] Outer garments.

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dren. He even put money in deposit for those who were in the womb. . . . But he gave nothing to panegyrists or singers. He founded many hostels and *sarā'es*. . . . He paid his soldiers with his own hands. He did not grumble at the crowd of men and the noise and the confusion.

'They say that an Afghān named Shēr Khān was one of his best servants. He took leave in Gujarāt and went to his home and stayed there for five or six years. When the Shaikh was appointed to the Kāṇgrā campaign, he came to the town of Kalānaur and paid his respects. The Shaikh told his *bakhshī*, Dwārkā Dās, to give him the man's account, in order that he might send the money to his family. The *bakhshī* wrote out his account and gave it to the Shaikh for the insertion of the date. The Shaikh got angry and said, "He is an old servant. If for some reason he has come late, how has our work suffered?" He made out his account from the date that his salary had been entered on the establishment and paid him Rs. 7000/-'[42].

His administrative and military service is an impressive aspect of Shaikh Farīd's career; his loyalty to the sovereign and his munificence are endearing qualities. Shaikh Farīd also earned the respect and regard of religious men and reformers because of his courage, his sincerity and his goodwill. He was rising in Akbar's favour about the time the religious discussions in the 'Ibādat Khānā were taking place; he did not become a partisan of the Emperor to get more rapid promotion or throw in his lot with the orthodox. He attached himself to Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh, who came to Delhi in 1599 or 1600, and settled down to work of quiet reform. Shaikh Farīd became a means of extending the Khwājah's influence among the nobility, but with a spirit of goodwill that placed him beyond suspicion. The Khwājah, and, after his death in 1603, Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind were anxious to counteract the growing moral laxity among the upper classes, and in this they apparently had Shaikh Farīd's wholehearted support. But he did not commit himself to any of their doctrines, or accept such implications of reform as opposition to the Shī'ahs and the Hindūs.

The collection of Shaikh Aḥmad Sarhindī's letters contains several addressed to Shaikh Farīd. Unfortunately, we do not possess Shaikh Farīd's reply to any of them, but the subjects dealt with in these letters can be assumed to indicate common interests, Shaikh Aḥmad's conviction that Shaikh Farīd would do something to further these interests, and matters arising out of them in which Shaikh Aḥmad would seek to influence Shaikh Farīd's opinion or urge him to

[42] Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op. cit.* Tr. by Beveridge, pp. 525-26.

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more concrete and decisive action. In one letter (Vol. I, No. 43) Shaikh Aḥmad has explained the difference between the Unity of Phenomena and the Unity of Existence. This was a controversy in which only a person who considered the *ṣūfīs* believing in immanence to be misguided and heretical would actively involve himself, and we would not be far wrong if we imagine Shaikh Farīd scratching his head after reading the letter and putting it away reverently. In the next letter (Vol. I, No. 44), Shaikh Aḥmad dilates upon the eminence of the Prophet, the high moral status of the people who believe in him, the vileness of those who disbelieve and the need of following the Prophet's example. Then we have a letter (Vol. I, No. 45) written shortly after the death of Khwājah Bāqī bi'llāh, in which Shaikh Aḥmad thanks Shaikh Farīd for having provided for those living in the *khānqāh* of the Khwājah. This indicates the kind of help Shaikh Farīd was giving to the reform movement. Letter No. 46 (Vol. I) is a sermon. Then we have a letter (No. 47, Vol. I) from which it appears that Akbar was dead and Jahāṇgīr was on the throne, and Shaikh Aḥmad thought this an opportune moment for restoring Islām and the Muslims to the position which in justice belonged to them. He says:

> 'You would know how wretched the Muslims were in the times that are past, in spite of their excellence. In earlier days the separation did not extend beyond the limits indicated in the sacred verse "To you your faith . . .", that the Muslims should act according to their faith and the *kāfirs* follow their own path. But in the (recent) past the *kāfirs* promulgated the ordinances of their religion as if they were the superior power, while the Muslims were utterly unable to declare the laws of Islām, and if they did, they could even be killed. . . . Now that the glad tidings of the decline of those who sought to restrain the power of Islām and of the accession of the King of Islām have reached the ears of all and sundry, the followers of Islām have declared it obligatory to help and support the King, to show the way towards the (universal) observance of the *sharī'ah* and the strengthening of the (Islāmic) community, whether with speech or with action'.

The letter proceeds to warn against the worldly *'ulamā*, on whom it puts the blame for all the evil that had befallen the Muslims.

> 'In view of this,' Shaikh Aḥmad continues, 'your humble correspondent desires to join those who are the supporters of the power of Islām and to exert himself in this matter, so as to bear witness to the truth (of the statement) that he who adds to the number of a nation becomes one of the nation. I hope that I, helpless though I am, will be included in the august community, and shall be able

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to consider myself in the same position as the old woman who had spun a hank of yarn and counted herself among those who sought to buy (the slave) Joseph. I hope I shall have the privilege of meeting you soon. I also hope that, since you are so close to the king and also possess the means, you will endeavour to propagate the *sharī'ah* of the Prophet Muḥammad in public and in private and rescue the Muslims from their desolate condition'.

The letter concludes with a staggering anti-climax. 'The bearer of this letter, Maulānā Ḥāmid, used to get a stipend from the government. Last year he got it through you; this year also he is a suppliant. May God bestow on you spiritual and material wealth!' In another letter (No. 51, Vol. I), there is again a mixture of exhortation and flattery, and Shaikh Farīd is assured that only the *ahl-i-bait*, the descendants of the Prophet[43] can rescue the Muslims from the whirlpool of error.

It is possible that Shaikh Farīd acted upon the advice given to him, and utilized all opportunities of transforming Jahāṇgīr into a Sunnī Muslim of the approved type. We learn from a letter of Shaikh Aḥmad (Vol. I, No. 53) that Jahāṇgīr had asked Shaikh Farīd to suggest the names of four learned men to be employed by the court for the exposition of the *sharī'ah*. The project of appointing four *'ulamā* in the court did not, however, materialize.

Shaikh Farīd's interests extended beyond politics and piety to secular knowledge also. He induced Shaikh Nūral Ḥaqq Muḥaddith to write the historical work known as the *Tārīkh-i-Ḥaqqī*, and the preparation of the *Zubdat al-Tawārikh* was also due to his encouragement and support. He was loudly praised for having a mosque repaired at Lahore and for building several *khānqāhs* and *sarā'es*. While at Aḥmadābād, he added a quarter to the city which he called Bukhārā, and he founded the township of Farīdābād, near Delhi.

Shaikh Farīd stands out as an example of distinguished administrative, diplomatic and military service, of a devotion to justice and duty unpolluted by selfishness and fear, and of an all-embracing goodwill. Without making any attempt to attract royal or popular attention, he became a symbol of conscientiousness and integrity. His own generation could not claim to possess many like him; in the succeeding generations his type became still more rare. 'Good God! Though there is the same interchange of night and day, the same movements of the planets and revolution of the spheres, yet at this portion of time this land is without such men. Perhaps they have gone to some other country!'[44].

[43] Shaikh Farīd came from a family of Sayyids of Bukhārā.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 527.

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CHAPTER XIII

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

THE SHARĪ'AH AS A SYSTEM OF LIVING

IT has already been admitted that the sphere of religious thought is very difficult to define, but that it is necessary to distinguish between the concept of the *sharī'ah* as a system of law and the *sharī'ah* as an ideal code of ethics. In theory no difference existed; that the *sharī'ah* comprehended all situations and circumstances was accepted without question, and even a cursory reading of any compendium of legal opinions would bear out this claim. We have, in fact, to distinguish between those who looked upon Islām as divinely instituted, operative and binding law, and those who regarded it primarily as a set of moral commands. In the one case it was enough to know the law that was operative, in the other an attempt was made to give the law a moral and spiritual basis, and emphasis was laid on conduct rather than relationships. For this purpose it was not enough to know the interpretations, opinions and judgements of the founders and outstanding exponents of the *fiqh* of the four orthodox schools; a study of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīṯh* was also necessary. It was unfortunate that those who made this study considered themselves bound by the principle of *taqlīd*, and did not claim the right to independent thinking. Their intellectual effort was directed towards the amplification of the *sharī'ah* as a system of law and ethics. The emphasis on conduct, however, did give their effort a distinct and characteristic religious significance by introducing a powerful element of idealism. Every Muslim had to obey the operative law; but that was not enough. He had also to realize, and as far as possible express in his own life, the moral ideals of Islām as revealed in the acts and sayings of the Prophet and of his Pious Companions.

The position was in theory unexceptionable, and deviation from current practice which presented a closer accord with the best traditions of Islāmic piety evoked admiration. But the risk of giving a personal formulation to accepted beliefs was not taken up by the religious thinkers—they gave, at best, a new and higher meaning to *taqlīd*. The *sharī'ah*, as they understood it, was an exalted way of life,

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but did not allow of experiment and adventure. Even their scholarship was not a search for new ideas, a means of discovering new answers to questions. They did not become cantankerous like the superficial or the official *'ulamā*, but intellectually they were so much on their guard against innovation and doubt that their knowledge could increase in quantity without any improvement in quality. Their field of activity, in terms of spiritual experimentation, remained narrow and, in the age of ferment which began with the impact of Islām over a wide area and on the lives of different types of communities and individuals, it seemed that the religious thinker had little to say that would arouse interest or curiosity. He could only repeat what had already been said before.

Sayyid Muḥammad Jaunpūrī was a religious thinker whose teachings went far beyond *taqlīd* and threatened to subvert the social order. They led inevitably to the formation of a sect. They were, therefore, bitterly opposed by the worldly and official *'ulamā*, who attempted to achieve with brute force what they could not accomplish through argument. The greatest weakness of the *'ulamā* of this type was that their personalities and private lives could not be held up as examples of righteousness. But we also find, during this very period, a succession of *'ulamā* who possessed outstanding intellectual gifts as well as the most impressive spiritual qualities of the *ṣūfīs*. This line begins with Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn Muttaqī. He was the teacher and spiritual guide of Shaikh 'Alī Muttaqī, whose most distinguished disciple was Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb Muttaqī, to whom Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith of Delhi owed much of his learning and inspiration.

Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn was a scholar whose earnestness in fulfilling the requirements of the religious law in its minutest detail led him to perform feats of self-denial and asceticism. He lived for many years on the produce of land which he cultivated himself. Then, for some reason, he lost possession of the land. He was unwilling to live on the labour of others, and did not eat anything till he was reduced to the last extremity. He gave up all rights of ownership over what he possessed, so that any person who took anything that belonged to him would not be guilty of committing a forbidden act. Since the law did not permit anyone to derive personal benefit from what belonged to the generality of the Muslims, Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn would not seek shelter from the sun under the shadow of the wall of Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakarīyā's mausoleum, as that had been built with public funds. Regard for the law had made him physically so sensitive that if he ate even one morsel of food in the cooking of which the law had been infringed, he would feel a heaviness inside. On one occasion when he had this feeling, investigation revealed

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that the fire in the hearth on which the food was cooked had been lighted with dry grass taken without permission from a neighbour's house. We cannot today see much value in this attitude, but there can be no doubt that such stories have been most edifying and have stimulated both piety and integrity.

The spiritual successor of Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn, Shaikh 'Alī Muttaqī, while equally strict in the observance of the law, was far superior intellectually, and his tendency towards mysticism was very pronounced. He was born at Burhānpūr in 885/1480, and for a while in his youth entered government service and lived like a man of the world. Then he abandoned everything and became the disciple of a Chishtī *ṣūfī*. Desire for study first took him to Multān, where he read *Baiḍāwī* and *'Ain al-'Ilm* with Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn, and then to the Holy Cities. Here he came into contact with the most renowned scholars of the time, who were all deeply impressed by his vast knowledge and exceptional gifts. He distinguished himself both in the study of the *ḥadīth* and *ṣūfī* literature, and is believed to have written about a hundred books. But apparently there is nothing that can be called an original contribution.

Shaikh 'Alī earned his livelihood through copying books till his hands and eyes failed him because of age. If he came across books in Arabia that were rare he made several copies and sent them to scholars and institutions in India. Because he had to travel a great deal, he reduced his needs to such an extent that he could carry all his necessaries in two bags, one of which contained only books. He did all his work himself, and would not allow anyone to serve him. On one occasion, when he was passing through Gujarāt, the ruling king, Bahādur Shāh, wanted to pay his respects. Shaikh 'Alī would not agree because, he said, the king would be dressed in stuffs not permitted by the law, and he would be forced, as a matter of principle, to admonish him. Ultimately, under pressure from friends and followers, a meeting was arranged and the king listened to Shaikh 'Alī's admonition. His attitude towards those who wished to become his disciples was more like that of the *ṣūfīs* than of the *'ulamā*, as he relied on the indirect effects of living together for study and prayer rather than on any direct injunctions as to what the disciple should do to cultivate his spiritual nature. Shaikh 'Alī resembled the *ṣūfīs* also in saying things that were challenging to the mind, and Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq, in his account, also quotes a Hindī couplet composed by the Shaikh[1].

The mantle of Shaikh 'Alī fell on his disciple, Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb Muttaqī, who lived and studied with him for twelve years, from 963/1555 to 975/1567. Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb was also born at

[1] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

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Burhānpūr (*c.* 943/1536), and apart from spiritual affinities that would, in any case, have drawn them together, there were admirers and disciples of Shaikh 'Ali who assured Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb that he could find no better teacher and preceptor. Before proceeding to the Holy Cities, Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb travelled widely in Gujarāt, Deccan and Ceylon. He had learnt calligraphy, and earned his livelihood by copying books, both in the *naskh* and the *nasta'līq* styles. In the Holy Cities he was hailed as a kindred spirit and soon was recognized as one of the pre-eminent scholars of his time. He did not confine himself to Mecca or the Arab world, but made several voyages back and forth between Arabia and his native country. He was thus able to stimulate learning and the desire for the truly religious life in India.

The most significant among Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb's teachings are those where he has indicated what should be the attitude of the orthodox Muslims towards views and statements that appear to be erroneous or heretical. Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith says:

> 'His attitude towards such ṣūfistic works as the *Fuṣūṣ* is one of acceptance, but he does not teach them; he does not make an occupation of studying them, nor does he reject them or heap scorn upon them in the manner of jurists. He used to say, "One must strengthen one's faith in accordance with the doctrines of the *ahl-i-sunnah,* both externally and in the heart. When the faith has been so strengthened, one must practise what has been written by them (the *ṣūfīs*), study their books, which are replete with truths and mysteries. If he should find anything difficult to understand, he should not distress his mind because of it, but leave it aside and proceed further. He should not begin by determining what he should believe on the basis of these books, and become a follower of what is just hearsay". He also used to say, "If one hears an opinion expressed, one should not repudiate it at once, even though it may be false. One should first listen and consider whether one has really grasped what has been said or not; then one should, if possible, reconcile it with (what one believes to be) the truth, otherwise one should reject it. If even that is not possible[2], one should just leave it alone and go one's way, without allowing one's faith to be shaken". He also used to say, "It is not a condition for those who travel on the path of ṣūfism that they should begin with a belief in the Unity of Existence in the form in which it is set forth in the *Fuṣuṣ* and other works. The condition for this path is the continuity of (good)

[2] That is, if the matter is beyond one's intellectual competence, being too philosophical or abstruse.

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action, with an asceticism that conforms with the doctrines of the *ahl-i-sunnah wa'l jamā'ah*. Then one will attain a condition of bliss and feel (the light?) in the heart" . . . He also used to say, "If you find anyone professing Islām with the *kalimah* and observing prayer and fast, and in spite of this giving expression to such views[3], then you must excuse him. You should not call him a *kāfir* or an atheist. But, of course, if he does not pray and fast and still says such things, then he is without doubt an atheist". . . .

'Someone said, "The *ṣūfīs* say that the seeker should be perpetually occupied with *dhikr*". He replied, "Whoever is occupied with good works is engaged in *dhikr*. Saying prayers is *dhikr*, reading the Holy Qur'ān is *dhikr*, imparting knowledge of religion is *dhikr*, and every act of goodness is also *dhikr*. There are people who give up study and teaching, give up everything and devote themselves to *dhikr* in solitude. This is a kind of medical treatment which must be resorted to only occasionally. As (spiritual) ailments are severe in the beginning, the treatment has also to be drastic, so that frequent *dhikr* in solitude is necessary". . . . He used to say, "Our (spiritual) predecessors used to follow the principle of beginning with good actions and moral refinement" '[4].

These views have particular reference to the teachings of Sayyid Muḥammad, whose followers were being bitterly and unscrupulously persecuted. What Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb said, in effect, was that the Mahdawīs could not be called unbelievers and atheists, because they called themselves Muslims, recited the *kalimah*, prayed and fasted. If they occupied themselves with *dhikr* and gave it undue importance in the religious life, there was nothing wrong in this. If Sayyid Muḥammad had made claims about himself on the basis of his spiritual experience, and these claims appeared unacceptable, it was more proper to say nothing about them. If he made statements that seemed erroneous, we should ponder them deeply, attempt to reconcile them with what we believe, and, if that is not possible, quietly continue in our own belief. In the context in which they were expressed, Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb's views are evidence of great moral courage. They did not stem the tide of persecution, but they must have brought hope and consolation to many earnest scholars and thinkers who saw that sincere and righteous men were being made to suffer for the profession of truth and the practice of Islāmic piety.

The *ṣūfīs*, no doubt, cultivated an attitude that was even more liberal than Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb's. 'It is proper', Shaikh Sai-

[3] That is, heretical, novel or unacceptable opinions.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 263-5.

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fuddīn (1514-1582), the father of Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, is reported to have said, 'that in a learned discussion you should not become cantankerous and hurt others. If you think the other person is in the right, agree with what he says; if he not in the right, try once or twice to convince him. If he still refuses to change his views, tell him that you are saying what appears to be true according to your knowledge, but it is possible that what he says is correct, and there is no need to dispute'[5]. Acceptance of this attitude, however, would have undermined orthodoxy, and Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq chose the cautious policy of increasing tolerance by increasing and propagating knowledge of the faith. He completed his studies at the age of eighteen, and began to teach when he was twenty. In 1587, he went on a pilgrimage, and stayed on in Mecca to study under Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb, returning after three years. He began to teach again, following a course of study in which the Qur'ān and *ḥadith* were the main subjects, and carried on his work till his death at the age of about ninety.

It is believed that Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq quietly migrated to Gujarāt in order to avoid signing Akbar's Manifesto. We cannot be sure how much pressure was actually exercised to obtain signatures; it must have varied inversely with the degree of personal authority and influence which an *'ālim* desired and attempted to exercise. But there can be no doubt that Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq would have found the atmosphere of Fatḥpūr Sīkrī, where he lived for some time, most uncongenial. He was not, however, disturbed after he had settled down at Delhi. He was on good terms with Jahāṇgīr[6] for some years, and once even visited the court. But later his relations became strained.

Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq's studies covered the whole field of religious knowledge, including ṣūfism, and he was a prolific writer. Presenting a fresh point of view, and thereby contradicting what was traditionally accepted, was not regarded as necessary or proper for a scholar. But if we take the *Akhbār al-Akhyār* as an illustration, Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq was gifted with a natural reverence and a large-heartedness that brought together the extravagances of the *ṣūfīs*, the meticulousness of the righteous *'ulamā* and the ideal of orthodoxy as one powerful current of spiritual striving. This harmonization of aims

[5] Dr K. A. Niẓāmī, *Ḥayāt-i-Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dihlawī*. Nadwah al-Muṣannifīn, Delhi, 1953. P. 78.

[6] Jahāṇgīr refers to Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq with great deference (*Tuzuk*, Persian text, edited by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad, Aligarh, 1864, p. 282). This may be contrasted with his references to Shaikh Aḥmad (p. 272) in terms of strong condemnation. These are repeated (p. 308) when Shaikh Aḥmad is brought to the court after his release from the Gwalior Fort.

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could be regarded as an end in itself, and a substantial contribution to the development of religious thought.

The religious thinker of real significance after Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq was Shāh Walīullāh (*c.* 1702-1763). He was the son of a noted divine, Shāh 'Abdur Raḥīm, and obtained his father's formal permission to teach when he was fifteen years old. He carried on this work quietly for about twelve years. The publication of a Persian translation of the Qur'ān, which he had undertaken in the belief that it would help considerably in disseminating knowledge of the Holy Book, brought him into unpleasant prominence. The conservative *'ulamā* accused him of innovation, strong opposition was aroused and once some people even went to the extent of hiring ruffians to beat him up. Both Shāh Walīullāh's project of making the Qur'ān accessible to practically all literate people and the violent opposition to the project are characteristic of the religious attitude of those days. Shāh Walīullah went to the Holy Cities to meet scholars and add to his knowledge. It may also have been his motive to let the opposition die down, for both the orthodox *'ulamā* and the Shī'ah nobles of the court were involved in it. But the idea of broadbasing religious life by enabling the largest number of people to read and understand the Qur'ān was not given up. Shāh Walīullāh's sons, Shah 'Abdul Qādir and Shāh Rafī'uddīn translated the Qur'ān into Urdu, the former following the text rather too literally, the latter paying more regard to the Urdu idiom.

There is no evidence to show that Shāh Walīullāh aimed at a reinterpretation of the sources of religion in order to adapt law and practice to existing circumstances. He did not even attempt a change in emphasis. But he did stimulate thought, in the first place by himself looking around more widely for evidences of the divine wisdom enshrined in Muslim belief and, secondly, by declaring that *taqlīd*, without any attempt to understand, was a characteristic of the lowest type of mind. He struck out a new path by adopting the historical method of approach in explaining the development of ṣūfism and of *taqlīd*, but this did not disturb his fixed belief in the innate perfection of the *sharī'ah* as it had come to be understood. He also ignored the possibility that great changes in the circumstances of life would affect the attitude of men towards morality and law. The perfection of the *sharī'ah*, which he demonstrates with great enthusiasm, served, on the other hand, to reassure his own and several succeeding generations that they were living in accordance with a system that could not be improved upon and, therefore, should not be changed.

If we take the *Ḥujjah Allāh al-Bāligh̲ah* as representing Shāh Walīullāh's concept of Islām, the first characteristic that strikes us is the emphasis on the completeness, the inner consistency, the

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perfect wisdom of the universal order. Transcending everything is the Divine Presence—*Ḥaẓīrah al-Quds*—, not God but the Sacred Precincts, where the Will of God is communicated to the chosen among the angels. Then there is the Court of Heaven—*Mala'-i-A'lá*—, which consists of Beings of Light, whom God has created for the doing of all that is good, of the refined emanations of the elements which become the source of Grace for the most exalted among human beings, and, thirdly, of human beings who attach themselves to the Court of Heaven, and perform such acts of supreme merit that the veil of physical existence is lifted and they join the angels and are counted among them. Sometimes the *Ḥaẓīrah al-Quds* agree upon devising some means for rescuing mankind from the deadly perils of the other world—the world of retribution after death—and of life in this world. They raise to perfection the most excellent man of the age, endow him with the power to command obedience and infuse in the hearts of the people the desire to follow and obey him[7].

This is the universal order at the highest level. Its wisdom is reflected in matters of common observation at the lowest physical and material level, and in human life.

> 'Consider each one of the species of animals. They are all different in appearance, like the trees. Apart from this difference, animals do things of their own will, they have their particular instincts and natural ability to do (certain) things which distinguish one species from another. . . . Each species has been provided with those instincts which are in harmony with its nature and disposition, and which promote its fulfilment and well-being. It is endowed with these instincts by its Creator as a quality of the species. . . . If after these considerations we reflect on the nature of man, we shall find that he possesses the characteristics of vegetable as well as animal life . . . and, in addition to these, many features which distinguish him from all animals, such as (the power of) speech, (the power of) understanding what is said by others, the creation of sciences that can be acquired through systematization of obvious propositions, or through experience or diligent search or intelligence, (and the power) to organize those matters which he does not perceive through his senses or his imagination but considers intellectually desirable, such as cultivation of the mind, or establishing political authority over a territory. As these characteristics are inborn and part of his nature as a species, they are found in all communities, even among those who live high up in the mountains. . . .

[7] *Ḥujjah Allāh al-Bāligh̲ah*, edition with Arabic text and Urdū translation, Ḥimāyat-i-Islām Press, Lahore. P. 26 ff.

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'And it is also one of the characteristics of mankind as a species that there should be born among them those who should be inclined exclusively towards the (flowing) stream of the intellectual sciences, and who should acquire them by means of revelation or wisdom or visions, and that others, who do not possess these abilities to the same degree, should follow them, having observed in them gifts of leadership and signs of grace, and obey them in doing what is commanded and eschewing what is forbidden. Among individual human beings there is none who is not drawn towards the Unseen in dreams that he sees or because of his opinion or of listening to some mysterious agent or of the keenness of insight. But all men are not alike. There are some who possess qualities of excellence, and some who have no worth, and the worthless need the excellent. The attributes of the excellent person are of an order entirely different from those of the animal species. He possesses the virtues of humility, purity, sense of justice and large-heartedness. The lights of the highest heaven and the world of the angels are reflected in him, his prayers are accepted and he gives evidence of miraculous powers and spiritual eminence. Although those features which distinguish the human species from the animal are many, they are all to be derived from two characters. (1) The first is the development of intellectual powers. This has two aspects, one concerns the principles of the organization of human life, and the derivation from these of the deeper consequences. The other aspect is the knowledge of the Unseen, which is bestowed as a grace. (2) The second character is the superior power of practical accomplishment. This also has two aspects. One is doing things with deliberation and as an act of will. . . . Whenever a man performs any act, the acts themselves vanish as soon as they have been performed, but the spirits, the souls of the acts settle down in the mind, so that after the performance of all acts, a light or a darkness is left behind. . . . The reason for this view that the souls of acts establish themselves in the human mind is that all communities of men are agreed on (the need and value of) spiritual discipline and prayer. They have discovered by intuition their spiritual merit. (On the other hand) they avoid what is (evil and) forbidden, and have discovered by intuition the hard-heartedness it engenders. . . .

'We must understand that the proper balance, which is inherent in man as man, cannot be fully attained without (1) certain kinds of knowledge, which only those endowed with the keenest insight can acquire, and whose guidance the others follow, (2) a *sharī'ah* which comprises religious knowledge, the sciences of beneficial living as well as those rules in which voluntary acts are

discussed and their detailed division into the meritorious, the permitted, the undesirable and the forbidden is laid down, and those theses in which the degrees of virtue are explained. Therefore it was considered necessary by God in His wisdom and mercy to provide sustenance for intellectual power in the Holy Unseen, and to select and set apart the person with the highest intelligence to obtain (every kind of) knowledge from the World of Holiness'[8].

The concept of *dīn*, the true, eternal, indestructible Faith, fits reasonably into this conception of the universal order. '*Dīn* we call that nature on which the changes of age and time have no effect, and upon which all the prophets are agreed'[9].

We do not find here ideas that could be called original. In fact, from some references it is apparent that Shāh Walīullāh had the pattern of Ghazāli's *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* before him. But it is also evident that he had the problems of his own time in mind. He says that there are two main causes of the decline of cities: (1) an unjustifiably large number of people doing no work and living on the *bait al-māl* and (2) heavy taxation of peasants, merchants and craftsmen. This excessive taxation he later calls 'plunder or even worse'. He sees in his own days the history of ancient Iran repeating itself in a degeneration of customs, manners and character that could have only one result[10]. He is not, therefore, anxious to support existing authority. He even says that under such circumstances it is the duty of men (gifted) with the highest understanding to use their best efforts to propagate (the ideal of) justice and eradicate all that is evil. Often it happens that the support of justice leads to conflicts and (open) war, but it is the most meritorious form of doing good'[11]. Shāh Walīullāh does not, however, follow up this idea and evolve a concept of *jihād* or of the duty of the individual to do his best to remove social evils.

One of the most significant aspects of Shāh Walīullāh's intellectual enterprises was his endeavour to remove misunderstandings and conflicts by means of a synthesis (*taṭbīq*) of the different points of view. He wrote a commentary on the *Muwaṭṭā* of Imām Mālik, who was the founder of a *madhhab* different from Shāh Walīullāh's own. He also tried to show that *waḥdah al-shuhūd* and *waḥdah al-wujūd* were not doctrines in conflict with each other, but stages on the road to spiritual knowledge, *waḥdah al-wujūd* being an earlier and *waḥdah al-shuhūd* a later and more advanced stage. However, while there can be no doubt about his immense learning and deep sincerity,

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 79 and 154.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

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his claim to have received knowledge of certain truths direct from God or the Prophet is most embarrassing for anyone who wishes to make a critical appraisal of his teachings. His mind seems to have derived its initial and main stimulus from an overpowering love for and loyalty to the *sharī'ah*, and this love and loyalty made him ultimately change his position almost completely. He widened the scope of discussion, but basically he adhered to the existing framework of thought. In the *Ḥujjah Allāh al-Bāligh̲ah*, when he expatiates on the essential unity of the *dīn* and the suitability of every *sharī'ah* to the situation in which it was promulgated, he follows the orthodox practice of limiting his references to the Jewish prophets and the books revealed to them. He does not attempt to bring the Indian Muslims and non-Muslims ideologically closer together, as, for instance, his contemporary Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānāṇ did. What is more significant, he did not provide his generation with a definition of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ*, good works, that would guide it towards those interests and activities which are implied in his own ideas of political justice and social welfare. We cannot, therefore, accept all the modernism that has been read into his works. On the contrary, we must regard it as a matter of real regret that a person of his intellectual stature got himself involved in the dispute about the relative merits of the four successors of the Prophet, and in his *Qurrah al-'Ainain* took up the unacceptable if not absurd position that the persons and acts of the *shaikhain*, the first two Khalīfahs, were an integral part of the prophethood of the Prophet himself. This represents, unfortunately, a reversion to the social forms of *taqlīd*, to the orthodox assertions of the pre-eminence of the first two Khalīfahs as against the claims made by the Shī'ahs in regard to the fourth Khalīfah. At one stage of his thought he is very critical of *taqlīd*:

> 'And another thing which appeared among them was that people were satisfied with *taqlīd*. . . . The reason for *taqlīd* is the wrangling of the jurists among themselves, for when they began to compete with each other for giving *fatwās*, whatever was stated by one was objected to by the others and not accepted until supporting evidence from the ancient scholars was produced. *Taqlīd* consists in this, that the expositions of the ancients should be accepted and the *ijtihād* of contemporaries should not. One of the reasons for the prevalence of *taqlīd* was the injustice of the qāḍīs, for when the qāḍīs began to be unjust, only those judgements of theirs which were in accordance with the views of the ancients were accepted. Another reason for increasing the prevalance of *taqlīd* was the ignorance of the masses. When these things happened a person began to be called a jurist if he did not attempt *ijtihād*. Otherwise

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in reality difference among the jurists meant preference being given to one opinion on matters where several opinions have been given. . . .

'Then followed many generations believing in *taqlīd*. They could not distinguish between falsehood and truth, disputations and deductions. The jurist then was he who was loquacious and blunt, a man who memorized opinions without distinguishing between the strong and the weak and opened his mouth as wide as he could to utter them. The *muḥaddith* was he who counted the true and apocryphal traditions and related them like stories on the strength of his jaw. . . .

'After this there followed generations which went further in dissension and *taqlīd*, for people had lost integrity, so that they were satisfied with not exercising their minds in matters of religion, saying that they had found their fathers and forefathers following a certain path and that they were just following in their footsteps. . . .[12]

But his *Waṣīyat-nāmah* shows a complete change of position. He states categorically that one must hold firm to the Book and the *sunnah*, that one must be strict in doing what is enjoined and eschewing what is forbidden, and avoid relationships with and be hostile to those who are indifferent in this respect, for human beings, as human beings, have no function other than that of following the *sharī'ah*. The only way in which his family could express its gratitude to God for its Arab blood and speech is to retain as far as possible Arab habits and customs and not permit the intrusion of 'Ajamī customs and the habits of the Hindūs[13].

[12] Shāh Walīullāh, *Al-Inṣāf fī Bayān-i-Asbāb al-Ikhtilāf*, pp. 70-93.
[13] *Waṣīyat-nāmah*. Printed at Kanpur by Masīḥuzzamān.

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CHAPTER XIV

ṢŪFĪS AND ṢŪFISM

I

OUR discussion of the first phase of ṣūfism in India was based mainly on the Chishtīs, because they were probably the largest in number and represented, for the period, what seems to be the most typical in the *ṣūfī* way of life. But the existence of other orders and of individual *ṣūfīs* who cannot be classified has also been indicated. In the fifteenth and subsequent centuries there was a vast expansion. The *Ā'in-i-Akbarī* gives a list of fourteen orders[1], but if we do not count the subdivisions or branches, the most important among the 'orthodox' were the Chishtīs, the Suhrawardīs, the Firdausīs, the Qādirīs, the Shaṭṭārīs and the Naqshbandīs, and among the 'unorthodox' the Qalandars and the Madārīs. The number of individuals belonging to no order and adhering to no system or discipline, who were regarded nonetheless as *ṣūfīs*, also multiplied considerably, almost each township having its own mysterious or curious figures. The orders remained and were recognized as distinct, but the practice of *murīds* seeking spiritual guidance and benefit from *shaikhs* of several orders became gradually very common, and not infrequently the *shaikhs* themselves were *khalīfahs* of *ṣūfīs* owning spiritual allegiance to more than one order. Ṣūfism did not lose its organizational form, but the orders themselves could not maintain the exclusiveness necessary to emphasize their identity. We shall consider them separately also, but for a proper appreciation of the character of ṣūfism during this period, its most prominent tendencies should first be analyzed.

The system of self-discipline and the routine of the *khānqāh* formed the link between the early and middle phase of ṣūfism. However, self-discipline came to be regarded not as an end in itself, and therefore a continuous process, but as the first stage of the spiritual journey. The devotional routine of the *khānqāh* was a means of

[1] The orders are: Ḥabībīyah, Ṭaifūrīyah, Karkhīyah, Saqatīyah, Junaidīyah, Kāzarūnīyah, Tūsīyah, Firdawsīyah, Suhrawardīyah, Zaidīyah, 'Iyādīyah, Aḥmadīyah, Ḥubairīyah, Chishtīyah. It is doubtful if all these existed as orders in India.

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keeping the mind detached from everything except God. Gradually it came to be followed mainly as something symbolizing the *ṣūfī* way of life, at once fulfilling the commands of the *sharī'ah* and ensuring salvation and heaven for the devotee. The 'orthodox' *ṣūfīs* in general ceased to reject the 'world' as represented by the state and the *sharī'ah* as represented by the externalist *'ulamā*. If anyone among them avoided kings and courts and declined to accept gifts of land, it was his own choice. The *shaikhs* who lived in affluence were deemed to possess no less merit than those who elected to remain destitute. The decisive factor, as we shall see later, was the evidence of the degree of favour shown to them by God. Self-imposed poverty had, in fact, been the expression of a passion for spiritual and social independence. This ideal receded into the background, and was not replaced by any conscious or subconscious movement to influence or reform the political system of orthodoxy. Ṣūfism did remain distinct and self-contained. But just as the attitude to self-discipline changed, the attitude in intellectual and spiritual matters was also transformed. Instead of being the sum total of independent and intensely personal experiences, ṣūfism grew into a system of beliefs and practices based on certain assumptions in regard to the supernatural and the spiritual, and tended to confine itself to the vindication of the truth of these assumptions. There was a shift in emphasis from the ethical to the metaphysical, from the concept of the ideal life as a struggle towards God to the concept of the ideal life as an overflow of the grace of God. The change was possible, and would indeed have been hardly noticeable because the earlier, dynamic concept of the spiritual life had neither been clearly defined nor its social and ethical implications elaborated. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīyā, as we have already stated, distinguished between intransitive and transitive forms of obedience[2], and he probably intended to give a metaphysical form to this distinction by saying that the love of God was of two kinds, love of the Person, (*dhāt*) of God and love of His Attributes (*ṣifāt*). Love of the Person was bestowed as grace, and could not be attained through effort, while the love of Attributes could, and therefore should be cultivated[3]. The virtues and powers, or the states and conditions of the *ṣūfī* could thus be looked upon as bestowed upon him by God for reasons known to Him only, or be considered the fruit of spiritual endeavour, of a self-discipline and moral aspiration inspired, refined and exalted by the love of God. As *ṣūfīs*, with very rare exceptions, abstained from active participation in social life, their ethical teaching consisted mainly of attempts to draw attention to those attributes of

[2] See above, p. 131.
[3] *Siyar al-Awlīyā*, p. 455.

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God which could be reflected in human behaviour, such as love, mercy, generosity, solicitude. The shift in emphasis to the purely spiritual and metaphysical is not evident in any new definition of ṣūfism, but in a wider prevalence of the belief that God was lavish in bestowing his gifts on His chosen ones, who thereby came to possess all that could be desired. The self-discipline and the austerities which the typical *ṣūfīs* of the earlier period practised throughout life were now mostly regarded as the purification preparatory to the reception of divine favours. The truths formerly imparted in flashes of inspiration that came when they came were now studiously reduced to a system, and ultimately there was no alternative to accepting an alliance with the systems of official orthodoxy and political organization.

Shaikh Sharafuddīn Yaḥyá Munērī, whose long life enabled him to form as it were a bridge between the early and middle period of ṣūfism, was probably the first to present *ṣūfī* doctrines in a systematized form. The *Ma'dan al-Ma'ānī*, a collection of questions and answers on topics concerning the *sharī'ah* and the *ṭarīqah* compiled by one of his *murīds*, Zaid Badar 'Arabī, may be taken as typical. It begins with rather elementary observations on God and creation, which are meant to prove the existence of God, and with a refutation of the concept of a Principle of Evil—Ahriman—in perpetual conflict with the Good. Then the question of Faith and Islam is considered, and though faith based on reason is declared to be superior to faith based on *taqlīd*, the recognition of both as equally valid is enjoined. This is followed by an exposition of the meaning of Knowledge of Person, *dhāt*, and Knowledge of Attributes, *ṣifāt*. The fourth chapter deals with Allegories (*mutashābihāt*). In the fifth, *Ṭarīqah* and *Sharī'ah* are discussed, and it is maintained that *ijtihād*, the exercise of reason in interpretation, becomes superfluous when we have certain knowledge. This view confirms *taqlīd* as defined and imposed by orthodoxy, though a modification is introduced for the benefit of the *ṣūfī* accused of errors or innovations by saying that the *ṣūfīs* do not rely on what is written or repeated, and it is possible that what appears to be an error or an innovation is really in accord with the hidden meaning of the Qur'ān or the *sunnah*. Subsequent chapters deal with the interpretation of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, with prophethood, *hijrah*, pre-eminence of the Companions of the Prophet over other Muslims, cleanliness, prayer, fasting, *hajj* and *jihād*, *dhikr* and litanies, God, *pīr* and *murīd*, instruction of the *murīd*, *qaṣr* and *farq*, the men of God, insight of the Great Ones, spiritual endeavours and austerities and turning away from the lower self in disgust.

What strikes us first is the intrusion of externalist ideas in an

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essentially ṣūfistic context. The cautious and conservative among the earlier *ṣūfīs* did enjoin adherence to the *sharī'ah*, but gave a secondary place to everything that was formal or external by making sincerity an absolute condition. Shaikh Sharafuddīn in his discussion of prayer quotes 'Ain al-Quḍāt, who said frequently that blind adherence to habit is idolatry, and worship is that which brings a man out of his habits. Still he gives the impression of wanting to weave orthodoxy into the pattern of ṣūfism so intimately that the two become inseparable. His emphasis is not so much on spiritual endeavour as on the mystery of the Absolute. The more this mystery is revealed to the *ṣūfī*, the more carefully must he guard it, and Shaikh Sharafuddīn goes to the extent of saying that to kill a person who makes public the mysteries of *tauḥīd* is better than to give life to a dead person[4]. It is in this context and in his discourse on the perfect man that he indulges in the refreshing boldness of ṣūfistic self-expression. Positively exhilarating in its inconsistency is his explanation of the conduct of one Qāḍī 'Umdah who, in one of his spiritual states, dyed his hands with henna, as if he were a eunuch or a woman, and walked about in the bazar with his arm round the neck of a courtesan. Once he came like this to Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh Dihlī and said, 'If you are a real Shaikh, go around the bazar as I do, and if you cannot, then give your turban to this courtesan'.[5]

But in spite of all attempts at systematization, the status of the *shaikh* remained the central feature of ṣūfism. In the middle period, it rose even higher than it was before, because of the belief that the *shaikh* found favour with God and was endowed with supernatural powers not because of his own spiritual endeavours but because it was foreordained at the creation of the world, just as prophets were not prophets by reason of the virtues they cultivated but because God had chosen them to be His prophets. That the saint was a saint while still in the womb and favourable circumstances were created for him by God's will is almost a refrain in the first part of the *Laṭā'if-i-Quddūsi*[6]. The attitude of the author of *Gulzār-i-Abrār* is quite the same[7]. On his part, the *shaikh* talks more of attainment than of struggle, more of the divine mysteries, knowledge of which has been bestowed on him, than of his adventures on the Path. Since esoteric wisdom is beyond the grasp of those not predestined to be endowed with it, the *shaikh* is on the look-out for the *murīd*

[4] Zaid Badar 'Arabī, *Ma'dan al-Ma'ānī*, Maṭba' Sharaf al-Akhtar, Bihār. 1301 A.H. Vol. I, p. 35.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 206.

[6] An account of the life of Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs Gaṅgōhī, compiled by his son, Shaikh Ruknuddīn. Matba'-i-Mujtabā'ī, Delhi, 1311 A.H.

[7] *Gulzār-i-Abrār*, by Muḥammad Ghauthī Shaṭṭārī. Translated by Maulwī Faḍl-i-Ḥaqq, Agra, 1326 A.H.

marked out by God as a worthy recipient, and when he finds him, imparts the secret knowledge which illuminates the heart of the *murīd* within a very short time. The ordinary *murīd* is reduced to the level of a mere worshipper; the routine of the *khānqāh* is a means of attachment to the *shaikh*, which in its turn is a means of ensuring salvation and heaven.

The *shaikhs* of the early period constantly spoke of their predecessors with love and reverence, repeating what they had said, or recounting their miraculous deeds. In the middle period, some *shaikhs*—Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī, Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī, Shāh Badī'uddīn Madār—became mythical personalities and objects of adoration. Their personalities were, one might say, so superimposed on the idea of God as to make it appear that He exercised all His powers through them and never against their wishes or requests. Not only had they performed miracles themselves; others could perform miracles by appealing to them or even using their name. In the Qādirī hagiology in particular, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlanī not only overshadowed all the other *ṣūfīs* but became a dispenser of favours equal almost to God himself. Shaikh Jalāl Bukhārī (Jahāniyāṇ Jahāṇ-Gasht) is reported to have put out a fire at a great distance by throwing a handful of dust in its direction and appealing to the omnipotent Shaikh for help. Even Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith calls him the 'Shaikh of the Heavens and the Two Worlds'[8]. Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī appears in the authentic records as the *ṣūfī* who introduced the Chishtī order into India. But there is no mention of any of his immediate successors going on a pilgrimage to his grave at Ajmēr. His pre-eminence among the *ṣūfīs* dates from Akbar's time. Badī'uddīn Madār may be altogether a fiction of the popular imagination, but there can be no doubt in regard to his being venerated for his miraculous powers by very large numbers of people from the fifteenth century onwards.

The creation of such mythical figures gave the *shaikhs* belonging to their order the inducement to exercise their imagination in determining their own status. Shaikh Jalāluddīn Aḥmad Khaṯū (1337-1445) and Sayyid Muḥammad bin Ja'far (*c.* 1350-*c.* 1450) are typical of the first attempts of this kind. Shaikh Aḥmad Khaṯū as a boy received instruction from Bābā Isḥāq, a native of Khaṯū. Then he came to Delhi, where he practised austerities in a mosque. Shaikh Jalāl Bukhārī (Jahāniyāṇ Jahāṇ-Gasht) saw him once while passing through the city and transmitted his spiritual gifts to him by rubbing his breast three times against Shaikh Aḥmad's. While in Delhi, Shaikh Aḥmad became acquainted with Ẓafar Khān, who was later made governor of Gujarāt by Fīrūz Tughlaq. When Ẓafar

[8] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

Khān became the independent ruler of the province, he invited Shaikh Aḥmad to come over. Whatever austerities he may have performed before, the Shaikh now lived in affluence, acting as adviser and spiritual guide to the rulers and esteemed by the people for his lavishness as well as his worldly influence. He also derived full benefit from the fact of being a Sayyid and of having performed the pilgrimage several times. From the extracts of his conversations quoted by Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, he appears to have talked mostly about himself and the distinction bestowed upon him by God[9]. Sayyid Muḥammad bin Ja'far, who claimed to be a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, is an even more extreme case. He says that he studied the externalist sciences (*'ulūm-i-ẓāhir*) for sixty years, and then devoted himself to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge for thirty years. He claims that he flew overnight to the mountains where the Nile has its source, met there the forty chief *abdāls* and the three hundred and fifty others; that he discoursed with Khwājah Khiḍr in a boat on the Nile; that he flew to the city of Khaṭṭān in Egypt and there met Khwājah Auḥad Samnānī; that Khwājah Khiḍr pestered him for sixty years in order to obtain all the knowledge contained in his book, the *Baḥr al-Ma'ānī*; that, with the permission of his Shaikh, he visited all the three hundred and eighty *shaikhs*, whom he describes individually and in detail, and derived spiritual benefit from them; that he met Ṣafwān bin Qaṣā, then 992 years old, in the cave where he had been living since his conversion by the Prophet; that he saw in a dream the Prophet with all his Companions and all the saints, including Shaikh Naṣīruddin Chirāgh Dihlī, that the Prophet spoke to him in Persian and asked him for the *Baḥr al-Ma'ānī*, which he read through at a 'prophetic' speed and then gave to all the others—among them Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Shaikh Ḥasan Baṣrī, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn—who likewise read it through at the same speed, and that finally the Prophet blessed him and prayed for an increase in his knowledge. Whatever Sayyid Muḥammad bin Ja'far writes of he claims to have seen with his own eyes or heard with his own ears, and we are asked to believe that all chances of error or misunderstanding were thus eliminated. No wonder that 'what he has written about his spiritual states and conditions staggers the mind'[10].

It is possible that in seeking to establish himself in the world of the spirit, the *ṣūfī* of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was fulfilling the general desire for security at a time when Muslim power in India had split up into different units, among whom there was

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 153-7.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 134-9. *Baḥr al-Ma'ānī* has been published by Maṭba' Iḥtishāmiyah, Murādābād, 1307 A.H./1889.

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continuous and, for the people, generally ruinous conflict. But the emphasis on the metaphysical aspect of ṣūfism was also both a natural and a logical development, and even though the metaphysicians claimed to derive all their doctrines from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, they could not carry conviction unless their own intuitive knowledge and spiritual experience was recognized as possessing an authority conferred on it directly by divine grace. The association of this authority with miraculous deeds and events further confirmed its validity.

The metaphysical doctrines of the *ṣūfīs* were concerned mainly with the nature of God and the means whereby He manifested Himself. The *ṣūfīs* who first ventured into this field were careful to restrict their teachings to the inner circle of their followers, and though he was very cautious in his statements, Shaikh Sharafuddīn directed that all his epistles should be collected and destroyed after his death. Later *ṣūfīs* were not so careful, and the doctrine of immanence and the Unity of Existence (*waḥdah al-wujūd*) was fervently proclaimed and freely disseminated. While this led to tedious subtleties and hair-splitting, it also opened the way for the assimilation of new ideas. The moral and ethical teachings of the earlier *ṣūfīs* kept the mind concentrated on the routine of self-discipline and devotions. The shift of emphasis towards the metaphysical, even if accompanied by admonitions to adhere strictly to the *sharī'ah*, opened the flood-gates of speculation at a point where all religions and all theistic philosophies necessarily converge. This coincided with the rise of the *bhaktī* movement, and promoted the emergence of beliefs that challenged the exclusiveness of the historical religious communities through a direct appeal to God, and through the postulation of a relationship with Him that could dispense with prophets, revelation, ritual and law. A number of Muslims were drawn into this movement, but even those who were not influenced to the extent of ignoring or rejecting their traditional ideal of forming a distinct community felt that this ideal was narrow by contrast with the universalism that followed logically from concentrating thought upon God. The conservative *ṣūfīs* did not change their attitude to the *sharī'ah*, but there were probably large numbers of *ṣūfīs* not learned enough to formulate their ideas systematically and not prominent enough to attract notice and criticism who formed the link between traditional Islām and the ideas thrown up because of the religious ferment among the Indian masses, of which the *bhaktī* movement was a symbol. No education, no knowledge and no system of self-discipline was required for concentration on the idea of God. This enabled ṣūfistic tendencies, or ways of living and thinking that emerged from the spiritual

traditions and the other-worldliness of ṣūfism, to spread widely among the people in the smaller towns and even the villages, a result which may be put in the balance against those symptoms of decline in the *ṣūfī* discipline which have just been indicated. The wide dissemination of an amorphous ṣūfism no doubt tended to undermine system and order, but it is of great historical significance, because it harmonized with the religiousness which is an age-old characteristic of the Indian masses, and stimulated this religiousness to find expression.

Another result of this expansion of ṣūfism was the tremendous impetus it gave to literature. But with that we shall deal separately.

II

The Chishtīs had spread to Bihār and Bengal by the time of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīya, and their centres in Rājasthān—Nārnōl, Ajmēr, Nāgōr—were even older. Of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn's *khalīfahs*, Shaikh Quṭubuddīn Munawwar settled at Hāṇsī, Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn Multānī in Gujarāt, Shaikh Wajīhuddīn Yūsuf in Chandērī, Shaikh Burhānuddīn Gharīb in a town near the Narbaddā which came to be called Burhānpūr after him, and Shaikh Sirājuddīn 'Uthmān, also known as Akhī Sirāj, in Bengal. Chishtī expansion into the Deccan was continued by Shaikh Gēsū-darāz, who settled at Gulbargā early in the fifteenth century. In Bengal, the successors of Shaikh Akhī Sirāj, Shaikh 'Alā'ul Ḥaqq (d. 1397), and his son and *khalīfah*, Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq (d. 1410), carried on the Chishtī tradition. A *murīd* and *khalīfah* of Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq, Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn, established a centre at Mānakpūr, and had distinguished successors in Rājī Ḥāmid Shāh, Shaikh Ḥasan Ṭāhir, Miyān Qāḍī Khān (d. 1562), and Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz (d. 1567). At Nāgōr, Khwājah Ḥusain, a descendant of Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn Nāgōrī, and his *khalīfahs*, Shaikh Aḥmad Majd Shaibānī and Shaikh Ḥamzā Dharsū'ī (d. 1550) were outstanding personalities. The Chishtī tradition of avoiding all relationships with the state and not accepting grants of land was maintained by some of those whom we have mentioned above. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz does not seem to have considered poverty and starvation absolutely essential and was on good terms with noblemen, courtiers and kings. Shaikh Aḥmad Khatū's association with the first sulṭans of Gujarāt has already been mentioned. Some *ṣūfīs* got involved in politics by accident. Some maintained their independence from wealth and power throughout their lives. We shall now consider a few of the *ṣūfīs* mentioned above in some detail.

Shaikh 'Alā'ul Ḥaqq was already a *ṣūfī* of some note when Shaikh

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Sirājuddīn 'Uthmān returned to his native place as a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīya. He belonged to an affluent and influential family, and it may have been out of jealousy or spite that when he became a *murīd* of Shaikh Sirājuddīn, the Shaikh's servants made him carry pots containing hot, cooked food on his head, so that he lost most of his hair. But he was not embarrassed even when he had to carry these pots through the quarter where his family lived. He was large-hearted and generous by nature, and when he set up on his own, he began to feed people and make presents on such a scale that the king—probably Sikandar Shāh (1357-1393)—began to suspect that money was being given to him out of the treasury by his father, who was a minister. He, therefore, asked Shaikh 'Alā'ul Ḥaqq to go and settle at Sonārgā'oṇ (Dacca). The Shaikh had no property. Two gardens, which formed a part of his inheritance and yielded a fairly large income had been seized by someone, and he had made no attempt to recover them, but he doubled his expenditure at Sōnārgā'on. Ultimately he was allowed to return to his native city of Pānduā[12].

Shaikh 'Alā'ul Ḥaqq's son and successor, Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq, received his training in self-discipline in a rather unusual way. He was first assigned the task of cleaning the latrines of the *khānqāh*. Once, when he was engaged in doing this, a *dervish* suffering from dysentery came unexpectedly to use the latrine, and without knowing it bespattered the clothes of Nūrul Ḥaqq with his excreta. His father, happening to pass by just then, saw him in this condition. He was overjoyed and said, 'You have performed this service excellently'. Then he entrusted him with other duties. For eight years he cut and carried wood for the *khānqāh*. There was a well near by where the ground had become slippery, so that women carrying water often fell and broke their pots. He was asked to stand there and carry the water-pots of the women across the dangerous patch. He performed this duty for four years. During festivals he and some fellow-disciples who had graduated as scholars performed the duties of water-carriers. The people of Bengal, it is said, were highly amused.

'The *shaikhs* of earlier days have said that ninety-nine stages have to be crossed to complete the *ṣūfī's* journey, and our *shaikhs* have specified fifteen stages. I have held to three stages. The first of these is, Clear your account before you are asked to render it. The second is, Whoever stands (idle) for a day is lost. The third is, The devotions of the *dervish* consist in the elimination of fear. The traveller who acts on these principles attains his goal'.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

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Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq was very sensitive and easily moved to tears. Once he visited an old woman, a widow who was related to him, and she asked him for instruction in some matters of doctrine. He came out of the house weeping and said, 'If I am forgiven, it will be for this old woman's sake'. On another occasion, when he was going out in a palanquin and a large crowd had collected around him, he was so overwhelmed that tears flowed ceaselessly from his eyes. He said, 'God has given me power over so many people. Some prostrate themselves before me, some kiss and lick my feet, some hold my hands. What if, on the Day of Judgement, my head is thrown before them to be trampled upon?' His letters are resonant with a deep humility and a sincere distress at having failed to achieve any spiritual merit. He was most unwilling that anything miraculous should be attributed to him. Someone returning after *hajj* told him that he had seen him at Mecca. He turned to the assembly and said, 'Friends, I have not left this house. There are so many people who resemble each other'. When the visitor continued to insist that he had seen him, Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq gave him some money and sent him away, asking him not to repeat what he had said anywhere else[13].

In 1409, when Rājā Kans seized the throne of Bengal and sought to establish his authority by getting rid of the prominent *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs*, Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq wrote to Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī to come and save the Muslims of Bengal. Sulṭān Ibrāhīm responded to the call, and Rājā Kans, finding himself too weak to meet the challenge, came to the saint and begged for his intercession, promising to agree to any conditions. Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq said he would intercede for him if he accepted Islām. The rājā was willing, but his wife refused to agree. Ultimately, a compromise was made by the rājā offering to retire from the world and permitting his son, Jādū, to be converted and to ascend his throne. On Jādū being converted and enthroned as Jalāluddīn Shāh, Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq induced Sulṭān Ibrāhīm, much against his will, to withdraw his armies[14].

Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn, who established the *silsilah* of Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq at Mānakpūr, belonged to a family of learned men, and his father was quite disappointed when he became a *ṣūfī* instead of continuing the family tradition. When Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq came to know of this, he said that the *dervish* desired people to follow his way and the learned man wanted people to follow his, but real

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-51. Extracts are given here from the *Rafīq al-'Ārifīn*, the conversations of Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq, recorded by his *khalīfah*, Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn Mānakpūrī.

[14] *Riyāḍ al-Salāṭīn*. Translation by Maulwī 'Abdus Salām. Calcutta, 1902, p. 112 ff.

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manliness consisted in being both a *dervish* and a scholar. Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn's own views were not different. He believed that even a book like the *Hidāyah* could be so interpreted as to appear to be a treatise on ṣūfism. This is obviously an overstatement, but it is clear that for Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn there was no conflict between the legal and the spiritual aspect of the *shar'īah*. At the same time, he regarded it as essential to have a spiritual guide, a *shaikh*, and to obey him implicitly. He was an immanentist, but not too fervent. 'The question of separation (from God) does not arise. (Everywhere) there is God, or His light, or a reflection of His light'. 'A traveller (on the Path) becomes a lover through *dhikr*; he acquires true insight through meditation (*fikr*)'. 'The grace of God comes all of a sudden, but only upon a heart that is awake and alert'[15]. Shaikh Ḥasan Ṭāhir (d. 1503), the *khalīfah* of Rājī Ḥāmid Shāh, who was a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Ḥusāmuddīn, was an intellectual who wrote on ṣūfism and *tauḥīd*, the most well known of his works being the *Miftāḥ al-Faiḍ*. He was a convinced immanentist. 'In the path towards God there are no stages, there is no "way", for "way" and stages are between two (distinct) things. When there is no duality, there is no way and no stage'[16].

Following the Chishtī tradition, but possessing their own characteristic temperaments were Shaikh Piyārah, Shaikh Jalāl Gujarātī, Shaikh Muḥammad Malādah, and Shaikh Rizqullāh Mushtāqī (1419-1572). Shaikh Piyārah was technically the *murīd* of Shaikh Yadullāh, the grandson of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz, but received his spiritual intruction from Shaikh Gēsū-darāz himself. It is related in the *Akhbār al-Akhyār* that when he first came to his *khānqāh* at Delhi, Shaikh Gēsū-darāz asked him, '*Dervish*, have you ever been in love?' Shaikh Piyārah hesitated to give a straight answer, and said, 'I have come to you to learn about love; what could I know about it?' The Shaikh said, 'My object is to examine your condition and understand your temperament and aptitude. If any incident has occurred, speak out and do not conceal it'. Then he replied, 'Once I saw a Hindū woman. I could think of no means of (satisfying myself with) looking at her, so I put on the sacred thread, dressed in a *dhōtī* and went to the temple where she used to go for worship'. The Shaikh embraced him and said, 'You are a man of great courage; where could I find one like you to guide on the path to God. What you have done is an act of lofty courage. People love their religion more than anything else, but you have sacrificed it for the sake of love. Come, I shall now teach you the way of the real love'[17]. This

[15] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

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anecdote may not appear to be quite in keeping with the known ideas and outlook of Shaikh Gēsū-darāz, but there is nothing inherently improbable about it. Shaikh Piyārah's successors, Shaikh Muḥammad Malādah and Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtāqī represent a type of ṣūfism in which poetic and spiritual love outweighs other characteristics. Shaikh Muḥammad Malādah is reported to have visibly pined and been brought to the verge of death when he heard songs at the *samā'* the theme of which was separation from the beloved, and to have recovered life and vigour when union with the beloved was the theme. Shaikh Rizqullāh wrote poetry both in Persian and in Hindi, his Hindi songs being particularly popular. He is reported to have been eloquent and lucid, and to have spoken with deep conviction and sincerity.

The sterner aspect of the Chishti tradition, and the intrepidity and high regard for principle which distinguished Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn Nāgōrī (or Siwālī) is evident in some of his descendants and their *khalīfahs*. Khwājah Ḥusain Nāgōrī, one of his descendants, was known for his simplicity and straightforwardness. He was educated in Gujarāt, whither his family had moved because of disturbed conditions in Nāgōr, but he passed most of his life at Ajmēr, then a deserted city, and at Nāgōr. His clothing was coarse and tattered, and he went about in a small bullock-cart, feeding and tending the bullocks himself. He was a fairly learned man, and wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān. Much of his time was devoted to teaching. The only occasion of his visiting a king was when Ghiyāthuddīn (1469-1500), the ruler of Māṇḍū, invited him to come and see a hair of the Prophet, which he had somehow acquired. As soon as he received the invitation, Khwājah Ḥusain set out from Nāgōr on his bullock-cart, meeting *ṣūfīs* and holding *samā'* gatherings on the way. When he was near Māndū, the king came out to pay his respects, but could with difficulty be made to believe that the dust-covered, miserable looking man in the bullock-cart was the saint he had heard so much about. When Khwājah Ḥusain was leaving, the king offered him a gift of money. At first the Khwājah refused, but was later persuaded by his son to accept it on the condition that it was to be spent on building the tomb of Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn at Ajmēr and Shaikh Ḥamīduddīn at Nāgōr.

Shaikh Aḥmad Majd Shaibānī, a *khalifah* of Khwājah Ḥusain, continued his tradition at Ajmēr and Nāgōr. He belonged to a family of qāḍīs, and was brought up in an atmosphere of theological hair-splitting and disputation. But he foreswore all this and gave up visiting courts and courtiers when, at the age of eighteen, he became the *murīd* of Khwājā Ḥusain. He lived at Ajmēr till 1516, leaving the city a few days before its capture by Rānā Sangrām, and died

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two or three years later. He was known for his fearlessness in enjoining what is ordained and forbidding what is prohibited, making no distinction whatever between the rich and the poor, the weak and the powerful. On one occasion, at the court of Māndū, he greeted the king with the usual 'Assalāmu 'alaikum' and seated himself by the king's side, instead of bending low and placing the forefinger on the ground, as was required by the court etiquette. But he carried to an absurd extreme the veneration of Sayyids as descendants of the Prophet, exempting them even from strict obedience to the *sharī'ah*, which he demanded relentlessly from other Muslims.

Khwājah Ḥusain and Shaikh Shaibānī participated in *samā* gatherings, and Shaikh Shaibānī was fond of music also, though he did not go out of his way to listen to it. But the pre-eminent characteristic of both was adherence to the letter and the spirit of the *sharī'ah*, and they abstained from any kind of exaggeration in the expression of their spiritual states. The Chishtī-Ṣābirīs[18], a branch of the main Chishtī *silsilah*, represent a quaint combination of metaphysical extravagance, ecstatic conditions and formal adherence to the *sharī'ah*.

The first outstanding *ṣūfī* in this *silsilah* was Shaikh Aḥmad 'Abdul Ḥaqq of Rudaulī (d. 1433). He had strong leanings towards the spiritual life even in his boyhood, and he left his house when he was twelve years old because he used to perform the *tahajjud*[19] prayer in secret, and his mother, no doubt out of regard for his tender age, told him not to do so. He went first to Delhi, where his brother, Shaikh Taqī'uddīn, was well-known as a scholar. But he had no interest in academic study, and he left his brother and wandered about searching for a preceptor. Shaikh Fatḥullāh of Oudh did not satisfy him, nor did Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq of Pāndua. In a town of Bihār he met two 'madmen', one called 'Alā'uddīn the Bare-headed, the other 'Alā'uddīn Nīm-laṇgōti[20]. From them he got an intimation of what was in store for him. He continued his wanderings, living in forests and cemeteries, and for some months in a grave which he had dug for himself. Ultimately, he became a *murīd* of Shaikh Jalāluddīn of Pānīpat. But on one occasion he returned the cap given to him by his Shaikh, because at a meal given by one of the *murīds*, 'prohibited things'—probably wine—had been provided. Soon, however, he changed his mind, and returned to

[18] Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn Ṣābir is believed to have been a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Farīduddīn Ganj-i-Shakar. But he is not mentioned in any of the contemporary records and this omission could not have been due to oversight.

[19] The *tahajjud* prayer is supererogatory. The time for it is from after midnight till about two hours before dawn.

[20] The *langōṭī* is the barest minimum covering for nakedness. *Nīm* or half *laṇgōṭī* would thus mean just a rag in front, with the buttocks left uncovered.

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renew his *bai'ah*. Then he came back to his native town and settled there.

His teachings have been expounded in a book, the *Anwār al-'Uyūn*[21], written by Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs (d. 1538). He is believed to have held that God was beyond names and symbols, and the most appropriate name, if one had to be given, was *Ḥaqq*. His *murīds* made *Ḥaqq* their salutation, repeating it three times, and began everything by saying or writing *Ḥaqq* thrice. He is related to have said that Manṣūr Ḥallāj was a child, unable to contain within himself the knowledge which he possessed; there have been travellers on the Path who drank up whole rivers of knowledge without being sated. Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq also held that the situation existing in the time of the Prophet had not changed, and even now men who rose to high spiritual states and were befriended by God were privileged to become the Prophet's companions.

Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs in his boyhood had a violent aversion to study and his mother complained about this to her brother, Qāḍī Dāniyāl, the district officer (*ḥākim*) of Rudaulī. The Qāḍī summoned the young reprobate and was scolding him when some women appeared and began to sing. The music affected Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs so strongly that he began to dance in ecstasy. The *Laṭa'if-i-Quddūsī* closes the account of this incident with the cryptic remark: 'On this path, all matters of principle are matters of detail and matters of detail are matters of principle'[22]. In fact the atmosphere at Rudaulī in those days would hardly have been conducive to serious study. There were, no doubt, *madrassahs* and many scholars, but the other ways to knowledge had only recently been proclaimed by Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq. There were also a number of 'madmen' and 'naked men' who were respected because of the supernatural powers they were believed to possess. Malik Yūnus the Mad went about completely naked and had the reputation of being a miracle-worker. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs, when still young, once saw him sitting by the roadside drinking wine. He wanted to slip by unnoticed, but Shaikh Yūnus saw him, ran after him with a cup of wine and forced it to his lips. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs contrived to spill the wine, but still a few drops went down his throat. There was also Miyān Tājan the Mad, who generally behaved in a crazy way, but sometimes surprised people with his words of wisdom. Among the *murīds* of Shaikh 'Ārif, the son of Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq, was Shaikh Piyārah, noted for his absorption in love[23].

[21] Aḥsan al-Maṭābi', Aligarh, has printed and published the book, 1905.

[22] Shaikh Ruknuddīn, *Laṭā'if-i-Quddūsī*, Matba' Mujtabā'ī, Delhi, 1311 A.H., p. 7.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

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It was probably to cure him of his other-worldly tendencies that Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs' marriage was arranged while he was still young. He was a most unwilling bridegroom, and when, as a part of the ceremony, he was taken inside the house and women began to sing the Hindi song probably usual on such occasions, 'Uncover your face and show it to your lord, young woman, It is because of the veil that he is twisting your arm', Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs was carried away. He danced in ecstasy and was as in a trance for several days. Finally, however, he accepted the obligations of matrimony and several sons and daughters were born to him[24].

Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs presents a rather illogical combination of spiritual susceptibility and dogmatism. He was willing to give Qalandars and Malāmatīs the benefit of doubt in the charge brought against them that they did not perform the obligatory prayers and ignored other commands of the *sharī'ah*; he even accepted the interpretation that their contravention of the *sharī'ah* was only 'apparent', and that they fulfilled the commands in ways not obvious to the externalist[25]. He wrote in one of his letters[26] that concealed polytheism (*shirk-e-khafī*) was breaking the back of the Muslims; that the destruction of the external aspect of religion sometimes becomes essential, and it was for this reason that some men of God had shaved their beards, put on the sacred thread and gone into temples. He was pained by the distinction of Muslim and Kāfir when all existence is one and all existence is in God[27]. He believed in immanence, in the Unity of Existence, though he regarded it as a mystery not to be revealed to all and sundry. He yearned for total absorption in God, and is reported to have said, 'The Prophet went as near to God as two bow-lengths and came back. By God, I would not have returned'. But in a theological discussion with two scholars who held that it was improper to say of anyone that he was worthy of heaven or hell 'in the eyes of God' (*'indallāh*) or even 'in the eyes of men', he represented the obviously intolerant and fanatical viewpoint that a person could be praised or condemned in both ways[28]. His letters to Sulṭan Sikandar Lōdī and Bābar (1526-1530) show that he was as anxious to maintain Muslim rule as any worldly Muslim, that he had no scruples in using the language of a courtier, and that in asking the rulers to be gracious to their subjects—particularly the learned men—and establishing the

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[26] *Maktūbāt-i-Quddūsī*. Maṭba'-i-Aḥmadī, Delhi, p. 184, Maktūb No. 105. Copy in the private library of Dr K. A. Niẓāmī, Muslim University, Aligarh.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 205, Maktūb No. 110.
[28] Shaikh Ruknuddīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3.

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sharī'ah he ignored all the high principles of *waḥdah al-wujūd* and the unity of all mankind in God[29].

There were honoured and influential *ṣūfīs* of the Suhrawardī order like Sayyid Jalāl Bukhārī (Jahāniyāṇ Jahān-gasht). But the Suhrawardī practice of mixing freely with kings and courtiers, though it was believed not to preclude the bestowal of supernatural powers by God, prevented the order from taking deep root, and Sayyid Jalāl Bukhārī regarded himself as much a successor of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī as of Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhrawardī. A few generations after him the Suhrawardī and Qādirī orders merged so much into each other as to become indistinguishable. The Firdausī order was also short-lived, Shaikh Ḥusain Balkhī being the only figure of more than local importance. In him, however, we see quite an unusual fervour. His exposition of the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* is lucid, and he does not get so absorbed in metaphysical subtleties as to forget that hunger is the foundation of everything, and that spiritual endeavour is fruitless if it is not accompanied by a change of habits[30], adherence to which 'Ain al-Quḍāt had condemned as idolatry.

The Qādirī order was established at Uch near Multān by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Ḥusainī al-Gīlānī. He was succeeded by his son, Makhdūm Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir (1459-1533). The attraction and the strength of this order lay in the myths and legends that had grown around its founder, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī, and the Qādirī centre at Uch was not lacking in wealth and affluence. Makhdūm Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir in his youth went out hunting, and perhaps it was only after succession to his father's position that he adopted the *ṣūfī* devotional routine. His brothers were in government service, and he could afford to return to the king all the papers relating to the endowments of the *khānqāh* when he heard that there were suspicions about him at the court. He claimed to have seen the Prophet face to face and to have inherited the power bestowed by God on his ancestor, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī, to heal all manner of diseases. The Suhrawardīs and the Qādirīs had strong objection to the *samā'*, and once when a *qawwāl* (singer) came to pay his respects, Makhdūm 'Abdul Qādir told him to repent, have his head shaved and become a *dervish*. But the Shaikh's spirituality failed to have any effect whatsoever on the *qawwal*.

The ability to feed large numbers of people and influence at the court seem to have been the mainstay of the Qādirī centre, apart, of course, from the legendary powers of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī. But there were Qādirī *ṣūfīs* like Shaikh Dā'ūd of Jhaniwāl and

[29] *Maktūbāt-i-Quddūsī*, pp. 44 (Maktūb No. 34) and 335-7 (Maktūb No. 169).
[30] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq, *op. cit.*, p. 121 ff.

Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan (d. 1537), who followed an entirely different line. Shaikh Dā'ūd was born at Jhaniwāl in the neighbourhood of Lahore. His parents died during his infancy and he received instruction from one Maulānā Ismā'īl at Uch. After about twenty years of austerities and 'wandering in deserts and continents' he settled down at Shērgarh, near Jhaniwāl, as a *khalīfah* of Shaikh Ḥāmid Qādirī, but he owned allegiance to the Suhrawardī and Chishti orders also. Soon the fame of his spiritual gifts spread far and wide. Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī had him summoned to Gwalior to answer charges of heresy, but nothing could be proved against him and he was allowed to return. His liberality was such that once and sometimes twice a year he gave away everything except a clay pot, a sackcloth and the clothes his wife and he happened to be wearing. His sermons, his guidance and the litanies he recommended were reputed to be very effective. Badāyūnī, who was then a student, went to visit him at Shērgarh. He found there not only a vast concourse of Muslims but groups of fifty to a hundred families of Hindūs coming almost daily to be converted. Shaikh Dā'ūd never went to the house of any worldly person, and declined to meet Akbar, although the Emperor was anxious to benefit from his guidance and blessings[31]. Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan and his *khalīfah*, Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq of Jhanjhānā were absorbed in the problem of Reality and not concerned with miracles or with the propagation of legends. Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan's father, Shaikh Ḥasan Ṭāhir, has already been mentioned. Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan first received instruction from him, but became a follower of the Qādirī *silsilah* of Yemen during a prolonged stay at the Holy Cities. His leaning towards the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* was probably due to the early influence of his father. His *khalīfah*, Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq, carried on a correspondence with Shaikh Amānullāh of Pānīpat (d. 1550), who also was a *khalifah* of Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥasan, on the problem of *waḥdah al-wujūd*. Shaikh Amānullāh claimed that while *ṣūfīs* generally evaded the formulation of the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd*, holding that its truth could be realized only through right intuition (*kashf-i-ṣaḥīḥ*), he had discovered sixteen reasons in support of it. But Shaikh Amānullāh's allegiance to the Qādiri order was modified by his relationship with Shaikh Maudūd Lārī, who was a confirmed immanentist, and still more by his allegiance to the Qalandarī order. From the technically *ṣūfī* point of view, there were inconsistencies in his belief and practice. He emphasized the importance of acquired knowledge, and had relatively few disciples because he insisted on their first concentrating on academic study. He was strict in his devotional

[31] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 28 ff.

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routine, but sometimes forgot to say his prayers and at other times did not get beyond the fourth verse of the *sūrah Fātiḥah*, which is recited at the beginning of each prayer[32].

The new tendencies in ṣūfism, so far as the 'world' was concerned, found the most characteristic expression in the doctrines and practices of the Shaṭṭārī order[33]. The order was first called 'Ishqīyah, and was supposed to have originated with Shaikh Bayazīd Bustāmī. The origin of the term Shaṭṭārī is obscure. Shaikh 'Abdullāh Shaṭṭār (d. 1485), who came from Īrān to establish the order in India, has offered an explanation of the term in his work, *Laṭā'if-i-Ghaibīyah*. He says that the followers of the Prophet can be divided into three types, the *akhyār* (good), the *abrār* (pious) and the *shaṭṭār* (swift). They have different systems of devotions, litanies, meditation, intuitive apprehension, approach to God. One should not discriminate between the prophets, but the Shaṭṭārī system, because it enables the aspirant to obtain spiritual benefit directly from all prophets and saints, takes him sooner to the goal than other systems.

Shaikh 'Abdullāh Shaṭṭār dressed like a king and his followers wore military uniforms. They went about carrying banners and beating drums. On arriving at any place, Shaikh 'Abdullāh announced to the *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* there that a *dervish* had adopted an itinerant way of life, so that if he found anyone who knew the meaning of *tauḥīd* better than he, he should receive instruction from him; if there were no such person, the *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* could obtain the treasures of *tauḥīd* from the *dervish* without effort on their part. Shaikh 'Abdullāh journeyed through the Ganges valley and Rājasthān, offering his services in this style, and found many adherents. Shaikh Muḥammad 'Alā, known as Shaikh Qāḍīn Shaṭṭārī, was his *khalīfah* in Bengal, and he established centres at Jaunpūr, Badaulī, Sambhal, Kālpī, Gwalior, Agra, Burhānpūr, Barōda, Aḥmadābād, Ajmēr, Sarhind, Ujjain, Sāraṇgpūr and Māndū.

We have already referred to the transformation in the status of the *shaikh*. The Shaṭṭārīs regarded him as someone in direct communication with all the saints, all the prophets and, indeed, with God Himself. He was deemed to possess earthly and spiritual power, and was absolved, by reason of being a Shaṭṭārī, from all the rigours of self-discipline and from visible detachment from the world. No wonder that it was also held that the propagation of the Shaṭṭārī doctrine was the exclusive function of the descendants of the Prophet, who could pass it on spiritually to their successors across long periods of time. The Shaṭṭārīs also claimed to have got beyond

[32] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-5.
[33] This account of the Shaṭṭārīs is based mainly on the *Gulzār-i-Abrār*.

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the opposites of speech and silence, company and solitude, opening and locking up (of the mind), veiling and unveiling, existence and non-existence. This position was so delicate that it could not be maintained for long, and the Shaṭṭārīs soon lost their prestige. A study of the life and work of Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth of Gwalior will enable us to understand the implications of Shaṭṭārī belief and practice.

Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth (1485-1562) has given a sketch of his early life in the *Jawāhir-i-Khamsah* (Five Diamonds), a book which he wrote at the age of twenty-two. He relates that he felt the urge to seek God very early in life, and adopted a course of self-discipline which, though it enabled him 'to apprehend the essence of all that had been created', did not satisfy him. He was a little over seven years old when it was intimated to him in a dream that he would attain his end under the guidance of Ḥājī Ḥamīd Ḥuṣūr (Shaṭṭārī), who took him in his charge at Gwalior. After giving him and his elder brother Bahlōl instruction for two years, Hājī Ḥamīd Ḥuṣūr proceeded towards Bihār. He left Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth in the hills of Chunār to perform austerities on his own, and Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth remained engaged in these for thirteen years, at the end of which he wrote the *Jawāhir-i-Khamsah*, and presented it to his teacher when he returned from Bihār. This was in 1523, and Ḥājī Ḥamīd Ḥuṣūr died the same year. Apparently Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth's personality and methods of teaching were very attractive and he soon acquired great influence. He studied Sanskrit and wrote a book, *Kalīd-i-Makhāzin* (Key to Treasures), combining *ṣūfī* doctrines with astrological theories, and another, *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* (Sea of Life) on the methods of self-discipline and breath control as practised by the *yōgīs*. The Emperor Humāyūn had great faith in him. Their relations were so intimate that when Shēr Shāh (1540-1545) drove Humāyūn out of the country, Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth thought it prudent to migrate to Gujarāt. Here a *fatwā* for his execution was issued by Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqī on the ground of his being an innovator. The king submitted this matter for a final decision to Shaikh Wajīhuddīn of Aḥmadābād (d. 1589), a man universally respected for his learning and integrity. Shaikh Wajīhuddīn interviewed Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth and was so impressed by him that he tore up the *fatwā* and himself became his *murīd*[34]. This raised the prestige of the Shaikh so high that the king and his courtiers became his *murīds*, and he was able to live in affluence and preach his doctrines in peace. When Humāyūn recovered his throne in 1555, Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth returned to Agra. Badāyūnī saw him there in 1558, riding through the bazar. His back

[34] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 44.

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was bent, but he was all the time returning the salutations of the people who thronged around him. Badāyūnī says he was noted for his courtesy and humility, so much so that he stood up respectfully even when a *kāfir* came to visit him, and for this reason some of the *ṣūfīs* were inclined to reproach him and reject his teachings. 'In the robe of poverty he was the possessor of worldly dignity and splendour, and had a crore of *tankās* as a maintenance grant'[35]. Akbar became displeased with him because of his relations with Bairam Khān and some other high officers, and Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth lived in retirement at Gwalior during the last three years of his life.

Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth represents a type of *ṣūfīs* whose number had been increasing in course of time. They belonged to different orders, but had the common quality of living what was recognized as a spiritual life in worldly surroundings. We have already mentioned Shaikh Aḥmad Khatū and Shaikh Gēsū-darāz. Malik Zainuddīn (d. 1520), Malik Wazīruddīn (d. 1525), and Shaikh Jamālī (d. 1535), the author of the *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, a chronicle of the saints, were other examples of this type. They must have had personalities that impressed rulers and noblemen, and they acquired prestige among the mass of the people because it was assumed that their influence with the high and mighty was proof of their spiritual power. Probably they benefited most from what had already become a superstition, that a person who had given up the world stood in high favour with God, that he could prevent harm being done or remedy the harm that had been done, that he could foretell the future and ensure success for enterprises by blessing them. They did not add to *ṣūfī* doctrines or ideas. The teachings of Shaikh Muḥammad Ghauth, as outlined in the *Gulzār-i-Abrār*, seem no more than a reshuffling of concepts, a manipulation of terms that creates the illusion of originality. Whether such *ṣūfīs* refined the temperaments and influenced the policies of rulers is open to doubt. But they did lower ṣūfism in the eyes of those who judged by appearances. *Ṣūfīs* began to be accused more and more openly of 'arraying their shops' in order to attract the notice of the rich and the powerful, and no doubt there were large numbers of men who claimed to be *ṣūfīs* merely on grounds of descent from the well-known *shaikhs* or who just exploited the ignorance and superstition of those who desired spiritual association in some convenient form with great *shaikhs* of the well-known orthodox orders. Such exploitation was practised in the name of unorthodox *ṣūfīs* also, and at a much lower intellectual and spiritual level. But here there was also breaking of new ground, which is of much cultural and perhaps also of spiritual significance.

[35] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 5.

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III

Three figures have loomed very large in the imagination and the life of the common people; they and their graves are not only revered but worshipped. Sayyid Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī, whose grave is at Bahrā'ich, is the oldest. He is not reckoned among the *ṣūfīs*, and his veneration in different forms is an aspect of social life, with which we shall deal separately. Dāwarul Mulk, who lived in Fīrūz Tughlaq's time and whose grave is in a village near Jūnāgadh, comes next. He also was a soldier and not a *ṣūfī*, but the miracles worked at his grave have made him famous in western India. Shāh Badī'uddīn Madār falls into the category of *ṣūfīs*. Whether he really existed is open to doubt, but the Madārīs became a half-mystical, half-exhibitionist sect. They were Muslims, and the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* was the foundation of their teachings and their *obiter dicta*, but they went about naked except for a rag to cover their private parts, avoided living in houses, ate what they were able to obtain and possessed nothing by way of property. It cannot be said that they were missionaries, but their way of life removed all the external differences between the *ṣūfī* and the *yōgī*, and this must have had considerable effect. It is most unfortunate that we have no reliable records of their activity[36].

The Qalandars are mentioned in the earliest *ṣūfī* literature. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn took a charitable view about them; mostly they were regarded as a nuisance by the orthodox *ṣūfīs*. In the *Jawāmī' al-Kalim*, they are accused of deliberately adopting irrational or repellent practices. But Shāh bu 'Alī Qalandar of Pānīpat and others of less note gave them a status, and their adoption of the belief in *waḥdah al-wujūd* made it difficult for the orthodox *ṣūfīs* to reject them. 'I have seen Qalandars and heard about them', Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs is reported to have said, 'that they have no fear of abandoning what is positively enjoined, like Shaikh Sharafuddīn bu 'Alī Qalandar and Khwājah Kark of Karā and others. I have myself seen that Shaikh Ḥusain of Sarharpūr (near Jaunpūr) had given up obligatory things altogether, although he was a profound scholar'. 'I told Shaikh Fakhruddīn of Jaunpūr that Shaikh Ḥusain did not say his prayers. But Shaikh Fakhruddīn replied that he would not say that Shaikh Ḥusain did not say his prayers. It was only appar-

[36] The *Gulzār-i-Abrār* gives the names of the immediate disciples of Shāh Madār, p. 75 ff. The *Ṭabaqāt-i-Shāhjahānī*, of Muḥammad Ṣādiq, a transcription of which I have seen in the Āzād Library at Aligarh, says, 'He had many famous *khalīfahs* and eminent companions, all of whom were adorned with the externals of the *sharī'ah*. Nakedness and effrontery has appeared only recently in the members of this order. Shāh Madār and his revered *khalīfahs* were disgusted with this way of life'. Account of Shāh Madār, pp. 20-21 of transcription.

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ently so. A Qalandar could appear to be neglecting prayers in one bodily form and be offering them elsewhere in another embodiment. They prefer one way, the *ṣūfīs* another'[37].

This Shaikh Ḥusain was a remarkable person. He was believed to be a *murīd* of one Sayyid Najmuddīn, who was a *murīd* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Awlīya. He wore a rag that just covered his nakedness and he had no means of livelihood; still he possessed a big library. People came to see him, but his mind seemed to be elsewhere and he did not attend to anyone. If forced to talk, he spoke of irrelevant or trivial things, and no one could discover what he had in his heart. Once, when Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs visited him, he asked whether it was true that ruby-red melons could be grown at Rudauli. When Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs said he did not know, he asked what the Shaikh thought would be the outcome of a battle that was about to take place between the forces of Sulṭān Bahlōl Lōdī and Sulṭān Ḥusain Sharqī. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs replied that he had not come to indulge in bazar gossip, and asked for the explanation of the verse:

> I would destroy with fire these
> religions and cults,
> And in their place have nought
> but love of Thee.

Shaikh Ḥusain turned to the gathering and said that questions like this would never occur to them. They occurred to Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs because he had adopted the ascetic life and was wearing a *ṣūfī's* robe. Then, addressing Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs, he said, 'This verse was composed by 'Ain al-Quḍāt. I have a copy of the 24th letter written by him, which I have put in a small box inside a big one. 'Ain al-Quḍāt has written that one of two interpretations can be put on everything he says: that it is true, and that it is false. It appears true to persons like Junaid and Shiblī, and false to the externalist *'ulamā*. If now you want the interpretation of the externalist *'ulamā*, I would say I am not a scholar, and 'Ain al-Quḍāt has himself said that the interpretation would be false; what could I add to that? And I am not a Junaid or a Shiblī'. Shaikh Ḥusain thus parried the question and did not commit himself by giving an answer.

The historian Badāyūnī's account of the *ṣūfīs* of his day gives an idea of the position occupied by the *majdhūbs* or irregular and unorthodox *ṣūfīs*. The people did not discriminate between them and the *ṣūfīs* who observed the *sharī'ah*, and were willing to believe in them if only they had the reputation of possessing supernatural

[37] Shaikh Ruknuddīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-2.

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powers. Shaikh Sa'dullāh banī Isrā'īl of Lāhōre was first an orthodox *ṣūfī*. Then he took to doing all the prohibited things. He fell in love with a courtesan and wandered about 'with his white beard' in the quarter where she lived. But people followed him and 'treated the dust of his feet as if it were collyrium'. He taught his pupils in the middle of the slave-market[38]. He drank wine with his courtesan and squandered everything he had on her. Once, when he was drinking with her inside his house, the *muḥtasib* along with other protagonists of the *sharī'ah* climbed over the wall, broke his crockery, spilt the wine and wanted to punish him. But they had committed an illegal act by entering the house without the owner's permission, and Shaikh Sa'dullāh forced them to leave. Later, he changed his ways of his own accord, and resumed his studies and writing of books. Shaikh Jalāl Qannaujī was a *ṣūfī* and a scholar and otherwise quite normal, but when the mood came upon him, he blackened his face, tied the strings of his bedstead round his neck and went about the streets wailing and lamenting loudly. Shaikh Kapūr of Gwālior was a Ḥusainī Sayyid. He was first a soldier, then he gave up military service and devoted himself to carrying water to the houses of helpless widows and providing it free to all who needed a drink. After some time he gave up that also, and sat in contemplation in a house behind the bazar, talking to no one and just pining away. If people asked him questions, he replied like one in a delirium, but his answers seemed to tell people just what they wanted to know. He stood praying for whole nights. Sometimes he laughed and sometimes he wept continuously. Ultimately he fell down from the roof of his house and died (1571). Shaikh 'Ārif Ḥusainī was a miracle-worker, turning round pieces of paper into gold coins, and procuring fruits out of season. He wandered from Gujarāt to Lahore, and further into Kashmir and Tibet. He prayed, fasted, observed all the commandments. But he kept his face veiled. He refused to meet Akbar or accept any gift from him. Shaikh Ḥamzah of Lucknow lived as the caretaker of his grandfather's grave. He came to the city sometimes, 'stalking like a lion'. He carried stones which he threw in all directions as he walked, but without hurting anyone. People were generally afraid of him and ran away when he approached, but he talked courteously and inspiringly to anyone who had the courage to face him and who appeared pleasing to him. In the neighbourhood of the same city, in a snake-infested cave near the river, lived Shaikh Pīrak. He was looked after by an old woman who fed him every Friday on dry bread and the fruit of a tree he had himself planted. If anyone came to visit him, Shaikh Pīrak came out of his cave, but hardly ever talked.

[38] Nakhkhās, the slave-market, courtesan's quarter, cattle and horse-market.

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A *ṣūfī* who represents another type that was gradually coming to the forefront was Qāḍī Qāḍin of Sindh. He was a poet and wrote in the people's language, Sindhī. The *Gulzār-i-Abrār* summarizes his ideas thus: books on theology had yielded him no knowledge; in all languages the word *lā* has been used to deny God, but He was still asserting Himself; whom does the word *lā* deny when there is nought but God; the Beloved we long for, if we search deeply enough, will be found within ourselves. To the same category belonged Shaikh Burhān Anṣārī of Kālpī (d. 1562). Badāyūnī, who visited him in 1559, relates that for fifty years he did not eat meat and other kinds of food and subsisted on a little milk or rice and milk cooked together. He had not studied much and did not know Arabic, but discoursed most learnedly on the teachings of the Qur'ān. He composed verses in Hindī on ṣūfism, *tauḥid* and the passion for a spiritual life, and these were widely known and admired. In his devotional routine he followed the Mahdawī system and, therefore, cannot be said to belong to any *ṣūfī* order[39].

IV

We have seen that ṣūfism comprehended within itself elements both of orthodoxy and innovation, and that by the fifteenth century the number of those who were considered *ṣūfīs* but displayed their disregard for externals in many ways was quite large. This was the century in which Kabīr (b. 1440) and Gurū Nānak (b. 1469) lived and Chaitanyā (1485-1533) was born. It is in the life and teachings of these personalities that the *bhaktī* movement may be considered to have attained its zenith. A reaction among *ṣūfīs* inclined to orthodoxy was, therefore, inevitable. This reaction has been magnified by some into a religious revolt inspired by Shaikh Bāqī bi'llāh and led to victory by Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind. But a conformist tendency among the *ṣūfīs* is evident from the beginning, and found exponents in the sixteenth century before Shaikh Bāqī bi'llāh came upon the scene.

Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn of Amēṭhī (d. 1571) is a typical instance. He belonged to the Chishtī order, and not only avoided courts and courtiers but omitted all praise of the King in the *khuṭbah* he read on Fridays at the mosque near his *khānqāh*. On one occasion, when he had gone to visit a *shaikh* whom he respected deeply, he found the *shaikh's* son, an erstwhile fellow-student of his, reading Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam*. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn snatched the book from his hand, and gave him another, the study of which he thought more appropriate. His own reading was confined mainly to the *Iḥyā' al-*

[39] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 6-7.

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'Ulūm of Imām Ghazālī, the *'Awarif al-Ma 'ārif* of Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhrawardī and the *Ādāb al-Murīdīn* of Shaikh Sharafuddīn Yaḥyá Munērī. In other words, he thought it proper for a *ṣūfī* to concentrate on the recognized text-books and what they had to teach, avoiding indulgence in speculation. He believed in adherence to the *sharī'ah* not only inwardly but also outwardly, and sometimes said his Friday prayers with his shoes on, because the Prophet is related to have done so. When he met a person, he said something appropriate to the occasion; most of the time he was repeating the *durūd* or verses in praise of God or some litany. He was easily irritated. When Badāyūnī went to pay his respects for the first time, the Shaikh was reprimanding a student for saying something wrong, and Badāyūnī was so terrified that he decided to make his escape the next morning. Later, he himself annoyed the Shaikh by putting upon a verse of Ḥāfiẓ an interpretation which, in the Shaikh's opinion, was false. When he had cooled down, however, the Shaikh said, 'I have no grudge or enmity against anyone. Whatever I say to people is for their good and to give them right guidance. Like the Prophet, if I use harsh words, the result is praiseworthy, and even if I upbraid anyone, it becomes an act of mercy'. 'People say I do not instruct the aspirants. What instruction am I to give? All that I can teach is contained in these words: a tongue engaged in *dhikr* and a heart filled with gratitude'[40].

The *Akhbār al-Akhyār* gives Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn's views on some matters which indicate his attitude somewhat more precisely. He was opposed to the *samā'*, and discouraged his *murīds* from attending *samā'* gatherings. It was a controversial subject, he said, and if one had to decide whom one should follow, it was advisable to follow the earlier and greater *ṣūfīs*, who did not practise *samā'*. The human mind was like the falcon; if untrained, it caught wild birds of the smaller kind only, if trained, it could seize a large fowl (*kulang*). On this ground he deprecated attention to the externals of spiritual life. But the Shaikh was not exempt from those moods which broke down the self-restraint of *ṣūfīs*, and sometimes his attempt to suppress his feelings made him ill. He spoke generally about rules of behaviour and the merits of good actions, but for the benefit of a select few he discoursed also on *tauḥīd* and reality[41].

All the *ṣūfī* orders and most of the *ṣūfīs* had their particular system of litanies and other devotions, but it is not easy to distinguish between them or to evaluate the reasons for which one or the other system was preferred. The judgements of the believers themselves must be regarded as purely subjective. Towards the

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-24.
[41] Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

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close of the sixteenth century, however, difference on one particular issue became marked. There were *ṣūfīs* who believed in *waḥdah al-wujūd,* some so fervently that it became the central feature of their thought, the main source of their spiritual experience and the stimulus for a self-expression which made their ideas and personalities into a leavening influence. These *ṣūfīs* can be grouped under orders also, but, as we have stated, the orders tended to merge into one another, and generalizations on the basis of orders can be misleading. *Waḥdah al-wujūd* was not rejected by any order or by any individual *ṣūfī,* but while most felt that it was a doctrine the exposition of which should be restricted to a select few, quite a number could not control the impulse to propagate it widely and indiscriminately. The cautiousness of those who considered extravagance in asserting and recklessness in preaching *waḥdah al-wujūd* as harmful was not unreasonable. Insistence on a unity in God which obliterated all distinctions at a metaphysical level tended all too easily to translate itself into an attitude in which the difference between right and wrong beliefs and actions and, in theological terms, between what was enjoined and what was forbidden by the *sharī'ah* could be ignored. The reaction against this found forceful expression in the teachings of Shaikh Bāqī bi'llāh, who established the Naqshbandī order in India, and his *khalīfah,* Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind. They brought to the forefront the doctrine of *waḥdah al-shuhūd,* the unity of the phenomenal world, or unity as apprehended by one who sees God, the universe and himself.

We have discussed in an earlier chapter the implications of *waḥdah al-shuhūd,* as expounded by Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind. The *Ṭabaqāt-i-Shāhjahānī* of Muḥammad Ṣādiq gives a list of the outstanding *ṣūfīs* of the first half of Shāh Jahān's reign, along with short notices about them. About half the *shaikhs* in the list were Naqshbandīs or *murīds* of Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind, all except one or two had a standing in the court and among the higher officers, and were engaged in expanding the activities of the order. Shaikh Nūr Paṭaṇgī and Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥayy were at Patnā, Khwājah Ḥāshim Kashmī at Burhānpūr, Shaikh Bahār at Jaunpūr, Shaikh Murtaḍā at Sambhal, Khwājah Khawand Maḥmūd in Kashmīr. The rest were in Agra, Delhi or Sarhind. For the first time we come across a '*ṣūfī*' engaged directly in missionary work. This was Mullā Muḥibb 'Alī Ṣadī. Shāh Jahān gave orders that if any Hindū desired to become a Muslim, he should be put in charge of the Mullā, who also recommended what pension should be given or favour conferred upon the convert. He is reported to have made a large number of conversions[42].

[42] P. 516 of transcript.

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But it would be a mistake to imagine that Shāh Jahān was interested only in one type of *ṣūfī*. Both he and his son Dārā Shikōh visited Shāh Mīr (d. 1633) of Lahore and expressed faith in him. Shāh Mīr was a Qādirī who believed in *waḥdah al-wujūd*. They had great faith also in Shaikh Muḥibbullāh of Allahabad (1587-1648), who was also a *wujūdī* and who gave a remarkable reply to a question Shāh Jahān put to him through Dārā in regard to the position of the Hindūs in the state:

> 'It is impertinent of me to give counsel, but justice requires that the welfare of the people should be the concern of the administrative officers, whether the people be believers or unbelievers, for they have been created by God, and the person who took the lead in being merciful to the righteous and the evil-doers, the believers and the unbelievers was the Prophet of God. This is recorded in (the history of) his victories and is stated in the Qur'ān[43]'.

Shaikh Muḥibbullāh belonged to the Chishtī Ṣābirī order and was a follower of Ibn 'Arabī, whose works he continuously studied. Since some statements in the *Fuṣuṣ* and the *Futūḥāt-i-Makkī* lead to the conclusion that existence is an objective totality and cannot be apprehended except through the units which compose it, he indicated this indirectly in his conversation. He also believed that God could be apprehended by reason. Some of his followers at Allāhābād propagated this as a materialist philosophy, which led to opposition being organized against them and their being condemned to death. The Shaikh heard of this and rushed from Jaunpūr, where he happened to be then, to Allāhābād. His explanation of his doctrines satisfied his opponents and his followers were saved. But the Shaikh's arguments are difficult to understand. He wrote a commentary on the *Fuṣuṣ*, and compiled a book consisting of extracts from Ibn 'Arabī's works. There is also a treatise of his consisting of questions put to him by Dārā Shikōh and his answers to them. To the question, 'If we assume that there is only one Being, what is the meaning of Forgiver and Sinner?', he replied, 'To the eye that sees Reality, father and son are one being. But their manifestation requires that the father should be the ruler, the son his subject. The relationship of the young and the old is a fact; (human) error and (God's) favour are obvious'. In another treatise in Arabic, the *Taswīyah*, he expounded, rather too tersely, the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd*, and put forward the views that the angels in heaven were spiritual, the angels on earth physical forces, that Gabriel was

[43] *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh Ilāhābādī*, Subḥānullāh Collection, Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh.

within the Prophet Muḥammad, as he was within the other prophets, and it was from within that he spoke; that Satan was within each of us and our evil actions were due to him; that all the discord within us was due to ourselves, and so was tranquillity, for there was only one being, and the question of duality did not arise[44]. Because of the heterodoxical opinions expressed in this treatise, Auraṇgzēb ordered Shaikh Muḥibbullāh's *khalīfah*, Shaikh Muḥammadī, to collect and burn all the copies of the work. The Shaikh replied that the Emperor could do this much better than he, for the royal kitchen required much fuel.

From the notices of the *ṣūfīs* in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Shāh Jahāni* and the *Mir'at-i-'Ālam* of Bakhtāwar Khān, it appears that a pattern of relationships between the court and the *ṣūfīs* had come to be established. Reports would reach the court, directly through official sources or indirectly through interested persons, of *ṣūfīs* who deserved recognition and imperial patronage. There would be a response in some form of grant, and, if it appeared advisable or desirable, the emperor would invite the *ṣūfī* to the court. A still greater recognition of spiritual eminence would be a visit by the emperor himself and a private audience. The instances in which recognition by the court made no difference to the *ṣūfī* or where offers of recognition and support through grants of cash and land were rejected were rare. In some cases, as that of Mullā Shāh Badakhshī, the *khalīfah* of Shāh Mīr, imperial favour enabled the *ṣūfī* to live in lordly style. Shāh Dulā'i of Gujarāt in the Panjāb received grants from the court, but as a *majdhub* was believed to have bestowed supernatural powers on him, the gifts in cash and goods that poured into his *khānqāh* enabled him not only to entertain lavishly but to maintain a zoo where all kinds of birds and animals, even elephants and lions, were kept. But it would be uncharitable to forget that persons in distress came to all the *ṣūfīs*, and it was often necessary to recommend cases for assistance or in the interests of justice to the administration or the court. There were *ṣūfīs* whose relationship with the officials and the court was due entirely to their desire to help others and did not bring them any personal benefit.

The *ṣūfī* types of the middle and late seventeenth century are exemplified by Shaikh Nūrul Ḥaqq, Shaikh Burhān, Sayyid Sa'dullāh, Shaikh Bāyazīd and Mīr Naṣīruddīn Harwī.

Shaikh Nūrul Haqq was the son of Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith, and carried on the great tradition of scholarship and detachment created by his father. He lived at Akbarābād (Agra) and died in 1665, at the age of 92. His attitude towards the men and affairs of his day is expressed in a quartrain that became famous:

[44] Ghulām Muḥīyuddīn 'Abdullāh al-Khēshgī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 271 ff.

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Of manners in this age of strife a
secret I'll reveal,
If you'll not deem it an extravagance:
Men are unto each other like the hour-glass,
The inside filled with dust, the outside
bright and clean.

Shaikh Burhān (d. 1672) belonged to Burhānpūr. He was a Shaṭṭārī and a man of such graciousness that people of all religions flocked to him. He would have nothing to do with courts and courtiers. When Auraṇgzēb was about to set out for his campaign against Dārā Shikōh, he went at night to the assembly of the Shaikh in disguise. The Shaikh, noticing a new face, asked him his name. He replied, 'Auraṇgzēb'. The Shaikh paid no further attention to him. When he went for the second time, the Shaikh protested. 'If you have come to like this house', he said, 'let me know, and I shall find some other place'. But Auraṇgzeb was determined to have his blessings. He enquired about the Shaikh's routine and confronted him early one morning as he was going out to say his prayers at the mosque. When the Shaikh asked him what he wanted, he began to complain about Dārā's laxity in matters of the *sharī'ah*, and declared his own intention of enforcing its commands and of looking after the welfare of the people. Then he asked for the Shaikh's blessings and his spiritual support in the accomplishment of his task. The Shaikh said, 'What can the blessings of poor people like me, who have no authority, do for you? You are a king. You should recite the prayers with all sincerity and with the desire for justice and concern for the welfare of the people. I also shall raise my hands in prayer'. The Shaikh had to face danger from another quarter also. Some of his *murīds* became so enthusiastic in their devotion to him that they declared he was sent by God and addressed him as if he was God. When he found that rebukes had no effect, he locked them up. Some repented, but a few had to be handed over to the qāḍī to be dealt with according to the law[45].

Closely resembling Shaikh Burhān in his treatment of Muslims and non-Muslims alike was Sayyid Sa'dullāh. He studied for 35 years under his grandfather, Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad Salōnī, and then went to stay at the Holy Cities. There he was universally admired for his helpfulness to Arabs and non-Arabs. He came away because, owing to some misunderstandings, the Sharīf of Mecca did not accede to his requests, and settled at Sūrat. From here reports were sent about him to the court, and he was given a grant, so that he could live in comfort. His relations with people of all religions

[45] Khāfī Khān, *Muntakhab al-Lubāb*. Bibliotheca Indica, Vol. II, pp. 553-5.

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were such, and he was so anxious to do what he could for them, that they all regarded him as their religious guide. One or two orthodox scholars objected to the manner of his association with non-Muslims, and, therefore, he began a letter addressed to one of his disciples, Harī Rām, permanent assistant to the chief magistrate of the port of Sūrat, with the verse:

> In the name of Him, who has no name,
> Who hears, by whatever name He's called.

This came to the knowledge of the scholars, and they protested against the verse being used for a person who should have been addressed as a *kāfir*. But the Sayyid replied that he deemed everything to be non-existent but God[46].

Shaikh Bāyazīd was a native of Qaṣūr in the Punjāb who came and settled at Shāhjahānābād (Delhi). He was noted for his austerities, but even more for the ungrudging manner in which he took upon himself the burdens of all who needed help, and he was continuously surrounded by needy Muslims and Hindūs.

> 'After Sīdī Yaḥyá had been appointed Kōtwāl (police and city magistrate) of Delhi he decided to employ some more persons on his staff. A group of people came to the Shaikh and asked him to recommend their appointment. The Shaikh took them all along with him to the Kōtwāl and made the recommendation. The Kōtwāl said, "Everyone comes to you and you do things for everyone. But I am a person with three defects. First, I am a purchased slave; secondly, I am an Abyssinian, uncouth in appearance and harsh in speech, the worst kind of man. Thirdly, I am the kōtwāl, whose business and profession it is to disregard persons. Now that you have come for the sake of these people, I shall employ them. But if you take the same trouble again, I shall not oblige you". The Shaikh said, "If I come again, you may shave my head, seat me on an ass, and have me taken round the town". Sīdī Yaḥyā wrote down the full descriptions and particulars of the persons (recommended) and had them checked up. After two or three days, a few more people came to the Shaikh and besought him to get them (also) appointed. He excused himself, but the selfish fellows continued to pester him. Then he went to the kōtwāl, taking a barber and an ass along with him. He said, "As I had accepted the condition that if I troubled you again, you could shave my head and take me round the town, I have brought this ass and a barber with me. I am willing to undergo the punishment at once, but you must employ these people".

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 559-61.

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Sīdī Yaḥyá smiled when he heard this and did what the Shaikh asked him to do'.

Shaikh Bāyazīd had the privilege of presenting cases deserving of consideration to the Emperor in person every Friday. As preaching and admonishing all and sundry was a part of his adopted function, he once sternly said to the Emperor, 'The Prophet gave away his daughter in marriage. Why do not you, who are a religious-minded king, give away your daughters in marriage?' This was the only occasion, perhaps, when anyone spoke to Auraṇgzēb openly on this subject[47].

A *ṣūfī* representing a type much rarer than even Shaikh Bāyazīd's, was Mīr Naṣīruddīn Harwī, of Burhānpūr (d. 1708). 'He lost the use of both his legs and his left arm early in his youth, and subsisted on what he could earn by copying out the Qur'ān and other books. He fasted almost continuously and spent a great deal of time reading the Qur'ān. He rarely accepted any gifts, and if he did, he gave much more in return. He seldom rejected the request of anyone for help, so that people wondered how he could give away so much when he possessed so little. He hated meeting rich men and officers of the government. It happened several times that he returned the presents and turned away the person of the Nāẓim (governor) of the town with harsh words. Once when Munawwar Khān, the governor of the province, came to him, he addressed him thus: "I know full well that the elephant on which you ride, and your army, have cut off the means of subsistence of the people, and you now wish to include me in the hatred which the people have for your oppression. What else can be the meaning of your taking this trouble and giving trouble to others". Munawwar Khān said, "Draw me to your side through your spiritual influence". The Sayyid replied, "You see that the sinfulness and disobedience of a transgressor like me has been such in the eyes of God that both my feet and an arm have become useless. You also should consider your acts and your behaviour towards God's creatures in exercising your rule and try to make atonement". The piety and righteousness of the Shaikh was reported to Auraṇgzēb, who sent a *farmān* through Khwājah Adham, the *Ṣadr* (Qāḍī) of Burhānpūr, making a grant of land. The Shaikh asked the *Ṣadr* why he was showing the *farmān* to him, because except that he was a Sayyid, he did not possess any of the virtues for which the grant was being made. The *Ṣadr* got angry, but the Shaikh said that God was providing for millions like him', and did not yield[48].

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 551-3 and Bakhtawar Khān, *Mir'at-i-'Ālam*, p. 222. Copy in the History Department, Muslim University, Aligarh.

[48] Khāfī Khān, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 556-9.

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Shaikh Bāyazīd and Mīr Naṣīruddīn Harwī were not the last of the *ṣūfīs*. If we judge only from appearances, neither the number of *ṣūfīs* nor of their *murīds* decreased. The belief that *ṣūfīs* were endowed with spiritual powers while yet unborn, that they could intercede for their *murīds*, not only after death or on the Day of Judgement but here in this world, that they had foreknowledge of events and could prevent misfortunes occurring was as strong as ever. It also did not make much difference that the 'prayer-carpet' (*sajjādah*) now usually passed from father to son, as it was only for a few generations among he *ṣūfīs* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the *khalīfah*-in-chief was selected from among the *murīds*, and the sons of the *shaikh* were distinguished only by the status which they acquired through their own spiritual effort. Shaikh Farīduddīn's sons were deeply hurt when he gave the insignia which he had received from his *shaikh* to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, but Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn came away to Delhi and a son of Shaikh Farīduddīn occupied his seat as head of the *dargāh* at Ajōdhan. Shaikh Gēsū-darāz was anxious that his grandson should succeed him and began making *murīds* on his behalf while he was still young. We have also mentioned that the spiritual 'states' began in course of time to be acquired with much less apparent endeavour, because of the belief that they were gifts which God bestowed on his elect, rather than the result of constant striving. The doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd* made ṣūfism metaphysical and intellectual; on the other hand, the representatives of *waḥdah al-shuhūd*, the Naqshbandīs, had already made a place for themselves in the official and social hierarchy, and their spirituality was buttressed by their influence among the great. Political circumstances changed to the extent that the Mughal empire declined and disintegrated, but this could also have acted as a stimulus, because the building up of community life around the *khānqāh* and the *shaikh* was one of the features of ṣūfism. The gradual decline of the effectiveness of ṣūfism must be attributed to what is noticeable generally among the Indian Muslims of the eighteenth century. They seemed to have lost their hold on life, to have ceased to see any particular purpose or meaning in any type of serious, constructive activity. They had not only disintegrated politically but morally as well. It was not the desire for spiritual fulfilment that took men to the *ṣūfī* but superstitious hopes and fears.

We have already discussed the teachings of Shāh Walīullāh. His work was mainly in the domain of religious thought, but he is also ranked among the *ṣūfīs* of his day. Many *ṣūfīs* before him had been scholars as well, and Shaikh Aḥmad of Sarhind deliberately made the attempt to transform ṣūfism into a handmaid of the *sharī'ah* as

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he understood it. This meant, in practice, the strengthening of the externalist armoury with the supererogatory prayers and the litanies of the *ṣūfī*, with the result that ṣūfism, if it remained 'orthodox', was reduced to these prayers and litanies. The writing of *ta'widhs* was also taken over and elaborated into a science, because of the numerous purposes it had to serve. It did not occur to anyone that the *ta'wīdh* was either a fraud practised on the ignorant or a trick played upon God.

From the close of the eighteenth century tangible distinctions between the 'orthodox' *ṣūfīs* and the religious-minded among the *'ulama* gradually disappear. On the other hand, unorthodox *ṣūfīs*, though they still continue to be found, could no longer represent the freedom of the human mind as against the restraints of an imposed system. The civilization of the West might have acted as a stimulus to spiritual life, but it came first in the form of trade, then of armies and administrators. When education brought in new ideas it was too late. Ṣūfism had itself lost the capacity to imbibe them and transform them into stimuli for a renewal of spiritual activity. It became one of the features of Indian Muslim social life and ceased to be an independent force.

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CHAPTER XV

POETS AND WRITERS

THE decline of the Delhi Sultanate and the establishment of many small and independent states could be regarded as an opportunity for making political and social experiments. An assessment from that point of view would lead to an adverse judgement of the Muslims. They repeated on a smaller scale all the defects of the Sultanate, without exercising their minds to realize a higher form of political self-expression. But where political frontiers also represented a linguistic division, they adopted instinctively, and without the creation of any prejudices, a linguistic identity. This is most evident in Sindh, in the Panjāb, in what is now known as the Hindi-speaking area, lying between Rājasthān and Bengal, and in Bengal proper. In principle, the concept of the Muslims being one political and religious community was recognized, and the Mughal Empire was a more imposing assertion of political unity than the Delhi Sultanate. In practice, linguistic diversity was accepted, and though the language of orthodoxy was everywhere the same, the *ṣūfī* and the writer felt themselves free—if not obliged—to cultivate the language of the people around them and to make it a means of self-expression. Persian remained the official language of every Muslim state, and the ambition to emulate the Persian classics was nowhere given up, the continuous influx of Persian poets being almost a compulsion for the study of Persian. But this in itself stimulated the cultivation of purely Indian languages by the Muslims. These were a field in which, even if they had rivals, they were not overawed by an established and unsurpassable excellence.

The *ṣūfīs* were the first to adopt the local or regional language for the propagation of their ideas. Bengālī is the only exception. Here the Muslim rulers performed the function of bringing the Hindū religion to the masses by patronizing the translation of religious classics. 'The orthodox Brahmans (of Kanauj) bitterly opposed the movement to translate the scriptures into Bengālī. As a result of their injunctions, written Bengālī could not thrive or get any recognition in the Hindū courts in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth

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centuries. But Muslim rulers had no such scruples and stuck to the custom of old times and encouraged translations of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian works into Bengālī. The kings and chiefs of Arakān, mostly Muḥammadans, were great supporters of Bengālī, and Muḥammadan scholars of their courts were zealous exponents of our tongue from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century'[1]. 'The first Bengālī translation of the *Mahābhārata* of which we hear was undertaken at the order of Nāṣir Shāh, the Emperor of Gauda, who ruled for forty years till 1325'[2].

The *Mahābhārata* was translated into Persian also, and more than once. In Bengāl this literary enterprise had a different background. The last chapter of a book, which was added some three centuries later to the original work, written towards the end of the tenth century, refers to the revival of Hinduism, the downfall of the followers of Sat Dharma (or Pure Religion, meaning Buddhism) and a free fight between the Muḥammadans and the Brahmans at Jājpūr, the Muḥammadans being described as the incarnations of gods and godesses, who are said to have come down for wreaking vengeance on the Brahmans for oppressing the Sat Dharmīs.

> 'In Jājpūr and Māldah, sixteen hundred families of Vedic Brahmans mustered strong. Being assembled in groups of ten or twelve, they killed the Sat Dharmīs, who would not pay them religious fees, by uttering incantations and curses. They recited *mantras* from the Vedas, and fire came out of their mouths as they did so. The followers of Sat Dharma trembled with fear at the sight thereof, and prayed to Dharma; for who could give them succour in that crisis? The Brahmans began to destroy the creation in the above manner, and acts of great violence were perpetrated on the earth. Dharma, who resided in Baikuntha, was grieved to see all this. He came to the world as a Muḥammadan. On his head he wore a black cap, and in his hand he had a cross-bow. He mounted a horse and was called Khoda (Persian, *Khudā*, God). Niranjan incarnated himself in Bhest (*Bihisht*-heaven). All the gods, being of one mind, wore trousers. Brahma incarnated himself as Muḥammad, Vishnu as Paighambar (Prophet), and Shiva became Adamfa (Adam). Ganesh came as a Ghāzī, Kartik as a Kāḍī, Nārad became Sekh (Shaikh) and Indra a Maulānā. The *Rishis* of Heaven became *Fakirs*. The Sun, the Moon and the other gods came as foot-soldiers, and began to beat drums. The goddess Chandī incarnated herself as Ḥayā Bībī, and Padmāvatī

[1] D.C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, University of Calcutta, 1954, p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

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became Bībī Nūr. The gods, being all of one mind, entered Jājpūr. They broke the temples and *maths*[3] and cried, "Seize! Seize!" Falling at the feet of Dharma, Rāmai Pandit sings, "O, what a great confusion!" '[4].

Indeed, what a great confusion. There is no Buddhism, Hinduism and Islām here, but human fancy running wild and creating a virgin forest so dense that not only the critical or logical mind but common sense is baffled. A chronological summary of the Muslim contribution to Bengālī literature does not reduce the confusion, but may take our mind off it.

The first Muslim writer of Bengālī, Yasōrāj Khān, who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century, was an officer and one of the many literary celebrities of the court of Sulṭān Ḥusain Shāh (1493-1518). The patronage of Bengālī poets was not qualified by any conditions regarding race or creed, and the poets themselves were not bound by the doctrines of any religion. Yasōrāj's *Krishna-Maṇgala* is probably the earliest instance of a Muslim poet using a Hindū theme[5]. The Muslim poets wrote primarily as Bengālīs and only secondarily as Muslims. 'Apart from a larger admixture of Persian and Arabic words in their vocabulary, they write in as Sanskritized a style as unhesitatingly as the Hindū poets do, and they accept Hindū mythology and write on Hindū deities with as much enthusiasm and reverence as any Hindū could have done. . . . It should not be supposed, however, that the Muḥammadan writers have ceased to be Muḥammadan, or that there is nothing Islāmic in their work. On the contrary, they enlarge the content of Bengālī literature with the Islāmic ideas they express and the themes they introduce from Arabic and Persian sources. Among the most interesting things they import from abroad are some tales, akin to the Arabian Nights, such as those of Ḥātim-Tā'ī, Leilā Majnun, and Yūsuf Zuleikha'[6]. If this is liberalism, the patronage was equally liberal. 'When the shades of twilight settled on the dark green clumps of shrubbery trees on the far Sonamura ranges, Parāgal Khān, the governor, used to call his ministers, attendants and courtiers every evening to his palace at Parāgalpūr in Fēnī, and before this illustrious audience the translator of the *Mahābhārata* had to recite portions from his poems, the governor himself giving cheers in appreciation of beautiful and interesting passages. The poet flattered his noble patron by calling him an incarnation of Harī

[3] Religious foundations, generally the centres of a sect or a particular teacher.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

[5] J. C. Ghosh, *Bengali Literature*, O.U.P., London, 1948. P. 46.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 82 ff.

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(the god Vishnu) in Kāliyuga, and it is curious to note that the Pathān chief, who was a devout Muḥammadan, enjoyed this compliment of the Hindū poet'[7].

According to the critics, 'Alā'ul (Alāol, born *c.* 1618) was the most outstanding Muslim Bengālī poet of the seventeenth century. He was the son of the Prime Minister of Jalālpūr in East Bengal. His father was killed by the Portuguese. Ultimately he found security under the patronage of Magan Ṯhākur[8], the Prime Minister of Arakān. 'Alā'ul wrote several long poems based on Persian models, but his most famous work is his version of *Padmāvatī*, an adaptation of Malik Muḥammad Jā'isī's *Padmāvat*. 'Both in this and in his other poems, Alāul displays a Sanskrit scholarship which would do credit to a Sanskrit pandit, and his knowledge of Hindū customs and his insight into Hindū character would be astonishing even in a Hindu writer. His chief fault is that he gets involved in abstruse metaphysical ideas. He writes in a highly Sanskritized style, which makes him the pioneer of the neo-classicism perfected by Bharat Chandra Ray in the eighteenth century'[9]. This is perhaps another way of saying that 'Alā'ul used his command over Sanskrit and colloquial Bengālī to create a standard language, a style that became classical. Sayyid Sulṭān carried this standardization into the world of belief, and in his most notable poem, *Nabīvamsa*, he included some Hindū deities among the twelve *nabīs*, or great persons, with whom he deals in this poem[10].

It is impossible, of course, for anyone who cannot read the Bengālī originals to estimate their literary value, or to judge the correctness of any critical appraisal. But, *prima facie*, what appears to be a religious or spiritual synthesis in the writings of Bengālī Muslims is historically baseless and intellectually absurd, devoid of ethical precept as well as of moral principle. This may or may not have affected the purely literary quality of these writings. Here one must record the esteem in which they were held and abstain from criticism as an impertinence. One cannot also challenge the genuineness of their emotional content, for while Islāmic doctrines may, among the masses, have dissolved into meaningless myths, there were Muslims who followed the devotional cults. There were Muslims, both men and women, who composed Vaishnava devotional songs, and

[7] Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

[8] Magan Ṯhākur was a Muslim. It seems there was nothing unusual in a Muslim having a Hindū name, or a Hindū a Muslim name. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 675.

[9] Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 83 ff. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 526 ff., is less inhibited in his appraisal of Alā'ul's genius.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5. In the early eighteenth century, a deity known as Satya-Pīr, half Hindū and half Muslim, came into prominence.

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Harīdās, one of the most eminent followers of Shrī Chaitanya (1486-1534) was a Muslim.

The Muslim contribution to Hindī, Panjābī and Sindhī is more significant from the social and more original from the literary point of view.

We have seen that, as early as in Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Amīr Khusrau's time, Hindī was acclaimed as the language of the people and Hindī songs heightened the rapture of the *samā'*. We have also mentioned *ṣūfīs* who wrote *dōhās* (or couplets) in Hindī. This was continued, and it represents one type of contribution to Hindī literature. Malik Muḥammad Jā'isī (1493-1542) is the originator of what Hindī scholars of today call the epic style. He took from the annals of Rājasthān the romantic figure of Padmāvatī, a princess of enchanting beauty, and wove around her numberless stories which together make up a complicated allegory. Though there are elaborate descriptions of battles and sieges, his work is not really an epic; it would be more correct to say that he used the style of the *mathnawi*. In this he represents a distinct tendency. A third tendency is the adoption of Krishnā as the object of devotion, of which Raskhān is the most outstanding representative. Finally, there are examples of purely erotic poetry, of the type called *sringār rasa* in Sanskrit, in which the topic is the beauty and charm of the beloved.

The personality of Kabīr Ṣāḥib overshadows all those who used the *dōhā* (couplet) style as their medium. He denounced both Islām and Hinduism because of the exclusiveness of their orthodoxy and ritual; and the question whether he was born a Hindū or a Muslim does not help us to decide to which community he belonged. There is a fervour in his monotheism and in his rejection of all material symbols which reflects the spirit of Islām, and his philosophy shows traces both of the *ṣūfī* concept of immanence and the Vedantist concept of One-ness. Hindūs generally include him among the Muslim poets of Hindī, and the Muslims, inured to poetic extravagance, do not disown him. He is reported as having become the disciple of a *ṣūfī*, and it would not be wrong to regard him as being himself a *ṣūfī* who rejected not only the *sharī'ah* but also traditional theology. His followers became a sect known as the Kabīrpanthīs, but Kabīr Ṣāḥib's teachings, taken as a whole, do not form a system. They derive their appeal, which has no doubt been tremendous, from the fact that they challenged and derided practices and prejudices which dam the free flow of the sentiments of charity and love and which are indefensible from the rational and purely human point of view.

The second type of Muslim poets of Hindī consists of a whole group of writers, Kutuban, a disciple of Shaikh Burhān Chishtī, and

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the author of *Mrigāvatī*, Manjhan, the author of *Madhumāltī*, Uthmān, the author of *Chitrāvalī*, Shaikh Nabī, the author of *Giyān Dīp*, and some minor poets. Their works are regarded as classics, and their distinctiveness consists in their use of Hindū themes to propagate spiritual and moral truths. They did not follow any logical method, and their themes are perhaps closer to the *Jātakas*, or Birth Stories of Buddha, than to any Hindū or Muslim literary models. The greatest of this type of writers, as already stated, was Malik Muḥammad Jā'isī. '*Rāmacharitmānas* (of Tulsīdās) is the finest Hindi epic. *Padmāvat* (of Malik Muḥammad Jā'isī) comes next. . . . The author of *Rāmacharitmānas* may have written a better language and expressed higher sentiments and ideas; he may have possessed greater breadth of vision; but he does not possess that singlemindedness of devotion and that depth of feeling which is Jā'isī's chief merit. . . . We must remember that *Padmāvat* had been completed thirty-four years before the *Rāmacharitmānas* was begun. . . . *Padmāvat* is the first successful epic in Hindī. It cannot be denied that as a poet Tulsīdās followed in the footsteps of Jā'isī. Thus Jā'isī is immortal as a poet, simple in nature, with a lofty intelligence'[11]. The full import of this inhibited appraisal will become obvious if more directly stated. The *Rāmacharitmānas* of Tulsīdās is regarded as a scripture and is most widely read and recited. It has moulded religious feeling among the Hindī speaking Hindūs. Its author had Jā'isī's *Padmāvat* before him as a model. He wrote in the same language, Avadhī, the form of Hindī spoken in the region. Tulsīdās used a larger number of Sanskrit words, and is, therefore, assumed to have a more literary style; Jā'isī wrote in the actual idiom of the people. Tulsīdās' 'higher sentiments and ideas' consist in his well-defined religious doctrines; Jā'isī did not preach. His mind was imbued with ṣūfism, but he was primarily a poet. His wisdom grew out of the rich soil of human experience, which did not need to be fertilized with dogma. He could paint scenes of battle and of love, of meeting and of parting with a freedom which the moralizer could never attain, and when he had displayed life in its fullness, he could call it an allegory. Jā'isī, the poet, served as a guide to Tulsīdās, the eloquent preacher, showing him the way to win the hearts of the people.

It is curious that of the two embodiments of the divine in the Hindū pantheon, Rāma does not seem to have appealed to the imagination or the religious sentiment of the Muslims, but Krishna, the naughty boy of Gōkul, whose spirituality evolved out of fun and frolic, who was god, lover and beloved all in one, caught their

[11] Dr Hazārī Prasād Dwivēdī, '*Jā'isī aur unkā Padmāvat*', Kāshī Prachārinī Sabhā. P. 198.

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fancy. Some were satisfied with the strong element of sensuousness, some sought and found in the myth of Krishna and Rādhā a supreme lyrical quality, some went further towards worship and devotion. Typical of these was Sayyid Ibrāhīm of Pihānī (b. 1573), who adopted the *nom de plume* of Rasakhān. In one of his works he refers to himself as belonging to a royal family, but hardly anything is known about him. About his conversion there are two stories, neither of which provides a rational explanation. One is that he fell in love with a boy, and so abandoned himself to his passion that he became a by-word. Once he heard someone saying that one should love God with the same intensity and devotion as Rasakhān loves the boy, and he was so deeply affected that he came to Gōkul and joined a group of Vaishnava devotees. The other story is that his wife or 'beloved' was very proud and used to nag him constantly, and once, while reading the Persian translation of the Vaishnava scripture, *Shrimad Bhāgvat*, it struck him that Krishna, whom the women of his village adored, was the proper object of worship for him. So he gave up everything and came and settled at Krishna's reputed birthplace, Vrindāvan[12].

There are two small collections of Rasakhān's poems. He departed from the current lyric pattern of the Krishnaite poets and adopted an altogether new style. His verses cannot be set to music, but they have a compensation in the melody of words, which is sweet as music to the ear. He avoided ornate language, exploiting to the full the effect of the chaste expression, the rhythmic potentialities and the natural alliteration of Braj Hindī[13]. If Rasakhān is to be regarded as a devotee of Krishna, he brought into the community of worshippers an originality, a literary aestheticism and a relish for the spiritual that has an essentially Muslim character.

'Abdur Raḥim Khān Khānān in the early and Raslīn (Sayyid Ghulām Nabī Bilgrāmī) in the late Mughal period are regarded as having excelled in erotic poetry. They were both linguists, and delighted to show their accomplishment in Hindī also. Their greatest value lies in their having placed the Indian concept of female beauty, which was true to nature, in opposition to the conventional Persian concept, in which the sex was disguised. They did not exercise any appreciable influence on the Persian or Urdu poetry of the Indian Muslims, but they occupy a very high position in Hindī literature.

An eighteenth century poet who attempted humorous writing, 'Alī Muḥibb Khān, though not well known or very successful, has also to be mentioned. Thus we complete the list of types of Muslim

[12] Ram Chandar Shukla, *Hindī Sāhitya kā Itihās*.

[13] K. B. Jindal, *A History of Hindi Literature*, Kitāb Maḥal, Allahābād. P. 155.

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poets who achieved varying degrees of excellence in almost every field of Hindī poetry. The works of some are regarded even today as classics; some were pioneers in their particular style; and together they enriched Hindī literature to a remarkable degree.

In Sindhī, Shāh 'Abdul Laṭīf's *Shāhjū Risālō*, is regarded both as a scripture and the perfect masterpiece of literature. Shāh 'Abdul Laṭīf (*c.* 1680-1748) was a *ṣūfī* who spent most of his life in the village of Bhīta, near Haidarābād in Sindh. He is believed to have performed the severest austerities and attained the status of a *shaikh*. His works show evidence of his having been a scholar, but since it was felt that poetry such as his could only have been inspired, there is a tradition that he was illiterate. For us, he is among those whose spiritual striving and aesthetic taste drew them towards the people, who took as their raw material stories and anecdotes related by wandering minstrels and gave them an inner meaning which illuminated their outward form with a transcendant beauty. Shāh 'Abdul Laṭīf's *Risālō* is a compendium of such stories. We give one below as an example to illustrate how the mythical and the irrational has been used as a means of expressing the absolute value.

Diāchū, or Diāch, the rājā of Girnār, had a married sister who was childless. A *faqīr* prophesied that she would have a child, but when he grew up he would cut off Diāchu's head. The child, when born, was put into a box and set afloat on the river. It was picked up by a bard, Charanu, who lived in the territory of Rājā Anērā'e, and he named him Bījalu. He grew up into a musician with magical power, which neither man nor beast could resist.

About the time Bījalu was found afloat, a daughter was born to Anērā'e, and the pandits prophesied that she would be the cause of much bloodshed. She, also, was put in a box and set afloat. Ultimately, she was rescued by a potter called Ratno, and given the name of Sōrathī. Once, when Sōrathī was grown up, Ratno, who was a friend and servant of Anērā'e, took two months' leave from him, but returned after four months. At this Anērā'e became angry, and when Ratno returned, he would not greet or even look at him. Ratno excused himself by saying that he was delayed because he had to arrange his daughter's marriage. Anērā'e asked Ratno if he would accept him as a husband for his daughter, and when Ratno agreed, Anērā'e sent a marriage procession with torches and drums. But Ratno lived in Diāchū's territory, and when Diāchū saw this marriage procession, and was told that Ratno's beautiful daughter Sōrathī was to be married to Anērā'e, he called Ratno and asked him why his own claim to Sōrathī's hand had been ignored. Ratno replied that she was not worthy of so great a rājā, but Diāchū had her seized and taken to Girnār, where he married her. Anērā'e was

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incensed and attacked Girnār, but failed to conquer it. He then resorted to a stratagem. He sent a pot of gold coins to the village of bards where Bījalu lived, and announced that the pot would be given as a reward to anyone who brought him Diāchū's head. Bījalu himself was away and his wife, a bardess, out of sheer greed took the pot, thereby accepting the obligation on her husband's behalf that the condition imposed by Anērā'e would be fulfilled.

When Bījalu returned and came to know what his wife had done, he was deeply shocked, but he felt morally bound to fulfil the awful condition. He took his lyre and staff and set off for Diāchu's court. There he enchanted Diāchū with his music to such a degree that ultimately he agreed to let him cut off his head. Bījalu took the head to Anērā'e who, realizing the danger of having such a wizard in his dominion, banished him. Bījalu returned to his village. Here he found Sōrathī about to mount the funeral pyre along with another wife of Diāchū. He was so moved that he also mounted the pyre, and his wife, whose greed was the cause of this great tragedy, followed him. In the end, all the persons in the story meet again in heaven, and all the events are repeated.

The most incredible incident, Diāchū allowing his head to be cut off, is the climax of the story. Unconditional surrender to Beauty is the highest spiritual attainment.

Three things have been reconciled and
  united: the string of the lyre,
  the dagger and the neck.
There is no journey comparable to the one
  that thou hast undertaken, O Bard!
I thank and praise God that thou, O Fakir,
  hast asked for my head!

If I had scores of heads on my shoulders,
I would have cut my throat hundreds of times.
And even then I would not have been
  worthy of the music poured forth
  by thy strings[13].

The story of Sōrathī is one of a number forming a part of the folklore of Panjāb, Gujarāt and Sindh. In the Panjāb the stories of Sassi Punnū and of Hīr and Rāṇjhā have for hundreds of years enchanted the people. The folk mind generally cannot bear the strain of originality, and many incidents are common to all the stories. In

[13] *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 17, 1863. Pp. 245-315. See also H. T. Sorley, *Shāh 'Abdul Laṭīf of Bhit* (Oxford University Press, 1940), which gives translations of many other poems.

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what is called the poetry of the *ṣūfīs* of the Panjāb, ideas and poetic images that had already found the most refined and striking expression in Persian appear in a crude form, almost as a reversion to the primitive. It pleases the sophisticated to extol this simplicity as something superior to culture. But there can be no doubt that Panjābī literature has its origin in the poetry of fifteenth century *ṣūfīs* of the Panjāb, and in Panjābī the works of some of these *ṣūfīs* have not been surpassed.

The verse forms used by these *ṣūfīs* are known as *kāfī* (a distortion of the word *qāfiyah*, rhyme), bārahmāh (the twelve months), *athvārā* (the eight days), *siharfī*[14], *qiṣṣa* (story), *bait* (couplet), *dohrā* (quartrain, with all the four lines rhyming) and *var* (ode). The first *ṣūfī* poet, with whom Panjābī literature also begins, was Shaikh Ibrāhīm Farīd (*c.* 1450-1575). Many of his compositions were later absorbed in the *Ādi Granth*, the scripture of the Sikhs. Apart from these, a set of *kāfīs*, 130 couplets and a *Naṣīḥatnāmah* or Book of Wise Counsel are attributed to him. His language was a mixture of several Panjābī dialects, interspersed with Arabic and Persian terms used by the *ṣūfīs*. His verses and sayings have become a part of everyday speech. One of his well-known verses runs as follows:

> 'Farid, revile not the dust, there is nothing
> like it. When we are alive it is beneath
> our feet, when we are dead it is above us'[15].

The next figure of importance, Mādhō Lāl Ḥusain (1539-1593-4), was an extraordinary person. In the Panjāb he is considered a *ṣūfī* even though he danced, sang and drank, and kept company with dancers and musicians. He was called Lāl (red) after he had taken to wearing a red dress, and Mādhō out of his intense attachment to a Brahmin youth of that name. 'When drunk, he would dance, sing his own poems and preach to the crowds gathered around him'.

> 'Doubt has vanished and doubtless is established; therefore I, devoid of qualities, dance. If I play with the Beloved I am ever a happy woman. The liar's face has been blackened and the lover's word proved true. Because doubt has vanished and doubtlessness is established, therefore I, devoid of qualities, dance'[16].

[14] A curious style, its only distinctive feature being that the poem begins with a letter of the alphabet standing by itself.

[15] Lājwantī Rāma Krishna, *Panjābī Ṣūfī Poets*, Oxford University Press, 1938. P. 10.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 19 and 23.

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Sulṭān Bāhū (1631-1691) wrote verses of a somewhat liturgical character, and his four wives, three Muslim and one Hindū, and seventeen mistresses, who together bore him eight sons may, by the cynic, be represented as his idea of the well-regulated life. Bullhā Shāh (1680-1758) achieved intensity of poetic expression through a perfect balance of his mystical and ascetic tendencies. He was an immanentist and seems to have passed through conditions in which opposites dissolved into a unity, and all men, all beliefs, all diversities of culture became transformed into the one and the real.

> 'Bullhā, what do I know who I am? Neither
> am I a Muslim in the mosque nor in the ways
> of paganism, nor among the pure or sinful. . . .
> Bullhā, what do I know who I am? Myself I
> know as the first and the last, none else
> as second do I recognize, none else is wiser
> than I. Bullhā, who is the true master?[17]

A critic has seen in Bullhā Shāh's ideas and his belief in reincarnation more than a trace of Vaishnava influence[18]. But this is not evident in the examples given in proof of this viewpoint. Bullhā Shāh used all the current symbols—habits, rituals, persons—in order to express himself. They should not be confused with his beliefs. He was no more extravagant or more adventurous in his search for symbols than many other *ṣūfīs*.

'Alī Ḥaidar (1690-1785) composed the story of Hīr Rāṇjhā and Ḥāshim Shāh (1753-1823) the story of Sassī-Punnū in verse. They have both been popular, but Wāriṯh Shāh's version of Hīr Rāṇjhā is generally believed to excel all such romances both as poetry and as a rural philosophy.

Wāriṯh Shāh lived at Jandiālā and belonged to a family of *ṣūfīs*. He completed his *Hīr Rāṇjhā* in 1766. If he was not a scholar of Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and such dialects as Prakrit and Braj, he seems to have had a fairly intimate knowledge of them, and was able to fuse them all into his literary medium, Panjābī. Hīr and Rāṇjhā are supposed to have lived in the early sixteenth century, and their romance, the story of their love, separation and death had become a matter of common knowledge, but was, by Wāriṯh Shāh's time becoming a story of long ago. The response this story had evoked in the Panjāb indicates a much healthier attitude than that cultivated elsewhere in Muslim society, where it was proper for an unmarried girl to suppress her feelings and where it was improper, therefore, to attach significance to romances of which the 'heroine' was the

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 51 ff.

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daughter of a 'free' and respectable Muslim. Warith Shāh, telling his people a story they knew, was able to give it a new meaning, to raise it from the level of a tragic romance to the eternal love which roams over heaven and earth with a longing that cannot be fulfilled, and which is also the most precious thing man can possess. The love of man and woman is *'ishq-i-majāzī*, ephemeral love, not to be depended upon. Some would, therefore, avoid it as an obstacle, a stumbling-block, a means to an end which is most likely to become an end in itself. But the poet can weave the physical and the spiritual, the ephemeral and the eternal into a pattern of fascinating consistency and symmetry, any part of which has the full, enchanting beauty of the whole, and make human life, with its days and nights, its routine and rules, its injunctions and taboos, its placidity and convulsions into an object of edifying love and reverence. This Wārith Shāh has succeeded in doing. His work transcends all barriers. It is not Muslim or Hindū or Sikh. It is the most perfect image of the Panjāb, an image such as even the *ṣūfī* could not create anywhere else in India.

Kashmīr has produced many scholars and poets, but none of them such an outstanding representative of his type or category as to be dealt with separately. The most picturesque figure in the literary, musical and, one may say, human history of Kashmīr is Ḥabbah Khātūn. She became something of a legend even in her lifetime; she was so completely merged in the life of her people as to become anonymous, and her personality became embodied in a collection of deeply-moving songs which the people have sung and the hills re-echoed. History has recorded very little about her; she was too enigmatic for the historians of her time.

Ḥabbah Khātūn was a contemporary of Akbar; we do not know anything more precise than this. Her original name was Zūn. She was probably the daughter of a fairly well-to-do landlord, and her father devoted more than usual attention to her upbringing and education. She possessed quite extraordinary intelligence and natural refinement, but the social system provided no opportunities and made no allowances for personalities like her. According to custom, she was married to a man of the same social status as her father. She may or may not have been happy with him otherwise, but her childlessness created a deep rift between her and her husband. Life must have been an agony for Ḥabbah Khātūn in a society where giving birth to at least one male child is essential for a woman's honour and prestige. Ḥabbah Khātūn's sorrow burst out in songs as she worked with the other women of the village in the fields. According to one account, she went once with some women to a *ṣūfī*, no doubt to have her barrenness cured, and her companions

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told the *ṣūfī* about her enchanting voice. She was asked to sing, and the *ṣūfī* was in ecstasies. He could not cure her, but he taught her Persian and inspired her with a new self-confidence. One day, as she was singing in the fields, Prince Yūsuf, the heir-apparent of the kingdom of Kashmīr, heard her, and he was so enchanted that he had her kidnapped, forced her husband to divorce her and installed her in his palace. In the new environment, Ḥabbah Khātūn's talents blossomed magnificently. She gave literary form to the Kashmīrī language and evolved a new system of music through a combination of the Persian and Indian styles. Her court became the centre of cultural activity. But Yūsuf soon began to drink excessively and to neglect his duties as king. On the other hand, the religious-minded, led by a highly respected scholar, Shaikh Ya'qūb Ṣarfī, objected to the 'innovations' of the court and created unrest among the people. Ḥabbah Khātūn was filled with a profound sorrow. She left the court and hid herself in a remote spot, but her songs, spreading from village to village, enabled the king to trace her, and she agreed to return when he took a vow to give up drinking and perform his duties conscientiously. But the new phase was short. Akbar had received reports about disorder in Kashmīr and Sunnīs had represented to him that they were being persecuted. Two expeditions led to the complete surrender of the valley, and Yūsuf Shāh was first kept under surveillance in the court and then given an estate in Bihār. Ḥabbah Khātūn, the childless wife, the deserted queen, went among the people with her sorrow. She sang as a wife waiting restlessly for her husband; but the tunes and perhaps the words would have been the same if her soul had thirsted for union with God, or if her people had sighed for the return of their king or contemplated with melancholy their existing condition and the future beyond the sunset. Ḥabbah Khātūn's grief has been shared by every sensitive Kashmīrī to this day; in her own time its expression roused quite a few into frenzied opposition to Mughal rule.

Ḥabbah Khātūn's songs are hardly known to the outside world. The story of her life has been recently pieced together by the poet Mahjūr, and he also helped to locate her grave. The translation of two of her songs, based on an Urdū rendering, is given below:

He has pierced every fibre of my body with the
  lightning of love:
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me from the top of the wall—
I wish I could tie a turban round his head.
Why did he then turn his back on me?
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me through my door—

Who told him where I lived?
Why has he left me in such anguish?
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me through my window,
He who is lovely like my ear-rings;
He has made my heart restless:
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me through the crevice in my roof,
Sang like a bird that I may look at him,
Then, soft-footed, vanished from my sight:
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me while I was drawing water,
I withered like a red rose,
My body and soul were ablaze with love:
I, hapless one, am longing for him.
He glanced at me in the waning moonlight of early dawn,
Stalked after me like one obsessed.
Why did he stoop so low?
I, hapless one, am filled with longing for him!

★

I thought I was indulging in play, and lost myself.
  Oh for the day that is dying!
At home I was secluded, unknown,
When I left home, my fame spread far and wide,
The pious laid all their merit at my feet.
  Oh for the day that is dying!
My beauty was like a warehouse filled with rare merchandise,
Which drew men from all the four quarters;
Now my richness is gone, I have no worth:
  Oh for the day that is dying!
My father's people were of high standing,
I became known as Ḥabbah Khātūn:
  Oh for the day that is dying!

In comparison with the major north Indian languages, the Muslim contribution to Gujarātī and Marāthī can hardly be called distinctive. There are many Persian words in these two languages, but they are mainly terms connected with the administration. Muslims are known, however, to have cultivated Gūjarī, which is the linguistic base of modern Gujarātī. Muslim folk poets, of whom Sagan Bhā'u is the most well-known, composed popular songs of a devotional character in Marāthī. In South India, Muslims adopted the regional languages just as they adopted the dress and the customs, but they did not exercise any influence on the development of literature. The war-songs of the Moplahs are of uncertain date and possess no literary or aesthetic value. They are written in the Arabic script, and their language is a curious polyglot *patois* of Malayālam, the local

vernacular, Tāmil, Telegū, Hindustānī, Arabic and of other tongues, a word of which is brought in here and there for some special purpose. They represent an attitude of mind in which the ordinary functions of the brain are stayed by religious frenzy[19].

Persian occupied a pre-eminent position among the Indian Muslim languages, and the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī, the great classic, was studied by every literate person. But Persian either never was or soon ceased to be spoken in the home and, therefore, remained a foreign, even though an extremely familiar tongue. It could not take deep root, and could not evolve a native idiom. On the other hand, the pressure of tradition was too strong to allow of experiments in the creation of new forms. Many Sanskrit works were translated into Persian, Dārā Shikōh's accurate rendering of the *Upanishads* being an event in world history. Jahāṇgīr's *Tuzuk* is classical in its simplicity and directness, and deserves to be given a very high position in literature. But there is very little to be said in favour of the ornate, involved and almost painfully artificial style of the *insha* that was prescribed mainly for administrative purposes and as the literary counterpart of Mughal etiquette. Among the Indian Muslim court poets of Akbar's reign, Abul Faiḍ Faiḍī (1547-1595) deserves special mention. He was a master of Persian, Arabic and Turkish, and there is both beauty of form and maturity of thought in his poetry. He was the exponent of the anti-orthodox emperor-worship of the admirers of Akbar, and some of his odes are examples of elaborate and extravagant adulation. But he could also forget that he was a courtier and feel and write as a poet.

Can one surpass, O Faiḍī, the self-control
  and strength
Of him who having passed the door of
  the beloved
Can turn and pass it by again?

★

My fellow-travellers on the mystic
  path declare,
O Friend, beware, caravans are attacked
  without warning.
I am aware of the dangers of the road,
  but alas!
What of those who waylay the watchful heart?

★

Destroy not the Ka'bah, O Love, for now and then
The traveller lagging behind
Finds there a moment's refuge.

[19] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX, Nov. 1901.

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At the end of this period, however, there appears perhaps the greatest Indian Muslim poet who used Persian as his medium, and who is even better known and more highly honoured in Afghānistān and Central Asia than in India. Mirzā 'Abdul Qādir Bēdil was born in the earlier part of Auraṇgzēb's reign at 'Aẓīmābād (Patnā) and died in 1720. He possessed a rare independence of spirit, and rather than write a single verse in praise of a prince or nobleman, he adopted the guise of a Qalandar and depended on God alone for his sustenance. As a poet, he was too impatient, too absorbed in the idea to cultivate the lesser literary virtues; the sheer beauty of words, the living idiom did not attract him. He was not a trader in diamonds, seeking to realize the full value of every little piece of precious stone. He was a miner digging deep into the bowels of the earth, heaping up diamond-bearing rocks and, with a reckless generosity, leaving them to be taken away by anyone who cared to. He was not a poet of the classes or the masses; he was a poet of the poets, a creator of ideas and images which challenged thought and sensitivity. He accepted all the conventions and adopted all the old symbols—*sāqī*, wine, wine-house, intoxication, heart, nightingale, cage, candle, moth, wave, shore—but they never disguise absence of thought or intensity of feeling. Bēdil was so intellectual that all his symbols transformed themselves into philosophic concepts, the aesthetic merged into the spiritual, feeling expanded into personality, and personality appeared as a secret that became more alluring and more elusive with every revealing glimpse. Bēdil was also deeply religious. His adoration of the divine flowers into poetic images, but his emphasis on the adoration and the image is so exquisitely adjusted that the one seems inconceivable without the other.

Bēdil came towards the end of a great age. The classical simplicity of Sa'dī, the lyricism of Ḥāfiẓ, the quiet ecstasy of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, the smiling disbelief of 'Umar Khayyām could bear endless repetition and imitation. They had become a part of culture. But they were a walled garden in which the same flowers could delight the eye with the beauty and freshness and rich variety of their colours from season to season. It was only rarely that a rebel like 'Urfī or an intellectual aristocrat like Bēdil ventured out to break new ground and build a garden of his own with landscapes and flowers of his own choice. Bēdil's garden is elaborate. His ideas and images are a path that winds upon itself in bewildering, exquisite curves, constantly unfolding to the eye patterns of form and colour that are surprising and unique. But the charm of his garden is for those who know all about gardens and flowers, and are passionately in search of rare designs, of novel combinations and contrasts, of hints and suggestions that carry within themselves the lure of uncreated forms.

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Now mourn we for Love, whose flame forlorn
Must in the dust abide, midst weeds and thorns
That we call men.

★

The drowsiness of the cup of solace
Is not easily o'ercome—
'Twixt open and suppressed lament
There lie the multitudes
Of thirsty, unfulfilled desires.

★

If I know the nature of Mercy,
I know that one fault of mine
Will the sins of the world redeem.

★

The beloved departed, and in departing
Cast one look behind.
What was I when the beloved had gone
But the look she cast behind?

★

'Tis the candle's honour to herald
The dawn with its dying flame:
Or the ashes of every moth could raise
A thousand dawns on the earth.

The art that flourished most during the Mughal period was historiography. We have voluminous, detailed chronicles of individual reigns, like the *Akbar Nāmah* of Abul Faḍl and the *Bādshāh Nāmah* of 'Abdul Ḥamīd of Lahore; the *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* of Badāyūnī, the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī* of Niẓāmuddīn Aḥmad Bakhshī, the history of Ferishta, the *Muntakhab al-Lubāb* of Khāfī Khān are reliable sources of historical knowledge from the beginning of the Muslim period till the occurrence of events of which the authors were eye-witnesses or had intimate knowledge; there are provincial histories like the *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī*; autobiographies like the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, biographies like 'Abdul Bāqī Khān Nihāwandī's *Ma'āthir-i-Raḥīmī*, and biographical dictionaries like the *Dhakhīrah al-Khawānīn* of Shaikh Farīd Bhakkarī and the *Ma'āthir al-'Umarā* of Shāh Nawāz Khān. 'Abdul Laṭīf has written an interesting account of his travels, which covered a large part of the country. Finally, there are letters, *farmāns* and similar documents that are classed as *Inshā*, or diction. Court histories, written under the eyes of a suspicious sovereign, were naturally eulogistic, and sometimes intolerably so; on the other hand some, like Ferishta's history, are objective and straightforward. The *Waqā'i'* of Ni'mat Khān-i-'Ālī, which has for a long time been used as a text-book, is an assortment of the hardest varieties of linguistic nuts which a reader could be

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given to crack with his teeth, but beneath the pompous verbosity is found a pungent humour and sometimes biting cynicism. It would be difficult to decide which of the numerous works of this period should be regarded as typical and for that reason be discussed in some detail. But the *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* of Badāyūnī reflects most clearly and intimately the personality of the author and the cultivation of the mind, the shrewdness, the credulity and the outbursts of passion and prejudice which often characterize the Indian Muslim, and seems to invite attention and study.

The author of the *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, Mullā 'Abdul Qādir, belonged to Badāyūn which, as we have stated earlier, was one of the oldest Muslim settlements south of the Sutlej. He was the son of Mulūk Shāh, and was born in 1540. When about twelve years old, he went with his father to Sambhal, and studied there for a number of years, specializing, among other things, in the recitation of the Qur'ān. His maternal grandfather, Makhdūm Ashraf, taught him the elements of the sciences, and Shaikh Mubārak of Nāgōr, the father of Faiḍī and Abul Faḍl, took him through courses in the traditional sciences. By the time he came to Āgrā in 1573, he was well versed in Arabic, Persian, astronomy, mathematics, and Persian and Indian music. He had also a fine voice. At first he attached himself to Jalāl Khān Qūrchī and Ḥakīm 'Ainul Mulk, but as talent was highly esteemed in those days, he was soon presented at the court and invited to the discussions that used to be held. Because of his wide and varied knowledge, he soon showed his superiority over the other *'ulamā*.

At Akbar's wish he translated into Persian the *Siṇghāsan Battīsī*, and Akbar, who was anxious to have full knowledge of the text, heard and admired his translation. His next assignment was the rendering into Persian, with the help of Shaikh Bhavan, the *Atharvavēda*, where it was believed that Islāmic doctrines were to be found in a rudimentary form. Thereafter he translated the *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Intikhāb-i-Jāmi' Rashīdī*, the *Baḥr al-Athmār* (*Kathāsaritsāgar*), the *Najāt al-Rashīd*, selections from the *Rājataranginī*, a history of Kashmīr, and parts of the *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, and co-operated in the preparation of the *Tārikh-i-Alfī*, which was to relate the history of a thousand years. The *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* was perhaps the only work written on his own initiative. Its first volume, which covers the history of India from the close of the tenth century till the death of Humāyūn, is based on the *Tārīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* and the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*; the third, which deals with poets, scholars and saints, on other contemporary works, but also on personal knowledge. The second volume, which is contemporary history, is the most important. He

had written with such freedom that it could not be published, and he had to keep it concealed during his life time. After his death, Jahāngīr asked his sons to surrender the manuscript, but they avowed that they knew nothing about it, as they were very young when it was written, if written at all. They offered to accept any punishment if the work was found in their possession.

Badāyūnī must have been brought up in a severely orthodox fashion, and in his youth he was also under the influence of Shaikh Abul Fatḥ, the son-in-law of Sayyid Muḥammad of Jaunpūr. In spite of his wide knowledge, he could not overcome his inhibitions, and his intellectual adventurousness was no more than that of a mouse peeping wide-eyed out of its hole. He jumped back with astonishing vigour and agility from the dogmatically unsafe positions towards which his associations and subconscious tendencies led him. His style was terse and epigrammatic and he was so eloquent in denunciation that he used every opportunity of practising it. In this he resembled Baranī. But he stood at a higher mental level, because he was not a snob and did not distort his outlook by making a fetish of race and family and blue blood. He was a perfect example of the emotionally high-strung orthodox Muslim who vents his fury upon unbelief without being himself sure of what he should and what he should not believe.

That Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāyūnī could bewilder the reader by telling the whole truth with spite and malice has already been indicated in the discussion of Akbar's religious beliefs and the conduct of Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī and Maulānā 'Abdullāh Sulṭānpūrī. He was associated with Faiḍī and Abul Faḍl for many years, and it is apparent from his own account that they assisted him because of his talent, and obtained assignments for him to translate Sanskrit works into Persian. But he was capable of ungratefully forgetting the generosity of the two brothers and cursing and reviling them in the interests of what he considered to be true belief. He writes of Faiḍī,

> 'In the individual sciences such as poetry and parable, prosody and rhyme, history, lexicography, medicine and style he was unsurpassed in his age. At first he wrote under his famous pen-name; towards the end, when his brother was given the title of 'Allāmī, with a view to exalt his person, he adopted the pen-name Fayyāḍī, to rhyme with 'Allāmī. But this did not prove auspicious and after a month or two he packed up and departed from the world. . . . An inventor of methods of jesting, of self-admiration, of unbelief, of (displaying) rancour, he was a compound of hypocrisy, depravity, dissimulation, ambition, arrogance and

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haughtiness. In the matter of malevolence and hostility towards the believers in Islām and mockery of the basic principles of their faith, in insulting and disparaging the Companions (of the Prophet), their immediate followers, the predecessors and successors of the earlier and later leaders of religious thought . . . he was worse than all the Jews, Christians, Hindūs and Magians. . . . To spite the religion of the Prophet he held all the forbidden things to be permitted and all the permitted things to be forbidden . . . and may no one see or hear the limits to which he went . . . He composed verses for full forty years, but they are all curiosities, well-knit bones without marrow; the ingredients of his verses are altogether insipid. His talent in the field of the superficial, the pompous, the anti-religious is well-known, but he is utterly devoid of passionate love for the real and the sublime, and of the quality of sorrow. May God forbid that his verses should ever become popular. Although there are more than twenty thousand verses in his *dīwān* and *mathnawī* there is no fire in any single verse, just as there is no freshness in his dry and shrunken mind. The lines of inferior poets may be remembered and recited, but his verses are so thoroughly repulsive and disgusting that no one cares to remember them.'

In spite of having said all this, Badāyūnī quotes in full a letter of Faiḍī to Akbar, praising him very highly and attempting to remove the misunderstanding because of which Akbar had become displeased with the Mullā.

'If any ask, "What standard of honour and loyalty is this that when he (Faiḍī) was so solicitous of friendship and gave such expression to his sincerity, he should be repaid with such aspersions and harshness? How do you explain your adoption of such a manner towards one who is dead?" I would reply, "This is all true. But what is to be done? The claim of Islām and the maintenance of our allegiance to it takes precedence over everything" '[20].

Among the poets, Badāyūnī also mentions 'Qāsim 'Alī, the son of Ḥaidar the Grocer, who was known for his inopportune demonstrations of pride and arrogance. He called himself 'Quraishī', and thereafter it began to be said that anyone who has no family connections calls himself one of the Quraish. As he was ashamed and angry if his father came to any of his parties, his father said, "To spite you I shall sit in the shop I have at Agra, sell dry fruits and tonics, and tell everyone who comes, without his asking, that Qāsim 'Alī is my son,

[20] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 299-305.

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begotten by me. This should be told to you so that you may go and kill him'' '[21].

We have already indicated Badāyūnī's attitude towards those *ṣūfīs* who were genuine and those who were 'exchanged for mules on the frontier'. He practised his epigrammatic wit on sulṭāns also. His remark on the death of Muḥammad Tughlaq sums up the conflicts of twenty-five years with magnificent terseness: 'The people were relieved of the sulṭān and the sulṭān was relieved of the people'.

[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 289.

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CHAPTER XVI

ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS

WE have described the development of the imperial and provincial styles of architecture during the early period, including in it a discussion of monuments in the Deccan which date from the second half of the seventeenth century, when Mughal rule had already been established in north India for over a hundred years. The Ibrāhīm Rauḍah, the Gōl Gumbad and the mausoleums of the Quṭub Shāhī kings were, therefore, contemporary with the masterpieces of the Mughal period, and a comparison with them as well as with the Pathān monuments of north India would enable us to identify the principal characteristics of Mughal architecture.

The Ibrāhīm Rauḍah and the Mihtar Maḥal give an impression of refinement and an exquisite sense of form; the Madrasah of Maḥmūd Gāwān and the tombs of the Quṭub Shāhī kings show the acceptance, almost without change, of Iranian styles of architecture and ornamentation. The Mughal emperors brought in the fresh blood of artistic traditions without being themselves subject to or deeply influenced by any. The Delhi Sultanate had been established under the shadow of a disaster—the Mongol onslaught on the Muslim world —and the grimness of the situation, the inescapable need of ruthless self-assertion is evident in the architecture of the period as it is in political policy. Bābar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty had to struggle with meagre resources and unreliable supporters against many enemies. But that was a game men played, and the spirit in which they took their gains and losses showed how much of men they were. The attitude towards life indicated by the mailed fist of Tughlaq's tomb would have appeared crude and the massive grandeur of Shēr Shāh's tomb tiresome to the great Mughal builders, Akbar and Shāh Jahān. They wished to translate into stone the refinement, elegance and strength of what they regarded as culture and character, and even though they built for all time, they took care to eliminate or conceal what was obviously earth-based and inert. In their estimate of man they did not consider endeavour and achievement only, but all that gives grace and charm to life, and they sought to make up in the intensity of aesthetic revelation what

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would otherwise have been earned through labour and patience. The buildings of the Mughal period reflected not only techniques of architecture and the wealth of the state but ideals of personality, the love of poetry, gardens and flowers and flowing water.

The first Mughal monument of significance is the tomb of the Emperor Humāyūn, built by his widow, Ḥājī Bēgam, who seems to have settled down near it, at what is now called 'Arab Sarā'e, in order to devote herself completely to the work. The tomb is the central feature of a large enclosed formal garden, with channels for running water. The other features are the four gateways, the principal one among which is on the west. On the outside, the walls flanking the arch of the doorway have been placed at an angle, and give the whole gateway the appearance of a screen lowered from heaven, with an opening through which one sees the mausoleum as a vision of grace and beauty There is something definitely Persian about this mausoleum—the large, bulbous double dome, the recessed alcoves, on each of the four sides, which seem to take away all the impression of weight and mass, the arrangement of rooms and corridors around the tomb chamber. There is also something definitely Indian Muslim about it—the restrained but striking use of marble inlay for ornamentation, and the domed kiosks at the corners of the main structure, which give it a fluid sky-line. But the blending of the foreign and indigenous elements is so perfect, the proportions of all the parts to the whole so harmonious, that any analysis of its design or embellishment seems pedantic. There is nothing we know of Humāyūn that would justify our regarding him as an outstanding personality; his tomb is much greater than he, because it is an idealization of his person and his qualities by someone who loved him. Culturally, the value of Humāyūn's tomb is magnified a thousandfold by this love, which has here demonstrated its power to create out of wrecked plans, fugitive living, deception and disaster an image of strength and grace and poetic lucidity.

Humāyūn's tomb stands where it does because the city of Dīn Panāh, founded by Humāyūn, lay to the north of it. In the meantime, the capital had been shifted to Āgrā, and when the construction of Humāyūn's tomb was begun in 1564, Akbar had already been eight years on the throne. Some buildings of minor importance —the tombs of Adham Khān and Atkā Khān, the latter a copy on a very small scale of Humāyūn's tomb—were erected at Delhi, but the main centres of architectural activity were Āgrā and Fatḥpūr Sīkrī, with palace forts at Lahore, Allāhābād, and Ajmēr.

We have already discussed Akbar's political and religious policy, and how it reflects his character. His architectural achievements confirm the estimate based on his ideas and activities, and reveal

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other equally impressive qualities. His buildings are almost entirely in red sandstone, relieved occasionally through marble inlay, as in the interior of the Jāmi' Masjid at Fatḥpūr Sīkrī and the gateway to his mausoleum at Sikandarā. There was no extravagance in his nature, and if we remember that there was no accommodation for king and court at any of the larger cities of north India, we can understand why he built so many palace forts. Perhaps the palace, offices and officers' residences at Fatḥpūr Sīkrī were not necessary, and the fact that they were abandoned after a few years may be taken as proof that they were not. But Akbar's urge to build something new and great, in fact as well as idea, was very strong, and the desire to realize it in a city of his own making must have been almost irresistible. There must have been something elemental and undying in this urge, for even now, after the buildings at Sīkrī have remained unused for over 350 years, they strike us more as ideas than as monuments.

Akbar's architectural activity began with the palace fort at Āgrā, where 'upwards of five hundred edifices of red stone in the fine styles of Bengal and Gujarāt'[1] were constructed. Akbar's catholic spirit was not fettered by any slavish submission to tradition. He collected artisans from all over his dominions, and made the fulfilment of his needs a means of self-expression for them. Unfortunately, Shāh Jahān did not think these red sandstone structures good enough for the imperial palace when marble and money was available, and he replaced most of them with buildings of his own choice. The Jahāṇgīrī Maḥal and the wall and gateways are almost all that is left of Akbar's creation. The Jahāṇgīrī Maḥal is a large complex of living apartments, and represents the adaptation of a Hindū style of architecture to the Muslim style of living. The encircling wall of the palace, nearly one and a half miles in circuit and about 70 feet high, with its battlements, embrasures, machicolations and string courses is a technical achievement; the Delhi Gate, which was the public entrance, gives an impression of refined strength and solidity from the outside, and of openness and cultured dignity from within.

Fatḥpūr Sīkrī has now an eerie atmosphere. The Dīwān-i-'Ām, a large enclosure which was meant both for audience and for inspection, the Dīwān-i-Khāṣ, apparently too small for its purpose, which is not a little suggestive of emperor-worship, the apartments of queens, pavilions for rest and relaxation, courtyards, an enormous, paved board for games where live persons were used for pawns, quarters for officials and offices are one part of the complex; the other consists of a mosque where perhaps a hundred thousand men could have prayed at the same time, with a gateway on the south

[1] Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

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side which looks modest from the mosque courtyard, but is perhaps the most imposing gateway in the world from the outside. On the northern side there is the marble tomb of a saint, surrounded by exquisitely carved screens and a verandah the pillars of which have brackets of the type found in Gujarāt temples. In the sanctuary of the Jāmi' Masjid the trabeate and arcuate systems, two entirely different techniques of supporting the roof have been most harmoniously combined, and the central and side naves are so profusely carved and ornamented that they burst upon the vision like a garden in flower.

The southern gateway of the Jāmi' Masjid, which we have mentioned above, was built to commemorate the conquest of Gujarāt, and represents the comment on his life and work which Akbar expected from posterity. From the ground level, a magnificent flight of steps leads forty-two feet up to the base of the superstructure, which is 134 feet high. Its facade has three faces, the central, which is 86 feet across, and one on each side, receding at an angle. The greater part of the central face is occupied by an arched and domed recess, which is its grandest and technically most impressive feature, as its semi-dome is carried on five surfaces in the form of a half-decagon. 'By the skilful manipulation of these surfaces the designer has correctly related the crescendo of the great alcove above with the diminuendo of the man-high doorway at its base'[2]. The skyline consists of a handsome perforated parapet behind which rises a range of kiosks with cupolas, the crown of a soaring ambition that had, however, not only a political and social but also an aesthetic form.

Akbar's mausoleum should have been the final representation of his personality and ideals. In a sense it is. In a chamber at ground level, there is the real tomb. There is no covering for the cenotaph at the top storey, no dome or even a light cupola; it is a terrace enclosed in marble screens with kiosks at the four corners. Death is not regarded as a mystery; a lover of nature lies in the open, in the lap of friendly elements, and not desiring an end to his sleep. But this magnificent idea has not found clear and convincing expression in the whole complex of the mausoleum. The gateway to the tomb is superb, red sandstone fading into the intricacies of white marble, the flesh changing into spirit, flowers dissolving in their own fragrance. Four graceful minarets take our gaze upward, lifting the material on the lever of beauty into the ethereal. We could stop at this gateway, feeling that there could not be anything beyond: its functional significance is completely lost in its beauty. But as we do get beyond, and enter the vast enclosed garden that is the setting

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

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for the mausoleum, there is something of disillusionment. The base or plinth of the mausoleum is a spacious terrace raised on arched alcoves, the middle point of each side emphasized by a rectangular structure containing a tall arched alcove surmounted by a graceful marble kiosk. The vigorous quality of the base is lost in the superstructure, which has meaning, indeed, but not a satisfying form.

Akbar's mausoleum was built in Jahāṇgīr's time, but Jahāṇgīr's main interests were painting and garden architecture. Verināg and Chashma'-i-Shāhī are gardens built around a spring, and their beauty lies as much in the surrounding landscape and the colours of the rising and setting sun as in their water channels and flowers. Apart from Akbar's tomb, the only monument of significance dating from this period is I'timāduddaulah's mausoleum on the left bank of the Jumna. Much praise has been bestowed on the inlay work, the mosaics and screens of this exquisite little building, but the ornamentation has suppressed the architectural features and appears to have been overdone. Like I'timāduddaulah, Jahāṇgīr's own tomb also has no dome, only minarets at the corners of the rectangular structure, and its excellence lies also in the ornamentation.

With the reign of Shāh Jahān began a phase of architectural activity distinguished by an intelligent and discerning regard for tradition and an innovation disciplined by a sense of values inherent in the structural material. The new structural material, used generously but not wastefully, was marble, adequate supplies of which could be obtained from Makarāna, in Rājasthān. Shāh Jahān first altered and replaced structures and added new ones in the palace fort of Āgrā. The Dīwān-i-'Ām was rebuilt, a glamorous effect being produced in the hypostyle by inlay of black marble to emphasize the lines of the engrailed arches, the width of the arches creating at the same time a feeling of lightness. The proportions of the arches and double columns of the Dīwān-i-Khāṣ, built some ten years later, are strikingly handsome. But Shāh Jahān's most praiseworthy contribution to the buildings of the Āgrā Fort was the Mōtī Masjid, whose shapely arcades, delicate kiosks, and quiet contrasts present the ideal of balance, gracefulness, and purity that should inspire the believer as he bows in prayer.

Shāh Jahān's ambitious spirit could not, however, be content with minor projects. His queen, Mumtāz Maḥal, had died in 1631, and he began dreaming of a tomb that would exalt her personality and her love to a degree that the whole world would gaze at it in awe and wonder. While this tomb—the Tāj Maḥal—was under construction, he began the laying out of a new city, mosque and palace fort at Delhi, to be called after him Shāhjahānābād. In 1648, he built the Jāmi' Masjid at Āgrā, in honour of his daughter Jahān Ārā. And

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during all this time he was busy replacing older buildings with what he thought were better ones and making additions of his own choice in the palace forts of Āgrā and Lahore.

The Red Fort at Delhi is an oblong, 3100 feet in length and 1650 feet broad, enclosed by a lofty wall of red sandstone. There are two gateways in this enclosure, one for private use on the south side and another, the public entrance, called Lāhōrī Gate, on the west side. Simple in its design, this gateway is a perfect combination of military requirements and architectural beauty. Passing through it, we enter a broad, vaulted arcade, which leads us to the intersection with the road coming from the southern gate. Beyond this intersection is another enclosure, containing the royal and private apartments. In front is a large quadrangle, with the Dīwān-i-'Ām facing us as we cross the doorway of the Naubat Khānah, where sat the musicians whose tunes indicated the time of the day. Now the interior arrangements have been transformed beyond recognition, military barracks having taken the place of courts and residential apartments of members of the imperial family. Between the Dīwān-i-'Ām and the palace buildings which are set in a line at the eastern limit of the enclosure and along what was formerly the river bank, is a formal garden, with a pavilion set within a pool. Of the palace buildings the most striking are the Dīwān-i-Khāṣ, the Raṇg Maḥal and the Ḥammām or bath. The white marble, the graceful arches, the restrained but rich ornamentation, the decorative water-channels and exquisitely carved pools suggest a way of life dedicated to beauty and unpolluted by anything grossly physical. The palace is now uninhabited, as pathetically empty as the marble stand on which once stood the gorgeous Peacock Throne, the masterpiece of the jeweller's and goldsmith's art, but the architectural qualities of the palace buildings are such that the atmosphere of imperial splendour lingers quite perceptibly.

The spiritual counterpart of this splendour, the Jāmi' Masjid, is still alive with men and prayer. With a courtyard 325 feet side and a sanctuary 200 feet long and 90 feet deep, it is the largest mosque in India, and has been built on such a lofty plinth that its domes and minarets dominate the city. But there is an exactitude, a mathematical harmony in its proportions, something cold and formal which reflects the impersonal character of imperial authority, and overawes without evoking an emotional response. Architecturally it is above criticism and in its own way an expression of perfection. The Jāmi' Masjid of Āgrā is only half its size, but has more the architectural personality of a house of prayer, because its design has not been made to express the concept of empire, or the aspiration to assert the permanence of worldly things.

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The Jāmi' Masjid of Delhi represents the consummation of mosque architecture, the Tāj Maḥal the perfection of the mausoleum. The characteristic features of both can be traced backwards for several centuries. But while perfection in one case has led to faultlessly correct form it has, in the other, reached those heights where architecture mingles with poetry and music to become an utterance of the human soul in the moment of supreme ecstasy. The physical qualities of the Tāj can be described; its plan is incredibly simple. It stands on the bank of the Jumna in an enclosure the size of which harmonizes fully, we could say musically, with the proportions of the mausoleum. There is a monumental gateway in the southern wall of the enclosure, balanced by broad octagonal pavilions at both the corners. As we pass the gateway and get the first view of the Tāj, it looks a relatively small building, for the garden in front is a square of 1000 feet side. The approach is a paved and raised path, with a broad water-course in the middle, and in the centre of the garden is a large pool in which the Tāj is constantly reflected. The mausoleum stands on a high terrace, and here again, for balance, there are two structures, exactly alike, at both the ends of the enclosure, one of which is a mosque and the other a Mihmān Khānah, or guest house. The tomb terrace is 22 feet high, a square with minarets at each corner. The mausoleum itself is also a square, 186 feet side, with chamfered angles, culminating in a large, bulbous dome, on a high drum, the total height of the building being 187 feet. The arrangement of the compartments and corridors around the tomb chamber and the cupolas around the dome follows the plan of Humāyūn's Tomb, only the shape of the dome differs. The finial is also a more significant and substantial part of the design.

The texture of the marble used is also one of the physical qualities of the Tāj, because it is so sensitive to light and atmospheric conditions, expressing a different mood in every season and at every hour of the day and night. But the same marble has been used elsewhere also. It is the combination of the material and the design that expresses the full values of both. To one who has followed the evolution of Indian Muslim and particularly Mughal architecture, the Tāj is the fulfilment towards which this art was striving, and this fulfilment has brought with it an intense feeling of release from all technicalities. The gross structural material, rubble, mortar, stone, whose weight and strength had to be calculated to ensure stability, has in the Tāj become something ethereal, an embodiment of exalted feeling unfettered by any physical limitations. The design which, among the nearest ancestors of the Tāj, the tombs of Humāyūn and Khān Khānān, was a couplet of exquisite charm in one instance and a verse of classic simplicity in another, has in the Tāj become a

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poetic image freed from bondage to words, an expression of pure experience. To those not acquainted with Indian Muslim architecture, or even with architecture, the Tāj comes as a revelation, as something that belongs to all peoples, all climates and all cultures, something that men and women have desired ever since love was born, and their souls will cherish even when their bodies have turned to dust. The Tāj has thus a historical and geographical context only in a limited sense. From being the expression of a personal love of a mighty artist-emperor for a queen who was for him an ideal wife and companion, it has become something purely human, an assurance to all that love has the power to transform itself into eternal beauty.

With the completion of the Tāj, the creative impulse of Indian Muslim architecture was exhausted. Wazīr Khān's mosque at Lahore was an experiment in the use of brick and tiles; the Bādshāhī mosque, in the same city, with its extraordinary number of tall and short minarets, was a commendable effort in a new style. The Pearl mosque in the Red Fort at Delhi, built by Auraṇgzēb, has an atmosphere of intimacy, but no outstanding architectural merit. Ṣafdarjaṇg's tomb, built in the middle of the eighteenth century, though following the traditional pattern, lacks that harmony among the different elements which appeals to the mind.

II

We have stated that Indian Muslim architecture should be regarded as possessing its own identity, and that its values cannot be fully appreciated if we place undue emphasis on the sources from which the Indian Muslim architect derived his style. The same criterion must govern our judgement of Indian Muslim painting. Here the Indian element hardly extends beyond the subject and the landscape. Muslims had most probably no knowledge of previous Indian styles and there were no masterpieces available from the study of which the Indian Muslim artist could get stimulus and inspiration. Indian Muslim—or, to be more precise, Mughal—painting was a synthesis of the arts of illumination, figure drawing, and calligraphy; its technique was derived from Persian masters who, in their turn, had learnt it from the Chinese, and its earliest subjects were situations and personalities of fiction and history. Its close relation to poetry is not generally realized, but it is in fact one of the most significant features. The reason will become obvious if we remember that under the Sung dynasty of China (960-1279), painting was a medium for the combined expression of mood, poetic image and physical form, and this philosophy of painting was too genuine and

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complete a reflection of man's nature to have been overlooked by those who studied Chinese techniques. Persian and Mughal painters aimed at an expression as terse, epigrammatic and concentrated as that of the poets. Just as the poet aspired to put all the feeling of the inspired moment into the fewest possible words, the painter endeavoured to collect vast and vivid impressions of form and colour into the smallest amount of space, with details whose minuteness captured and held the eye. In Chinese paintings there was more of balance between the visible and invisible, between the mood that possessed the painter and the forms he painted; the forms were, therefore, delicate lines or shades. Persian painters introduced colour, and gave it a decisive position. Mughal painters re-emphasized the line, and subjected colour to the discipline of form, thus fusing line, form and colour into a harmonious and attractive composition. The result was not as much a challenge to the sensitiveness of the critic as Chinese paintings, whose appreciation required complete absorption in the painter's mood, but it was far enough removed from realistic reproduction to suggest more then it showed, to demand a degree of imagination in the beholder which would enable him to convert a two-dimensional representation into a three-dimensional reality and create the perspective which the painter had ignored. Mughal paintings, in spite of the most meticulous attention to detail, take us beyond their precision and minuteness into a large world of colour and brilliance, of movement sometimes, of contemplation rarely. They are couplets with compressed meaning, and unless their excellence is limited to technique, they unfold and magnify themselves into visions of splendour.

The history of Mughal painting begins with Humāyūn. He developed a taste for this art while an exile in Iran, and engaged the services of two masters, Mīr Sayyid 'Alī and Khwājah 'Abduṣ Ṣamad, to initiate him and Akbar into its mysteries and illustrate the *Dāstān-i-Amīr Ḥamzah*. In India these two masters gathered pupils around them, and thus the Mughal School of painting was founded. While manuscripts continued to be illuminated and illustrated, painting also became independent, representing court and hunting scenes, groups, persons, animals and flowers as self-sufficient subjects. A critic has expressed the opinion that 'it was only at the Islāmic courts that painting could receive encouragement from the unreasonable but stimulating demands of private patronage, instead of being trammelled by the priestly conventions beneath which Hindū and Jain painting was stifled into traditional formalism'[3]. Painting, from being a royal fancy, gradually found patrons among

[3] Robert Skelton, *The 'Ni'mat Nāmah': A landmark in Mālwā Painting*'. Mārg, Vol. XII, No. 3, June, 1959.

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the nobility. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it even became commercialized, the artist plying his trade like any other craftsman. This meant the end of painting as an art. But even in the times of Akbar and Jahāṇgīr, the masterpiece was an accident. The emphasis of the patrons of art was not on the self-expression of the human spirit but on the excellence of technique. A picture could be highly esteemed even if it was the product of team-work. The methods of training made this possible.

Painting was taught in the same way as all the other Indian art industries, by a modified application of the apprenticeship system. The apprentice was first taken through a course in the 'letters', the basic elements of a picture. When he was 'letter-perfect' in each portion of the various subjects, the next step would be for him to combine these and so make up the finished design or 'word'. Provided with a brush (*qalam*) made of goat's hair, a small earthen saucer containing ink (*siyāhī*), and a piece of coarse bamboo paper, the student proceeded to draw in brush outline the series of exercises which comprised twenty different figures presumed to be graded according to their increasing difficulty. Outlines of pictures were pounced from tracings on transparent sheets of deerskin, and pupils made drawings over the pounced charcoal lines: paper stencils of famous pictures of the contemporary Iranian court were brought and copies made with the help of these stencils. What was regarded as the highest artistic qualification was perfect control of the hand and the eye, to acquire which the artist was quite prepared to repeat the same series of exercises day after day and for several years with that unflagging perseverance in which the oriental craftsman excels[4].

This method of training must have suppressed to a large extent the individuality of the artist and left little opportunity for self-expression. There were connoisseurs like Jahāṇgīr who could distinguish the work of each of the artists if they co-operated to make a picture, but we cannot ignore the fact that conformity with recognized standards of excellence was far more important than self-expression. We know the names of many artists and of the masters under whom they studied, but a discussion of Mughal painting has to be based on an appraisal of outstanding pictures and not on the qualities of individual styles. A strict application of the definition of Indian Muslim also cannot be made. There were many outstanding artists who were Hindūs, but whose work represents the Mughal style as faithfully, and sometimes more characteristically, than the productions of their Muslim compeers. Very few of the Muslim

[4] Percy Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924. Pp. 180-84.

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artists had been born in India, but the elements which can be called Indian are as evident in their work as in that of the Hindū artists.

Painters had to fulfil the wishes of their patrons, and their patrons, the emperors and the grandees of the state, were generally interested in themselves and their affairs. Court functions, hunting and battle scenes are, therefore, the subjects of the largest number of paintings, and it was in these that the artist had to make the richest and most glamorous use of colour. Portraits of emperors and noblemen had also to be given a colourful background. Akbar was very fond of the *Dāstān-i-Amīr Ḥamzah*, and the first major assignment of Mīr Saiyyid 'Alī and Khwājah 'Abduṣ Ṣamad was to illustrate this story. The pictures were made on cotton cloth, and their size—28.25 in. x 22 in.—was the largest among the Mughal miniatures. In style they appear to have shed some Persian and acquired some Indian qualities; perhaps it would be more correct to say that because the obligation to adhere to a certain tradition had been removed, the artists moved a step closer to their own and to external nature. The few surviving pictures of this series show great vigour and skill in composition, and reflect the vividness of the imagination that created the *Dāstān-i-Amīr Ḥamzah* itself. The illustration of the *Dāstān* took fifteen years to complete. Then the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* were taken up. Jahāṇgīr was more inclined to fact than fiction. To his period belong magnificent representations of court ceremonies and of hunting scenes, portraits of himself—miniatures painted in large numbers and distributed as marks of favour—but also pictures of animals, birds and flowers, and of a dying drug addict, 'Ināyat Khān. Shāh Jahān did not share his father's passion for painting; portraits began to be adorned with extravagant *ḥāshiyahs*, or marginal motifs, to display the affluence of the day. Surfeit of power and wealth produced a reaction in the Emperor and his son being shown visiting recluses. Ladies of the court and of the empire also began to be painted. As it was inconceivable that they should pose for men, we must assume that women must also have taken up painting as a profession. The representation of love-scenes also begins gradually to increase, and to acquire importance. The artist continued to do what was required by his patrons, till he ceased to have any patrons at all.

Of the paintings of the court in its splendour the most outstanding is that of Jahāṇgīr's accession by Abul Ḥasan, with the *Gulāb-pāshī* (perfume sprinkling) by Gōvardhan as a close second. However, such subjects, though they provided the opportunity for a lavish display of colour, lacked the dramatic element. This is evident in the hunting scenes, where the artist has taken full advantage of it. In one picture, where Jahāṇgīr is shown as having just shot a lion,

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the fierce clawing of the dying animal, as it rolls on its side, the admiration of two huntsmen, who have not been able to resist the temptation of running to the animal to point out to the emperor where his bullet has lodged, the anxiety of the emperor to get the full measure of applause are all shown with a clarity that vividly reproduces the situation. In another picture, the roles have been reversed. A lion has attacked the emperor's elephant, and is tearing at its body. An attendant, struck with such terror that he forgets his duty, is just about to jump down from the elephant's back, the *mahout*, or driver of the elephant, is crouching, too panic-stricken to move. The emperor sits in the *howdah*, dignified but utterly perplexed. While the dying lion in the first scene is shown in the full light, the shadowy outlines of the attacking lion intensify the feeling of a creeping horror. One is mortally afraid that the emperor will not escape the claws of death[5].

Like the court scenes, the portraits of the great, the emperors and the noblemen, could not have been painted with the freedom which is essential for creative work. They are, therefore, formal if not stiff. The accomplishment in technique, which enabled the artist to show the transparency of cloth or the delicate craftsmanship of the jeweller cannot disguise the fact that he did not dare to interpret the features of his subjects so as to reveal their character. Such portraits belong more properly to the category of still life. But in some sketches and paintings where the artist had not been overawed by the power and wealth of his subject, we find him interpreting character with extraordinary fullness and precision. Among the works of the early period is the sketch of Amīr Shaikh Ḥasan Nōyān, Wālī of Baghdād[6]. He is an old man, riding a horse only a little less old and decayed than he, with a face like the ruins of an empire. An attendant with a falcon adds to the impression of destitution and misery; even the hills that serve as a formal background seem to be disintegrating with age or embarrassment. The *Old Pilgrim* by Nādiruzzamān[7] is a similar interpretation of character from another sphere of life. The pilgrim (*ḥājī*) is supposed to have repented of all his sins, and to have been purified by the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, by the sacrifice, and other rituals connected with the *ḥajj*. But many stories and anecdotes have been current for centuries which insinuate that the *ḥājī* considers himself absolved from all sin and blame, and tries to take full advantage of the fact that he has

[5] Reproductions of these two hunting scenes are given in Percy Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924. Pp. 132 and 134.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

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performed the *ḥajj*. Nādiruzzamān's *Old Pilgrim*, bent with age and toothless, is the personification of hypocrisy, craftiness and a consuming greed. The sketch of a man writing[8] is, again, a frontal attack on the irritability and haughtiness of the learned. The painting of the dying 'Ināyat Khān, an intimate attendant of Jahāṇgīr, is another commentary on the contemporary age, although it was executed within a very short time under the orders of the emperor himself. 'The artist entrusted with the gruesome commission did his work most thoroughly, the glazed eyeballs and the emaciated body plainly indicate that opium had done its worst'[9]. On the other hand, in the painting which depicts the occasion when Tānsēn, the singer whose accomplishment has become a legend, visited Akbar's court for the first time[10], there is an eagerness in the singer's posture, an ecstasy in his countenance, the indication of a relationship between him and the instrument he is just about to play, which reveals the music that is in his nature. Two paintings of *'ulamā* engaged in a discussion[11], apart from being fine examples of portraiture, symbolize the *'ulamā* as possessors of the light of knowledge, and of a sobriety and dignity in keeping with the eminence of their vocation. A critic is all admiration for a painting which shows dervishes dancing in ecstasy, where 'the group of Indian saints (i.e. *ṣūfīs*) seated in a sort of frieze below the scene of the dervishes is of extraordinary beauty'[12]. A contrast to this ecstasy, and 'the finest, the most felt and the most complete of these subjects', is the scene, 'bathed in a tender quietness' in which Shāh Jahān is shown divested of all his pomp, seated reverently on a mat in front of a *ṣūfī*[13].

The paintings of flowers, birds and animals reveal an intense appreciation of nature. Manṣūr excelled in the painting of birds, and his *Turkey Cock*, *Falcon* and *Pheasant*, while being realistic, express the innate qualities of the birds with a surprising lucidity[14]. There is a painting of camels fighting, which represents both the hysterical ferocity and the ludicrous awkwardness of the animals when they abandon their usual attitude of innocence and humility[15]. An exact opposite is the picture by Abul Ḥasan of a pair of oxen drawing a cart. The animals, alert and sprightly, are obviously filled with a festive spirit, which has flowed into their lovely forms. The cart, which is small and exquisitely decorated, is almost alive with move-

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 142 and 177.
[12] Lawrence Binyon, *Court Painters of the Great Mughals*. O.U.P., 1921. P. 61.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[14] Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 145, 146.
[15] W. E. Gladstone Solomon, *Essays in Mughal Art*, O.U.P., 1932, p. 63.

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ment, and organically related to the bulls which draw it[16]. The whole composition has the lilt of a merry song.

III

We have already described how, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Indian Muslims cultivated the taste for music, and began to study Indian music scientifically. As in language, so in music, they sought for self-expression, and made the additions and modifications that were necessary for this purpose. Indian music was a highly developed art, but it was also subject to rules that had become too rigid. Musicians could not make innovations on their own and have them acknowledged as original contributions to their art. However, because of the fortunate accident that many Muslim rulers were themselves not only lovers of music but made a scientific study of it, virtuosos were able to make what were really improvisations in the themes, known as *rāgās*, and get them accepted and recognized as both pleasing and valid. Amīr Khusrau was perhaps the first to inject what might be called the Muslim spirit into Indian music, and this probably took the form of altering the tempo to bring it closer to the natural flow of sentiment. Thus, the ideal of abstract perfection of modulated sequences of sound was modified to make room for a purely personal, emotional element. Names were given to the various methods of improvization, and renderings of each were learnt and handed down from master to pupil, much as the spiritual qualities of the *shaikh* were passed on to his favoured *murīds*. There is even a tradition that, just as the *ṣūfīs* performed the *chilla*, that is, secluded themselves entirely from the world for the sake of uninterrupted devotion to prayer and contemplation, the master-musicians among the Indian Muslims dedicated periods of forty days to the practice of particular variations and improvizations in musical themes.

The Indian propensity to create myths has embodied all musical excellence in Amīr Khusrau and Miyān Tānsēn. Amīr Khusrau, as we have already stated, is the reputed originator of the *khayāl* style, which is believed to have attained its perfect form in the eighteenth century with two singers of Muḥammad Shāh's court, Adā Raṇg and Sadā Raṇg. It is still the most cherished of all styles. Its most eminent exponents have been Muslims and it is regarded as the most outstanding contribution to the development of music. Miyān Tānsēn was a singer of Gwalior whom Akbar brought over to his court. He may have been the genius he is believed to be. But the

[16] N.C. Mehta, *Studies in Indian Painting*. Taraporevala, Bombay, 1926. P. 64.

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Ā'in-i-Akbarī says, 'There are numerous musicians at the court, Hindūs, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions, one for each day of the week. When His Majesty gives the order, they let the wine of harmony flow, and thus increase intoxication in some, sobriety in others'[17]. When so many musicians practised their art together without any religious inhibitions for the pleasure of patrons who were themselves well versed in the art, it was natural that the votaries of music should grow in number and excellence. La'l Khān, son-in-law of Bilās Khan, the son of Miyān Tānsēn, was an illustrious singer of Shāh Jahān's court, and there were others besides him who received titles and presents. We do not know what effect Auraṇgzēb's ban on music had on the cultivation of this art, but we may be sure that there were only a few who shared the Emperor's prejudice. The *Rāg Darpan* was written in 1665-6, in Auraṇgzēb's reign, and the *Muraqqa'-i-Dilhi* bears ample evidence to the fact that music was a rage of the time, and all those with any pretensions to culture were expected to understand and appreciate it, if they could not acquire proficiency in some branch of it themselves.

IV

Products of Indian craftsmanship of the Mughal period grace many museums of the world and are easily distinguishable because of their unique aesthetic qualities. These were due probably to the grafting of Turkish and Persian taste on Indian technique, and to an insistence on the exquisite. Turkish and Persian taste implied preference for certain shapes, patterns and materials; insistence on the exquisite was a characteristic we observe also in other arts. There was also a multiplication of requirements due to the urban background of the Muslims and the traditional magnificence of Iran under the Sassanians and of Baghdād under the 'Abbāsis. Indian techniques were seldom changed or improved upon. A study of the technical terms of the various crafts shows that very few came from abroad, while among the products a number have only Arabic, Persian and Turkish names or Hindī names also besides these[18]. In cotton textiles the names of the tools and processes as well as the products are all Hindī, in silk manufacture, the tools and processes have mainly Hindī, the products mainly Arabic or Persian names.

[17] Abul Faḍl, *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*. Blochmann's translation, p. 681.

[18] This opinion is based on the technical terms and names given in M. Ẓafarur Raḥman's *Iṣṭilāḥāt-i-Pēshahwarāṇ*, published by the Anjuman Taraqqī Urdū, Delhi, 1940, in five volumes. But the matter requires much deeper study than has been possible for the author.

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Wool and mixed wool and silk products—blanket, shawl, varieties of cloth—have non-Indian names. Carpets woven with cotton thread have Indian names, and they are generally small in size, being used mainly as seats or for lying on. Carpets of wool and silk have Turkish and Persian names. In metal work, because of the Hindū prejudice against the use of copper utensils and against all utensils with spouts, the Muslim contribution by way of forms and functions has been large. All types of wash-basins and vessels with spouts are Muslim in origin, so are all varieties of spittoons. The usual word for box in north India is Arabic—*ṣandūq*—which possibly indicates that before the Muslims came boxes were not in common use. In jewellery, on the other hand, most names are Indian or translations or adaptations of Indian names. Tailored clothes were worn either seldom or not at all before the settlement of the Muslims[19], and the names of most tailored articles of clothing are of Muslim origin. Tailored caps and articles made of leather were introduced by the Muslims. We have thus an assimilation of tastes, techniques and forms on a large scale, and the more closely the subject is studied the more obvious will it become how the Indian Muslims enriched industry and crafts.

The most significant change was the multiplication of wants, the demand for manufactured goods for a large variety of uses. Muslim religion and culture militated against hoarding and exercised almost irresistible pressure in favour of display, use and, necessarily, waste. Muslim women wore gold ornaments on the feet—which Hindū women avoid. Muslims used gold and silver plates and utensils, and gold and silver leaf for the decoration of eatables, thus consuming what in all amounted to a considerable quantity of precious metals as food. Hindū beliefs and social forms reduced the cooking utensils and plates and dishes to the minimum that could be kept ritualistically—and actually—clean; Muslim culture made the manufacture and utilization of a number of cooking utensils of large sizes necessary, because the entertainment of guests was a social duty. There were in almost every city kitchens where cooked food was distributed

[19] There are examples in the sculpture, painting and coinage of the pre-Muslim period of figures in tailored clothes. But the far larger number of figures have clothing draped around them. The references in literature of the pre-Muslim period do not clarify the position. (See, e.g. G. S. Ghūriye, *Indian Costume*. Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1951; Jamīla Brij Bhūshan, *Costumes and Textiles of India*. Taraporevala, Bombay, 1958; and Dr Mōtī Chandra, *Prachīn Bhāratīya Vēsha Bhūsha*. Bhāratīya Bhanḍār, Prayāg, 1950). It cannot probably be disputed that tailored clothing was not *generally* used before the Muslims settled in India. Brahmins do not wear tailored clothing even now when officiating at worship in the temples, because of a long-standing prohibition. On the other hand, the law requires the Muslims to keep the head, the chest and back, the upper arms and the legs up to the ankles covered during prayer.

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free to the poor. The process of tinning was introduced by the Muslims, and a large variety of copper utensils could be used without fear of poisoning. China plates and spoons began to be manufactured very early, and the poor used utensils, plates, drinking bowls etc. of local clay. Even the poorest Muslims did not use leaves for serving food, a practice which is not unusual even now among the Hindūs, particularly in the south.

Toilet requisites—dressing-cases, perfume-boxes, jewel-boxes—were made of gold, silver, copper, ivory, sandalwood and rose-wood, and every woman had her favourite size and shape for the *pān-dān*, or betel-nut casket. In fact, the result of the industrial revolution, which came towards the end of this period, was to reduce the number and variety of manufactured products used in the Indian household, not to increase them.

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CHAPTER XVII

SOCIAL LIFE

In a previous chapter we reviewed the social life of the Indian Muslims with the year 1350 as our observation post. The Delhi Sultanate had then been in existence for about 150 years. By the end of the century, the Sultanate split up into several provincial kingdoms, and Delhi was ravaged and destroyed by Timur in 1398-9. Immediately preceding and following this catastrophe, there was a large exodus of people, and Delhi sank to the level of a poor provincial town. But this meant a diffusion of culture, and the loss to Delhi was an almost corresponding enrichment of the capitals of the successor states and other cities. These states were the dominant factor in Indian life for over a century and a half. The year 1600, when Akbar had ruled for about forty-four years, appears to be the next suitable point for a survey of social conditions. By 1750, the Mughal Empire had declined and the political system broken down completely. That will be the time for a concluding review of social life during this period.

There was, in principle, no change in the basic pattern of life and thought between 1350 and 1600. Theoretically that was inevitable, as the framework of the *sharī'ah* was believed to have been made for all time. The Mahdawī movement, we have seen, was a call to live more strictly and positively in conformity with the higher principles of the *sharī'ah*. The result was the formation of a sect, instead of a general reform, but it was an obvious indication of one direction in which people's minds were moving. It is also clear that this was a reaction to what was happening of itself—sophistication, fastidiousness, concentration of thought and resources on the means of achieving greater comfort and aesthetic satisfaction. Social life followed its inherent tendencies without any intellectual or moral control or direction. We can, for the moment, sum up the position by saying that while all the virtues and vices of the earlier period remained, many of them were overshadowed by affluence, refinement and sophistication.

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As before, courts and courtiers exercised great influence. Under the Sultanate, side by side with the virtues which he was expected to possess, the ruler was a harsh dispenser of justice, seldom caring to disguise his power to inflict death. In the succeeding period, with which we are now concerned, there were intrigues, conspiracies and rebellions. These were punished, and sometimes suspects and guilty persons received quite inhuman treatment. But with the establishment of small kingdoms with limited resources, the image of the ruler very largely lost its terrifying aspect. The feeling of insecurity created by the Mongol raids had also vanished. A distinction began to be made, in practice if not in theory, between major and minor offences, and the infliction of the maximum punishment was no longer considered the only wise policy. Because of the reduction in the size of the states during a part of this period, rulers could not remain hidden or aloof from their people. They did not have to use the support of the people to counterbalance the nobility, like the European monarchs of this period, but they won the loyalty of the people because only they could control the administration and its officers and prevent or remedy injustice. We do not know if the fame of such monarchs as Zain al-'Ābidīn (1420-1470) of Kashmīr and Maḥmūd Bēgharā (1458-1511) of Gujarāt spread outside their kingdoms, but there can be no doubt that within their dominions they were both known and loved. The Lōdīs (1451-1526) were Paṯhāns, among whom the free and democratic spirit of the tribe was still fresh. Unfortunately, instead of democratizing political life, the Paṯhān tribal chiefs made it obvious through their conduct that the monarch would have to choose between despotism and ineffectiveness. Shēr Shāh may be regarded as the ideal Paṯhān ruler, while Akbar created precedents for a most praiseworthy addition to the virtues which a ruler was expected to possess—magnanimity towards the erring and the vanquished. This was not all. Akbar introduced an element of personal affection and regard in his relations with his officers and advisers. He was intimate with them and invited them to share his fears and sorrows, his hopes and aspirations, his serious business as well as his amusements. Many stories of wit and wisdom with Akbar and Bīr Bal (or Bīr Bar) as the chief figures have been current among the people, though hardly any could be regarded as genuine history. But there are historical anecdotes which illustrate the new atmosphere of the court perhaps even more strikingly than legends.

> 'It is related that once Ḥaḍrat 'Arsh Āshiyānī (the Emperor Akbar) was enjoying the breeze along the side of the tank at Fatḥpūr Sīkrī towards the close of the day. He had come by him-

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self out of a meeting (*jirgah*) of the *amīrs* and proceeded towards the tank, holding Shahbāz Khān's hand. Shahbāz Khān looked every now and then at the sun, fearing that the time for (the *'asr*) prayer would pass. The Emperor was all the while talking to him with royal graciousness. . . . Ḥakīm Abul Fatḥ and Ḥakīm 'Alī (who had been present at the meeting and were now looking on) said among themselves, "If Shahbāz Khān does not allow the time for prayer to pass, we shall become his disciples, for we shall know then that he is pious by nature; but if he is puffed up because of the favour being shown to him by His Majesty and misses his prayer, he will have proved himself a mere imitator in religion, and we shall give up talking to him". It so happened that when Shahbāz Khān saw that the time for prayer was passing, he reminded the Emperor about it in all humility. The Emperor said, "Let it go; don't leave me alone". But the Khān released his hand, spread his kerchief (*dupaṭṭā*) on the ground, and began to pray with all earnestness and fervour. After prayer, in accordance with his established routine, he sat facing the Ka'bah and began telling his rosary (*tasbīḥ*). The Emperor kept on nudging him, asking him to get up, but he remained absorbed in his devotions. Ḥakīm Abul Fatḥ said (to those standing around), "This man has given piety its due. Now he is being harassed; we must relieve him". He came forward with the other *amīrs* and said, "Cynosure of all eyes, may Heaven preserve you! It is not fair or pleasing to bestow all your favours on this man alone. Your other slaves also expect a share of your royal graciousness". The Emperor left Shahbāz Khān and went towards the other *amīrs*'[1].

Akbar's towering personality disguised the fact that the highest dignitaries in the state, who were as often as not connected with the royal family by marriage, could live in a style almost as splendid as that of the Emperor himself. A figure of Akbar's and Jahāṇgīr's days, who came to be regarded as the archetype of munificence, was Mirzā 'Abdur Raḥīm Khān Khānāṇ. His father was Bairam Khān, Akbar's guardian and for some time all-powerful vizier (*Wakīl-i-sulṭanat*), his mother was the daughter of Ḥasan Khān Mēwātī. He was thus half Mughal and, if it is true that the Mēwātīs are Rājpūts, half Rājpūt. In 1560, Bairam Khān was murdered near Patan in Gujarāt, when on his way to Mecca. 'Abdur Raḥīm, then four years old, was saved with great difficulty. Akbar was deeply grieved when he heard of this tragedy, and asked that 'Abdur Raḥīm and the ladies of Bairam Khān's family be brought to their court. He took

[1] Shaikh Farīd Bhakkarī, *Dhakhīrah al-Khawānīn*. Edited by S. Mo'inul Haqq, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 1961. Vol. I, pp. 159-60.

charge of 'Abdur Raḥīm's education, and the boy's talents were provided the fullest opportunities for development. He soon became noted for his tact, his excellent manners, his literary gifts and his worldy wisdom. He rose in honour and esteem and was given his first major assignment, that of suppressing a revolt and restoring order in Gujarāt, in 1584, shortly after he had been appointed tutor to the heir-apparent, Prince Salīm. His success in Gujarāt earned him the title of Khān Khānān. In 1589, he was sent to Sind, to deal with another rebellion. Having fulfilled this assignment also with credit, he was sent to the Deccan, where fresh territory was being acquired, and spent over thirty years there. Towards the end, Khān Khānāṇ and many other dignitaries were placed in an embarrassing position by the conflict between Jahāṇgīr and his son Khurram; Khān Khānān was deprived of his title and was under surveillance for some time, but finally he recovered the confidence of Jahāṇgīr. He was given command of the forces to be sent against Mahābat Khān, who was his bitterest and most successful rival, but he died before he could take up the command.

Traditions, more or less confirmed by history, have endowed Khān Khānān with an incredible munificence. The possessor of enormous wealth, he dispensed gifts with a lavishness and grace that kings might envy. After his final victory in Gujarāt, he gave away everything that he had, except the elephants. Then a soldier came to him and complained that he had been overlooked. There was nothing else within reach, so Khān Khānān gave him his ornamental inkstand. In the Deccan, after the successful conclusion of a series of hazardous engagements, he danced on the battlefield, and distributed all that he had among his soldiers. When he removed his camp, it was found that all his remaining possessions amounted to no more than two camel-loads. Later, Akbar asked Khān Khānaṇ's daughter, Jānāṇ Bēgam, how much had been given away, and she replied that her father had about 7,500,000 rupees in cash. Khān Khānāṇ was equally imaginative in his gifts to individuals, in particular to poets. Mullā Nau'ī was given his weight in gold coins; Mullā Ḥayātī was taken to the treasury and asked to carry away as much money as he could; Mullā Shauqī was also taken to the treasury and asked to fill the lapel of his cloak with gold coins and, as he was then wearing a light cotton cloak, the lapel of which would not bear the weight of many coins, he was also presented with a woollen cloak. Mullā Naẓīrī Fāḍilī wondered what a lakh of rupees would look like if placed in a heap; the money was heaped up and then given to him[2]. Rewards of a thousand rupees or

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 31 ff.

mohurs[3] to poets were normal events of assemblies in which odes in praise of Khān Khānān were recited. The poets, on their part, thought no praise too extravagant, so long as it was different from what others had said. Mullā Shaidā'ī Taklū exceeded the limits not only of hyperbole but of discretion:

> The personality of Khān Khānāṇ in India
> Is like the House of Ka'bah in the wilderness[4].

Apart from occasional rewards, poets were given monthly allowances that relieved them from all worldly cares. But poets were far from being the only accomplished persons to benefit from Khān Khānāṇ's patronage. The *Ma'āthir-i-Raḥīmī* gives a list of outstanding scholars, story-tellers, musicians, singers, painters, calligraphists, illuminators of manuscripts, bookbinders, specialists in the manufacture of particular weapons, *qārīs*[5] who received handsome allowances from him or were employed by him in his library[6]. He was a judge of excellence far easier to approach than the king, and anyone who was a master of his art felt himself entitled to Khān Khānāṇ's recognition. History and legend have preserved accounts of his large-heartedness and discernment which compel admiration. Once, it is related, Jahāṇgīr was practising archery with Khān Khānāṇ and other nobles standing by. A jester (*bhāt*) annoyed Jahāṇgīr with his silly remarks, and Jahāṇgīr ordered him to be thrown under the feet of an elephant. The jester pleaded that he was too insignificant for such punishment. He could be crushed to death by a mouse or a sparrow. It was great men like Khan Khānāṇ who should be thrown under the feet of elephants. Jahāṇgīr turned towards Khān Khānāṇ to see how he had taken this remark, and found him whispering to one of his attendants. On being asked what he was saying, he replied that His Majesty's graciousness had raised him, a person of no consequence, to a position where he could be called a great man. He had thanked God for this and asked his attendant to give the jester five thousand rupees as soon as His Majesty had forgiven his offence. The jester's life was saved and he got a reward for the exercise of his wit, in spite of the possible dangerous consequences to Khān Khānāṇ himself. But this was not the only occasion when he showed generosity in an unexpected fashion. He is reported to have rewarded a man for having thrown

[3] Also called *ashrafīs*. The *mohur* was a gold coin, whose value fluctuated with the price of gold.

[4] 'Abdul Bāqī Nahāwandī, *Ma'athir-i-Raḥīmī*. Bibliotheca Indica Series, Vol. III, p. 1488.

[5] One who has mastered the art of recitation, usually of the Qur'ān.

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 1698 ff.

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a stone at him, on the ground that stones are thrown at trees laden with fruit, and the man was in reality paying him a high compliment. The fame which Khān Khānān earned by these open and unexpected acts of generosity did not satisfy him, and it is related that, in addition to what he gave publicly, he went around at night, secretly and in disguise, to the houses of poor men whose self-respect would not allow them to beg, and relieved their distress. Khān Khānān no doubt had his faults. During his last years he got involved in intrigues and he was so anxious to hear the gossip of the court that, apart from his official representatives, he employed spies to send regular reports to him. But we must remember that a person in his position had to deal with malicious and intriguing rivals, and the wonder is that he was able to maintain his balance and his general attitude of goodwill, not that he lost it now and then.

Versatility was an essential qualification for advancement in the Mughal court. Khān Khānān was a handsome man and his manners were charming. But he established his position first through his literary ability. He not only mastered Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Hindī. There was hardly anyone in the court who could draft letters, *farmāns* and requests better than he, and among his first literary achievements was a translation of the *Tuzuk-i-Bābarī* from the original Chaghatāī into Persian. His writings in Hindī are a classic of that language; his Persian *ghazals* and quartrains, though few, are exquisite[7]. And with all this literary ability, he was brave enough as a soldier to win the admiration of the bravest. It was this quality which enabled him to command the loyalty of men like Miyān Daulat Khān Lōdī Shāhū Khail, Miyān Fahīm, Shaikh 'Abdus Salām, who were noted for their dauntless courage. He engaged the enemy in his first big battle in Gujarāt in spite of directions from Akbar to await reinforcements, because Miyān Daulat Khān Lōdī told him that it was better to die fighting than to live unhonoured and unknown. On another occasion, during a critical moment in a battle against heavy odds, when Daulat Khān asked him where he would be found in case the battle was lost and a retreat necessary, he replied that they should look for him under some heap of the dead on the battlefield. Daulat Khān reported this to the army commanders and the battle was won[8].

Equally typical of this age was Rājah Mān Singh of Ambēr. His family risked loss of caste among the Rājpūt princes because of his aunt being given in marriage to Akbar, and one of his half-sisters being given to Akbar's son Salīm—later the Emperor Jahāngīr. He and his father built a Jāmi' Masjid at Lahore, and mosques and

[7] They have all been reproduced in the *Ma'āthir-i-Rahīmī*, Vol. II, p. 560 ff.
[8] Shaikh Farīd Bhakkarī, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 44.

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ḥammāms at several places where Muslims could bathe and then offer prayers. All the Muslims in his service were expected to pray regularly, the call to prayer being given at the appropriate times, and those who neglected their prayers were dismissed from service. But the Rājah was a staunch Hindū. Once, when on his way to take up the governorship of Bengal and Orissa, he went to pay his respects to Quṭub al-Aqṭāb Shāh Daulat at Monghyr. 'He said to the Rajah, "With all this intelligence which you possess, why do you not become a Muslim?" The Rājah replied, "You say yourself that in the Holy Qur'ān it has been intimated, 'Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their ears and upon their eyes'. If you have any access to God, please put in a request in His court of Generosity that the seal of hard-heartedness put upon me may be broken, and that I should feel drawn towards the religion of Islām. (If that happens) I shall become a Muslim forthwith. I propose to stay a month in this city, and that will be the time-limit". As it had not been written in the Book of Destiny that this should happen, the Rājah did not become a Muslim'[9].

Religion did not make any difference to the Rājah's position in the court and among the dignitaries of the realm. He was given the titles of Mirzā Rājah and Farzand (son), and was the first *manṣabdar* to be given the rank of Seven Thousand[10]. He was entrusted with the education of Mirzā 'Abdur Raḥīm, and fixed allowances for the two sons that were born to the Mirzā while he was in his charge. These allowances were not discontinued till the sons had grown up and joined the imperial service. Some years after joining service the young men, just to tease the Rājah, whom they called 'grandfather', asked him why he had stopped their allowance. The Rājah at once had the amount that would have been given to them calculated and paid. In other ways also, the Rājah was an example. During a campaign in the Deccan, when there was scarcity of grain, he said to Khān-i-Jahāṇ, the governor of the province, and the other commanders: 'If I were a Muslim, I would have invited you to at least one meal a day, as I am the only one among you with a white beard; now at least allow me to offer you the price of a *pān* daily'. Khān-i-Jahāṇ placed his hand on his head and said, 'I shall be the first to accept'. The other commanders also agreed with pleasure. Thereafter each received daily according to his rank a gift of money and sacks of grain, the provision and transport of which from Ambēr to the front had already been organized by Mān Singh's chief Rānī, and the arrangement worked most efficiently[11].

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-110.
[10] Abul Faḍl, *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, pp. 361-3.
[11] Shaikh Farīd Bhakkarī, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-110.

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Khān Khānān and Mān Singh were in many ways exceptional, and it cannot be denied that among their immediate predecessors, contemporaries and juniors there were men who rose to equally high positions, but who had none of their culture and were, as men, jealous and quarrelsome, cruel and ungrateful, niggardly and incompetent, treacherous and vindictive. Akbar had to deal with them in such a way as to make use of their talents for the service of the state, without creating the impression that their undesirable qualities had also been helpful in their career. Apparently he succeeded in the vast majority of cases. His successors, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Auraṇgzēb were not men of the same stature, but they followed the same policy in their dealings with their ministers, advisers and other officers. We may describe this as a benevolent neutrality combined with such appreciation of special aptitudes as would inspire and strengthen the belief that a successful career depended essentially upon merit. Jahāṇgīr was animated with a genuine desire for efficient government, and he was a shrewd judge of men, though he was a poor administrator, and his addiction to drink ruined his health. But no one among the rulers, and very few among the poets and writers of India have had as keen an eye as Jahāṇgīr for the beauty of nature, for birds and flowers and gardens, and as sensitive a mind for the effects of environment and atmosphere. Akbar had initiated the art of painting; Jahāṇgīr became a connoisseur. As we can distinguish persons by their voices and mannerisms, he could distinguish the works of painters not only by looking at whole pictures but at lines and colours in a picture, and he claimed that if a number of artists worked together on one canvas, he would be able to point out their respective contributions with the fullest ease and confidence. On hearing that one of his courtiers, 'Ināyat Khān, was dying, he went to see him, and observing the peculiar effects of drink and opium-eating on 'Ināyat Khān's face, he directed the court artists to paint the dying man at once. The result was a masterpiece. His Memoirs are a classic, a most pleasing contrast to the verbose circumlocution of official documents and such works as the *Akbarnāmah*. He was also a good judge of poetry. He did not have his father's inquisitive mind, but he was equally irritated by fanaticism. He and his Empress, Nūr Jahān, though different from each other in many ways, are an example of understanding and companionship which is rare even among those who do not face the ordeal of being surrounded by courtiers and sitting upon a throne.

Shāh Jahāṇ was an able administrator. 'Not only was he liberal in rewarding and prompt in chastizing the great; he was equally grateful in every matter, even the smallest. It happened that one

day on his way to hunt he became separated from his men. Worn out and very thirsty, he went into a village lying on the king's highway from Āgrah to Dihlī, and arrived at a hamlet where as a charity a Brahman was giving water to the wayfarers. The king came up to him and requested him to give him water. The Brahman, seeing that Shāh Jahāṇ was drinking greedily owing to his great thirst, threw into the vessel a little grass, thereby forcing him to drink more slowly. The king in anger asked him why he had put in the grass. The Brahman, not knowing to whom he was speaking, said, 'It is what I do to my asses when they are tired, so that they may not get colic pains'. The king took rest at the edge of the village, beneath a tree. When his retinue arrived, the Brahman, recognizing that it was the king, prostrated himself on the spot and asked for pardon. But Shāh Jahāṇ rewarded him with a gift of the said village, which at this day is known as the 'Brahman's village'[12].

Shāh Jahāṇ possessed his father's eye for beauty, but his main interest was architecture and the jeweller's art. The Jami' Masjid at Delhi and the Taj Mahal are the creations of an aesthetic sense that had been rapidly developing and fulfilled itself in a perfect synthesis of architecture, painting and poetry.

When the highest had been attained, a decline was inevitable. We are not concerned here with art but with social life, in which a concept of excellence had been realized almost to the limit. The relations of the Emperor and the *amīrs* and of the *amīrs* among themselves were governed by an elaborate etiquette that prescribed all the details of conduct. Everyone knew what was expected of him when a visitor arrived, when there was a festivity of any kind or an occasion of sorrow in his family or in the family of a fellow-officer. He knew what to do when he arrived at a place and when he left; where and when he should go in person, where he should send a representative. If the general rule was not followed, it indicated some definite meaning. If, for instance, an officer on his way to the court stopped at a town where there were one or more officers of almost equal rank, and they sent a representative instead of visiting him in person, it showed that they knew he had fallen from favour; if they took no notice of his arrival, he would understand that the emperor suspected him of disloyalty or some other serious offence. Elaborate forms of address were evolved in which the truth, pleasant or unpleasant, could be discovered by the discerning, but in which nothing discourteous could be detected. In Akbar's days this etiquette had the freshness and the sincerity of a new way of life, almost of a faith. Under Jahāṇgīr and Shāh Jahāṇ it matured, and

[12] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*. Translation by W. Irvine. John Murray, London, 1907. Vol. I, p. 214.

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may be regarded as having attained its climax in the mystic aspirations of Dārā Shikōh. This prince had many faults, most of which arose out of his inability to face difficult situations. He was weak, incompetent and irritable, unable to control others or himself. But we are not judging him here as a politician or an administrator. What he represents socially is the culmination of that understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims of which Akbar laid the foundation and which led to the creation of a mixed governing class with a common code of behaviour. This understanding reached its highest point symbolically in Dārā Shikōh's translation of the *Upanishads* and in Shaikh Muḥibbullāh Allāhābādī's verdict that a ruler who believed in a Prophet called 'the Blessing for All Humanity' could not discriminate between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. The translation of the *Upanishads* was not due to literary curiosity, like the translations of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* and other works of Sanskrit literature made in Akbar's time and earlier; it was the result of a passionate search for truth, and Dārā Shikōh must have felt that in the *Upanishads* the goal, 'the Confluence of the two Oceans' had been reached.

The next step could be a step forward, under the stimulus of a firm belief in the unity of all existence. If that step forward was not taken, there was bound to be a reaction. We cannot affirm with any confidence that the Muslim and the Hindū communities were mentally prepared for the step forward, and if Dārā Shikōh had succeeded against Auraṇgzēb he may still have failed to achieve 'the Confluence of the Oceans' because of the unwillingness of the oceans to flow into the channel made for them. It is, therefore, unfair to make a single person, even though it happened to be the rigidly orthodox Emperor Auraṇgzēb, responsible for the disintegration of an empire and the collapse of a social and cultural system. In fact, the social and cultural system survived the empire by over a century, and the concept of cultural unity remained till long after the possibility and the desire for political unity had vanished. Auraṇgzēb may have reimposed the *jizyah*, but Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh did not receive less honour in his reign than Rājā Mān Singh under Akbar. Among the Muslim ministers Ja'far Khān represented, as well as anyone before him, the standards of culture and refinement that distinguished the dignitaries of the empire.

Ja'far Khān was closely associated with the royal family, but was not close enough to be dangerous. When his father, Ṣādiq Khān, who was Mīr Bakhshī, died, Shāh Jahāṇ sent Auraṇgzēb to offer condolences to the bereaved family. Soon after, Ja'far Khān was called to the court and given employment. He rose steadily in rank and esteem under Shāh Jahāṇ and, when the monarch fell ill and a

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civil war was in the offing, sided with Auraṇgzēb. He became the chief minister or, as Manucci says, chief secretary to the Emperor in 1663, and held that office till his death in 1669.

'He was the man of all those at court who made the greatest show and was most judicious in dealing with people.' 'He had also a great and generous mind, and no occasion escaped him of giving proof of it'[13]. 'He was so civil and courteous that he addressed everybody as "Sir", and he was incapable of displaying anger. He was very polished, and his purity might be called a fetish. He declined to listen to coarse language in any shape'[14]. He was incredibly rich and incredibly fastidious; he had the best of everything. Once Auraṇgzēb wanted a certain kind of fine cloth for the women of palace, and the stock of it in the royal store fell short of the total quantity required by a few pieces. As it was a rare type of cloth, there was none available in the market. Ja'far Khān was asked if he could make up the deficiency. On enquiring from the manager of his household, he found that there were 1000 pieces of that cloth in his stock, and he made a gift of 100 pieces to the Emperor. He was, of course, very generous with the poor. Once, when he returned home, he found a poor Persian at his gate, who asked him for help. He sent word to his wife, Farzānah Bēgam, asking her for 10,000 rupees. She refused to send them. Ja'far Khān went to her chamber, where she was lying half-asleep. He quietly took one of her slippers, which was worth 50,000 rupees, and gave it to the Persian. When Farzānah Bēgam got up and found one of her slippers missing, there was an outcry, and then Ja'far Khān told her he had given away her slipper because she had refused to give him what he asked for. The Begam had no choice now but to redeem her slipper for 10,000 rupees[15].

Ja'far Khān's fastidiousness was even more famous than his wealth. The Qāḍī of Dhār had heard that he was very fond of fine, white cloth. He got many pieces of what he considered to be a very expensive variety woven and embroidered in the *jāmēwār* style, and brought them as a present. Ja'far Khān looked at the cloth and said it was a poor specimen of the weaver's art. The Qāḍī was intelligent enough to understand what he meant and said at once that the stuff was not for clothing but for spreading on the floor as *chāṇdnī*[16].

[13] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 416-7.
[14] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 156.
[15] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 416.
[16] Nūr Jahān is believed to have introduced the custom of using white cloth for spreading on the floor because carpets were expensive, and people who could not afford them could thus safeguard their respectability. The white cloth, called *chāṇdnī* (moonlight), became the fashion and is still used. It is generally spread over a cheap carpet or mattress of some kind.

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Ja'far Khān was very pleased and immediately ordered *chaṇdnīs* to be made out of it. His sensitiveness to smell was extraordinary. Once he ate a melon called *hinduāna*. He liked it very much but said it smelt of fish. On investigation it was found that the melon had been brought from the Kōṇkan, on the Western coast, where fish was used as manure[17]. It is not surprising that such a man had his horses rubbed with rose-water every day. He found even the mention of an evil-smelling place unbearable. While examining the plans of a palace he proposed to build, he asked about the purpose of a certain part of the building. The architect told him that it was for the privies. 'Whereupon he held his nostrils with his right hand and puckering up his face, made a sign with the left hand to take the plan away, as if it smelt merely through having the painting on it'[18].

Bernier has made much of the fact that India had no hereditary aristocracy. 'The Omrahs (*amīrs*) of Hindustan cannot be proprietors of land or enjoy an independent revenue, like the nobility of France and other states of Christendom. Their income consists exclusively of pensions which the king grants or takes away, according to his own will and pleasure. When deprived of this pension, they sink into utter insignificance and find it impossible to borrow even the smallest sum'.[19]. It is for this reason, he says, that the Emperor 'is surrounded by slaves, ignorant and brutal, by parasites raised from the dregs of society, strangers to loyalty and patriotism, full of insufferable pride and destitute of courage, of honour, and of decency.'[20]. This is obviously an overstatement of the case for a hereditary aristocracy. The Mughal *manṣabdār*, like the modern civil servant, was a paid officer without any proprietary rights in his office. But more importance was attached to birth and ancestral profession than would now be considered justifiable. In the *Ā'īn*, Abul Faḍl has written almost in the spirit of a believer in the caste system.

> 'The political constitution becomes well-tempered by a proper division of ranks, and by means of the warmth of the ray of unanimity and concord, a multitude of people become fused into one body. . . . The people of the world may be divided into four classes—warriors . . . artificers and merchants . . . the learned . . . husbandmen and labourers. . . . By their exertions, the staple of life is brought to perfection. It is, therefore, obligatory for a king

[17] Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 531 ff.
[18] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 156.
[19] Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*. A. Constable, Westminster, 1891. P. 65.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

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to put each of these in its proper place, and by uniting personal ability with the respect for others, to cause the world to flourish'[21].

What we notice in fact, as against this theory, is a rather undue regard for the Sayyid, and an actual division into foreign and Indian Muslim officers, with a partiality, not as pronounced as under the Sultanate, for foreigners, who attained high office sooner than the Indian-born. 'But this advancement through special favour proceeds slowly, for it is almost an invariable custom to pass gradually from small salaries and inconsiderable offices to situations of greater trust and emolument'[21a]. This was a rational and just practice, and shows the soundness of the system. But the officers were jealous of each other, specially at the highest level; and they were most of them 'in embarrassed circumstances, and deeply in debt' because of the 'costly presents made to the king at certain annual festivals', and by their establishments of wives, servants, camels and horses[22].

It was not only the officers and the dignitaries of the kingdom who carried the burden of 'wives, servants, camels and horses'. The heaviest load was borne by the Emperor himself. But it was no longer like a sack bearing the royal seal whose contents it was irreverent and dangerous even to guess. Though as closely guarded as ever, the 'wives' of the Mughal court acquired somewhat the quality of living persons. This quality had no background. The Pathāns, who were proud of their women, did not grant them any rights. After Bahlōl Lōdī's death, when one of his queens called the chiefs together to plead for her son, Niẓām Khān, she was roundly abused by one of the older men for being a goldsmith's daughter. The queens in the provincial kingdoms did not have any better chance of recognition. Ghiyāthuddīn of Māndū, who was either a variety of male that is fortunately very rare or just a pervert, collected women with passionate zeal for his project of having a city consisting entirely of women, porters, potters, cultivators, weavers, goldsmiths, merchants, and a number of women consumers large enough to keep these producers and distributors of goods occupied. Once the king's agents forcibly abducted the daughter of a respectable person. He lodged a complaint and the king apologized, but neither was sufficiently shocked to undo what had been done. The Bahmanī king Fīrūz was also notorious for his fondness for women, and fought a war with the neighbouring state of Vijayanagar to secure possession of a goldsmith's lovely daughter. The Mughal Emperors were not fundamentally different from their predecessors.

[21] Abul Faḍl, *A'īn-i-Akbarī*, p. 4. Blochmann's translation is not quite literal.
[21a] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Their code was based on a compartmentalization of sentiment, and the intensity of their affection for a particular queen does not seem to have been reduced by their relations with other women. It also happened that the royal family produced ladies of remarkable character and personality. Humāyūṇ's sister, Gulbadan Bēgam, Akbar's mother, Ḥamīdah Bānō, his wife, Salīmah Sulṭān, Jahāṇgīr's queen, Nūr Jahāṇ, Shāh Jahān's queen, Mumtāz Maḥal, his daughter, Jahāṇ Ārā, dominated the court. Nūr Jahāṇ was for some years joint ruler with Jahāṇgīr. The chief lady of the palace kept the Emperor's private seal; Jahāṇ Ārā was keeper of this seal for over thirty years. Chānd Sulṭānah of Aḥmadnagar is mentioned among the notable women of India, but she was in the limelight for a very short time. Several ladies of the Mughal court exercised a stronger influence for a much longer period.

There were no continuous contacts between the ladies of the palace and the wives of even the most exalted dignitaries, except when these happened themselves to belong to the royal family[23]. It would be interesting to speculate as to whether the palace ladies influenced the women outside more or those outside the inmates of the palace, but the historical material is inadequate to make such speculation yield results. Akbar organized fancy bazars in the palace once a month, to which merchants brought rare and precious goods. The ladies of the *ḥaram* came to these bazars, and 'the women of other men' were also invited. There was much buying and selling and general enjoyment, so that the occasion was called *Khushrōz*, or joyful day. After the fancy bazars for women, bazars for men were held[24]. Badāyūnī has, of course, put another interpretation. 'In order to direct another blow at the honour of our religion, His Majesty ordered that the stalls of the fancy bazars, which are held on New Year's Day should, for a stated time, be given up for the enjoyment of the *bēgams* and the women of the *ḥaram*, and also for any other married ladies. On such occasions, His Majesty spent much money, and the important affairs of the *ḥaram* people, marriage contracts and betrothals of boys and girls were arranged at such meetings'[25]. It was probably on some such occasion that Jahaṇgir first noticed the personality and charm of Nūr Jahān. She was then a widow and thirty-four years old, but he married her. But we may assume that it would have been tactless of women who did not want their family life to be disturbed, to give the ladies of the palace any reason to talk about their dress and other attractions.

[23] An account of how men were received and physicians consulted is given in Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 352 ff.

[24] Abul Faḍl, *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, pp. 286-7.

[25] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 339.

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What about the morals of the court? These could not be talked about or questioned[26]. Akbar had his own ideas regarding the behaviour proper to women. He did not like the practice of their riding on horseback, but could not abolish it. Auraṇgzēb was a puritan for the rest of the world, but one of his wives, Zainābādī Bēgam, almost made him drink, and another, 'Udaipūrī Bēgam was, if Manucci is to be believed, herself habitually drunk. Manucci relates another story which, even if not true in fact, has a symbolic significance. Auraṇgzēb once ordered that no lady of the palace should drink or wear a kind of tight trousers that were becoming a fashion, probably among the courtesans. Evidently the ladies of the palace did not like it. So Jahāṇ Ārā Bēgam invited a number of the wives of the most eminent *'ulamā*. They naturally came dressed according to the latest fashion, and accepted the wine offered to them. Soon they got drunk and lay down pell-mell on the floor. Then Jahāṇ Ārā brought in Auraṇgzēb, and asked him whether it was fair to forbid the ladies of the palace what was permissible for the wives of those who were guardians of the *sharī'ah*[27].

The Emperor did not have any more success with his chief minister.

> 'This man used to drink his drop of liquor, and on this account Aurangzēb, as a strict Mussalmān, caused him to be spoken to several times, and in the end spoke to him himself, saying that it was not a fit thing for the first minister in a kingdom of the faithful to drink wine, he being under obligation to set a good example. Ja'far Khān replied that he was an old man, without strength in his hands or firmness in his feet, had little sight in his eyes and was very poor. By drinking wine he got sight for seeing, power for wielding the pen in the service of His Majesty, felt strength in his feet to run to court when His Majesty called, and seemed in imagination to become rich. For these reasons he drank. . . . Aurangzēb laughed at this speech . . . and Ja'far Khān kept to his old habit'[28].

As everywhere else in the world, and almost at all times, fashions in dress and conversation and the whole art of pleasing were set by

[26] Akbar saw the wife of one of his officers, 'Abdul Wāsi' Khān. She was a very beautiful woman, and he fell in love with her. 'It is the custom among the Mughal kings that if they cast their eyes with desire upon a woman, it becomes obligatory on the husband to divorce her' (Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 61). 'Abdul Wāsi' Khān, therefore, divorced his wife and Akbar married her. This custom was introduced by Chinghiz Khān.

[27] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 150.

[28] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 155-7.

the courtesans. In India, the courtesans represented both a caste and a profession. Their supply increased with the demand. In Akbar's days their number became so scandalously large that he was obliged to segregate them and have registers maintained to enter the names of those who visited their quarter. If a young woman wished to establish herself there, he called her for a private interview to discover the reason, and expressed strong displeasure if any of his *manṣabdārs* had been guilty of forcing her to take up the profession by making her ineligible for marriage. We do not know how long this experiment lasted; no doubt it was bound to fail. It was a practice for singers and dancers to be called to the court, and by a process of selection they kept on becoming additions to the inmates of the palace. Two of Auraṇgzēb's wives were courtesans, and he appears to have loved them both deeply. In the Deccan, conditions were no different from the north. Tavernier says that in Golconda, the capital of the Quṭub Shāhī kingdom, there were

> 'more than 20,000 public women entered in the *dārōghah's* (superintendent's) register, without which it is not allowed to any woman to ply this trade. They pay no tribute to the king, but a certain number of them are obliged to go every Friday with their governess and their music to present themselves in the square in front of the balcony. If the king be there, they dance before him, and if he is not, an eunuch signals to them with his hand that they may withdraw. In the cool of the evening you see them before the doors of their houses, which are for the most part small huts, and when night comes, they place at the doors a candle or a lighted lamp for a signal. . . . These women have so much suppleness and are so agile that when the king who reigns at present wished to visit Masulipatam, nine of them very cleverly represented the form of an elephant, four making the four feet, four others the body, and one the trunk; and the king, mounted above on a kind of throne, in that way made his entry into the town'[29].

The urban character of Indian Muslim civilization became much more apparent during this period. The population had increased considerably. There were 120 big cities and 3200 townships in Akbar's empire, with multitudes of artisans, servants and peons. Agra, the capital, had a population of 660,000 when the court was there and 500,000 when it was not. Foreign travellers have stated that Delhi was as large as Paris, and Aḥmadābād, in the early seventeenth century, as large as London and its suburbs. Patna had

[29] Tavernier, *Travels in India*. Ed. by V. Ball, MacMillan, London, 1889. Pp. 157-8.

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a population of 200,000[30]. A new city of Delhi was laid out by Shāh Jahāṇ and called after him Shāhjahānābād. It was one of the very few cities built according to a plan. Āgra or Akbarābād

> 'surpasses Delhi in extent, in the multitudes of residences belonging to Omrahs (*amīrs*) and rajahs, and of the good stone or brick residences inhabited by private individuals. . . . Not having been constructed after any settled design, it wants the uniform and wide streets that so eminently distinguish Dehli. Four or five streets, where trade is the principal occupation, are of great length and the houses tolerably good, nearly all the others are short, narrow, irregular and full of windings and corners. . . Āgrā has more the appearance of a country town, specially when viewed from an eminence. The prospect it presents is rural, varied and agreeable . . . the mansions of Omrahs and Rājahs are all interspersed with luxuriant and green foliage, in the midst of which the lofty stone houses of Banyanes or Gentile merchants have the appearance of old castles buried in the forests'[31].

There was not only lack of planning but also absence of uniformity. Bernier gives us a general picture of Delhi and Agra: 'The houses of the merchants are built over these warehouses at the back of the arcades: they look handsome enough from the street, and appear tolerably commodious within; they are airy, at a distance from the dust, and communicate with the terrace-roofs over the shops, on which the inhabitants sleep at night; the houses, however, are not continued the whole length of the streets. A few, and only a few other parts of the city have good houses raised on terraces, the buildings over the shops being often too low to be seen from the street. The rich merchants have their dwellings elsewhere, to which they retire after the hours of business'. The streets were numberless, having been 'built at different times by individuals who paid no regard to symmetry; very few are so well built, so wide or straight' as the two principal streets.

> 'Amid these streets are dispersed the habitations of *manṣabdārs*, or petty Omrahs, officers of justice, rich merchants, and others, many of which have a tolerable appearance. Very few are built entirely of brick or stone, and several are made only of clay and straw, yet they are airy and pleasant, most of them having courts and gardens, being commodious inside and containing good furniture. The thatched roof is supported by a layer of long,

[30] 'Irfan Ḥabīb, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*. Aligarh Muslim University, 1962. P. 75.
[31] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-5.

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handsome and strong canes, and the clay walls are covered with a fine, white lime. Intermixed with these different houses is an immense number of small ones, built of mud and thatched with straw, in which lodge the common troopers and all that vast multitude of servants and camp-followers who follow the court and the army. . . . It is because of these wretched mud and thatch houses that I always represent to myself Dehli as a collection of many villages or as a military encampment with a few more conveniences than are found at such places. . . .

'The dwellings of the Omrahs, though mostly situated on the banks of the river and in the suburbs are yet scattered in every direction. In these hot countries a house is considered beautiful if it be capacious and if the situation be airy and exposed on all sides to the wind, especially to the northern breezes. A good house has its courtyards, gardens, trees, basins of water, small *jets d'eau* in the hall or at the entrance, and handsome subterraneous apartments which are furnished with large fans and on account of their coolness are fit places for repose from noon until four or five o'clock. . . . Instead of these cellars, many people prefer kas-kanyas[32]. . . . They consider that a house to be greatly admired ought to be situated in the middle of a large flower-garden and should have four large dīwān-apartments[33] raised the height of a man from the ground and exposed to the four winds, so that the coolness may be felt from any quarter. Indeed, no handsome building is ever seen without terraces on which the family may sleep during the night. They always open into a large chamber into which the bedstead is easily moved in case of rain, when thick clouds of dust arise, when cold air is felt at break of day. . . .

'The interior of a good house has the whole floor covered with a cotton mattress four inches in thickness, over which a fine white cloth is spread during the summer and a silk carpet during winter. At the most conspicuous side of the chamber are one or two mattresses, with fine coverings quilted in the form of flowers and ornamented with delicate silk embroidery, interspersed with gold and silver. These are intended for the master of the house or any person of quality who may happen to call. Each mattress has a large cushion of brocade to lean upon, and there are other cushions placed around the room, covered with brocade, velvet or flowered

[32] *Khas khānās*. The *khas* is a fibrous root which cools the air when sprinkled with water. The *khas khānā* was a room with walls and roof constructed of thatched *khas*.

'All ranks use ice in summer; the nobles use it throughout the year.' *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, p. 59.

[33] Covered terraces.

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satin for the rest of the company. Five or six feet from the floor the sides of the room are full of niches, cut in a variety of shapes, tasteful and well-proportioned, in which are seen porcelain vases and flower-pots. The ceiling is gilt and painted, but without pictures of man or beast'[34].

Pelsaert gives a similar but briefer description of the better houses. He adds, however, that they 'last for a few years only, because the walls are built of mud instead of mortar. . . . The white plaster of the walls is very noteworthy. They use unslaked lime, which they mix up with milk, gum and sugar into a thin paste, rubbing it with well-designed trowels until it is smooth, then they polish it steadily with agate, perhaps for a whole day, until it is dry and hard, and shines like alabaster, and can be used as a looking-glass'[35].

Sir Thomas Roe in a letter condemns Indian houses as 'all base, of mud, one storey high, except in Sūrat, where are some stone houses'[36] and Bernier also does not, on the whole, have a good opinion of Indian city planning and architecture. Foreign observers generally looked at things too much in the light of their own preconceived views, but it is necessary also to appreciate the difference between the European and the Indian concept of the city. In Europe, the city had an entity, a legal existence; it grew physically by the addition of new buildings and the acquisition of new rights. In Muslim India the city had a physical existence, and its decay or destruction entailed a great loss. But it had no legal entity; it was not even a corporate body. A verse, recited to catch 'Abdur Raḥīm Khān Khānān's attention as he sat in his *shāmiyāna* (awning) in the evening to enjoy the breeze and receive visitors at his first halt on a journey from Āgrā to Burhānpūr reflects the principle on which a Muslim city was founded:

> The benefactor is not without resources
> in the mountains, the desert and the
> wilderness:
> Wherever he goes he pitches his tents
> and sets up his court.

Once the city was there, urban life meant education, manners, accomplishments, a routine of meeting and conversing with cultured people, the availability of all that was desirable for comfort or pleasure, the opportunity to fulfil ambitions. It did not inevitably

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 245 ff.
[35] *Jahāngīr's India*. Edited by Moreland. Pp. 66-7.
[36] Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, or *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol. IV, James MacLehose & Sons, Glasgow, 1905, p. 443.

or necessarily mean giving life a sedentary character, or civilization a fixed abode of brick and stone. The spirit could discard one body and inhabit another.

This attitude to the city was largely due to the nomadism in the blood of the Turks and the Mughals, the evidence of which is that in spite of all their architectural ambitions and achievements, they continued to use tents. In the *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Abul Faḍl has described some of the *shāmiyānās* and tents used. The *shāmiyānā* was an awning, generally of lively colours and rich patterns. It could be left open on one or more sides, or enclosed within canvas walls called *qanāts*. The largest of the *shāmiyānā* type, called *bārgāh*, could accommodate more than 10,000 persons. It took 1,000 men one week to put it up with the help of various kinds of machines. The *sarā-pardah* was a *shāmiyānā* 150 by 150 'yards', and contained sixteen divisions. It had a double roof, the upper one, called *qalandarī*, being tent-like in shape[37]. There were many varieties of *shāmiyānās* and tents of a more manageable kind, and the royal camp must have been a whole town of *shāmiyānās* and tents. There was something in the improvized dwelling that seemed to give the Mughals more freedom and satisfaction.

The structure of society becomes clearer in this period than it was before, although there is no indication of any great change having taken place. There was the ruling class, more precisely defined now by being called *manṣabdārs*. They had a hierarchy of their own, with the emperor at the head, and constituted a self-contained unit which cut across racial, religious and social divisions. There were chiefs, all Hindūs, who ruled over small and large territories. They could accept service under the emperor and become *manṣabdārs*, without losing their hereditary rights over their territories, or they could keep aloof and maintain their hereditary position on the basis of an agreement to pay tribute. Chiefs in outlying areas remained independent if they did not come into conflict with the government or the government was not able to impose its authority on them. But chiefs of all types taken together cannot be called an aristocracy because they remained unintegrated individuals. Apart from the chiefs, there were *zamīndārs*, persons of different races and castes who possessed a hereditary and transferable right to a proportion of the revenue, generally 10 per cent, which they collected themselves, and did not obtain as a share from the revenue due to the state. To be able to enforce their claims over the peasants, the *zamīndārs* maintained or were allowed to maintain miniature armies and build miniature forts; according to the *Ā'īn*, the armed forces of the *zamīndārs* in the whole empire amounted to 3,84,558 cavalry,

[37] Abul Faḍl, *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, pp. 48 and 55-7.

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4,277,057 infantry, 1863 elephants, 4260 guns and 4500 boats. But the *zamīndārs* were so divided among themselves and so confined within their caste and local interests that they could not become a governing class[38].

It is believed that, until the nineteenth century, India had no middle class. There were the rich who tended to acquire more and more of riches and power, and the poor who, because of continuous exploitation, became poorer. But there has been, all along, a bourgeoisie, a class of people who carried on banking and moneylending, who were distributors of goods and who provided artisans, particularly jewellers and weavers, with the raw material to produce goods and paid the wages on which they subsisted. There were also merchants dealing in goods, wholesale or retail. They belonged definitely to what should be called a middle class, and there would have been no doubt about their existence or their significance if their traditional caution, justified by the conditions of insecurity created by political conflicts or the attitude of administrators, had not forced them to conceal themselves socially. The ruling class was reckless in its ostentation; the middle class practised self-effacement. No doubt there were exceptions. Some high officers invested money in foreign trade; some planted orchards or grew vegetables, and made them yield an income. Some members of the bourgeoisie, assured of their position and secure in their wealth, lived openly in a lordly style. But apart from Muslim merchants, whose number was never large, the bourgeoisie was mainly Hindū, adhering more or less strictly to caste rules in its social relations. There were no public occasions, no operas and theatres, no clubs and inns, where people could come together as individuals in their own right. There was no mixed society; one had to choose between deliberate ostentation or a safe anonymity. By and large, the bourgeoisie chose to remain anonymous.

The tradition of following the family profession was very strong. Muslim embroiderers, weavers, goldsmiths, masons were not castes but they married within their own communities. A weaver's son could become an *'ālim*, and he would not be respected less for his learning because of his family profession, but a family of *'ālims* would not regard him as belonging to its *kufw* and eligible for marriage. However, what really prevented the artisans from building up their business and becoming independent if not wealthy was a system of exploitation on the one hand and a habit of thriftlessness on the other. The ordinary artisan could be called upon to work at any wage prescribed. The artisan with more than ordinary skill would accept or be forced to accept employment under some high officer, and

[38] 'Irfān Ḥabīb, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-9.

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would work exclusively for him. The specially gifted artisans were monopolized by the government. Shāh Jahān established a large number of workshops for which the services of the masters of various crafts were commandeered. But the number of skilled workers was large enough to provide ample opportunity for capitalists also to employ them and produce goods for sale. The inevitable result of this system was to deprive the artisan of the real joy of work; he only did as much as he had to and as well as he had to. This attitude was due as much to pressure from above as to his own thriftlessness. The habit of overspending was not confined to the *amīrs* and *manṣabdars*. In their own way, the artisans also were extravagant, and generally in debt. A restricted market, monopolistic tendencies and, among the artisans themselves, lack of the urge to work and save and gradually improve their condition led to a stratification of classes which made change and improvement difficult. This is all the more tragic if we consider the unstinted admiration foreign travellers[39] express for the excellence of Indian craftsmanship and the marvellous beauty of the specimens that have survived to this day.

The condition of the peasantry was undoubtedly the worst, as they were exploited by the *manṣabdārs*, the *zamīndārs* and most of all by the state. But this is a question more of the system of land revenue than of social life.

We have information from different sources about the mode of travelling in the seventeenth century which, in the opinion of Tavernier, was 'not less convenient than all they have been able to invent in order that one may be carried in comfort either in France or in Italy'. Generally, ox-drawn carts or palanquins were used. 'They have also for travelling small, very light carriages, which can contain two persons; but usually one travels alone, in order to be more comfortable, being then able to have his clothes with him; the canteen of wine and some small requisites for the journey having their place under the carriage, to which they harness a pair of oxen only. These carriages, which are provided like ours, with curtains and cushions, are not slung'. The oxen were so trained that they could cover several miles at a steady trot. 'Those who drive these oxen follow no other trade all their lives; they never dwell in houses and they take with them their women and children'. 'Those who can afford to take their ease make use of a pallankeen (palanquin), in which they travel very comfortably. It is a kind of bed, of six or seven feet long and three feet wide', held on two bamboo poles extending five or six feet along the length on both sides. The palanquin carriers placed these poles on their shoulders.

[39] As, for instance, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

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'The journey from Surat to Agra occupies thirty-five or forty days' journey by road, and you pay for the whole journey forty to forty-five rupees. From Surat to Golconda it is nearly the same distance and the same price, and it is in the same proportion throughout the whole of India. . . . The great heats of India compel travellers who are not accustomed to it to travel by night, in order to rest by day. When they enter towns which are closed, they must leave by sunset, if they wish to take the road. For the night being come, and the gates closed, the governor of the place, who has to answer for thefts which occur within his jurisdiction, does not allow anyone to go out, and says it is the Emperor's order, which he must obey'[40].

Men of substance, when travelling, hired armed guards. Only a person who was socially of no consequence went out on foot and alone; travelling was otherwise in a procession, the number of persons accompanying him being an index of a man's social status. The Emperor had, of course the largest retinue, and he travelled mostly on an elephant. The princes, princesses and 'great ladies of the seraglio' had big retinues, the men travelling in open, the ladies in closed conveyances. Some preferred the *chanḏōlīs*, which were borne on men's shoulders. They were gilt and painted; those used by the ladies being 'covered with magnificent silk nets of many colours, enriched with embroidery fringes and beautiful tassels. Others travel in a stately and closed *ṗālkey*, gilt and covered, over which are also expanded similar silk nets. Some again use capacious litters, suspended between two powerful camels'. 'I have sometimes,' Bernier continues, 'seen Roshan Ara Begum pursuing her journey, and have observed more than once in front of the litter, which was open, a young, well-dressed female slave with a peacock's tail in her hand, brushing away the dust and keeping off the flies from the princess. The ladies are not unfrequently carried upon the backs of elephants, which upon these occasions wear massive bells of silver and are decked with costly trappings, curiously embroidered'[41]. The exhibition of social status rather than the need to reach a destination with speed and comfort determined the mode of travelling. Walking about the streets for business or pleasure was considered derogatory, and foreign observers noted the very small number of relatively well-dressed persons whom one saw in the streets. The whole etiquette was cumbersome and irrational.

The numerous paintings of this period show the dresses that were worn by the men and women of different ranks, and the writer's pen

[40] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 39 ff.
[41] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 372. *Pālkey* is the indigenous word for palanquin.

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cannot emulate the vividness or the accuracy of the painter's brush. Some princesses wore turbans with the emperor's permission, and on the turban an aigrette, surrounded by pearls and precious stones. Some dancing girls were also accorded this privilege. Otherwise the turban and the aigrette were worn by men, the aigrette in particular indicating rank. The upper garments and the trousers of the men may have undergone some alteration as compared with the earlier period. The change in the women's dress was more pronounced. The head and shoulders began to be covered with a cloth that fell in folds down to the waist, but the cloth was so light and transparent that it did not conceal the coiffure and the quality and colours of the other garments or the jewellery. A covering for the head was part of the dress before also, but probably only among women who did not belong to the ruling classes. Now it was adopted by all, and this may have been due to greater contacts with Hindū women. An undergarment, something like a modern brassière with half sleeves, worn by Hindū women, specially Rājpūts, also became common. Over this were worn other garments, of various shapes and lengths, the topmost of which was a loose tunic coming down to the knees. The excellence of these garments consisted in their lightness and transparency, both of which the weaver's craft attained to an almost incredible degree. Some types of cloth used for undergarments were so delicate that they could be worn only once. Jewellery of all kinds was worn profusely by women. Men wore pearl necklaces and rings, and the turbans and aigrettes of members of the royal family and the higher dignitaries were also adorned with jewels and pearls.

The dress of the poorest classes did not change. All foreign travellers were struck by the large number of people who had nothing more than a rag to cover their nakedness. It was most probably due to a large influx of people from the rural areas into the towns. Otherwise there is every reason to believe that the artisans, the petty shopkeepers, the lower middle class people were better off than before, because even if the population had increased and exploitation by the ruling classes was becoming more pervasive, the taste for luxuries and various types of refinement led to a greater division of labour and correspondingly greater opportunities for employment.

We have more specific information about the food, thanks to the recipes given in the *Ā'īn* and the accounts of foreign travellers. The most noteworthy fact seems to be the large quantity of seasonal fruits consumed by rich and poor alike. The rich procured the best indigenous varieties, mangoes from Bengal, the Deccan and Goa, and apples from Kashmīr. They also obtained grapes and melons

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from as far as Samarqand and Bukhārā, though imported fruits were very expensive. Some of the *amīrs* imported seed from outside and cultivated fruits in their orchards with great care. Dry fruits were available all the year round and were consumed in large quantities. The recipes given are almost all of dishes prepared even today, with the only difference that the red chilli, now so widely used, is not mentioned. It was probably due to Akbar's desire to restrict the use of meat and the slaughter of animals that green vegetables, such as spinach, are mentioned and specially praised. But the *Ā'īn's* list could not have been at all comprehensive. All the meat dishes, the recipes of which it has given, would not suffice to provide the desirable variety for an ordinary banquet.

The most remarkable feature of social life during this period were the relations between the Muslims and the Hindūs. The orthodoxies continued to reject each other; we have no evidence of any change, or even the desire for change in the basic beliefs. There was no weakening of the caste system. Indeed, the *Rāmacharitmānas* of Gōswamī Tulsīdās bears eloquent testimony to a revival of Hindūism and its transformation into a people's religion, with faith and devotion taking the place of ritual and investing the established system of caste with a sanctity which it did not possess earlier. But there can also be no doubt that, largely because of the passage of time, the Hindūs had come to accept the existence of the Muslims and to reconcile themselves to the domination of a ruling class that was mainly Muslim. In the fifteenth century, the Hindūs accepted and adopted Persian as the language of this ruling class, and thereby qualified themselves for higher posts in the government. Akbar's genius for understanding and co-ordination of spiritual and cultural values lent strong support to the integrating and unifying tendencies. He prohibited intermarriages and the slaughter of cows and discouraged meat-eating, which ensured that Hindūs who mixed intimately with Muslims would not be in danger of absorption in the Muslim community against their wishes and would be entitled to have even their prejudices respected. The doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd*, with its corollary that all religions were paths to God, placed Islām and Hinduism—even Hinduism with all its taboos and its rituals—logically on an equal footing. Hindūs who were resolved not to give up their old habits of thinking and living were under no compulsion to change their ways, but those who were willing to adjust themselves to any degree and even entirely in their own interest were not handicapped in any way. Islām was the official religion; the rulers were Muslims; temples were destroyed, though also built and endowed, by the rulers, including Auraṇgzēb; the *jizyah* was imposed, and also abolished; animals, including cows,

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were slaughtered for meat as well as sacrifice on the prescribed day. On the other hand, though missionary activity was sometimes supported and subsidized by some of the rulers, its scale was negligible. Sikandar the Iconoclast of Kashmīr (1394-1416) appears to be the only one among all the Muslim rulers who made forcible conversion a sustained political policy. *Kāfir* could be and no doubt was used as a term of abuse; but the poets made it into a term of endearment also. There is hardly any evidence in the literature of this period of particular Hindū beliefs and practices being attacked; even the horrible custom of *satī* was not prohibited but only regularized. The fact that the vast majority of caste Hindūs, and many even of those who were in government service or in the private employ of Muslims regarded the Muslims as untouchable seems to have passed unnoticed, while Hindūs and Muslims merrily joined hands in assailing the Muslim concept of their community, the hypocritical puritanism of the preacher (*wā'iẓ*) and the insipid and irrelevant wisdom of the adviser (*nāṣih*). Thus, while the Muslim attack on the citadel of Hinduism was mainly symbolic, the Hindū occupation of the open fields of Islām was real and fairly extensive. There are obvious facts, as we have already admitted, which provide arguments for holding the view that Muslim rule implied the suppression of Hindūs and Hinduism. But while a political analysis would reveal that Muslim rule rested on very insecure foundations and lasted as long as it did because of the passive acceptance or active support of the effective elements in Hindū society, a social analysis would lead to more astonishing results. We would find that while the Muslim proclaimed his mission and trumpeted his intentions, Hindū influences, moving silently and unobtrusively like the waters of a flood, surrounded him from all sides, leaving only small islands where the flag of Islām flew high—and defenceless.

Paradoxically enough, the palace, apparently so secure, provided the inlet for the flood. The desire to know what the future holds in store is common enough; those who constantly risk their lives and hopes on the field of battle are more susceptible than others to omens of success and failure. Long before Muslim rule was established in India, Muslims had come to believe in magic, in the influence of the stars, in the mysterious qualities of precious stones, in signs and omens. In India, astrology had the prestige of a science, and Muslims were completely taken in by the astrologer. We mentioned in an earlier chapter how thriving this trade had become by the early fourteenth century. The construction of an observatory in the early eighteenth century at Jaipur and at Delhi to help in astrological calculations marks the climax of the belief in astrology and the total surrender of commonsense to fear and superstition. The sulṭān's

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ḥaram was the next point of infiltration. Slave-girls from all the world over had given it a secular, international character even in the earlier period. This character was retained, but Akbar went a step further. His reverence for all beliefs sincerely held, and his special regard for the Rajpūt princesses in the *ḥaram* induced him to permit them to continue their forms of worship. The deification of the Emperor was one result, the other, far more significant socially, was a change in the position of the male members of the family—father, brothers, husband. The sentiment against the daughter demanding her share of inheritance, against the widow demanding remarriage, even though it had also a purely Muslim background and also an economic aspect, derived its strength mainly from the influence of Hindū ideas and institutions, in which it was the privilege of the female to sacrifice herself for the male. The orthodox *'ulamā* would not, of course, admit the validity of this opinion, but they could not resist the subtle influences of their environment, however horrified they may have been at such a possibility.

A third, and perhaps the most significant point of infiltration is indicated in Badāyūnī's account of Shaikh 'Alā'ī's visit to Shaikh Badh in Bihār for the purpose of being interrogated. Shaikh 'Alā'ī heard the sound of music coming from inside the house. He also saw what Badāyūnī calls 'things deceitful by nature and according to the *shar'*', meaning probably dancing girls and musical instruments, in the assembly where Shaikh Badh himself was seated. In accordance with his practice, Shaikh 'Alā'ī objected. Shaikh Badh was himself almost too old to speak; his sons and relatives replied saying that some customs and habits had become so deeprooted that if they were prohibited and then by chance some loss of worldly goods or life or body occurred, the women of India, who are deficient in understanding, would attribute this loss to the custom having been prohibited, and would in this way incur the blame of having denied the true faith. In any case, their deviation (*fisq*) was less sinful than their turning away from the faith (*kufr*). Shaikh 'Alā'ī retorted that if this was true, one should consider whether they were Muslims at all, and whether marriage with them was legal[42]. It can be safely assumed that all such 'customs and habits' had been taken over from the Hindūs.

A fourth point of infiltration, to which we have referred in an earlier chapter, were slave-girls and slaves. In the period we are now dealing with, there is hardly any mention of prisoners of war, men and women, being sold as slaves, though the system of slavery continues in full force. Now the results of a whole process become evident. In the typical names of concubines and slave-girls given

[42] Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 406-7.

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by Manucci[43] some, like Kētkī and Champā, would have been given to converted Hindūs; among the superintendents and servants the names show that the women were also probably converted Hindūs, and because of their position would have exercised a greater and not a lesser influence on ideas and sentiments than concubines and slave-girls. There were singers and dancers attached to every queen and princess and there are a good number with *bā'īs*[44] attached to their names in Manucci's list. We may assume that such women had no religion, but only sentiments and superstitions. These would be mainly Hindū in origin, and would be more contagious because communicated by converts.

The acceptance of the official etiquette by the Hindūs appears to have been also an acceptance of the Muslim view of refinement and culture. On the Muslims this etiquette did have a refining influence. They had to set aside their prejudices and overcome their inhibitions. The Hindū learnt court manners but, apart from adopting a type of intercourse which itself may or may not have involved 'touching' the Muslim, he underwent no change at all. Instead, he obtained official recognition for all the restrictions imposed on him by caste, and for his own view of life. Most of the marriage ceremonies and birth rites of Hindū origin found among the Muslims of north India derive from the practices of the Kāyasthas, the caste which almost monopolized the clerical posts under the government and in the private service of the Muslim *amīrs*[45]. Muslim influence on Hindū society was mainly confined to a small number of ruling and landowning Rajpūt families and to Kāyasthas. Even among these it was restricted to dress, food and the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd*. It was the common language—Persian in the seventeenth and Persian and Urdū in the eighteenth century—which brought Hindūs and Muslims really close together in a common and fruitful loyalty. But this is a subject which must be treated by itself.

In a brief survey of social life in Delhi, the *Muraqqa'-i-Dihlī*[46], written by Sālār Jaṇg in 1739, shortly after Nādir Shāh's invasion, we get a picture that is at once fascinating and horrible, and which forces us to reflect on the causes that brought about this result and the possibility and value of these conditions persisting.

But before we discuss the *Muraqqa'*, it seems useful to have another look at its background—the conflict between moral strict-

[43] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 334 ff.

[44] A Hindū term for 'lady'. Also used for 'courtesan'.

[45] Once the Muslim officers of the court asked for the removal of Rājā Ṯōḏar Mal. Akbar replied that they all had Hindūs in their employ; why could he not have one? Badāyūnī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 66.

[46] Mss. of the *Muraqqa'* are available. The account which follows is based on a transcription of the mss. in the Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh.

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ness and the general tendency towards laxity. The fate of Mīr Wā'iẓ of Multān is a striking illustration of this conflict and its results.

Mīr Murtaḍā Wā'iẓ came into prominence during the second half of Auraṇgzēb's reign. He was a reformer who insisted on the *shari'ah* being followed without any deviations and innovations. He condemned and, as far as possible, tried to prevent *samā'* and the playing of musical instruments, and no music could be heard in the quarter where he lived. He did not eat food cooked in the houses of government officers. He had a large number of disciples and followers, but when anyone came and asked to be made a *murīd*, he rebuked him for using this term. 'Say, I have come after repenting and asking forgiveness for the sins I have committed. I promise to commit them no more and pray to God for the strength to abide by the *sharī'ah* in word and deed'. Then he asked the prospective *murīd* whether, if God granted him a son, and his wife desired to celebrate the event according to custom with dance and music, he would refuse to allow it; and if his wife threatened to leave him because of his refusal, whether he would prefer to placate her or obey the commandments of God and the Prophet. If the prospective *murīd* assured him that he would follow the *sharī'ah* at all costs, Mīr Wā'iẓ accepted his profession of repentance and made him his disciple. He had three or four thousand such *murīds* scattered over the country from Lahore to the Deccan.

When anyone brought an offering, Mīr Wā'iẓ made a strict enquiry about his means of livelihood, to feel sure that the offering was not beyond his means and that his wife and children were not being deprived of their legitimate share. If he was satisfied about this, he accepted the gift. He used one-fifth of what he obtained in this way as capital for trading, and lived on his earnings. He refused grants of land offered to him by officers of the government and the emperor himself.

Mīr Wā'iẓ fasted often, read the Qur'ān and remained engaged in devotions. In his sermons he referred in very harsh terms to oppressive and unjust officers, hypocritical *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* who hovered around government officers to get money and grants, said things to please and gratify the rich and led the officers to do things against the injunctions of God and the Prophet, who listened to music in the assemblies of worldly people and held *samā'* and dances at the tombs of saints. Mīr Wā'iẓ condemned persons who celebrated *shab-i-barāt*, *'āshūrah* and *'īd* in a manner not permitted by the *sharī'ah*; he declared unlawful food cooked and exchanged as a part of ceremonial mourning for the dead, and also *niyāz* and *fātiḥah*, although these had become a practice also among the stricter *ṣūfīs*. He also condemned the use of tobacco as forbidden (*ḥarām*)[9] He

antagonized the officers and *'ulamā* to such a degree that once a riot was barely averted. He presented a book entitled *Ḥaqq Gō* (Declarer of Truth) to Auraṇgzēb who read a few pages, guessed its nature and thanked God for having blessed his reign with such a fearless lover of truth. Auraṇgzēb wanted to entrust Mīr Wā'iẓ with the education of his son, Prince Kām Bakhsh and give the Mīr a grant of land. This Mīr Wā'iẓ declined to accept. Then Auraṇgzēb proposed that he should become the *muḥtasib* of some city. Mīr Wā'iẓ declared he would agree if he was appointed *muḥtasib* of the 'special' people, as the commoners were already becoming devoted to him. The Emperor said he did not understand this distinction. Akram Khān, the *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr*, who had already had a clash with Mīr Wā'iẓ, happened to be sitting near by. He suggested that by 'special' persons Mīr Wā'iẓ might be meaning the tombs of the saints, for he had already expressed the view that the grave of any saint near which music was played should be dug up and the bones burnt. Auraṇgzēb was offended and said this was going too far. Mīr Wā'iẓ protested in vain that he was being misrepresented, but the Emperor's heart was turned away from him, and he lost all prestige. Mīr Wā'iẓ then went away to Burhānpūr without formally taking leave. Here, while preaching against the use of intoxicants, he once quoted a *ḥadīth* threatening punishment for those who took *bhaṇg* (ḥashīsh). Thereupon a Kashmīrī scholar got up and said insultingly that Mīr Wā'iẓ should himself be punished for inventing *ḥadīths*, because there was no *bhaṇg* in the days of the Prophet. All the pleasure-loving young men and the wordly *'ulamā* joined the Kashmīrī scholar and Mīr Wā'iẓ was thoroughly humiliated. He went to his house and did not leave it till his death. There was a rumour that he poisoned himself[47].

Preachers had not lost their occasional and permanent admirers when the *Muraqqa'* was written. But no one possessed any religious or moral authority. The Emperor was a nonentity. He is referred to incidentally as someone who appreciated a musician's art or a courtesan's beauty. In a carefree world he seemed to be the only one to have taken Nādir Shāh's invasion seriously to heart and to have lost, at least for a time, all taste for women and wine and music. He had been reduced to this position because of the civil wars fought to determine the question of succession. Only Humāyūn and Akbar had ascended the throne peacefully; Jahāngīr had to fight against his own son, and his position would not have been as favourable as it was, but for Murtaḍā Khān; Shāh Jahān owed his succession to Āṣaf Khān's timely intervention, and Auraṇgzēb had to fight his brothers. After Auraṇgzēb's death there was again a civil war, and

[47] Khāfī Khān, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 561-5.

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in this the higher dignitaries of the state played a much more independent role. Bahāḍur Shāh's death was followed by a struggle for power among the nobility, who became kingmakers in the persons of 'Abdullāh Khān and Ḥusain 'Alī Khān. The monarchy, in fact, never regained power, and Muḥammad Shāh, known as the Gay, retained his position only by cleverly making the powerful *amīrs* responsible for decisions in all matters of policy. Administration and authority became entirely dependent on successful intrigue. Āṣaf Jāh in the Deccan, Burhānul Mulk in Oudh, and 'Alī Wardī Khān in Bengal became virtually independent, and the emperor's authority over the rest of his dominions was also purely nominal. In an atmosphere of suspicion and intrigue the powerful *amīrs* neutralized each other, and possessed only the shadow of authority. The position became very much worse with time. The Emperor was not only a puppet but was treated like one; the members of his family regarded the palace as 'the sulṭān's prison', from which there was no escape.

The *Muraqqa'* begins with an account of the daily routine of the people. Visits to the tombs of saints and other places endowed with sanctity was usual, but there were special days for each place also, Saturdays for the *Qadamgāh* of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Sundays for the *dargāh* of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn at Chirāgh Dihli, Wednesdays for the *dargāh* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, Thursdays for the *dargāh* of Shaikh Quṭubuddīn at Mahraulī. Reciting the *fātiḥah* at a *ṣūfī's* grave was really an excuse for an excursion, which in most cases would last a whole day. These excursions provided the link between the different anniversaries of the saints, when there would be *qawwālī* of the traditional type serving as the nucleus of festivity in which there was song and dance, display of charm, meeting and lovemaking. Some of the anniversaries, like that of Khuld Manzil[48] and Mīr Mushrif, were very frankly of a worldly type, where among wondrously contrived illuminations lovers went around arm in arm, the lustful indulged themselves without fear, where there were crowds of 'boys'[49] such as would 'break the vows of ascetics, sons of gazelles matchless in love-making', 'a world of sinners attaining their heart's desire' and 'multitudes of lechers going about their business'. The streets and bazars were full of *nawwābs* and *khāns*, 'singers and *qawwāls* were more numerous than flies and wretches and beggars more numerous than fleas'.

Chāndnī Chowk, the principal bazar and promenade, and even

[48] The Emperor Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719).

[49] *Amrad*, meaning literally a boy on whose face the down, which later becomes the beard, is not yet visible. Evidently this was a term for young eunuchs and hermaphrodites who offered themselves to sexual perverts.

more the Chowk of Sa'dullāh Khān, which has since disappeared, were places of congregation every evening. The latter Chowk was opposite the gate of the Palace. Here one saw enormous crowds, comprising an amazing variety of people. There were boys dancing, preachers sitting on improvized pulpits, discoursing on themes suitable for the day and month, and making a fair collection of coins from 'fools' who listened and were affected; there were astrologers making pleasing prophecies, quacks, impressively dressed, with colourful bags full of medicines, advertizing their aphrodisiacs, tonics and remedies for syphilis and gonorrhea; there were buffoons and wine-sellers; there were boys in such numbers that if one looked up, 'the eye was caught by some attractive face, and if one stretched the arm, it encircled a graceful neck'. Two quarters of the city, Kasalpurā and Nāgal, seem to have been enormous brothels. At Kasalpurā there was singing and dancing in almost every house, while women solicited freely in the streets. Nāgal was supposed to have a saint's tomb, on the pretext of visiting which women went on the seventh of each month, decked in all their finery, having made appointments with acquaintances and friends, and 'none came back disappointed'.

'Īd al-Fiṭr, *'Īd al-Aḍḥā* and *Muḥurram*, *Hōlī*, *Dīwālī* and *Dasehrā* were no doubt celebrated, but the festival that finds most detailed mention in the *Muraqqa'* is the Hindū festival of *Basant* as observed by the Muslims. Its celebration extended over a whole week, beginning with *qawwālī*, music and sprinkling of scents at the *Qadamgāh* of the Prophet, and culminating on the night of the 7th with a kind of carnival at Aḥdīpurah, where the grave of a fictitious saint was washed with wine. No one was in charge of the arrangements; there was a friendly understanding among instrumentalists, singers and dancers, and they performed by turns in an atmosphere of festive abandon.

The *Muraqqa'* describes some outstanding connoisseurs of music and dancing, and also the most popular, the artists, among whom some were normal persons with a natural talent for particular art forms, some were *amrads*, some courtesans. Art and perversity were so mingled as to be indistinguishable. Among the courtesans, the most famous seems to have been Nūr Bā'ī; she belonged to the caste of *ḏōms*, who were professional singers and dancers. She lived in princely style, rode out on an elephant, with liveried servants before and behind, and seems to have been held in high esteem as an artist. To be known to her was a privilege, to obtain favours from her was a ruinously costly distinction. Most of the courtesans had been in the palace, and were or had been mistresses of dignitaries. It is strange to find among them an artist, also a *ḏōm* by caste, who had the

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reputation of being chaste. She was regarded as a beauty, although she had a jet black complexion; she was modest and remained as far as possible in the background. A direct contrast was provided by a courtesan who painted her legs instead of putting on the tight trousers worn under the *pēshwāz*[50].

Sandwiched between the description of Chāṇdnī Chowk and the account of *amīrs* who were patrons of art are brief notes on contemporary *ṣūfīs*. Some of these were averse to any kind of relationship with kings and countries; one, Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, who retired from government service to devote himself to the spiritual life, was known for his courageous declaration of the truth before the high and mighty. Shāh Kamāl ate well and dressed well, and was a good mixer. Shāh Pān-ṣad Manī[51] achieved distinction by always riding on an ass. Majnūn Nānak Shāhī had his *dargāh* on the riverside, and enabled people to combine spiritual edification with boating. There were also Naqshbandī *ṣūfīs* who thought it sinful to listen to song or music. These *ṣūfīs* were not thrown aside by the current of life. The Prophet's Day was regularly celebrated, and the Arabs in 'Arab Sarā'e, near Humāyūn's Tomb, made it a cherished occasion for those interested in the various styles of reciting the Qur'ān. People who talked of spiritual things also had their time and place in a world that accommodated every kind of virtue with every type of vice.

One of the most pleasing personalities of this period was Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānān (1702-1781). He lived through the period when degeneration of character and surrender to frivolity had become the dominant feature of life at Delhi. Nature had endowed him with an instinct for refinement, and his life as a *ṣūfī* taught him simplicity. Almost from his fifth year people began to say that he had 'the lover's temperament'. Some anecdotes, not very striking in themselves, provide side-lights on his personality as well as the times he lived in. Once, when still young, he went out towards Mahraulī, and after offering the *fātiḥah* at the grave of Shaikh Quṭubuddīn, he wandered around in the groves and gardens for a while. He was sitting in what was probably an abandoned *khānqāh* when a beautiful woman, obviously drunk, came in. She looked at him, and said, 'Your appearance shows that you are in love, or mad, or a poet'. Mirzā Maẓhar confessed that he was something of all the three. The woman said, 'If you are a poet, let us hear some of your verses.' 'I shall recite my verses', Mirzā Maẓhar said, 'when I know what kind of a taste you have in poetry. So please first recite what you consider

[50] The *peshwāz* was a long tunic, coming down to below the knees. It was usually of fine, light cloth.

[51] Weighing 500 maunds = 1000 lbs.

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to be a good verse.' She took up the challenge and recited a verse which pleased Mirzā Maẓhar, and he responded with an extempore verse[52]. We do not know if this strange encounter had any results. Probably Mirzā Maẓhar was too chaste for his times, and a woman's ready wit would not have captivated him. He was also by nature very fastidious. Once he visited a *khānqāh* at Amrōhā, where the host in his solicitude had got a new bed made for him. But Mirza Maẓhar could get no sleep because the sides of the bed were not exactly at right angles. He tried as much as his courtesy would allow to instil a sense of order and symmetry into the people he met. Once a young Nawwāb came to visit him. After a time the young man felt thirsty and looked around for a servant. Mirzā Maẓhar, guessing what he wanted, pointed to a corner where there was a vessel filled with water and a bowl to drink out of. The young man went and drank the water, leaving the round vessel bent at an angle and the bowl on the floor. When he had returned to his seat, he requested Mirzā Maẓhar to allow him to appoint a man for his service, as the absence of a servant must be causing him great inconvenience. 'Thank you,' Mirzā Maẓhar replied with a smile, 'But I have noticed how clumsy you are. Your servant would be very much worse'[53]. It happened sometimes that, while walking in the street, he saw a cot lying awry outside a house. He either waited till the owner came out, when he would request him to set the cot straight, or would set it straight himself. During the pillage of Delhi under the orders of Nādir Shāh, Mirzā Maẓhar's *khānqāh* was also invaded. Finding nothing else, the brutish soldiers fell upon the big pots of *khichrī*[54] cooked for the poor, and started eating. Mirzā Maẓhar told them that *khichrī* was not taken by itself; it tasted much better with a little clarified butter and pickles. These had been placed in a niche near the *khichrī* pots. Why did the soldiers not mix them with the *khichrī*?[55].

This would appear rather queer by itself, but in the context of Mirzā Maẓhar's personal culture it acquires a different significance. He was a man of many accomplishments and great courage. Once, while offering the *maghrib* prayers, he was attacked by a man with a dagger. He wrested the dagger out of the man's hand and then returned it to him. The man attacked him again and again six times and finally fell at his feet and begged his forgiveness. Mirzā Maẓhar himself was an accomplished swordsman and used to say that if he had just a stick in his hand twenty men with swords would not

[52] 'Abdur Razzāq Quraishī, *Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānān aur unkā Urdū Kalām*. Adabī Publishers, Bombay, 1961. Pp. 120-21.

[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-4.

[54] *Khichrī* is rice cooked together with one of the pulses.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

be able to hurt him. He was also a good cutter and knew almost fifty different ways of cutting a *shalwār*.

Most contemporaries bear witness to his scholarship, as they do to the purity of his life. He was the most explicit in expressing the opinion that Hinduism was one of the religions which, like Christianity and Judaism, had been superseded by Islām. He declared the Vedās to be revealed and the great personalities mentioned in it to have been Prophets. He even held that the prostration of Hindūs before their idols was an expression of reverence and not an association of any gods with the True God[56].

Mirzā Maẓhar represents the culture of his century in all its spiritual richness and social grace. But he was more a relic of the past than an augury of future. Delhi survived its occupation by Nādir Shāh to be attacked again and again by the Abdālīs, the Marhaṭṭās, the Rōhillās, till there was nothing left of the city but a mere husk.

What was true of social life in Delhi cannot be regarded as necessarily true of all India. But Delhi, though no longer the seat of power, set the style in dress and manners, in food and clothing, in what was to be considered admirable and what was to be dismissed as crude. Oudh (Faiḍābād), Murshidābād, Ḥaidarābād, Lucknow, as capitals soon claimed to have surpassed Delhi in refinement and culture, but they followed the same pattern and diverged only in details. The compartmentalization of sentiments and beliefs to which we have referred earlier was carried to such an extreme that the very notion of contradictions and inconsistencies in character and conduct seemed to have vanished and nothing appeared wrong or unjustifiable enough to be denounced or opposed. The belief in *waḥdah al-wujūd*, while it no doubt broadened many minds, seemed also to have degenerated into an acceptance of all habits and customs as justifiable, no matter how harmful they might be ultimately. What appeared to be a comprehensive tolerance was really a loss of faith. It led to the concentration of all effort and activity on the fulfilment of immediate objectives, without regard for the moral and social consequences, and to the disastrous practice of regarding experience as a narcotic, the first symptom of which was excitement and the last stage a sickly somnolence.

It is this background which explains and brings into sharp relief the orthodoxy, the religious thought, the poetry as well as the fanaticism of the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Part IV

CHAPTER XVIII

ORTHODOXY AND THE ORTHODOX

AFTER Auraṇgzēb's reign, the Mughal Empire disintegrated, and the policies of rulers and noblemen became more and more opportunist and unethical. The association of orthodoxy and the state could be maintained locally, but owing to the weakness of the rulers, orthodoxy had to fall back on its own resources. These were plentiful and powerful enough. The Muslim community did not and could not have a church; it did not even have an organization of the religious. But in spite of this, it was still possible in India for Muslim orthodoxy to mobilize opinion, to gather the bewildered Muslim community under its own banner. The attempt was made, too. But orthodoxy had assumed the existence of a political authority that would serve as its executive agency too consistently and for too long, and was now fettered by its own commitments. The *fiqh*, it seemed, could walk an infinite distance if supported by political power, but could not carry political power even for two steps on its back. It is indeed tragic to see a personality so powerful, sincere and perspicacious as Shāh Walīullāh turn from one unworthy potentate to another with the expectation that he would restore the supremacy of the Islāmic way of life. He saw more clearly than anyone else, perhaps, the viciousness that characterized the political relationships of his time, and the ruin caused by the merciless exploitation of the poor. He could even suggest what ought to be done. But he pinned his hope now on Niẓāmul Mulk, now on Najībuddaulah, now on Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī. He could not conceive of any other means of averting disaster than discovering the enlightened Muslim prince, who possessed resources and armed strength, and would establish his dominion and ensure peace and prosperity by acting on the high principles of the *sharī'ah*[1].

[1] *Islāmic Culture*, Vol. XXV. Articles by Dr K. A. Niẓāmī, on Shāh Walīullāh and Indian Politics in the Eighteenth Century.

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Such an enlightened Muslim prince could not be found. Ḥaidar 'Alī of Mysore and, after him, Ṯīpū Sulṭān, could have been made figure-heads. An attempt to give them an all-India status, even if it failed, might still have made the Indian Muslims politically more conscious. Instead, Shāh Walīullāh's sons, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Shāh Rafī'uddīn and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, turned to the study of the Qur'ān, the popularization of religious knowledge, the creation of a new aspiration to study, understand and live according to the doctrines of the *sharī'ah*. Shāh Rafī'uddīn and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir translated the Qur'ān, and the translation of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir was very widely read. Such an effort would have been commendable at any time. With leaders such as the Walīullāh family in Delhi, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (1786-1831) in the U.P. and Maulānā Sharī-'atullāh in Bengal, the religious revival became intense and widespread. It is because of the personalities of the leaders and the potentialities of the movement that it can be said that the Indian Muslims might have had another destiny if orthodoxy had given a different quality and direction to its guidance.

In the first years of the nineteenth century, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz (1746-1824) issued *fatwās*, declaring India to be *dār al-ḥarb*, which give a clear picture of the working of the orthodox mind. We reproduce part of one *fatwā* as an illustration.

'In this city (of Delhi) the *Imām al-Muslimīn* wields no authority, while the decrees of the Christian leaders are obeyed without fear (of the consequences). Promulgation of the commands of *kufr* means that in the matter of administration and the control of the people, in the levy of land-tax, tribute, tolls and customs, in the punishment of thieves and robbers, in the settlement of disputes, in the punishment of offences, the *kāfirs* act according to their discretion. There are, indeed, certain Islāmic rituals, e.g. Friday and *'Id* prayers, *adhān* and cow-slaughter, with which they do not interfere. But that is of no account. The basic principles of these rituals are of no value to them, for they demolish mosques without the least hesitation, and no Muslim or *dhimmī* can enter the city or its suburbs except with their permission. It is for their own good that they do not object to people going in and out, to travellers and traders visiting the city. (On the other hand), distinguished persons like Shujā'ul Mulk and Wilāyatī Bēgam cannot visit the city without their permission. From here to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that to the right and to the left, in principalities like Ḥaidarābād, Rāmpūr, Lucknow, etc., they do not govern directly as a matter of policy and because the possessors of these territories have become subject to them. This is what is to be understood from the *ḥadīths*, and in accordance with the principle of

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following the lives and actions of the venerable Companions and the great Khalīfahs'[2].

It seems incredible that a person like Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz should regard the degenerate and unhonoured figure seated on the throne of Delhi as *Imām al-Muslimīn*. But logically he had no choice. Orthodox thought had so bound itself with injunctions regarding obedience to the ruler and been so consistently careful to avoid placing restraints upon his liberty that it was forced to speak on his behalf. But since nothing could be expected from the Emperor at Delhi, orthodoxy could save its face only by means of an unequivocal declaration that India had become a *dār al-ḥarb*. Ḥājī Sharī'atullāh, the founder of the Farā'iḍī sect of Bengāl, was a reformer and a man of great piety and learning. He declared that India had become *dār al-ḥarb*, and the Friday and *'Īd* prayers should not be performed as public prayers. But the declaration that India was a *dār al-ḥarb* led to many complications. The Christian rulers had to be equated with *kāfirs*, infidels, which could not be done without stretching the letter of the law or, in fact, even after stretching it to the utmost. It had to be proved that they restrained the Muslims by force from the practice of their religion. It had to be proved that other restrictions, such as those mentioned in the *fatwā* above, were something new, that the rulers whom the Christians had displaced showed greater regard for freedom of trade and travel, and provided greater security. This could not be done in the face of all the memories of the recent past and all the contemporary evidence to the contrary. And if that could not be done, if it could be argued from the opposite side that India was ruled by people who were not idolators, who were indifferent, but not actively hostile to Islām, and that therefore India was not technically *dār al-ḥarb*, then the orthodox automatically became guilty of rebellion. This was not only a political crime but a sin as well. Besides, in the context of a discussion so basically theological, it would have to be shown that there was in existence a Muslim ruler who recognized the *sharī'ah* and would have the power to enforce it, and Muslims should transfer their allegiance to him and fight on his behalf; otherwise all armed opposition could be construed as rebellion and not *jihād*.

A statement by Shāh Ismā'īl Shahīd (1781-1831) offers another illustration of how subservience to precedents embarrassed and frustrated even those who had the moral courage to fight against a rotten system.

'We ought to know that the despotic sulṭān is a person on whom his lower self (*nafs-i-ammārah*) has obtained ascendancy to such a

[2] Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, *Fatāwā'-i-'Azīzī*, Maṭba' Mujtabā'ī, Delhi, 1311 A.H. Vol. I, p. 17.

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degree that no fear of the Creator even is left, who feels no shame before men, and who does what he wants without any regard for the *sharī'ah* and for custom. . . . It is such people whose government I call despotism and whom I call despots. . . . Their desires differ because human dispositions are different. Some are afflicted with pride and haughtiness, some with the waywardness of majesty, some revel in cruelty and excesses, some in various kinds of immorality. . . . When such people attain the position of rulers, shrewd men who see which way the wind is blowing gather around them, and encourage the type of lasciviousness to which they see the rulers predisposed. They consider it an art with manifold aspects, and cultivate this art to the limit of perfection. The sulṭans, on their part, choose such people as their courtiers. Thus the person who is a loose-liver, shameless, adept in mimicry and deception, a singer or an instrument player, becomes the royal favourite and the great man of the court. Because this kind of indulgence entails much expenditure, money is collected by extortion from the people. . . . The subjects are treated with cruelty and the sulṭān, being engrossed in his dissipations, cannot dispense justice . . . This domination of immorality and injustice is a curse for the (Muslim) community and the people. It is for this reason that men who are wise and upright keep as far away as possible from the sulṭāns of their time, avoid associating with them, do not try to win their confidence. They consider gifts from them a source of evil; they do not sacrifice the tranquillity of their hearts and attend to the betterment of their (position in) after-life, for if they win the confidence of sulṭāns they will have to abandon religion and faith. . . . The pride of the despots is such that they consider all, big and small alike, as beneath them . . . regarding themselves as above others in their general behaviour, in the terms in which they are to be addressed and the respect which they are to receive. They are offended at anyone sharing what they have appropriated to themselves. They exclude (every form of) equality. If they themselves sit on thrones, they forbid others to sit on them; when they are seated, no one else in their assembly can sit; they punish severely anyone who uses, even for their sons, terms or titles which they have appropriated to themselves, such as *sulṭān, shāh, malik, ḥuḍūr-i-aqdas*. In brief, what they desire is that they should not be regarded as ordinary human beings . . . going to the extent of claiming to be gods and prophets.

'We ought to know that despotism, the characteristics of which have been stated above, is of two kinds. The first kind is that in which the despot, in spite of the boldness and impertinence described above, has also some faith and performs good works. He performs these works in a manner not permitted by the *sharī'ah*, but his motive

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is to win God's favour. Just as he spends his income and his buried treasures on the fulfilment of his desires, he also builds a mosque which is graceful, refined, gilded, ornamented, neat and clean and adorned with inlay, and he deems this to be worship with wealth. Although the construction of such a mosque is to be counted as extravagance, which is disapproved by the *sharī'ah* and is not acceptable to God, but (he does it) because he thinks the meaning of 'spending for the sake of God' is that the more he spends on objects approved by the *sharī'ah*, the more he will be liked by God and be acceptable to Him.

'The other kind of despot is he who does not have enough fear of God in his heart to perform the commandments of the *sharī'ah* with sincerity. Instead, he performs them as if they were customs or habits, or to earn a good name among his contemporaries or to excel his predecessors. He regards this as something appertaining to his dignity and majesty. For this reason, just as the act of the first kind of sulṭān was praiseworthy because of its motive but meriting rejection because of what it was in itself, the act of this second kind of sulṭān is to be rejected on both grounds. . . . The first kind of despot counts himself as one of the Muslims, and sometimes his heart is filled with regard for the honour of the Dignified Faith and the *Explicit Sharī'ah*, and he strives to exalt the word of God. For this reason, obedience to him is one of the basic doctrines of Islām, and to support him is to support the Prophet. . . . Such a despot without doubt stands in need of admonition, and to declare the Truth before him is one of the highest forms of worship. But he should be asked to do what is good in a way that does not approach the limit of opposition and dispute or touch the boundaries of rebellion and attack, for it is not permitted by the *sharī'ah* to attack the *Imām*. . . . The term absolute state or absolute government means the (second) type of despotism mentioned above. When such a government is established, its laws gradually take a form opposed to the laws of the *sharī'ah*, the decrees of the sulṭān flagrantly contravene the ordinances of God, many things which are forbidden by the *sharī'ah* are permitted by the laws of the sulṭān and vice versa. For instance, many of the royal titles, the ceremonial and the festivities of the court . . . are all forbidden by the *sharī'ah* and obligatory according to the laws of the sulṭāns. In the same way, there is a difference in the punishments for many crimes. For instance, the punishment for theft prescribed by the *sharī'ah* is cutting off of the hand, and according to the law of the sulṭān, killing or imprisonment. All the brothers of the sulṭān are, according to the *shar'*, co-heirs of the property left by their father, but they are denied this by the laws of the sulṭān. The *bait al-māl*, according to the *shar'*, belongs to the generality of

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Muslims, but according to the law, it belongs to the sulṭān. Besides, such despots are able to find masters of the art (whom these despots call their tutors) who write books in accordance with their wishes and legalize all things, as for instance, *'A Book showing that the Use of Silk for Clothing was Permitted'* and *'Sijdah'-i-ta'ẓīmī'*[2a]. The *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī* is a very comprehensive book representing this art. On the whole, the policies of kings constitute a religion, and this religion is not Islām, and those who follow it are a community following a false religion, like the Hindūs and the Magians. The Shī'ahs and the Khārijīs, for instance, although their beliefs are false, none the less claim that they rely on the Book and the *sunnah*, but the laws of the sulṭāns do not even rely on the Book and the *sunnah*. . . . Since we cannot definitely state that these sulṭāns have become *kāfirs*, it behoves the man who is particular about the lawfulness of his actions not to take the initiative in attacking or rebelling against these sulṭāns, but he should not consider anyone who takes such action to be culpable. Rebellion against and attacking a misguided *Imām* is forbidden, therefore the government of these (sulṭāns who are despots of the second kind) has also to be regarded as a type of *Imāmat*.

'As compared to these despots, the sulṭān who is a *muqallid*[3] . . . is nearer to the Muslim community. One must be careful in opposing or provoking conflict with him. If anyone opposes him and rebels against him, he will not be open to condemnation according to the *shar'* but, considering the prevailing conditions, his action will be inopportune. However, if it is certain that after overturning this kind of government a Pious Khilāfat or a Just State will be established, then raising the standard of bloodshed and deposing the heretical and misguided sulṭān will lead to the welfare of the (Muslim) community and its members. Otherwise it will certainly harm both the high and the low.

'Sulṭāns who are Muslim in name but in fact have become utter *kāfirs* bent on disgracing Islām through every word and deed . . . are a type of arrogant *kāfirs*, *zindīqs* and apostates. It is a basic doctrine of Islām to carry on a *jihād* against them, and to insult them is to honour and praise the Prophet. Their government absolutely cannot be considered any kind of *Imāmat'*. (The authority quoted for this is the *ḥadīth*: 'Ubādah bin al-Ṣamit says that the Prophet took the *bai'ah* from us on the conditions that we would

[2a] Prostration as a token of reverence.

[3] This term is explained in detail and with many illustrations. The *sulṭān-i-muqallid* is one who has inherited a system of government that is unlawful, and, in spite of realizing this, adheres to it because he has not the courage or the power to alter it basically.

obey the *Imām* in all situations and all conditions of life, leave government and (political) leadership to those entrusted with it and never raise disputes in this regard except when acts of *kufr* by the *Imām* became patent, the proof of which is found in the Book of God')[4].

Such expression of opinion, even when strong language was used, remained academic and created confusion where it should have offered guidance. Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd considered the creation or discovery of territory that could be called *dār al-amn* essential to make *jihād* legal and legitimate. Since India had become *dār al-ḥarb*, *jihād*, according to him, would in this country become mere rebellion. He was for six years in the camp of Amīr 'Alī Khān. What drew Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd to him was his independent position and his possession of an army of 8,000 men. When Amīr 'Alī Khān came to terms with the British, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd left him and began to search for a free territory where he could establish a centre for his movement, ultimately selecting the north-west frontier for this purpose. Once, when addressing the people of this area, he said:

'While in India I thought of a place of peace where I could take Muslims and organize *jihād*. In spite of its extent of hundreds of miles, I could not find a place to which I could migrate. There were many who advised me to carry on *jihād* in India, promising to provide me with whatever was necessary by way of material, treasure and weapons. But I could not agree to this, for *jihād* must be in accordance with the *sunnah*. Mere rebellion was not intended'[5].

Thus the weakest point in the orthodox position was the logical compulsion to prove that the enemy, whether the effete Mughal Emperor or the East India Company, was a religious enemy, a *kāfir*, a *mushrik*, and that *jihād* against this enemy had been organized in accordance with the law. This itself was difficult, if the opposite party or its supporters were given a hearing. But in any case, the use of these theological terms was crippling. The Muslims could not form enduring political alliances with people who did not belong to the proper theological category on the basis of equality and fraternity[6]. The terms *kāfir* and *mushrik* were used not only to define beliefs but to indicate the attitude which Muslims should adopt, *kāfir* in particular being so elaborated as to include not only unbelievers but even those Muslims whose views regarding the personality and character of the first two Pious Khalīfahs did not

[4] Shah Isma'īl Shahīd, *Manṣab-i-Imāmat*, Matba'-i-Fārūqī, Delhi. Year of publication not given.

[5] Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, *Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd*. Kitāb Manzil, Lahore, 1952. Vol. I, p. 277.

[6] Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 114.

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satisfy the demands of the reverence which the Sunnīs felt was absolutely due to them[7]. But, of course, we must remember that Ḥanafī orthodoxy was not alone in its attitude of hostile exclusiveness. Co-operation for political ends between Hindūs, Muslims and Sikhs as religious communities would not have been possible even if all the books on *fiqh* were set aside. Muslim orthodoxy was only partly responsible for the failure to present ideals and frame policies that would prevent the establishment of foreign rule, and even this partial responsibility must be assessed against the background of the struggle made by Muslim orthodoxy against foreign domination.

We have dealt at such length with the political attitude of the orthodox because of its very grave implications. In matters of belief the orthodox played an equally important part. Shāh Walīullāh was a gifted thinker and writer. But it would not be unfair to say that in his attitude towards the *sharī'ah* he was anxious above all to maintain and intensify the desire for conformity. The whole force of his argument is used to prove the practical wisdom and the spiritual necessity of believing and practising what had been enjoined in the *sharī'ah* and was, therefore, obligatory. We have treated him as a religious thinker because he widened, to some extent, the intellectual horizon of the orthodox, but there can be no doubt that he idealized the *sharī'ah* in the form in which he found it, without attempting a definition of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ*, the duties and the social virtues that would help the Indian Muslims to fulfil their moral and spiritual function when Muslim states were rapidly declining.

The rigidity of the orthodox attitude was reflected in the dogmatism of the reformer, which produced conflicts that had a bitter, sectarian character. This diverted attention from the really significant issues. We have already stated that Ḥājī Sharī'attulāh attracted a large following. But he created a strong sentiment against himself by declaring that it was a deadly sin to let a midwife cut the navel cord of a new-born child. That was a Hindū custom and should not be imitated; the Muslim father should perform this operation himself.

A study of the life of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd, of which we have a fairly detailed record, reveals the responsiveness of the Muslims, rich and poor, to the magnetic power of his personality. He exhorted the people to live according to the *sharī'ah*, which meant now, as centuries earlier, to obey the law more strictly. This had a negative side, the avoidance of all that was unlawful, and also a positive side of guidance and command.

'Brethren,' Sayyid Ahmad Shahid said once to a group of two or three hundred people who had acknowledged him their spiritual guide by performing the *bai'ah*, 'the purpose of performing the

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 18, 191.

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bai'ah is that you should give up everything you do which is of the nature of polytheism or heresy, your making *ta'zīyahs*[8], setting up banners, worshipping the graves of *pīrs* and martyrs, making offerings to them and taking vows in their name. All this you should give up, and do not believe that your good and ill comes from anyone except God; do not recognize anyone but Him as having the power to grant the fulfilment of your wishes. If you continue (in the way of polytheism and heresy), merely offering *bai'ah* will bring no benefit'[9].

The effect of this aspect of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd's teaching, though perforce we have to call it negative, was tremendous. It brought release from superstitious, idiotic or economically ruinous practices, the number of which had been increasing; it promoted a rational way of looking at the affairs of life. In the field of religious observance, it swept away the objections to the performance of the pilgrimage. In social life, it initiated the struggle against the sentimental objection to widow remarriage, which had almost acquired the force of law, and it was a courageous and stimulating reaffirmation of the Islāmic doctrine of equality[10]. It began, in fact, a movement of reform whose momentum lasted for generations. The positive aspect was, by contrast, very limited. Prayers were to be offered regularly, with all the devotion and humility due from a good Muslim to his God; fasting during *Ramaḍān* was insisted upon with equal fervour. Supererogatory prayers and fasts were commended. The giving of *zakāt* was enjoined; the pilgrimage was restored to its status of a basic duty. Finally, the *jihād* also was performed. Prayer, fasting, *zakāt* and *jihād* in the context of a new life, which means a life with new political, social and economic aims and obligations, would have generated a revolutionary force. Within the intellectual and mental confines of the *fiqh*, even if its hold was somewhat loosened here and there, they turned into good habits, with the tendency to become just habits.

The theological outlook prevented the old Muslim concept of life from yielding to the pressure of new circumstances, and extending into and assimilating to itself new intellectual and emotional experiences by converting much of the energy that could have been used for other purposes into sectarian zeal. Throughout the country, differences between Shī'ahs and Sunnīs became more acute. Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānāṇ was assassinated for having made what ap-

[8] Fanciful structures, of paper and bamboo, but also of more durable material, representing the mausoleum of Imām Ḥusain, carried in procession during *Muḥarram*.

[9] Maulānā Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, *Sīrat-i-Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd*. Maktaba'-i-Islām, Lucknow. P. 184.

[10] See Maulānā Abul Ḥasan Nadwī, *op. cit.*, p. 188 ff. for some significant examples. Also Chapter XIX, below.

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peared to be derogatory remarks about the custom of keeping *ta'zīyahs*. On the other side, we find Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīs discussing the question whether Shī'ahs were *kāfirs*, apostates or just immoral, and he was among the most enlightened Sunnī *'ulamā*[11]. Even among the Sunnīs themselves there was bitter controversy between the Muqallids and the Ghair Muqallids[12], which ranged over a long period. It was alive till the first decades of the twentieth century. In the proceedings of the court[13] trying Maulwī Amīruddīn, a Wahhābī leader of Bengal, for conspiracy against the British government, it is recorded that the father of the accused, 'a broken down old man, upwards of seventy years of age . . . who appears to have thrown himself into the movement with the zeal of a new convert', embraced his son when the sentence of transportation had been passed against him. 'My son,' he cried out, 'never forsake *Āmīn* and *Raf'-i-yadain*[14]. Keep firm in the faith. It is not Christians and Jews who have destroyed you, but the Ḥanafīs.'

But it would not be correct to say that orthodoxy was not capable of conceiving the Muslims as a community to be organized according to certain political principles, however much its emphasis on the strict performance of religious duty might incline us to the view. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz declared that it was abhorrent and, therefore, improper to learn English for the promotion of better relations with Englishmen, or to serve them in the capacity of *munshīs* (clerks), servants or soldiers[15]. The *jihād* of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd, directed initially against the Sikhs but intended, ultimately, to be converted into a war against the British, was carried on intermittently as a war against the British for over twenty years after they had annexed the Panjāb[16]. The activities of Dūdū Miyān, the son of

[11] Shāh 'Abdul' Azīz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 12, 18, 190.

[12] The Muqallids hold that it is essential to follow one of the four schools of *fiqh* for the proper observance of religious laws. The Ghair Muqallids do not accept this view.

[13] Home Department, Judicial, No. 202, Ct. dated Rājmaḥal, 15th November, 1870.

[14] The word *āmīn* is used in the Muslim prayer after Sūrah Fātiḥah. The point at issue was whether it should be pronounced inaudibly or audibly. The Ḥanafīs insisted that it should not be audible, the Shāfi'īs, Hambalīs and Ghair Muqallids insist that it should be pronounced aloud. The question of Raf'-i-yadain concerns the raising of the hands up to the ears not only at the beginning but also during the prayers. The Ghair Muqallids believed that the hands must be raised at certain specified points.

[15] Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, *op. cit.*, p. 195. Several sensational murders have been committed by Muslim servants who suddenly became conscious of the sinfulness of serving British masters.

[16] A full account of this is given, of course from a hostile point of view, in W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, The Comrade Publishers, Calcutta, 1945, Chapter I.

Maulānā Sharī'atullāh, founder of the Farā'iḍī sect, acquired the character of a peasants' struggle against oppression. Religious-minded Muslims, such as Maulānā Aḥmadullāh Shāh and Bakht Khan played a leading part in the upheaval of 1857-8. We have undeniable evidences both of political consciousness and ability to take organized action. Those who opposed British rule on religious grounds considered opposition a matter of duty, to be performed without regard for other interests. After the suppression of the *jihād* movement, the orthodox who honoured this tradition came again to the forefront during the first World War, under the leadership of Maulānā Maḥmūdul Ḥasan (1851-1920), who explored the possibilities of co-operation between the Muslim powers to form a united front against British imperialism, and was in consequence interned for three years in Malta along with a number of fellow-workers.

But, as indicated above, the orthodox were not all of one mind in their attitude towards British rule. Some held, on the basis of the commonly accepted texts, that as the English did not interfere with the practice of religion, it followed logically that India was *dār al-amn*, the British government was an established government, and it would be a breach of the law to rebel or create disaffection against it[17]. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad has summed up all the arguments in favour of this attitude in his *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ*[18]. According to him, since there was complete freedom of belief and practice, two parts of the Qur'ānic injunction, 'Obey God and obey the Prophet and those from amongst you who are set up in authority' were being fulfilled. As regards the third, which requires that those set up in authority must be from amongst the Muslims, he admitted there was difficulty. But he overcame it by saying (i) that in fact there were no injunctions in the Qur'ān or the law books that were applicable to the situation in which the Indian Muslims found themselves, because no such situation had arisen in the time of the Prophet and the generations immediately following, (ii) that obedience to the British government could be regarded *de facto* as based on a contract—obedience in return for security and peace, (iii) that the laws of the *sharī'ah* were not being applied as a whole, and many of them were, in practice, suspended, (iv) that by enjoining obedience to the ruler, the *sharī'ah* had itself provided for its own

[17] Maulānā 'Abdul Ḥayy, *Majmū'a-'i-Fatāwā*. Shaukat-i-Islām Press, Lucknow, 1307/1889, Vol. II, pp. 170, 245, Vol. III, p. 98. A number of *fatwās*, declaring that *jihād* was not called for, were given in the 1870s. See Hunter, *op. cit.*, Chapter III.

[18] In 3 Vols. Published by Muḥammad 'Abdul Ghaffār. Delhi, 1324/1906. Vol. II, p. 128 ff.

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suspension, so far as the Indian Muslims were concerned, and the laws of the British government were now the laws of the *sharī'ah*, (v) that obedience had become a matter of necessity, (vi) that, having regard for the shortcomings of His people, God had made due allowance for all contingencies in the verse, 'And God does not lay upon anyone a burden greater than he can bear', and, finally, (vii) that if the Muslims considered India to have become *dār al-ḥarb*, then, since they were not able to fight, it became their duty to emigrate, but this was not admitted to be necessary by any Muslim sect. On the contrary, 'You will not, from one end of India to the other, find a Muslim who does not love the British administration from the bottom of his heart'.

It cannot be denied that this mixture of commonsense, casuistry and intellectual frivolity does, in fact, reflect the attitude most prevalent from about 1875 till the Balkan wars of 1912-13. There was then an upsurge of Islāmic and Pan-Islāmic sentiment. In 1913, Maulānā Shaukat 'Alī proposed the establishment of the Anjuman Khuddām-i-Ka'bah, and invited the *'ulamā* to participate. This was the beginning of the generality of the *'ulamā*'s formal participation in Indian politics in their capacity of religious leaders. We have referred to Maulānā Maḥmudul Ḥasan's project of a united Muslim front against British imperialism. After his release in 1919, he joined the Khilāfat and Non-cooperation movement. The nationalist *'ulamā* constituted themselves into the Jam'īyat-i-'Ulamā-i-Hind, and the first public session of this body was held at Amritsar in December, 1919. To most it seemed a very hopeful sign that the *'ulamā* were active in the political field. In fact, it showed that the *'ulama* were separate from the generality of the Muslims, and could endorse as well as disagree with the decisions of other Muslim and Indian organizations. One disastrous mistake made in the following year showed where undisciplined religious fervour could lead to. The idea was mooted that, if the British failed to do justice to the Sulṭān of Turkey, the Khalīfah, Muslims should migrate to the nearest *dār al-Islām*, Afghānistān. This fantastic suggestion was taken up, Maulānā 'Abdul Bārī issued a *fatwā* recommending such *hijrah*[19]. About 18,000 Muslims sold what they had with the resolve to migrate, and many more might have joined the movement if the Afghān government had not placed restrictions on the entry of immigrants. This was nothing short of ruin for the 18,000 families, and though the Khilāfatists did what they could to mitigate the sufferings of those who survived and returned to their homes, it did not serve as

[19] Qāḍī 'Abdul Ghaffār, *Ḥayāt-i-Ajmal*, Anjuman Taraqqī Urdū, Aligarh, 1950. P. 221.

a reminder that religious ardour needs to be tempered with sober thought[20].

The participation of the *'ulamā* heightened the religious colour of the Khilāfat movement. After its collapse, there was division among the ranks of the *'ulamā*, as among the Muslims in general, but what was deemed to be the religious aspect of every issue continued to be emphasized. However, as it became more and more evident that Indians would acquire political rights and India would become free, an answer to the question of what the position of the Muslims in a free India would be became urgent. The Jam'īyat-i-'Ulamā-i-Hind, in spite of occasional differences, continued to co-operate with the Congress, and its leaders were so sure of their ground that they could meet the challenge of those who opposed nationalism for communal or religious reasons. Some of the *'ulamā* joined the Muslim League. After 1940, when the Muslim League had adopted the ideal of Pakistan, the question of giving political form to the separateness supposed to be required by orthodoxy came actively under discussion. One of the results was that attempts were made to define the concept of the Islāmic state and determine its administrative structure. The most complete definition of orthodoxy and of the administrative set-up that followed as a logical consequence, has been given by Maulānā Abul 'Alā Maudūdī, the founder of the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī.

Maulānā Maudūdī categorically rejects the Western view of life, and the moral, social and political values it claims to represent. His reasoning is apparently sound, and would convince anyone who knew the West only from hearsay and did not feel the need to understand Muslim and Indian history or to face the facts of contemporary life. The positive aspect of Maulānā Maudūdī's teaching is that Islām embodies the highest spiritual, moral, social and political values. He contrasts the Muslim prayer with other forms of worship and of meditation on God, he analyses the significance of the Muslim fast of Ramaḍān, and affirms that while a man can be selected for the civil service of a country and be successful in his career, no matter how dirty his private life is, there is power in the type of faith inculcated by Islām to keep men steadfastly on the path of justice, truth, awareness and worship of God and virtuous conduct, and to induce them to perform the stupendous task of reforming the world, the difficulties and responsibilities of which non-Muslims cannot dare even to contemplate[21]. He begins a discussion of Islāmic civilization with the thesis that the constituent elements of a

[20] *India in* 1920. Superintendent, Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1921. Pp. 51-3.

[21] Maulānā Maudūdī, *Islāmī 'Ibādat par ek Taḥqīqī Naẓar*. Maktaba Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, Dār al-Islām, Jamālpūr, Paṭhānkōṭ. Pp. 19-20.

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civilization are the concepts in regard to worldly affairs and the aim and purpose of life, the fundamental beliefs, the personal culture and the ideal of a political, social and economic order. Identifying the Islāmic faith with Islāmic civilization, he comes to the conclusion that no civilization has these elements in the same form as Islām, nor is there anywhere else an example of a similar combination of the various elements. As the subject of discussion—or rather, exposition—is really the Islāmic faith, and civilization is only a corollary of the faith, assertion and proof go merrily hand in hand, without any regard whatsoever for thirteen hundred years of Muslim history, the degradation of the Muslims everywhere in the world in the nineteenth century, and their admitted backwardness in the twentieth. The statement that no other culture or civilization has so thoroughly permeated life as the Islāmic is, however, a fatal slip[22]. Any reference to history or actual fact is incompatible with the method Maulānā Maudūdī has adopted, because it leads to complete disillusionment. Otherwise the Maulānā's position is unassailable so far as the Muslim is concerned, for disagreement would oblige the Muslim to declare that Islām is not a perfect system, or even if theoretically perfect, is in some way or other inapplicable to modern circumstances. To the logical and dogmatic mind the essential wisdom of setting history aside because it creates unnecessary confusion[23] is as obvious as the foolishness of this method is to anyone who has a knowledge of history and a proper regard for the value of human experience. Maulānā Maudūdī's teachings have to be accepted *in toto* or set aside without argument as creating an impossible situation.

That they create an impossible situation is very clear. Islām does not admit of any division of life into secular and religious, social and political affairs. An Islāmic state is not a matter of choice or expediency. It is fundamental to the Islāmic way of life. This state, according to Maulānā Maudūdī, has to be theo-democratic, with God as the sovereign, His law as the public and private law, with the individual citizen holding the position of His *khalīfah* on earth, and helping equally with all other citizens in the maintenance of the *sharī'ah*. The political ruler will be elected on the ground of his faith being purest and his conduct most righteous. But any canvassing for election will disqualify him. He will be advised by a Consultative

[22] Maulānā Maudūdī, *Islāmī Tahdhīb aur uske Uṣūl-ō-Mabādī*, p. 312. Markazī Maktabah Jama'at-i-Islāmī, Lahore.

[23] In the introductory part of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, and in his book on *Pardah* (Markazī Maktabah Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, Rāmpūr) Maulānā Maudūdī has, however, applied the historical method. The disregard of history, where he does disregard it must, therefore, be deliberate.

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Assembly which shall have no parties. It will make laws in matters not covered by the *sharī'ah*, and all matters in which a doubt arises as to whether they are covered by the *sharī'ah* or not will be referred to a sub-committee of the Consultative Assembly which shall consist only of *'ulamā*. The judges will be appointed by the administration, but as their function will be to decide cases according to the law of God, they will not be subject to any authority after their appointment. Finally, the Islāmic state cannot be delimited. It cannot have geographical frontiers. Any Muslim anywhere will be entitled to its citizenship[24].

This is a straightforward statement, of the kind that has a fatal attraction for those who are ignorant of political procedure and the facts of political life. How can a Muslim say that God is not the sovereign, that the ruler should not be a person of exemplary virtue, that the Consultative Assembly should violate through its own legislation the eternal laws of God, that every citizen should not consider himself God's vice-regent on earth and devote his life to the service of God, that artificial barriers between true believers should be recognized and that the Muslims of the world should not form one, united, God-fearing community? Obviously, no believing Muslim could say so. And if he cannot, he has to commit himself to the position that God can exercise the functions of a human sovereign, that the leader he actually has to elect is a person of exemplary virtue, that the eternal laws of God exist in such a codified form that a Consultative Assembly would know the limits of its jurisdiction, that a citizen, however ignorant or incapable, is God's vice-regent by virtue of being a Muslim, that an administration can be built up which has to regard the profession of Islām as the qualification of citizenship. It cannot be said as yet that the doctrines of Maulānā Maudūdī have been a source of the reform of personal or public life, but they are being propagated vigorously both in Pākistān and India.

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II

Orthodoxy has always had to contend with a natural human tendency to freedom of thought, and Muslim orthodoxy has not been an exception to this rule. In India, as in the purely Muslim countries, the orthodox controlled education, and used this as a means of resisting the influx of subversive ideas. But, as we have seen, their control was never complete. There were, first, the independent *'ulamā*, who were willing to teach anyone who was willing to learn

[24] Maulānā Maudūdī, *Islām kā Siyāsī Niẓām*. Maktabah Jamā'at Islāmī Hind, Rāmpūr, U.P.

and did not look for support to the government or the educational institutions which it maintained. Secondly, there were the mystics, who acquired all the knowledge of the orthodox, but rejected their approach and attitude. Thirdly, there were men possessing secular knowledge, military scientists, astronomers, physicians, master-builders, artists and craftsmen. They combined science with 'mystery', and did not seek the support of any public system of education. We are concerned here only with the system and content of what the orthodox considered to be proper education, that is, 'Knowledge of Faith', through which they hoped to maintain true belief and make it the basis of correct practice.

Every Muslim, man or woman, must be able to recite the *kalimah*, perform the prescribed prayers and be able to read the Qur'ān. This minimum of education was imparted in the informal school known as the *maktab*, which was accommodated in a mosque or a private house. As it was considered meritorious both to impart and to receive this minimum of education, the number of *maktabs* was large and they were generally self-supporting. Those who did not study further could qualify as Muslims, but as they did not understand the Qur'ān they read, and were generally not able to read anything else, they could hardly be called literate. All *maktabs*, however, were not of the same kind. For those who belonged to the learned or well-to-do classes, the *maktab* was the first stage, and here they also learnt to write and to reckon. They were also taught Persian or Arabic or both. Those who desired higher education but did not aim at becoming *'ulamā* would be content with a little Arabic and make a wider study of Persian, while those intending to become *'ulamā* would study Arabic further, and from language go on to books of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *adab* (Arabic literature) and *tafsīr*, or commentaries on the Qur'ān. For these subjects more qualified teachers and more systematic schooling was necessary. This was provided in the *madrasahs*, which began to be established from the time of Muḥammad Ghōrī, and were considerable in number. They were not so much pious foundations as institutions in which personnel was trained for the administration of justice and the declaration of the law.

A man's knowledge was judged by the number of books he had read and the scholars under whom he had studied. The number of standard works on Arabic grammar and syntax, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and commentaries on the Qur'ān that had to be read was known, and there would be scholars in every *madrasah* who specialized in the study of particular standard works. A pupil got a certificate from his teacher for every book whose study be completed, and the academic turban was tied round his head when he had finished his studies. But all turbans were not alike. The fame of the teacher and the number

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and authority of the books studied would make a great difference.

Though the number of subjects was limited, we should not conclude that, as a consequence, education itself circumscribed the sphere of thought and interest. The *fiqh*, in particular, could be very educative in the modern sense of the term. The *Hidāyah*, for instance, consists of fifty-seven Books, which means so many different aspects of life, conduct and relationships. The first five Books deal with purification and cleanliness and the basic religious duties of prayer, fasting and the pilgrimage. Then come questions of marriage, divorce, slaves, offences and punishments under the *sharī'ah*, peace and security, taxes, *jiziyah*, *dhimmīs*, the *bait al-māl*, apostasy, rebellion, partnerships, trusts, commercial transactions, qāḍīs and the administration of justice, evidence, deposits, credit, gifts, wages, misappropriation, preemption, assessment of rents and dues from agricultural land and orchards, mortgage, capital crimes and compensation for such crimes and other losses, sanctuary and asylum, wills, eunuchs. The discussion of each question in the books of *fiqh* took the form of statements of the opinion of the learned, which were as often as not inconsistent with each other to some extent, of an indication of the direction towards which the views of the majority inclined and the view to which, in the author's opinion, preference could be given. As there were not many points about which learned opinion was unanimous, few statements were made with finality. The student could, if he chose, try to find out the opinions of other learned men not mentioned in the text which he happened to be reading, to consult the sources referred to in the text, and even think for himself. Unfortunately, it had been assumed that *ijtihād*, the formation of an opinion on the basis of independent study, was no longer proper and permissible, and the student or the qāḍī would have to follow the precedents or the generally accepted opinions of his region or particular school of thought. But even with this serious limitation the *fiqh* offered wide fields of life and activity for further study. It was really the fault of teachers and students if they did not look up from their books to see what was happening around them, and attempt in some way the adaptation of jurisprudence to actual circumstances.

We have hardly any knowledge of the organization and working of the institutions of higher learning, apart from the names of places in which these institutions were established, and occasionally the names of scholars of eminence connected with them. Giving a list of towns and institutions has no meaning. The history of orthodox education, from the point of view of the syllabus, can be divided into five periods. The first begins with the advent of the Muslim Turks and extends to the end of the fifteenth century. The syllabus during

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this period, as will be seen from the number of texts studied, was very meagre[25].

Arabic (Ṣarf and Naḥw):

Miṣbaḥ. By Imam Naṣir bin 'Abd al-Sayyid al-Mutarrizi (1144–1213 A.D.).

Kāfiyah. By Shaikh Jamaluddin abu 'Umar 'Uthman bin 'Umar, known as Ibn al-Hājib (1174–1248 A.D.). This is a condensed and extremely reliable book on Naḥw, and is regarded as an authority.

Lubb al-Albāb. An abridgement of *Kāfiyah*, with a supplement. By Qāḍī Naṣiruddin Baiḍāwī (d. 1286 A.D.).

Irshād. By Qāḍī Shihābuddīn Daulatābādī (d. 1445).

Fiqh:

Hidāyah. By Burhānuddīn 'Alī bin abu-Bakr al-Marghīnānī (d. 1196 A.D.).

Uṣūl-i-Fiqh (Principles of Fiqh):

Al-Manār. By Hāfiẓuddīn 'Abdullah bin Ahmad al-Nasafī (d. 1310 A.D.).

Uṣūl-i-Bazūdī. By Fakhr al-Islām 'Alī bin Muḥammad Bazūdī (1010–1089 A.D.).

Hadith:

Mashāriq al-Anwār. By Imām Raḍīuddīn Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al-Saghānī (d. 1252 A.D.).

Maṣābih al-Sunnah. By Imām Ḥusain Muḥammad Mas'ud al-Farā al-Baghwī (d. 1122 A.D.).

Manṭiq (Logic):

Sharḥ Shamsiyah. *Shamsiyah* is a concise work written by Najmuddīn 'Umar bin 'Alī al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī (d. 1099 A.D.). It was studied with the help of its commentaries, one by Quṭubuddīn Maḥmūd bin Muḥammad al Rāzī (d. 1364–5) and another by Sa'aduddīn Mas'ud bin 'Umar al-Taftāzānī (d. 1389 A.D.).

Kalām (Scholastics, Dialectics):

Sharḥ-i-Ṣaḥā'if. By Al-Samarqandī.

Tamhīd fi Bayān al-Tawḥīd (*Tamḥīd* Abu Shakūr Sālimī). By Abu Shakūr Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Sayyid al-Sālimī.

Adab (Literature):

Muqāmāt. By Al-Ḥarīrī (1054–1122 A.D.).

Taṣawwuf (Mysticism):

'Awārif al-Ma'ārif. By Shaikh Shihabuddīn Suhrawardī (d. 1234 A.D.).

[25] The details of the syllabuses given are based on Maulānā 'Abdul Ḥayy's article, included in Maulwī abul Hasanāt Nadvī's book, *Hindustān kī Qadīm Islāmī Darsgāheṇ*. Ma'ārif Press, A'zamgarh.

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Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam. By Muḥiyuddīn ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240 A.D.).
Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ. By Imām Ghazalī (1058–1111). A commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam.*
Lama'āt Fi'l-Ḥikmat. Shaikh Fakhruddīn al-'Irāqī (d. 1287).
Certain additions were made in Sikandar Lodi's reign, specially in the syllabus of *Hadith.* This marks the second period in the history of orthodox education. Towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the syllabus was again expanded and some books on philosophy and medicine were introduced. The high-water mark of orthodox education was the syllabus of Maulānā Niẓāmuddīn, known as the *Dars-i-Niẓāmī,* introduced in the middle eighteenth century. This was the fourth period. The fifth and last period coincides more or less with the expansion of English education and the influx of western knowledge and ideas, when even the extremists were forced gradually to admit that orthodox education was inadequate. In fact, and mainly because of the capacity of the orthodox to isolate themselves from the life around them, it had become irrelevant.

The *Dars-i-Niẓāmī,* which represents the most comprehensive form of orthodox education, was organized as follows:

Arabic (Ṣarf and Naḥw):

The number of books for the teaching and learning of arabic was considerably increased. Several of these were by Indian authors and, therefore, better suited to serve as text-books.

Logic (Manṭiq):
Sughrā, and *Kubrā.* By Sayyid Sharīf (d. 1413 A.D.).
Īsāghōjī. By Imam Athīruddīn Abharī (d. 1261 A.D.).
Tahdhīb, and *Sharḥ-i-Tahdhīb.* By 'Abdullah Yezdī.
Qutbī. By Quṭubuddīn Rāzī.
Mīr Sullam al-'Ulūm. By Muḥibbullah al-Bihārī (d. 1708 A.D.).

Philosophy (Ḥikmat):
Maibadhi. By Ḥusain bin Mu'īnuddīn al-Maibadhī.
Ṣadrā. By Sadruddīn Shīrāzī.
Shams-i-Bāzighah. By Muḥammad Maḥmūd Jaunpūrī.

Mathematics (Riyāḍī):
Khulāṣa al-Ḥisāb. By Bahā'uddīn.
Taḥrīr-i-'Uqlaidis.
Tashriḥ al-Aflāk.
Risāla Qawshijīyah.
Sharḥ-i-Chaghmīnī.

Rhetoric (Balāghat):
Mukhtaṣar Ma'ānī. By Sa'duddīn Taftāzānī (d. 1389 A.D.).
Muṭawwal. By Sa'duddīn Taftāzānī.

Fiqh:

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Sharḥ-i-Waqāyah (first two parts). By 'Allāmā Zainuddīn Junaid bin al-Shaikh al-Sandal al-Hanafī.

Hidāyah (last two parts). By Burhānuddīn 'Alī bin Abu-Bakr al-Marghīnānī.

Principles of Fiqh ('Uṣūl-i-Fiqh):

Nūr al-Anwār. By Mullā Jīwan, the teacher of the Emperor Aurangzēb.

Scholastics and Dialectics (Kalām):

Sharḥ-i-'Aqā'id-i-Nasafī. By Taftazani.

Sharḥ-i-'Aqā'id-i-Jalālī. By Muḥammad bin Asad Sīddīqī Dawānī.

Mīr Zāhid. By Mīr Zāhid Harwī.

Sharḥ-i-Mawāqif. By Sayyid Sharīf (d. 1413 A.D.).

Commentary (Tafsīr):

Jalālain. Both the parts of the Commentary, the first of which is by Jalāluddīn Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Shāfi'ī (d. 1459 A.D.), and the second by Jalāluddīn 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Abu Bakr al-Suyūtī (d. 1505 A.D.).

Baiḍāwī. By Qāḍī Naṣīruddīn Abu Sa'īd 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar al-Baiḍāwī.

Hadīth:

Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ. By Shaikh Walīuddīn Abu 'Abdullāh al-Khaṭīb.

The most notable changes in this syllabus appear to be a greater emphasis on the literary and cultural aspects of education, *fiqh* being taught less as jurisprudence and more for the proper performance of ritualistic and ceremonial duties. This course laid the foundation for the apologetics that became more and more prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The idea that education was the basis for the propagation of beliefs and particularly interpretations of beliefs is very old among the Muslims, and it was a healthy reaction to the break-up of the Mughal Empire that the number of educational institutions increased. The *Dars-i-Niẓāmī* was criticized later for having included only the most difficult books, or books that presented subjects in a very condensed form, for having overemphasized the study of logic and philosophy, and by comparison neglected *Ḥadīth* and Literature. On the other hand, it has been praised for including works of Indian Muslim scholars and for having so organized its courses that a young man could graduate at the age of sixteen or seventeen and be intellectually equipped for the further study of any subject. The praise was not unjustified, for distinguished graduates of Firaṅgī Mahal established their own institutions for teaching the *Dars-i-Niẓāmī* in different parts of the country.

Soon after 1857, Ḥāfiẓ Sayyid 'Ābīd Ḥusain, Maulānā Mahtāb

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'Alī and Shaikh Nihāl Aḥmad started a *maktab* in the Jāmi' Masjid of Dē'oband, which developed within ten years into a *Dār-al 'Ulūm*, an institution of higher learning. Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim, to whose boldness and energy the Dār-al 'Ulūm of Dē'ōband primarily owed its existence, planned to have a network of *maktabs* in Western U.P. to serve as feeders for the Dār-al 'Ulūm, but this plan was realized only to the extent that two other institutions took root, the Maẓāhir-al 'Ulūm at Sahāranpūr and the Qāsim-al-'Ulūm at Murādābād, and they looked to the Dār-al 'Ulūm of Dē'ōband for inspiration and guidance. The Dār-al 'Ulūm was the manifestation of a militant spirit of resistance to the domination of the British and of Western culture, and was strongly animated by the desire to discard all the intellectual weapons that appeared unessential for carrying on the struggle. Though the general pattern of the *Dars-i-Niẓāmī* was followed, more emphasis was placed on the study of the *fiqh*. For a time those who considered philosophy a useless discipline had their way, but later the syllabus of the *Dars-i-Niẓāmī* in this subject was reintroduced. The reduction of the total period of study from ten years to six was wrong, but this mistake was not rectified.

In course of time it became apparent that the absence of co-ordination of any kind between religious and secular education was creating a deep rift in the Indian Muslim community. Some of the *'ulamā* felt the need of an institution where both types of education could be imparted side by side. To give practical shape to this idea, the *Majlis-i-Nadwah-al'Ulamā* was constituted in 1892, and the *Dār-al 'Ulamā* established two years later. But even those *'ulamā* who had sponsored the idea could not, when the time came, agree to providing for education in English and other secular subjects in the *Nadwah*. They succeeded in burking the issue for a number of years, agreeing, when cornered, to introduce a revised syllabus, but later evading it. Even in 1905, when Maulānā Shiblī Nu'mānī became the Education Secretary, and ordered the teaching of English, nothing was done for three years. The *'ulamā* had, in fact, conscientious scruples about spending money collected for religious education on the teaching of secular subjects. In 1908, the U.P. Government sanctioned a grant-in-aid for the provision of secular education in the *Nadwah*, and English began to be taught up to the matriculation standard. In the same year, Hindī and Sanskrit were also introduced, and a pandit was appointed to teach them. But after a few years, when Maulana Shiblī left the *Nadwah*, the classes were closed. Since then, the syllabus has been revised several times and is now about as near the *Dars-i-Niẓāmī* as it was in the beginning.

It is apparent from a glance at the syllabus during all the five

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periods that there was no material change in the approach to education, except that during the last two periods the syllabus was expanded to include texts published later, and give the student a wider knowledge of the old subjects. As the chances of the graduates from the *madrasahs* getting employment under the government diminished rapidly, the expansion of the syllabus may have been due to a desire to make education itself more worth while. The addition of *munāẓirah*[26] to the subjects in the fifth period shows that orthodoxy was on the defensive, but there is hardly any change that indicates awareness of contemporary conditions. Orthodoxy protected itself by seeking isolation from the outside world, and by attempting to keep those who recognized its prerogatives aloof from contemporary knowledge. It inculcated, through its education, a suspicion and supercilious disdain for systems of ideas based on the relativity of truth, and refused to consider the implications of scientific discoveries and technical inventions.

But it was one of the functions of the *'ulamā* to preach. There was danger of deviations from the *sharī'ah* taking root, and these deviations were based on the tendencies as well as the exigencies of modern life. The *'ulamā* could not, therefore, avoid references to contemporary circumstances, and commonsense could not be excluded from religious discussion. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's *'Al Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ'*, which we have referred to already, aimed at ensuring peace and spiritual satisfaction by fitting the *sharī'ah* into contemporary life or contemporary life into the *sharī'ah*, whichever seemed more feasible. It was meant to be a compendium of information, accessible to anyone who desired any kind of guidance[27], and Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad added notes and observations of his own wherever he felt it to be necessary. This was not a new kind of venture, if we consider the problems discussed and the authorities quoted, but it had the distinction of being an attempt to bring the *sharī'ah*, its doctrines and laws, within reach of the common man's intelligence. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's general attitude was anti-intellectual. He insisted on unconditional belief in Islāmic doctrine and the performance of prescribed duties. He did not bring the wrath of God down on those impudent enough to speculate independently,

[26] Theological disputation.

[27] A compendium of the same kind, *Bihishtī Zewar*, was written for women by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī. A section for men was added later. In a way it is more comprehensive than *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ'*, because it includes a primer, easy lessons in the form of stories, instructions about writing letters, recipes for the dishes prepared in middle class households, medicines and methods for preparing them and useful advice for cultured life. The *Bihishtī Zewar*, begun in 1902 and published about the same time as *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ'*, was more widely utilized.

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but he did create a prejudice against them. He was sure that all the objections and doubts of these dissidents in regard to generally accepted beliefs arose because, out of conceit, they assumed their knowledge to be all-comprehending, their intelligence to be perfect, their minds capable of approaching the highest matters. They forgot the verse of the Qur'ān, 'You have been given but a small part of knowledge'. If they did not understand anything, then, instead o admitting the shortcomings of their own intellect, they began to challenge and deny it. Man will never know anything about his soul, and God has forbidden inquiry and investigation into its nature. 'How can one who knows so little about himself dabble with divine mysteries, which are beyond number? If he does so, he is just being crazy'. There is nothing among the wonders of creation which philosophers can explain with any degree of certainty; but they do make guesses, such as that the primeval ancestors of man must have been monkeys. As regards the new sect of *Nēcharīs*—meaning Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and those who thought like him—they say they cannot understand and, therefore, cannot believe all this stuff about the angels, the jinns and the devil, about miracles, about prayers producing results, about sins leading to visitation from heaven, about heaven and hell and *qiyāmat* (the Day of Judgement) being exactly as described in the books on religion, about creation having taken place in the way described in the revealed books. 'We must say we cannot understand how, in spite of believing in God, he (the *nēcharī* or the philosopher) has the right to be surprised at or to disbelieve any of these things'. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's advice to the sensible and God-fearing Muslim was, 'Don't let your faith be shaken. . . . Just as we do not strain our eyes to see in the dark, we must not strain our minds to discover the deep secrets of God's wisdom'[28]. But he was not opposed to the exercise of intelligence when basic beliefs were not under discussion. Muslims must use the freedom that has been granted to them to study the sciences, as the Europeans were doing[29]. He also deplored the inadequacy and irrelevance of the syllabus of the theological institutions. In other words, he was inconsistent, but with the best of intentions. And he tainted his orthodoxy by holding that the laws of the *sharī'ah* in regard to interest must, considering all circumstances, be so interpreted as 'to kill the snake without breaking the stick'. 'The best argument we can think of is that the injunctions regarding interest were not meant for us at all. There are so many injunctions of the *sharī'ah* that we have to consider now as suspended'[30].

[28] Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 16 ff.
[29] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 214, Vol. III, p. 144.
[30] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 440.

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What is this *sharī'ah* that has to be followed all the way and may still be evaded or explained away, 'considering all circumstances'? The *sharī'ah*, according to Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad, is the law of Islām, and its purpose is to maintain peace in the world. It is based on the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, and the *sunnah* includes the conduct and the sayings of the Prophet, of the Companions and those who had opportunity of being with the Companions. But Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad admits that if all these are followed, the Muslims are, as it were, 'caught in a vice', and can only adopt the principle of *taqlīd*. If there are differences of opinion, reference must be made to the Qur'an. This was, again, nothing new, and the *ḥīlah-i-shar'ī* (theological subterfuge) was an old device for getting round the most direct and obvious injunctions of the *sharī'ah*. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad made it quite plain that the government and laws of God were similar in kind to human government and law, but only more perfect and all-comprehending, because they regarded not only acts but intentions, and, therefore, correct belief and honest motives were most important in religion. This view may or may not have produced a greater desire for orthodoxy; on the other hand, a human law that can be disregarded with impunity ceases to command respect, and if Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's analogy were accepted, the same rule would become operative in the case of the *sharī'ah* laws. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was called a *kāfir* by the *maulwīs* for having adopted the English style of dressing and eating, 'but they could do him no harm'[31]. This could serve as a precedent for others also, and they could say that they were 'simple and straightforward' Muslims like Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad himself[32], and would come to no harm if they refused to follow this or that traditional practice.

This rather detailed discussion should not convey the impression that the *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ* is an authoritative work. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's intention was to popularize knowledge about the *sharī'ah*, and he often deprived the discussion of intellectual dignity by using idioms and similes that were too 'popular', such as saying that, from the *sharī'ah* point of view, a new kind of Islām, 'half partridge and half quail', had become operative, or that the *sharī'ah* had been eaten up by white ants in many places[33]. But, along with the *sharī'ah* he also popularized the view that those who did not pay any heed to the circumstances of life and were unrelenting in their orthodoxy would not be able to maintain their position. His

[31] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 381-2. The term *maulwī* came into use in the nineteenth century instead of the old term *'alim* (pl. *'ulamā*).

[32] 'I advise all my Muslim brethren to be simple and straightforward like me.' *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 217.

[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 128 and 440.

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work reflected quite faithfully the illogical position that the Indian Muslims had come to adopt. They regarded orthodoxy as an ideal, meaning that Islām was the best and the only true religion, that life according to the *sharī'ah* was the ideal life, and that one should try to follow the commandments of the *sharī'ah* as far as possible, frankly admitting shortcomings, errors and omissions. The extreme, or logical point of view, also continued to be represented and has, as we have seen, now found expression in the writings of Maulānā Maudūdī.

In the second decade of this century, Maulana Muḥammad Ilyās initiated a movement with all the humility that should distinguish sincere moral effort[34]. Its aim, roughly, is to make Muslims aware of Islām ideologically and socially. Its method consists in giving social form to one or two questions and requests—they could be summarized as 'Do you know—? May I tell you—? Shall we say (or do) it together?' Concretely, filling up the blanks, 'Do you know how to pray? If not, may I tell you how to do it? Shall we pray together?' It may have been the intention of Maulānā Ilyās to eradicate ignorance or to challenge and overcome indifference among the educated, whether *'ulamā* or otherwise, towards their ignorant brethren. The two aims could not really be separated. He himself, a weak and ailing man, kept alive by the fire of his zeal, was a poor exponent of ideas; it was mainly his transparent earnestness and complete dedication that spoke for him and found him supporters and followers. He is credited with having revolutionized the life of the Mēwātīs, who were notorious thieves and robbers, entirely ignorant of their religion and following customs that were not only opposed to the *sharī'ah* but reprehensible in themselves. It was as much an achievement, however, to have awakened the *'ulamā* and the 'educated' Muslims to a consciousness of Islām being a social religion in which individuals supported the community and the community supported the individuals in a common effort to provide basic knowledge of Islām to all. The emphasis throughout has been on 'movement', on constantly increasing the circle of those interested in and co-operating with it, on people constituting themselves on their own initiative into self-supporting 'missions' for touring the countryside as well as the towns. The humility, goodwill and tolerance of those participating in the 'movement' has been such as to circumvent all opposition, and their zeal such that 'missions' have

[34] This account is based partly on an exposition of the nature of the movement by Dr Zakir Husain, who participated in it himself, on Maulānā Abul Ḥasan 'Ali's book, '*Maulānā Ilyās aur unkī Taḥrīk*' and partly on personal knowledge. A distinctive feature of the movement is that ideas are evolved out of practice, and sensational publicity is avoided.

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gone to Indonesia and Japan in the east and the United States in the west. There are two great dangers, however, which the movement faces. The lesser one is that the educated and well-to-do will join it and make participation in its activities into a social fashion. The other and far greater danger is that it will restrict the conception of the Islāmic way of life to recitation of the *kalimah*, prayer and fasting, and will not establish itself on such a concept of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ* (good works) as can stimulate people to utilize their particular aptitudes and vocations for the attainment of social and spiritual ideals. But the movement is growing and its implications unfolding themselves. Any predictions of possible failure will be unfair and unjustified.

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CHAPTER XIX

STATESMEN AND ADMINISTRATORS

I

ḤAIDAR 'ALĪ

IN the last decade of the seventeenth century, a kind of numbness had begun to creep over the body and members of the Mughal empire, due most probably to the exasperating futility of the last phase of Aurangzēb's Deccan wars. Aurangzēb's death in 1707 was followed by a civil war. Bahādur Shāh, who succeeded, had grown old and ineffective under the eyes of a grim, suspicious and unforgiving father. He reigned for a little under five years, and the candidates for the throne after him were creatures of ambitious noblemen. The situation grew worse with the conflicts among the high officers, who appropriated the resources of the state in order to maintain themselves and their supporters. Government became a struggle for power; policy degenerated into intrigue; there was loss of aim and loss of political stature, a confusion of petty interests which throttled the imagination and made honesty look ridiculous. Then, in 1739, Nādir Shāh invaded India, and plundered Delhi. Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī began his inroads in 1748. They were successful as military exploits, but seemed to have no political policy behind them, and Aḥmad Shāh became just another party to a meaningless conflict.

The Marhattas under Shivājī had risen against the Mughal empire. They introduced a new technique in warfare against which armies that represented an established political order were almost helpless. But in the event it became gradually clearer that this warfare was an end in itself, that the empire it aimed at undermining and destroying would not be replaced by a better or even a different order. It is a matter of history that the Marhattas failed to produce the statesman possessing the ability or even the ambition to establish his rule over the whole country, to adopt or adapt the existing system of administration, to build up a new empire on the ruins of the old. The first phase of self-assertion under Shivaji was followed by a period of determined struggle for existence against the Mughal

empire. Then came expansion under the Pēshwās and, in 1758, Marhatta armies swept up to the Indus at Attock. But they were not the forces of an expanding administration. They represented power but not responsibility. The Marhattas fought wars that were not inspired by any ultimate objective of stability and peace; they created or utilized divisions among their enemies or opponents, but they did not seek for a basis of unity among their allies and supporters. In the fateful battle of Pānīpat (1761) they had no Rājpūts or Jāts on their side, and in north India their defeat did not cause even a mild regret.

The battle of Pānīpat did not, however, lead to any reconsideration of policy. The Pēshwās and the Marhatta chiefs continued their system of seasonal warfare. The central authority at Poona became gradually weaker, the chiefs more independent, the ideal of a consolidated empire bestowing all the benefits of peace a more and more remote prospect. Instead, the Marhatta armies became a force working against stability, against even the miserable peace and security which the individual rulers, big and small, were able or willing to offer to a distracted people. The chances of resisting the encroachments of the European powers were meagre enough; they vanished completely because Marhatta leaders chose to follow an incalculable policy, and most often preferred to weaken other Indian powers rather than acquire permanent strength for themselves. There can be hardly any doubt that the Marhattas could have conquered Mysore at any time between 1750 and 1772 and made this principality an integral part of their dominions. Ḥaidarābād could have been conquered earlier. These additions to their territory would have brought them into direct contact with the footholds acquired by European nations on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, and it would have made all the difference if the Marhattas, controlling the man-power and resources of the whole of the Deccan, had confronted the British and the French in the Carnatic. Their leaders did not, however, have the imagination to aspire to this role, and their policy got lost in intrigue and treachery, in small victories and indiscriminate extortions.

This has to be said because the Muslim rulers in north India were politically and morally exhausted, and the *ṣūbahdārs* of Ḥaidarābād, who were in reality independent rulers of considerable territory, became, after the death of Niẓāmul Mulk in 1748, a prey to intrigue. Niẓām 'Alī Khān, who ascended the throne in 1762, knew only how to play for safety, and he played this game without ambition, courage or scruple. The tragedy of the Marhatta leadership abdicating the rights of a brave and vigorous people in return for petty gains in territory and money becomes all the more poignant when

we realize that it deprived the only gifted and ambitious statesman this age produced of his chance to achieve greatness.

Ḥaidar 'Alī was born in 1721 or 1722 at Budikote, in the northern part of what is now the Mysore State. His family, never distinguished, had fallen upon evil days, and Ḥaidar 'Alī did not get the opportunity even for the normal minimum of education. Not that he was inclined to study. His elder brother was an officer in the Mysore army, and Ḥaidar spent his boyhood and youth riding and hunting and enjoying other forms of physical activity. He had his first experience of warfare in 1752 when, as an officer of the Mysore army, he served in the campaign to capture Trichinopoly. With his courage and quick intelligence he was bound to rise in an army that carried 10,000 torches when making a night march in order to avoid the enemy[1]. But he was shrewd enough to realize that he must build up his personal resources, and by the time the first campaign was over, he had enough money and arms of his own to be considered fit for appointment as governor of Dindigul. The Mysore state was larger then than it is today, though like all states of the time, its boundaries were partly actual and partly hypothetical. The government of Mysore had been for many years in the hands of two brothers, Dēvrāj and Nanjrāj, with the rājā as a mere figurehead. Dēvrāj was in charge of revenue and internal administration, Nanjrāj of the army and external relations. It was obvious that they had usurped the rājā's authority, and equally obvious that there was nothing to be done about it. But the brothers had become old, and could no longer control administration and policy. Early in 1755, the Niẓām's armies invaded Mysore and compelled Dēvrāj to cede territory and pay an enormous sum of money in addition. Two years later the Marhattas overran the state, and again a demand for cession of territory and payment of cash had to be met. The government was now completely bankrupt and had lost all credit. Ḥaidar, on both occasions, came forward to help in collecting the money to be paid, and in order to reimburse the bankers who had accepted him as a surety, he had large assignments of land made to himself. He thus became the most important man in the state. He owed this position to his own ability and to the incompetence of those who occupied the seats of authority. Dēvrāj and Nanjrāj themselves being usurpers and the rājā being more 'palace' than man, the government of Mysore was the right of the person most fit to take charge. Ḥaidar was a born ruler of men, and in removing the usurpers he took no more than his due. He was not guilty of ingratitude, deception or violence. But he had been helped to acquire a

[1] N. K. Sinhā, *Ḥaidar 'Alī*. A. Mukherji & Co., Calcutta, 2nd Edition, 1949. P. 10.

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dominant position by a palace intrigue, and the leader of the clique, Khāndē Rā'ō, attempted to oust him through another, and almost equally successful intrigue. Within a year Ḥaidar 'Alī was able to retrieve his position. Khāndē Rā'ō had been in his service for a number of years before he became an officer and an intriguer at the court. Ḥaidar spared his life, but he passed the rest of it in a cage. There were no more intrigues. The rājā retained his position and his palace, and Ḥaidar 'Alī became the real ruler of what he called the 'God-given Kingdom'.

'It is most astonishing that this sovereign asks questions, gives answers, hears a letter read, and dictates an answer to another, beholds a theatrical exhibition and even seems to attend to the performance at the same time that he decides concerning things of the utmost importance'. 'There is no sovereign more easy of access . . . the *faqīrs* alone are excluded from this indulgence'[2]. On the ground that it is the duty of the powerful to see that the weak have justice, Ḥaidar 'Alī thought that there was no greater crime than that of interrupting the communication between a sovereign and his subjects[3]. His rule was real, his presence was felt in every nook and corner of his kingdom. His own alertness and interest in every detail was supported by a system of spies who reported to him every instance of irregularity and injustice. No one could disregard his orders or disobey him with impunity, and he was determined to be a good shepherd to his people. In a directive he gave to the French commandant of his forces, he indicated his ideas of dealing with cases between his Christian subjects: 'You are, doubtless, acquainted with the suit urged by the widow Meguinez against the Jesuits; and, as I wish the affair to be terminated by an equitable decision, I have fixed upon you to take cognizance of the same. . . .' The officer had doubts about his competence. But Ḥaidar 'Alī said, 'Certainly you, who are yourself a Christian, must be better acquainted with the law of the Christians than any judge in my dominions; and since my intention is that everyone shall be judged by his own law, you cannot avoid accepting this commission; but I permit you, if it be necessary, to select, as assistants, jointly with yourself, such officers of your nation and religion as you think capable of seconding your own endeavours'[4].

Ḥaidar 'Alī was suspicious of his revenue officers, and often extorted from them more than they could have earned by dishonest

[2] A Facsimile Reprint of the *History of Hyder Shah, alias Hyder Khan Bahadur, and his son, Tippoo Sultaun*, by M.M.D.L.T. 'Bangabashi' Office, Calcutta, 1908. P. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

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means. One of his dīwāns—or revenue ministers—died with honour, one survived him, one was removed and his property confiscated because he had proved incompetent and one died under torture. But dishonesty had to be rooted out, even if by violent means. And apart from any altruistic desire Ḥaidar 'Alī may have had to promote honesty, we must remember that he had to face the financial strain of constant wars, most of which were not of his making, and in which the expenditure and losses incurred far surpassed the income from spoils. But his own subjects were spared irregular exactions, a forced levy from bankers in 1780 being the only considerable exception to the rule.

It would never be safe to make a categorical statement about any Indian Muslim not being religious. Ḥaidar 'Alī was superstitious enough to consult astrologers. He circumcized some Europeans and pressed them into his service; he formed battalions of what were called *Chēlās* by converting boys of martial races, mostly the Bēdars of Chitaldrug and Nā'irs of Mālābār. This was not done with any intention of acquiring religious merit himself or conferring it on others; it was merely a drastic way of binding people to himself and his state. Ḥaidar 'Alī was sometimes fiercely vindictive, but the reasons for this were personal and political, not religious. He continued the celebration of the *Dasehra* festival. He retained the figures of Hindū deities on his coinage. His attitude in matters of religion is perhaps best illustrated by the following anecdote. A celebrated Muslim *pīrzādah*[5] once complained to him that some Hindūs of Siriṇgāpatam had beaten up his followers—who had themselves attacked a Hindū procession—and demanded redress from him as the head of a Musalmān government. But Ḥaidar 'Alī turned on him and asked, 'Who told you this was a Musalmān government?'[6]. However, on one occasion, when hard pressed, he expressed himself in a manner that could not be surpassed by the devoutest Muslim:

> 'I have had no reason to expect so numerous a combination of enemies, who, so far from being provoked, have been loaded by me with benefits; but, notwithstanding their number, I do not despair. It is the power of God that has raised me, and I possess nothing but through Him: as long as He supports me, I shall look down upon my enemies; and if He should forsake me, I must submit with resignation to His pleasure'[7].

Ḥaidar 'Alī was ambitious and possessed of incredible energy.

[5] Son of a *pīr* or saint.
[6] N. K. Sinhā, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-5.
[7] M.M.D.L.T., *op. cit.*, p. 126.

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It cannot be said that if he had had no enemies, he would have devoted himself entirely to peaceful pursuits. If he kept an army, he would have thought it a waste of resources to keep it idle. States like his 'God-given Kingdom' could not subsist altogether on their own resources, and expansion was almost a necessary condition for survival. Ḥaidar 'Alī was also too much a realist to imagine that it was possible to maintain friendly relations with his neighbours, and that plans of peaceful living would provide a concrete basis of security. Since war was inevitable, wisdom lay in being prepared, in taking the initiative when necessary and in utilizing periods when his more powerful enemies were inactive for the expansion of his territory and the consolidation of his strength. Under these circumstances, the qualities of Ḥaidar 'Alī as a commander became of decisive importance. He possessed these in ample measure. He did not lose his nerve in any crisis, and could take the most drastic measures with unruffled composure and full confidence in his judgement, as when, in 1766, the Marhattas, the Niẓām and General Smith made a concerted attack on his territories. He made a realistic appraisal of the contemporary system of warfare, military discipline, weapons and organization. He did all that was possible under the existing conditions and with the resources at his disposal to get his army trained and equipped in the fashion of European armies and to employ European—but by force of circumstances almost entirely French—officers and men in those services where experienced Indians were not available. He negotiated for men and arms with the Dutch. He did his best to create a navy. His campaigns show that his strategy and tactics were flexible, that he exercised his mind to cover up his own weakness in pitched battles as well as exploit the defects in the enemy's system, whether in speed of movement or in provision of supplies. But there were realities which could not be disguised or changed. Ḥaidar 'Alī himself had received no systematic education in military science; he had learnt by doing. The same was true of his commanders and soldiers. In spite of all the drilling that could be given in corporate action, Ḥaidar 'Alī's forces and his officers were at a great disadvantage. This explains why he was never able to obtain a decisive victory. But what he did achieve was quite remarkable.

His first participation in extraterritorial affairs was in July 1760, when the British and the French were at war, and he sent a convoy with provisions into Pondicherry after defeating a British force. His collaboration with the French was interrupted by the conspiracy of Khāndē Rā'ō, who had won the support of the Marhattas and attempted to get help from the British also. By the time Ḥaidar 'Alī had disposed of this conspiracy, the Anglo-French war had ended

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with the defeat of the French, and all that he could do was to collect competent French officers for training his army. He had now fully realized his position. He knew that the British could not be trusted, and in particular the government of Madras would remain suspicious and hostile. A strong reason for this was the influence Nawwāb Muḥammad 'Alī of Arcot had on the policy of the Madras Government, Muḥammad 'Alī being his bitterest enemy because of the support he had given to the rival claimant for the principality of Arcot. Ḥaidar 'Alī was equally certain that the Niẓām would oppose him, never openly enough and never single-handed, because that required a courage the Niẓām did not possess, but persistently and even without provocation. The grimmest reality was the southward advance of Marhatta power, which could not be restrained by any thoughtfulness on the part of the Marhatta leadership or any peaceful intentions or declarations of his own. It was obvious to Ḥaidar 'Alī that he would have to fight for survival, and he did not shirk the fight. Circumstances did not allow of any of his victories being decisive, and he was not made of the stuff that accepts defeat. But while in 1762 he had no friends, in 1780, after years of hard fighting, he was able to plan a simultaneous attack on the British with the Niẓām and the Marhattas on his side. Both his allies failed him, but it was an achievement to have brought about such a radical change in the situation.

Ḥaidar 'Alī utilized the opportunity provided by the defeat of the Marhattas at Pānīpat in 1761 and the temporary collapse that followed to extend his power to the north by occupying strategic towns and forts and establishing outposts beyond the river Tuṇgabhadrā (1761-4). All Indian territory was Marhatta territory because of a right they claimed to levy *chauth*, which means literally 'the fourth' of the revenue, and in this sense Ḥaidar 'Alī had committed an encroachment. But he would have been asked to pay *chauth* in any case for whatever territory he possessed, and it would be quite reasonable to regard these annexations of his as defensive measures. His forethought, however, was not much use. The Marhattas were far too strong for him. But the Marhatta Pēshwā, Mādhava Rā'o, in spite of his successes, concluded peace (March, 1765). Then he induced the Niẓām to join him in an offensive alliance against Ḥaidar 'Alī, which the Niẓām agreed to in the hope that the Marhattas would do the fighting and he would dictate the terms. Mādhava Rā'o opened hostilities early in 1766, but instead of crushing Ḥaidar 'Alī as he could easily have done after his successes in the field, he made peace with him in order to prevent the Niẓām from intervening (1767). Ḥaidar 'Alī, in his straits, had attempted to negotiate an alliance simultaneously with the Niẓām and the

British at Bombay and at Madras. The negotiations with Bombay proved abortive, and the Government of Madras wrote to Bombay indicating the possibility of an alliance with the Niẓām to overthrow Ḥaidar 'Alī.

As soon as the war with the Marhattas was over, Ḥaidar 'Alī turned towards Madras. The East India Company's Governor and Council here had ideas and policies with which the Governor and Council of Bombay and of Fort William (Calcutta) did not always agree, and it was only after the Regulating Act of 1773 came into force that a Governor-General was appointed and the question of having a unified policy arose. But even when each centre—Bombay, Madras, Calcutta—acted more or less independently, all had a common outlook. The only right they recognized in principle was the British right, whether of commercial supremacy, safeguarded, during the period with which we are concerned, by regional political supremacy, or of taking measures to promote their interests. It was taken for granted that the fulfilment of obligations to Indian princes and the observance of engagements and treaties was subject to its being advantageous to the British, and those placed in authority did not consider themselves bound by commitments their predecessors had made.

> 'I was before well convinced', Ḥaidar 'Alī wrote to the Governor of Madras on the eve of his last war with the British, 'that the treaties and engagements are inviolable, but whenever a new Governor arrives, he will not conform to the agreement of the Council, but acts as he pleases, making many innovations in the established friendships. . . . It was agreed between us under the strongest engagements that whenever I should require assistance in a necessary war, it should be immediately furnished from that quarter, and that as often as they should demand succours they should be sent from hence. Accordingly, before this when I was engaged in hostilities against several enemies, notwithstanding that I had not the smallest occasion for it, yet to try the strength of their friendship and alliance, I desired assistance from them, but they pleaded various excuses and in many other instances acted in direct breach of their engagements. What dependence, therefore, can be placed on the engagements and treaties of the chiefs of the Company?'[8].

This is a forthright statement which it is impossible to contradict. But it could make no impression on those who thought only of their

[8] National Archives of India, Foreign Secret Department, July 17, 1870. No. 11.

own interest. About a year and a half earlier Ḥaidar 'Alī had written to the Governor of Bombay:

> 'I see what you write concerning your intentions against the French factory of Mahe. In my country there are factories belonging to the English, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes and French, and besides them there are many merchants here who are considered my subjects. If anyone entertains designs against those traders, I will without doubt take the best and most considerate methods to give them assistance—if you are not already acquainted with this, you may inform Members of your Council'[9].

This was another straightforward statement which made no impression. 'Mahe, as you well know', came the reply, 'had been for many years in possession of the French. . . . They are our enemies, you are our friend, and should rejoice at our success'[10]. That Ḥaidar 'Alī claimed Mahe as territory under his protection was of no great consequence. The British believed firmly in the overriding character of their own rights and interests. It was this belief which governed their thinking and their policy. The Government of Madras realized that because of their not entering into any 'engagements of mutual assistance and support', Ḥaidar 'Alī had been left, 'in times of difficulty and distress, to such aid of foreign nations, particularly the French, who have always yielded him supplies of men and stores, as far as their ability would permit. . . . However, whilst we continue to preserve so great a superiority in India, it appears to us that the interests of Hyder [Ḥaidar]will always point out our nation as the most useful ally, and from that cause only can we expect that he will enter into new engagements with us'[11]. But this was written under the exigency of a particular situation. The basic policy had been outlined eleven years earlier, during the first phase of the first Anglo-Mysore War:

> 'Every day's experience convinces us more and more of the justness of Lord Clive's observation concerning Hyder Alley [Ḥaidar 'Alī], when he tells us in his letter of the 17th of October, 1766, that sooner or later he must be reduced, and we entirely concur in His Lordship's opinion regarding the strength of the Marathas and Hyder Ali, when he speaks of what is to be apprehended from either of them, viz., the chief strength of the Marathas is horse, the chief strength of Hyder Ali—infantry, cannon and

[9] National Archives of India, Foreign Secret Deparment, No. 3. March 23, 1779.

[10] National Archives of India, Foreign Secret Department, No. G. May 8, 1780.

[11] National Archives of India, Foreign Secret Department, No. 7. August 10, 1778.

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small arms; from the one we have nothing to apprehend but ravages, plundering and loss of revenues for a while—from the other, extirpation. It is these advantages added to a great command of money and the possession of so large a tract of the sea-coast on the Malabar side that makes Hyder Ali as dangerous a neighbour for future tranquillity, and reduces us, however unwilling, to the necessity of fixing him as a friend or overthrowing him as an enemy.

'The former, notwithstanding all our advances, we have hitherto found impracticable. . . .

'It is not only his troublesome disposition and ambitious views that we have to apprehend, but also that he may, at a favourable opportunity or in some future war, take the French by the hand and reestablish their affairs and utterly ruin us on this coast. He has money to pay them, and they can spare and assemble troops at the islands, and it is reported that he has already made proposals by dispatches to the French company in Europe or to the French King.

'The accomplishment, therefore, of his reduction is one of our principal objects as the only sure method to give peace to the Carnatic and stability to our possessions. The sooner, therefore, we lay our plan and persist in our operations to extirpate him and restore the ancient family of the rajahs to the government the better'[12].

Ḥaidar 'Alī's aspirations and his policies have to be judged in the context of these circumstances. The possibility of any form of co-operation with the Marhattas for action against the intrusive foreign power has to be ruled out, because even in 1780, when Haidar 'Alī had established himself and the Marhattas and Niẓām 'Alī Khān had their own reasons for fighting against the British, the alliance proved ephemeral and illusory. Niẓām 'Alī Khān seemed only to be waiting for the British to use proper methods of dissuasion in order to break away; the Maratha leader, Nānā Farnāvīs, because of the situation created by differences among the Marhatta chiefs, demanded too high a price for the alliance, and began to regret having made it soon after it had been concluded. The Marhatta contribution in the war of 1780 against the British was half-hearted and disorganized, and overtures for peace began to be made about a year after it had started. Ḥaidar 'Alī was too much of a man to turn into a jackal or a fox because of terror or temptation. He fought his own war, without any definite hope and without much

[12] National Archives of India, Select Committee, Vol. XIII, Fort William. September 21, 1767.

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success, but with manliness and grim determination, his soldierly qualities supported but never overshadowed by his diplomatic ability. He died in December, 1782, when the war had not concluded, but the position of the Mysore armies was by no means disadvantageous. It was six months after the Marhatta Pēshwā had engaged himself 'on his behalf as well as on behalf of his allies, the Nabob Niẓām 'Alī Khān, Raghūjī Bhōṇslē, and the Nabob (Nawwāb) Ḥaidar 'Ali Khān that they shall in every respect maintain peace towards the English and their allies'—at a time when the British troops in the Carnatic were finding it difficult to hold their own against Ḥaidar 'Alī. He was no doubt fighting for himself and for his kingdom, but whether we judge him by the ends he had in mind or the means which he adopted, we cannot deny him our admiration and respect without undermining belief in honour itself.

II

1857-8

The 'God-given Kingdom' of Mysore was the last in which an independent Muslim ruler could exercise his discretion and determine his own policy. Statesmanship thereafter came to mean the political wisdom of individuals and their ability to organize the masses for purposes of political action. Because of the change in circumstances, the administrator, too, had to perform his function in a different setting.

We have already discussed the political ideas of the orthodox and shown their limitations. The movement started by Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd was like a smouldering fire for a number of years and contributed to the outburst which unexpectedly took the form of the upheaval of 1857. The basic question how the British government could be displaced had not been faced squarely and, therefore, no thought had been devoted to the future relationship between the Indian Muslims and Hindūs. However much the events of 1857-8 are idealized, we cannot point to any person, Hindū or Muslim, who had any conception of national freedom. The struggle was either for rights, which in most cases were such that they could not really be considered a matter of national interest, or it originated in a frenzied determination no longer to endure subjection to British rule. Two figures of this period are, however, noteworthy, Maulwī Aḥmadullāh Shāh and Bakht Khān, and it is unfortunate that our information about them is very vague and meagre. According to some sources, Aḥmadullāh Shāh came from the south, according to others, from the north-west. We do not know where he was educated and how he spent the early years of his life. He appears suddenly on the scene

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about two years before the upheaval of 1857, as a powerful speaker who could enthral large audiences and whose movements were so swift and mysterious that a suspicious and hostile government was unable to restrain them. He was at the same time establishing secret societies, probably with the intention of taking appropriate action when the time came. In February or April, 1857, we find him at Faiḍābād. The police refused to carry out the order to arrest him, and so the military were employed for the purpose. But the jail physician fed him and looked after him; he was condemned to death because of his seditious activities, but the military uprisings began before the sentence could be carried out and he was released by the soldiers. Thereafter, his career was mainly one of frustration. He was caught in the meshes of intrigue at Lucknow, and though not always unsuccessful in his engagements with the British army, he could achieve nothing. The British were impressed by his character, his chivalry, his ability to fight with the poorest manpower and resources; but they also put a price upon his head. Finally, he lost his life at Purvāyan or Pawāyan, where he went to negotiate with the rājā.

Of Bakht Khān we know as little as about Aḥmadullāh Shāh, and the accounts are so contradictory that while in one he is described as short and fat, in another he is tall and soldierly. He was a petty officer in the East India Company's army, and seems to have learnt enough of military science to conduct operations in a professional way. He collected troops at Shāhjahānpūr shortly after the commencement of the uprising and marched with them to Bareilly and then to Delhi. Here he was the principal civil officer and also the commander-in-chief. He had to work against heavy odds, but some facts reveal a statesmanlike attitude. After the capture of Delhi, he escaped with a small force, determined to carry on the struggle. Nothing is known of his ultimate fate.

The new spirit is seen not only in Maulwī Aḥmadullāh and Bakht Khān, but in other persons as well. The constitution of an administrative committee drawn up by the revolutionaries at Delhi is worth quoting in full.

'Whereas it is necessary and expedient to frame Rules and Regulations in order to remove disorder and put an end to irregularities in the military and civil administration, and it is most essential to set up a Court in order to enforce action in accordance with the same Rules and Regulations, the following rules and regulations are enacted:

(1) A Court shall be established, and be called Court (of) Administration, that is, a Committee for the Administration of Military and Civil Affairs;

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(2) This Committee shall consist of ten members, in the proportion that six shall be military and four civil, and of the military two shall be elected from the infantry platoons, two from the cavalry *risālahs*, and two from the artillery department;

(3) Of these ten persons, one shall be elected President, that is, Chairman of the Committee, according to the majority of votes, and one Vice-President, that is, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, with the vote of the President being considered equal to two votes, and as many Secretaries as may be necessary shall be appointed for each department; the Court shall be in session . . . [13] special work . . . [14] five hours;

(4) At the time of appointment these ten members shall take an oath to the effect that they shall perform the duties of the Court with honesty and trustworthiness, without regard or favour, most painstakingly and with deliberation, and shall not omit or ignore the smallest detail of the matters of administration, and neither by pretext nor openly, by compulsion or as a favour of any kind and in any way, when considering administrative matters in the Court; but that, on the contrary, shall use their best efforts and endeavours so to administer the affairs of the kingdom that the state grows strong and the welfare and prosperity of the people is ensured; and that they shall not directly or indirectly reveal the proceedings of the Court without its permission and the permission of Ṣāḥib (-i-'Ālam Bahādur)[15] until the same have been published;

(5) The election of the members of the Court shall be in this way that by a majority of votes two persons each shall be taken from the infantry platoons and the cavalry *risālas* and the artillery department of the army who have been in service for a long time and are shrewd and acquainted with affairs and able and intelligent; provided that if any person is very shrewd and intelligent and gifted with understanding and capable of handling the affairs of the Court, but does not fulfil the condition of having been long in service, this fact only shall not prevent such a person being appointed; and the appointment of the four civilians shall be made in the same way;

(6) If after the appointment of these ten persons, any one of them shall, while expressing his opinions in the open meeting of the Court of Administration, show dishonesty or untrustworthiness or be insistent upon showing favour to anyone, he shall be expelled from the Court upon a unanimous opinion being given against him, and

[13], [14] The text of the original is illegible here.

[15] The original is illegible here, but a comparison with Sec. 7 shows that the Court was subject to the authority of Ṣāḥib-i-'Ālam Bahādur, that is, the heir-apparent.

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another person shall be elected in his place in the manner laid down in Section 5;

(7) All administrative questions that arise shall first be brought before the Court, and after they have been decided by a majority of votes, they shall be placed for approval in the court of Ṣāḥib-i-'Ālam Bahādur, and after they have been approved by Ṣāḥib-i-'Ālam Bahādur, the Court shall communicate them to His Majesty in due course. The Court shall be subject to the authority of Ṣāḥib-i-'Ālam Bahādur, and no administrative order, whether concerning the affairs military or civil, shall be promulgated unless it has been considered by the Court and approved by the august Ṣāḥib-i-'Ālam Bahādur and the advice of His Majesty has been taken in regard to it; and in case Ṣāhib-i-'Ālam Bahādur disagrees, the matter shall, after the Court has considered it the second time, be placed before His Majesty, the shadow of God, through His Eminence[16], with the disagreement as it exists, and the decision of His Majesty shall be final;

(8) No person other than the members of the Committee, shall participate in or attend the meeting of the Court, but Sāhib-i-'Ālam Bahādur and His Majesty, the Shadow of God, have the right to grace it with their presence; and if, from among the fixed members of the Court, any member is unable, for a strong and acceptable reason, to attend a meeting of the Court, then the majority opinion of the remaining members of the Court shall be deemed the opinion of the whole Court;

(9) If any member of the Court wishes to place any proposal before the Court, he shall first obtain the concurrence of one other member, and the proposal shall be placed before the Court on behalf of the proposer and the member in agreement with him;

(10) If any proposal is brought before the Court in accordance with Section 9, the proposer shall first speak on it, and no one shall interrupt him until he has finished; if anyone in the Court has any objection, he shall explain it to the Court, and no one shall interrupt until he has finished (his explanation); if a third person speaks against the proposal and brings forward amendments or alterations, of any kind whatever, and the remaining members of the Court are silent, then each member of the Court shall separately give his vote in writing, and . . .[17] Section 8, action shall be taken according to the majority of the votes, and after approval (the decision) shall be communicated to the Secretary of each department;

(11) Persons elected from each department of the army in accordance with Section 2 shall be the persons in charge of the organization

[16] Ṣāhib-i-'Ālam, the heir-apparent.

[17] The text of the original is illegible here.

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and administration of this department; there shall be a committee of four persons acting under their supervision and control, these persons being appointed in accordance with Section 4, and as many Secretaries as may be required shall be appointed from among these persons; whatever decisions are taken by this committee by a majority of votes shall be placed by the same persons before the officer supervizing and controlling (the work of) the committee, and action shall be taken by the Court in accordance with Section 7; this procedure to be followed in every department, military and civil;

(12) The Court shall have the power to alter and amend by a majority of votes the rules and regulations herein laid down whenever it appears desirable or necessary[18].

Circumstances were such that the Court or Committee thus set up could not function, but this is perhaps the first instance in the history of modern India when democratic constitutional procedure was devised. Bakht Khān and his comrades, who sought to obtain control of a premature and unplanned military uprising did have in them the makings of just and democratic rulers and organizers, and it was tragic indeed that their cause was ruined by dissolute and incompetent princes, and by cowards and traitors.

III

Faiḍ 'Alī Khān

Before we go on to discuss personalities and issues of significance for the whole country after 1858, it seems necessary for the sake of balance to describe the career of an almost forgotten administrator who gave ample evidence of vision and practical competence. Faiḍ 'Alī Khān (b. August 26, 1821) belonged to a landlord family of Bulandshahr district. He managed his own estate so skilfully that his fame spread quite far and wide, and in 1853, the Mahārājā of Jaipūr invited him to join his service in the Police department. His active prosecution of schemes of reform was not welcome to his superior officer, the Nā'ib-i-Riyāsat, and therefore he resigned. But the Mahārājā, who seemed desperately in need of an honest and efficient administrator, refused to part with him and transferred him to another department. Here, also, his work was impressive, and within a year the Mahārājā conferred on him the title of Nawwāb, and made him Paymaster-General of his army.

The condition of the troops was utterly wretched. They had not been paid for two years, and they were officered by thoroughly incapable men who held their posts because of nepotism and personal

[18] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India. Bundle 57, Nos. 539-4.

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influence. The horses were no better off than the troops. Those in charge of the stables were not given cash salaries but assigned lands, the income from which they appropriated as their salary. These lands were also expected to provide fodder for the horses. Every year the dumb animals were accused of having consumed all the fodder produced before eight or nine months had passed, and as the state treasury was usually empty, money was continuously borrowed at exorbitant rates of interest. This was one of several ways in which money-lenders obtained gradually increasing control of the revenues of the state. Faiḍ 'Alī Khān at once abolished the system of land assignments, arranged to pay salaries in cash, reduced the number of troops by discharging all who were unfit, and fixed rations for the horses. He was not a soldier, but he studied the military administration of the East India Company and introduced a system that was similar and equally efficient.

His measures must have offended many, and appeared as a challenge to all vested interests. But his success, though it did not silence criticism, earned for him the whole-hearted support of the Mahārājā, and in 1863, when the Chief Minister died, Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was appointed to this post. He was now the highest authority under the Mahārājā and able to take far-reaching measures. He realized that he could do nothing so long as the state was bankrupt and first concentrated all his attention on finance. Within an astonishingly short time he rescued the state from the clutches of the money-lenders, and after paying off all debts, even created a reserve fund. The state could not fulfil all its liabilities at once, but it was a great relief to the employees of the Government that salaries were paid regularly every two months. To improve the administration, Faiḍ 'Alī Khān abolished the traditional division of the state into sixteen parts of widely varying areas, and divided it instead into ten *Niẓāmats* of almost equal size. The officer in charge of each *Niẓāmat* was given control over the civil, criminal and revenue administration. Each *Niẓāmat* was divided into two or three *taḥṣīls*, with a *taḥṣīldār* for the collection of revenue. Police stations were established for the better maintenance of law and order. Trade was stimulated by the removal of toll barriers within the frontiers of the state.

A somnolent feudal state could not be modernized without arousing bitter opposition, and the Mahārājā had to yield by degrees. In 1867, he constituted a Royal Council with eight members representing different parts of the state, and Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was appointed First Member of the Board. He continued to perform his administrative duties with a relatively free hand. Then his opponents prevailed upon the Mahārājā to set up a Board of Control. Faiḍ

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'Alī Khān knew that he would no longer have the necessary freedom of action, and he resigned.

Jaipūr State had for centuries been directly under the political and cultural influence of the Mughals, and even in Faiḍ 'Alī Khān's days Persian was the official language. Still it is remarkable that a Muslim officer, unsupported by any outside influence, acquired such authority and prestige and carried through measures of reform that broke the fetters of vested interests. Faiḍ 'Alī Khān's position at Jaipūr provided a refuge for Muslim craftsmen who fled from the British reprisals at Delhi in 1858 and made Jaipūr into a notable centre for the brassware, bangles, dyeing, printing and shoe-making industries.

Shortly after his resignation from the service of the Jaipūr State, Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was appointed member of a Commission to inquire into the affairs of Barōdā State and suggest appropriate reforms. But before the Commission could complete its work Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was asked by the British government in 1874 to accept the Prime Ministership of Kōtah State.

The situation here was far worse than in Jaipūr, and the British government thought it necessary to endow the Prime Minister of their choice with status and powers almost equal to those of the Mahārājā himself. Kōtah had no roads and bridges, even offices and other buildings of the state were built of mud; there were no schools, no health service; and two-thirds of the income of the state was used to pay instalments of the principal and interest on loans taken. The Mahārājā was fond of giving money in charities and making pious gifts. As no department of the government was sure of getting the money necessary for salaries and essential expenditure, officers of these departments made it a normal practice to utilize all income received without depositing it in the treasury. Some even went to the extent of giving as loan to the state income which they received and which had not been entered in the books. Only extreme measures could create some order in this mess.

Faiḍ 'Alī Khān first issued orders that all income received by any official should be immediately deposited in the treasury. Restrictions were placed on the expenditure of the Mahārājā himself, who was given a fixed amount as his privy purse. Because of these economy measures and strict enforcement of rules, Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was able to put an end to the bankruptcy of the state. He had at the same time taken up measures of development. The state was divided into equal districts as in Jaipūr, and officers were put in charge of each district with civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction. Faiḍ 'Alī Khān wished to have detailed statistics of every village showing the number of men, women and children, of mosques and temples, of

wells and tanks, and of mud and brick houses. This was a wise measure but attempted long before its time. Faiḍ 'Alī Khān was able to get roads, bridges and buildings constructed. He established two schools, one for boys and the other for girls. He reorganized the judicial administration, setting up a separate department for this purpose, with a high court possessing supreme jurisdiction. All this he began or completed within the two years during which he was able to work as Prime Minister. The Mahārājā had asked the British Government for a good administrator but not for a person who would so completely dominate the state with his ideas and his achievements. The British Government also did not want an Indian administrator to be too successful, and they therefore agreed to his being recalled in 1876. He was knighted and became the first Indian member of the Law Council[19].

IV

The National Movement

After the suppression of the movement of 1857-8, when the British had openly declared their determination to destroy all those elements in the Muslim population which could serve as the nucleus of opposition, there was no other way of recovery except by accepting British rule. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) endeavoured, on the one hand, to prove that the Muslims were not by tradition or habit disloyal and, on the other, to convince the Muslims that the right course for them was to accept the British government and to rehabilitate themselves by co-operating with it and seeking service under it. This was a realistic approach, and gradually Indian Muslims of the particular province where their opposition to the British had been most violent followed the policy suggested by Sir Sayyid. But when the National Congress was established and its influence began to increase among the Muslims also, a decision had to be taken as to whether the Muslims should follow the Congress policy of criticism and demand more opportunities of service under the Government or Sir Sayyid's policy of seeking friendship with the British in order to strengthen their position. Sir Sayyid ultimately threw his whole weight against the Congress, and the British administrators tried to feel their way towards measures that would weaken the growing opposition. One of these was the partition of Bengal. This could be regarded as administratively necessary because

[19] This account is based on *Muraqqa'-i-Faiḍ*, copy of which the author found in the Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, and Mathurā Lāl Sharmā, *Kōṭah Rāj kā Itihās*, Kotah Printing Press, Kotah, S. 1996 (A.D. 1939). Vol. II, pp. 655-70.

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the province was too large, and of benefit to the population of the new province created, which had so far been suffering from neglect. It could also be regarded as the dismemberment of Bengal so as to weaken the Hindūs and create opportunities for the Muslims. The opposition of the Hindūs had, in fact, both these facets, the hatred for the Muslims who supported the measure being no less fierce than for the British who planned and carried it out[20]. When the agitation caused by the partition of Bengal began to gain momentum, it was thought opportune by the British administrators that the Viceroy should receive a deputation of representative Muslims for presenting demands on behalf of their community. This was done, and the Muslim League was established in 1906. It held its sessions annually, reiterating each year its sentiments of loyalty. The stage was thus set to play the Hindūs and the Muslims against each other with a show of regard for law and justice.

The attitude of the Muslims towards the British government changed, not so much because of any developments in India but because of events outside. Muslim sentiment had already been roused by the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 and the Greco-Turkish war of 1897. The Italian invasion of Tripoli in October 1911, and the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 agitated the whole Muslim world. Then came the war of 1914, in which Turkey joined the central powers; the allies had to use military force as well as diplomacy against Turkey as an enemy, which involved raising the Arabs against the Turks. There was a treaty between the British and Sharīf Ḥusain of Mecca early in 1916, as a result of which the Arabs revolted in June and a British army occupied Palestine and Syria. In October, 1918, Turkey asked for an armistice, which was signed at Mudros on October 30th, and Constantinople was occupied in December the same year. To realize all that had been promised to them in engagements and treaties made during the war, the Italians landed forces at Adalia on April 29, 1919, and the Greeks at Smyrna on May 15th. Resistance to this obvious attempt to divide up Turkey among the victorious powers was organized by Muṣṭafā Kemal, and a nationalist government was established at Ankara. But the Turks suffered serious reverses in the beginning, and the Treaty of Sèvres, in June, 1920, announced what was nothing less than the extinction of Turkey. It was now a fight for life. The Turks stopped the Greek advance and finally drove the Greek armies back to the sea, occupying Smyrna in September 1922. A month and a half later, Muṣṭafā Kemāl abolished the Sultanate, the Republic was proclaimed on October

[20] Abul Kalām Āzād, *India Wins Freedom*. Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1959. Pp. 4-5.

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29, 1923, and the Khilāfat was abolished on March 3, 1924. In the same year, Ibn Sa'ūd occupied the Ḥijāz.

These events, none of which occurred in India, caused a series of convulsions among the Indian Muslims, and were a serious challenge to their political leadership. The resentment against the unprovoked Italian invasion of Tripoli was universal, and brought forth a considerable amount of explosive literature. That created an awareness of the international situation among Muslims, but did not suggest a solution of national problems, because the British were neutral. Within a year, when the Balkan War had broken out, a medical mission was organized and sent to Turkey. This provided a feeling of achievement; its political value may have been neutralized by the fact that the government earned some gratitude for having looked upon the organization and dispatch of the mission with favour. But the demolition of a corner of the courtyard of a mosque in Kānpūr, and police firing upon a crowd of quite peaceful citizens turned the Muslims against the government, which ultimately had to pacify them by making a compromise. When the world war began in 1914, the Muslims were either willing to help in the war effort or indifferent, but the entry of Turkey into the war created a dilemma. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī was interned for an article on the *Choice of the Turks*, and Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzād was also placed under surveillance at Rāṇchī. It was a good omen of the future that the Muslim League and the Congress gravitated towards each other; an agreement on the future constitutional rights of the Hindūs and Muslims was arrived at between the two and adopted at their sessions held simultaneously at Lucknow in 1916. The British government, because of expediency or good intentions or both, had made commitments during the war in regard to the future position of India, and Indian leadership was mobilizing opinion to see that the commitments were fulfilled. After the revolt of the Arabs, the Indian Muslims could no longer have any hopes of Turkey emerging from the war without serious loss and they were deeply anxious about the future. What were they to do?

There can be no question that the Allies had decided to dismember the Turkish empire. On the other hand, it was impossible for the Turkish empire, loosely knit as it was, to be restored to its pre-war position. The Indian Muslims had no reason to hope that the British home government would forego advantages due to its victory to please its Indian Muslim subjects; but they could exert pressure in alliance with their fellow-countrymen. They had to remember, however, that this alliance had to possess a solid basis of common interest; that the Hindūs would oppose the British, but had no sentimental relationship with Turkey or Arabia. They had also to

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remember that they had no means whatsoever of influencing the decisions of the Arabs and the Turks. After the war, when the Khilāfat Conference was constituted about the middle of 1919, and a public session was held at Delhi in November, Indian Muslim leadership was wise enough to make Mahātmā Gāndhī the President. The Muslims had already participated, sincerely and effectively, in the protests against the Rowlatt Acts, and the union between the two communities was cemented by their throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the Non-cooperation movement. It is idle to speculate on how long this unity of Hindūs and Muslims would have lasted if the Non-cooperation movement had not been suspended in February, 1922; it would also be untruthful and unchivalrous to minimize the sincerity of the Muslims who joined in the national struggle. But the Indian Muslims were not able to distinguish between the religious and the political element in their thought or to leave their religious sentiment unexpressed at any time. They had been either tactless enough to raise it themselves or fallen into a trap laid by others, but at the Muslim League session in December, 1917, the question had been discussed as to whether an Indian Muslim was first a Muslim or first an Indian. It was assumed that Islām did not allow of a distinction to be made between politics and religion, and it was believed that Indian Muslims would remain indifferent to political affairs unless it was demonstrated that Islām required them to show full and proper concern. The *'ulamā* were brought into political life in order to provide religious sanction for political policy. In 1920, the resolution of the Congress which initiated the Non-cooperation movement was reinforced by a *fatwā* of the Jam'īyat-i-'Ulamā'-i-Hind. In July, 1921, Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī proposed, and the All-India Khilāfat Conference adopted a resolution that 'it is in every way *religiously unlawful* for a Muslim at the present moment to continue in the British army, to enter the army or to induce others to join the army. And it is the duty of the Muslims in general and of the *'ulamā* in particular to see that these *religious* commandments are brought to the home of every Muslim in the army'. The Conference also decided that if the British attacked Turkey, the Muslims of India would declare the independence of India and hoist the flag of the Indian republic at the next session of the Congress[21].

The suspension of the Non-cooperation movement was a heavy blow to all who had joined it; it was particularly disastrous for the Muslims. They had made unqualified commitments on religious grounds, and there were no religious grounds for withdrawing from

[21] Rām Gōpāl, *The Indian Muslims*. Asia Publishing House, 1959. Pp. 148-9.

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the declarations made on their behalf by the leaders. After the Congress and the Khilāfat Committee had unwillingly discussed the question of boycotting the councils (established under the Government of India Act of 1919), the Jam'īyat-i-'Ulamā declared that their *fatwā* of 1920 must be adhered to. An embarrassing complication arose because of the presumption of the Indian Muslims that the Arabs and the Turks were inspired by the same religious zeal as they themselves and could, therefore, be asked to adjust their policies in accordance with the wishes—not to say demands—of the Indian Muslims. This was most unrealistic, and events showed it to be so. The Arabs under Sharīf Ḥusain had rebelled against the Turks in 1916; the Turks abolished the Khilāfat in 1924. This not only broke the back of the Khilāfat Committee; it made the whole agitation for the protection of the Khilāfat look ridiculous. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Ali and Maulānā Shaukat 'Alī remained identified with the Khilāfat Committee: they still hoped they would be able to assert themselves in Turkey and the Ḥijāz. Other leaders, like Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān and Maulānā Āzād, who had also talked religion, but with more humility and wisdom, engaged themselves in the same devotional spirit in purely political and social tasks. But the maintenance of unity between the Hindūs and Muslims in the mood in which they then were seemed to be beyond human power.

We are not concerned here with the political history of India but with Indian Muslim statesmanship and its response to the challenge of circumstances. This necessarily involves passing judgements. It is not the function of a historian to make out a case against persons or policies, though in some situations that may be the easiest as well as the most satisfying method to adopt. Anyone who believes the partition of India to have been wrong can lay the blame for it, as he chooses, on all the Indian Muslims, or on those who supported and completely identified themselves with the Muslim League, or on the Hindūs generally and specifically the Indian National Congress for lack of vision and worldly wisdom in not realizing that failure to come to an understanding with the Indian Muslims could drive them to despair, and force them to attempt remedies disastrous for the Indian people as a whole. On the other hand, those who believe the partition to have been a just solution can attempt to prove not only that the Hindūs made any other solution impossible but that territory which Muslims could call and administer as their own was their religious, cultural and political birthright. Each of these views can be regarded as having a background and has had enough people holding it to be entitled to consideration and study. But it is not possible for us to go into all the details here. We shall

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confine ourselves to a discussion of the problem as a challenge to Indian Muslim statesmanship and an assessment of the solutions proposed.

The Non-cooperation movement was suspended in February, 1922, and the disillusionment and disintegration which followed can best be judged by the number of riots that took place in different parts of the country—eleven in 1923, eighteen in 1924, sixteen in 1925, thirty-five in 1926—, by the split in the Congress between the Swarajists and the No-changers and the division of the Indian Muslims themselves into many ineffective groups. It was clear, however, that Indian nationalism was a force gathering momentum, and that the British government had already committed itself to changes that would lead to Dominion Status. Independence of India within or outside the British Commonwealth was equally possible, but the attainment of either goal would depend on the pressure exercised by Indian nationalism to force a decision. The National Congress was the largest political organization with the most effective and influential leadership. It was aware of the need to satisfy the minorities, but held that it would be unable to do so until the Indian people had become free, because there were elements, both in the minorities and in the majority community which could utilize the presence, if not the good offices, of the British government to prevent the acceptance of any solution that did not fulfil all their demands, however unreasonable they might be. Since we are concerned only with the Indian Muslims, let us consider the typical reactions of Indian Muslim statesmen to this situation.

During one phase, the stage was dominated by Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī. He was as closely associated with Mahātmā Gāṇdhī in 1920 and 1921 as any two political leaders could possibly be. But when he was released from jail in 1923 and studied the situation in the country, he felt compelled to break away from Mahātmā Gāṇdhī and began to voice Muslim resentment against the Hindūs for their aggressiveness and militancy. Early in 1929, the All-India Muslim Conference adopted a well reasoned resolution in regard to the Nehrū Report[22], which had recommended that India should have a unitary government, that the system of separate electorates introduced by the Government of India Act of 1909 and retained in the Act of 1919, should be abolished, that minorities should have

[22] The Nehrū Report, so called after its Chairman and guiding spirit, Paṇḍit Mōtī Lāl Nehrū, was the first attempt at constitution-making by Indians. The Report was discussed all through 1928, and 'generally approved' by the Working Committee of the Congress, but not formally adopted by the Congress itself. Its recommendation that India should have the status of a Dominion was the main point of left-wing nationalist attack, led by Jawāharlāl Nehrū, who insisted upon the adoption of independence as the goal.

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reservation of seats in the legislative bodies, but strictly in proportion to their numbers in the population, and that three new provinces where Muslims were in a majority should be created. The Conference demanded instead a federal form of government and the retention of separate electorates and the number of seats already granted by the Act of 1919. But Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī interpreted the Nehrū Report as an attempt to establish a Hindū government, and criticized it vehemently on that ground. In fact there was opposition to the Report from inside the Congress also; by the end of 1928 it had been shelved and, in the session of 1929-30, a resolution demanding complete independence was approved. As a measure of direct action to exert pressure on the British government, Mahātmā Gāṇdhī began the Salt Satyāgraha in March, 1930. This was a decision to give the highest priority to the attainment of independence, and leave the solution of other problems till after it had been attained. The question arose, therefore, as to whether Muslims should join the movement of civil disobedience without ensuring their future status and rights. How many did and how many did not join is a matter of dispute, but there was considerable participation. At the All-India Muslim Conference held in Bombay in April, 1930, Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī declared that the Muslims did not want British domination and also did not want Hindū domination, and that they could not join Mr Gāndhī's movement because its aim was not to achieve independence for India but to make the 70 million Muslims of India dependents of the Hindū Mahāsabhā[23]. This is what a large number of Muslims really did feel, and they applauded Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī for having given pointed and vehement expression to their sentiment. It must be said in fairness, however, that there were, on the other side, reactionary Hindūs who identified national resurgence with the suppression of the Muslims.

It was obvious that the national movement, though still far from its goal of independence, was making its influence felt. After three sessions of a Round Table Conference, a new constitution for India was drafted, which took final shape as the Government of India Act of 1935. Elections were held in accordance with the Act early in 1937, and Congress came into power in most of the Provinces.

The new situation soon brought to the forefront Muḥammad 'Alī Jinnāh, who was then President of the Muslim League. He was an elder statesman who had kept away from civil disobedience movements, but was one of the chief architects of the Pact of 1916, and had since represented a sound, progressive viewpoint. In the evidence he gave when the Joint Committee's Report was under consideration

[23] R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, O.U.P., 1944. Part I, p. 111.

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in 1935, he stated that self-respect required that Indians should settle the question of communal representation themselves, and asked for a new deal with the Congress. The manifesto issued by the League showed as much awareness of the people's needs as that of the Congress, and in the U.P. the League and Congress even came to an arrangement in the matter of putting up Muslim candidates for the elections. Unexpected success at the polls, however, made the policy of co-operation with other parties and organizations appear unnecessary to the Congress leadership, while those who had worked for the Congress or just belonged to it felt as if they had become masters of the country and its government. The Congress ministries, apart from the responsibility of carrying out measures of reform that were part of the Congress mandate, felt the pressure of all those who had ideas and plans; the civil service felt the pressure of the local Congress leaders who thought that they had the freedom to do what they liked; the ordinary man displayed the inflated self-confidence, if not the arrogance of the new-rich. There seemed to be no question of a new deal with the minorities; other matters were more important. Those Indian Muslims whose main concern was the welfare of their community had three courses open to them. They could join in those activities in which the Congress governments were engaged and mould Congress policy at different levels, in other words, obtain their share in the political earnings by joining in the production; they could wait and see; finally, they could counter the self-assertion of the majority by asserting themselves. Those known as the nationalist Muslims took the first, the Muslim League, under Mr Jinnāh's leadership, took the third course.

Every community has the right to assert itself, specially a minority community which is inevitably in danger of being overwhelmed politically and culturally by the majority. In such cases, not only the political and cultural status but the character and the potentialities of a community are sure to be affected by the spiritual, moral and social values whose embodiment it believes itself to be, and which make its self-assertion a creative act. From 1937 onwards, the Muslim League concentrated on discovering and publicizing the evil intentions and the injustices of the Hindūs generally and the Congress governments in particular. If all the allegations made by the League were accepted as true, the question still remained as to whether it was in the real interest of the Muslim community to cultivate the attitude which it did. The Muslim League justified its policy as the only means of self-preservation. This policy soon took the form of the thesis that the Indian Muslims were a separate nation, and the Pākistān Resolution of 1940 was the first indication of a demand that the country should be divided so that the Muslim

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nation would have territory of its own in which to establish an independent state. In March, 1941, Mr Jinnāḥ, who had put forward the two-nation theory, declared that Pākistān was neither a counsel of despair nor a counter for bargaining, but a serious demand. Schemes began to be devised for a division of the country that would satisfy the requirements of the two-nation theory, but no scheme was formally approved by the League. It was a natural corollary of the two-nation theory that the League should insist on being regarded as the only body representing the Muslims, and the Simla Conference of 1945 foundered on this issue, Mr Jinnāḥ denying the Congress the right to nominate any Muslim to represent it in the proposed interim government. He examined all the announcements and proposals made by the British government after 1940 in the light of the League's demand for Pākistān, and in all discussions with representatives of the Congress he insisted that the right of the Muslims to Pākistān should first be conceded. Constitutional proposals in regard to Muslim majority areas ceased to have meaning when the Indian Muslims had been declared to be a separate nation, for when Muslims refused to live under Hindū majority rule it followed that Hindūs could also do the same. If Mr Jinnāḥ was sincere in regarding the Muslims as a separate nation and demanding separate territory for them, it was his obvious and inescapable moral duty to define the boundaries of Pākistān. He should also have realized that a transfer of populations would be inevitable. In the event, the Indian Muslim 'nation' was entrusted to a commission to divide up as it thought fit, and the transfer of populations took place under conditions of incredible savagery. And the problem of the Indian Muslims was not solved. They became a much smaller minority in India, physically not less but more vulnerable by the creation of the separate state of Pākistān, with their loyalties obviously open to suspicion and doubt, and their future nothing but the darkness of uncertainty.

The atmosphere of conflict from 1936 to 1947 was not one in which moral values could be asserted in the form of political principles. But as against the idea of Muslim interest as represented by the League, there was the policy of the nationalist Muslims, who believed positively in co-existence and co-operation with the non-Muslim majority in India. Though apparently they disregarded the immediate benefit of the Muslims and refused to share gloomy views about their future under Hindū majority rule, their attitude provided both a stimulus and a challenge. It forced the Muslims to reconsider their cultural and political function as a community; it asked for a new philosophy of life, for personalities who would represent not communalism but faith, not numbers but values, not multitudes but

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effectiveness. As a political party the nationalist Muslims did not succeed against the League, but circumstances brought to the fore two personalities typical of the best in Muslim culture as well as in statesmanship, Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzād and Rafī' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī.

V

We shall discuss in the next chapter the contribution of Maulānā Āzād to religious thought, and study more closely the religious belief which inspired all his political activity. He has given in his *India Wins Freedom* a purely secular colour to his ideas and his whole career, and it is indeed undeniable that he could eliminate irrelevant religious considerations when thinking of or discussing purely political issues. This detachment was possible because of the sincerity and strength of his religious belief. For a time he was inclined towards the revolutionaries of Bengal; for a number of years he was an eloquent Pan-Islāmist. When, under Mahātmā Gāṇdhī's leadership, the Khilāfat and Non-cooperation movements combined, Maulānā Āzād realized that Indian freedom was an all-important prerequisite for any form of effective co-operation between Indians and the outside world. The disappearance of the Khilāfat brought despair to many and made them lose their balance. But Maulānā Āzād, though he had no followers, had already been recognized as a person gifted with political insight and moral courage and, therefore, a person to be consulted and respected in his own right. We cannot here give the details of his career, or give examples of how his views influenced Congress policy. But just as he smoked freely and continuously in Mahātmā Gāṇdhī's presence, in spite of its being known that Mahātmā Gāṇdhī was strongly opposed to such indulgence, he also declared openly that for him non-violence was a matter of policy, not of creed[24]. This basic disagreement with the Mahātmā, for whom non-violence was not only a creed but the essence of Truth, did not affect the position of Maulānā Āzād. From 1930 onwards, when the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress became more and more definite and acute, many nationalist Muslim leaders began to waver and make compromises because of the fear that, if the Muslims disowned them, they would be isolated and lose their importance. But Maulānā Āzād could stand alone. The faith and courage which enabled him to do so entitles him to a high position among the great men of the world. He continued, in his own life, the glorious tradition of suffering for the sake of truth which is enshrined in his *Tadhkirah*, though in *India Wins Freedom* there

[24] Āzād, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

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is not even a passing reference to the invective, the abuse and the gross insults heaped upon him by his Muslim opponents. The obvious inference from his being rejected by the Muslims and being accepted and honoured by the Congress would be completely wrong. Maulānā Āzād was in the Congress and with it throughout his political career, but he never thought it a moral obligation to agree with the Congress as a party. Particularly in the years after independence he stood out as one who could be relied upon for absolute impartiality of judgement and for an unimpeachable integrity. He was too aloof to concern himself with persons, too intellectual to relish political small talk, too proud to think in terms of alliance, affiliation or opposition. He was a statesmen who would not accept the normal functions of a politician, and he was so engrossed in principles that he could not become an efficient administrator. He had to be taken for what he was, with no credentials other than his personality.

Rafī' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī was a product of the culture of the idle rich, though he himself was never idle or rich. Born in a family of not very well-to-do landlords of Bārābaṇkī, he was brought up in an atmosphere in which ideas had the status of adolescent girls. They could appear in public only when arrayed in the garb of modest and restrained conversation, and could be snubbed or suppressed by a well-turned phrase or a superior frown. On the other hand, aptitude for mischief was considered a sure sign of intelligence and had great social appeal, the young man who preferred to study or avoided playing pranks being marked out for ridicule. A poker face, an ability to amuse, to provoke, to embarrass or to abash others with wit, irony and sarcasm was all that a young man needed to win admiration and social esteem. Rafī' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī had these cultural gifts. His ideas and real sentiments observed the seclusion prescribed for them by Indian Muslim etiquette, his personal relations had all the expansiveness necessary for culture to display its rich capacity. He served his apprenticeship during the Non-cooperation movement, having his district 'named' by the Governor as the most troublesome in the United Provinces. As private secretary to Jawāharlāl's father, after his release from jail in 1922, he received training of another kind, and established personal relations which marked out his political career for him. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926, and gained valuable experience as a parliamentarian. It was then that his ideals of social justice found practical expression. But his value for the party and the Assembly lay in his social qualities. He seldom made a speech, but he 'was seen busy all the time in friendly chats with groups of members, who always surrounded him. He was very humorous and was always cracking jokes. He would make fun of all those who spoke

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bad English during their speeches or used wrong idioms. Shafī' Dā'ūdī was particularly his target'[25]. 'In the Assembly hall, Rafī' could be seen moving from seat to seat, smiling and joking, shaking hands with one, hugging another to his bosom, putting his arms round the shoulders of the next, and so on. Even the nominated[26] members followed his advice, so much so that the Home Minister and Finance Minister felt very much perturbed'[27]. His methods did not change when he worked among the people. In 1930, and again in 1932, he gave evidence of a most remarkable talent for organization and even more for dealing with persons. He spoke very little in public, relying almost entirely on direct personal dealings. His intimate knowledge of personal temperament and needs was such that he had little reason to resort to the artificial methods of oratory. He inspired confidence, he fulfilled needs; his commands were obeyed because they were his commands, his plans were accepted because they were his plans. His talent as an organizer was exercised with ease because he was able to arouse sentiments of loyalty and admiration. His willingness to offer personal help was unlimited, and his quiet, never-failing generosity became a legend. His anger never went beyond a despairing, 'What is this?' and a sad silence. His bitterest political opponents knew that in the hour of need they could call upon him as a friend, and that at any time they could be confident of being received with a smile.

With all these qualities, Rafī' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī had quite unusual initiative and drive. As Minister for Revenue and Jails in Uttar Pradēsh he introduced the bill for the abolition of landlordism, with the object of removing the parasitic intermediary between the government and the cultivator. This measure was undoubtedly just, but it meant the ruin of his own and thousands of other families whose only income was the dues they collected as intermediaries[28]. His jail reforms in Uttar Pradēsh gave the lead to the whole country, and perhaps for the first time in India prisoners were ensured humane treatment. As Minister of Communications in the Union Government he introduced the system of night air mail, which carried without extra charge all the post between the important

[25] P. N. Chopra, *Rafī' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī*. S. L. Agarwala, Agra, 1960, p. 24. Shafī' Dā'ūdī was a member from Bihār whose English was very poor.

[26] Members nominated by the Government, who were expected to be 'loyal' when voting.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[28] His step-mother, for whom Rafī' had the greatest love and regard, once jokingly remarked, 'Now what will become of us, Rafī'? This Act of yours will starve the whole family'. Rafī' smilingly said, 'Don't worry, mother, I shall take the sickle and cut grass, and you will sell it in the market, and the family will pull on'. Chopra, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

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cities of India. His surprise visits to post-offices and telephone exchanges set new standards for central supervision, but though he exacted prompt and conscientious work, he also introduced the system of a weekly holiday. He had an uncanny gift of anticipating results. In reply to demands from the public for telephones, which grew more and more vociferous, he brought up the slogan, 'Own Your Phone' for Rs. 2,000/-, with a nominal rent and charge per call. The initial cost appeared exorbitant, but the vast majority of people who wanted telephones could pay for them, and Rafi' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī surprised his colleagues and the Planning Commission by laying the foundation-stone of a telephone factory. As Minister of Food he steered the country out of a dangerous situation by de-controlling foodgrains in spite of theorists and statisticians. His methods were swift and unorthodox, but there is no instance in which his action did not improve the system of administration and yield better results.

Rafi' Aḥmad Qidwā'ī has left no records that will survive the generations that knew him. We do not know what he believed and what he did not believe, and from where he derived the supreme self-confidence that was evident throughout his public life. On the other hand, there was about his qualities, whether taken individually or collectively, something that was typically Muslim, though he would have resented such classification. It is one of the hall-marks of genuine culture that it seeks the guise of what is purely human.

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CHAPTER XX

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

THE orthodox reaction to the establishment of British rule is first reflected in the *fatāwā* of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. The philosophy of the opposition movement first found expression in the *Ṣirāṭ-i-Mustaqīm*[1] of Shāh Ismā'īl Shahīd, which purports to be an exposition of the prophetic sayings of his *shaikh*, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd. We have discussed the activities of these two powerful personalities as leaders of a reform movement culminating in a *jihād*. It becomes apparent from this book that they did not base their movement only on theological arguments as to what was right and what was wrong, what was enjoined and what was forbidden by the *sharī'ah*; they were also mystics inspired by other values.

Shāh Ismā'īl held that *kashf* and *shuhūd*, mystic and direct apprehension of events and facts, and mystic vision, were conditions to which *kāfirs* and innovators who went through the requisite discipline could attain, just like true believers and followers of the *sunnah*. There were many atheists in the guise of *ṣūfīs* who misled people, and many who had become innovators because of *rāfiḍī* influence. The true believer was distinguished by the aspiration to adhere to the *sharī'ah* and fulfil its highest aims in his life. For this purpose Shāh Ismā'īl seems to give personal preference to the cultivation of *ḥubb-i-īmānī*, or the 'way of the *nabī*', though he states specifically that there is no authority for holding this 'way' to be superior to the 'way of the *walī*', and the *ḥubb-i-'ishqī* which was its distinctive feature[2]. His liberal attitude towards the 'way of the *walī*' almost led him into inconsistency, for he did not consider its merit to be reduced, although adherence to any law was not part of its basic principles, and one of its signs was neglect of knowledge and external acts of worship as well as 'not understanding of the relationship between the external and the hidden aspects of the

[1] Published by S. Muḥammad Ashraf, Lahore.

[2] *Ḥubb* means love, affection, friendship. *Ḥubb-i-īmānī* would thus mean love of God expressed through strengthening faith in Him and obeying His commandments, and *ḥubb-i-'ishqī* would mean striving in the way of God through absorption in love.

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sharī'ah'. He dilates on the 'fruits' of the way of love and quotes, though not in the same context, a quartrain whose spirit appears to be quite contrary to the way he chose for himself:

> Proud am I of my eyes, that have beheld Thy beauty;
> My feet I do adore, that me to Thee have borne;
> I kiss my hands a thousand times each moment,
> That, having seized Thy lapel, did draw me to myself.

But it is in the exposition of the *ḥubb-i-īmānī*, the 'way of the *nabī*' that Shāh Ismā'īl strikes a new note. One of the signs of *ḥubb-i-īmānī* is to give preference to 'transitive' values over personal self-realization, to concentration on reformist activities, political and social organization, service and instruction of the people over dedication to prayer and other kinds of 'intransitive' worship. Those who are asleep must be aroused, those who plead ignorance as an excuse must be taught the truth, those who are bent on denial and opposition must be defeated with the argument of the sword and the spear. This is the exalted condition of being God's deputy, His vice-regent. Here we have a fairly clear definition of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ*, an identification of the highest civic with the highest religious duty. Shāh Ismā'īl knew that the unflinching performance of this duty would entail considerable personal suffering, which should, therefore, be regarded as one of the inevitable consequences of *ḥubb-i-īmānī*. But unfortunately his own militant nature as well as lack of precedents—after the time of the Prophet, of course—made him appeal to the argument of the sword under conditions when there was no hope of success.

Both Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd and Shāh Ismā'īl were uncompromising in matters of principle, and one cannot admire the political wisdom of the form they gave to their *jihād*. After them it was obvious that the type of struggle carried on on the north-west frontier could itself yield no result and could be damaging to the Muslim community in many ways. Other points of view had to be presented before the Muslims. The works of Maulwī Karāmat 'Alī of Jaunpūr (d. 1873) are an outstanding example of attempts that were made to prevent reformist tendencies from becoming extremist and thereby defeating their own ends. Maulwī Karāmat 'Alī was a prolific writer who preached against the continuance of Hindū customs and superstitions that had been adopted by the Muslims of eastern Bengal, the area in which he lived and worked most of his life; he also combated the fanaticism of the extremists, who denounced all who did not agree with them as polytheists and *kāfirs*, and undeserving of a proper Muslim burial. The Farā'iḍīs insisted that the Friday and *'Īd* prayers could no longer be performed, as they

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were public prayers, and as such prohibited in territory that was *dār al-ḥarb*. Maulwī Karāmat 'Alī argued against this view also. If it cannot be said that he stood for tolerance, he at least followed a middle path and tried to wean Muslims away from an attitude of intolerance and fanaticism that was destroying the unity and solidarity of the community. He was liberal enough to think that there were problems and subjects worthy of serious study apart from those dealt with in Muslim theological literature. He competed for a prize offered by Sir Charles Trevelyan for the best essay in Hindūstānī on the influence of the Greeks and Arabs on the European Renaissance, which is a proof of his desire to widen his interests. It is unfortunate that he could not develop his thesis that in every century a teacher is born to revive the faith into a concept of historical development and progress.

Maulwī Karāmat 'Alī, in spite of his balanced and peace-loving attitude, belonged to the school of thought which believed in the necessity of fitting contemporary life into the traditional framework. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) saw too much of life, and was too acutely conscious of its demands to agree wholeheartedly with this view. He did not receive what would be recognized as religious education in his own days or in ours; he did not lead what is generally conceived to be a religious life. He studied Persian and Arabic in his boyhood but without much application and did not associate with religious-minded people. He learnt more later from recognized teachers out of an inner urge to accomplish self-imposed tasks. He was interested in mathematics and astronomy; he studied medicine and also practised it for some time. He made an astonishingly complete and accurate survey of the monuments of Delhi, and brought out an edition of the *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī* of Abul Faḍl, the text of which was based on a comparison of the texts available and to which valuable illustrations had been added. These two works alone would entitle him to a high position among the scholars of the world. Sir Sayyid was also painstaking in all that he did, and the scholarly tasks he undertook were planned in great and exact detail. For a commentary on the Bible, through which he hoped to show that there was no disagreement between it and the Qur'ān, he learnt Hebrew, set up a printing-press, with Hebrew, English and Urdū types, and engaged an Englishman to translate his Urdū commentary into English. Unfortunately, he could complete only a part of this work, but the labour put into even this was enormous.

Sir Sayyid spent a few years of his youth in what was considered frivolous living in his time. After the death of his elder brother he became for a while strict and religious. But when forced to look for employment, he took service as a minor officer in the court of the

Ṣadr Amīn under the East India Company in preference to service of a higher rank in the Mughal palace. Later, he passed the examination for the post of Munṣif, the lowest judicial officer, and then rose steadily in rank and esteem. The upheaval of 1857-8, which brought ruin on the Muslims of Delhi and the United Provinces, was the turning-point in Sir Sayyid's life. He felt a strong urge to lead and guide, and his versatile mind, his strength of character and his moral integrity fitted him eminently for this task.

It may be argued that Sir Sayyid's views on Islām do not entitle him to be considered a religious thinker according to our definition. He was beyond doubt a very sensitive and sincere Muslim, and went all the way to England to search in the India Office Library and the British Museum for the source material that would enable him to refute the charges made against the Prophet by Sir William Muir. This was something inconceivable in his time, and later generations of Muslims have not produced anyone as keenly and desperately anxious to maintain the honour of Islām in the world of scholarship. But Sir Sayyid had, in fact, a secular mind, or rather one dominated by common sense, and he sought to achieve essentially secular values. He desired a position of honour for the Muslims in India, and he felt, quite correctly and genuinely, that the traditional view of Islām was a real hindrance to progress. 'Progress' is not a religious concept, and it would have been illogical to regard it as a criterion, but for the fact that it was the traditional view that worldly power and position was among the blessings bestowed by Islām. Sir Sayyid had no deeply thought out idea of progress; for him the blunt and obvious contrast between the British and the Indian Muslims was enough, and he was convinced that he was performing a religious duty in attempting to make the Muslims aware of the disgrace they had brought upon themselves in the eyes of the world and of God.

> 'It is strange that to use one's effort to enable the Muslims to progress as a people, to maintain the study of religion, to make provision for education in those worldly sciences which are beneficial and useful, to ensure economic security, to open avenues of honest employment, to remove the blemishes in social life and eradicate those evil customs and bad habits because of which people professing other religions look down upon the Muslims, to remove those prejudices and superstitions which are opposed to the *sharī'ah* and a hindrance to every kind of progress—it is strange that this should not be attributed to religiousness and to love of the Muslims but to absorption in worldliness. I do not see how this attitude could be justified in the eyes of God'[3].

[3] *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*. Faḍluddīn, Lahore, 1313 A.H., p. 163.

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Even such basic considerations of welfare can reduce religion to a means of worldly benefit and deprive it of spiritual content[4]. But Sir Sayyid's insight and sincerity enabled him to pick out a few issues which religious thinkers had been evading not only for generations but for centuries, and this evasion had been disastrous for spiritual life.

'*The Ahl-i-Sunnah w'al-Jamā'ah* of the later ages have evolved the strangely erroneous concept that (the principle of) *ijtihād* is no longer to be acted upon and now no one can become a *mujtahid*. They are only uncertain as to who was the last of the *mujtahids*. . . .

'But it appears to us from some works that the majority of the '*ulamā* hold the view that it is essential that there should be a *mujtahid* in every age and that there is no age without its *mujtahid*. . . . How great a mistake of the *Ahl-i-Sunnah w'al-Jamā'ah* is it then that they should regard *ijtihād* as being over and the *mujtahid* as non-existent.

'This error in belief has done us great spiritual and worldly harm. It is, therefore, essential that we should give up this belief and resolve upon investigating all matters, whether they concern religion or worldly life. We must remember that circumstances keep on changing and we are faced daily with new problems and needs. If, therefore, we do not have living *mujtahids*, how shall we ask those who are dead about questions which were not material facts of life in their time. We must have a *mujtahid* of our age and time'[5].

Sir Sayyid made no claims for himself, but he put forward views that in fact made him into a *mujtahid*. He declared that the doctrines of Islām are fundamental in two ways. Some are based clearly on the Qur'ān and authentic *ḥadīth*s, and are fundamental in themselves. They constitute the basis of Islām, and are in accordance with the laws of nature. Other doctrines, which may or may not be in accordance with the laws of nature, are to be regarded as fundamental because they follow logically from those of the first

[4] 'A false religion is without doubt a hindrance to civilization, and if false notions and unjustifiable prejudices and innovations (*masā'il-i-ijtihādīyah*) and beliefs based on conjecture (*'aqā'id-i-qiyāsīyah*) get so mixed up in a true religion that in practice and principle it becomes impossible to distinguish and discriminate (between them and the real doctrines), then without doubt it becomes as great an obstacle to civilization as a false religion. This has happened with Islām in our age, when (the true) faith has been hidden completely from the eyes by the darkness of *taqlīd*. But true religion, like the basic Islāmic religion, can never be a hindrance to progress, for the commandments of this religion are identical with the aims of civilization and culture.' *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6.

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type, and both support and supplement each other. In practice, both have equal validity and belief in both is equally obligatory. For instance, the fundamental doctrine in regard to *namāz* (prayer) is concentration of thought on God; other doctrines related to this, such as *wuḍū* (ablutions), standing, sitting etc., support and establish this doctrine. That is why, in case of illness or inability, these can be given up, but concentration of thought on God always remains obligatory. But it is necessary to act in accordance with both, unless there are sufficient reasons for not doing so[6]. This was *ijtihād* with a vengeance, but it would not, perhaps, have been so provocative if 'nature' had not been made a criterion, and if it had not been a logical consequence of this position—which Sir Sayyid was bold enough to state definitely—that *ijtihād* was permissible in matters of doctrine and law where these were not obviously based on the Qur'ān or some authentic *ḥadīth*. If *ijtihad* was permissible, *ijmā'* and *qiyās* could not be binding, and *taqlīd* could not be accepted as in any sense obligatory[7].

Sir Sayyid applied the criterion of 'nature' to doctrines about the Person and attributes of God, and held that statements in regard to them in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* were to be considered allegorical or metaphorical, and not to be taken literally. It was the same in regard to statements about the Day of Judgement, and Heaven and Hell. Angels, according to Sir Sayyid, should be considered personified powers of Nature, *jinns* wild tribes of the deserts and mountains; Satan is not a being, but the personification of man's lower self. This was clearly going too far, in an age when belief in angels and *jinns* was a necessary corollary of belief in God, when the physical world was considered a mere symbol, a witness to the reality of the Unseen and the supernatural. But Sir Sayyid's reasoning in these matters appears to be a mere pin-prick compared with the deadly arguments he used to drive home his point that slavery was against nature and against the will of God, that no human being could own or be owned by another, and that the clear and final injunction of the Qur'ān was that prisoners of war should either be set free or ransomed. He showed that he was not the first to hold this view, and quoted orthodox literature in support[8]. The scholars of his day were aghast at the discovery that a clear injunction of the Qur'ān had been overlooked, and a whole code of law relating to slavery built

[6] Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī, *Ḥayāt-i-Jāwēd*, Mufīd Ām Press, Agra, 1903. Part II, Pp. 215-16.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

[8] *Ibṭāl-i-Ghulāmī*. Mufīd-i-'Ām Press, Agra, 1893. The whole question has been discussed by Maulānā Sa'īd Aḥmad Akbarābādī in his *'Islām mēṇ Ghulāmī kī Haqīqat'*, but from a theological point of view and to show that others have practised greater injustices than the Muslims.

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up in a manner that betrayed the intention of making worldly interest override the word of God. At the time when Sir Sayyid wrote, however, slavery was no longer a recognized institution, and all the evils that resulted from it were things of the past. Of greater contemporary value were Sir Sayyid's views that polygamy was permissible only if the husband was sure he could do equal justice to his wives[9]; that usury was prohibited, but not interest on Government Promissory Notes and loans; that dressing like non-Muslims and eating like them was not forbidden; that side by side with love based on community of faith (*ḥubb-i-īmānī*), there could be love based on common humanity (*ḥubb-i-insānī*)[10].

Sir Sayyid did not fight his battle all alone. It is true that he shocked people and roused violent opposition. But his friends and admirers did not abandon him, although hardly any agreed with him entirely. Finally, he decided to devote his time and energies to the school which he founded at Aligarh in 1875, and which soon developed into a college. From the syllabus of theology taught at the school and the college, it appeared as if he had made a bargain, and asked his community to accept his school and college, where the 'new' education was offered, on condition that new ideas on Islām were not offered as a part of this education. Even if it was not so in fact, and Sir Sayyid could not spare the time to discuss religious issues because of his new responsibilities, the higher value was discarded for the lower, a few hundred acres of dusty land and buildings without character were exchanged for the infinite spaces of religious and moral speculation; the reconstruction of the social and economic life of a whole community was sacrificed to secure recruitment in the lower grades of government service for the sons of a few hundred Muslim families[11].

Sir Sayyid went far beyond any religious thinker before him in giving concrete form to the concept of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ*, good works[12]. He was thinking, too obviously, of success in this world, and his moralizing could not, therefore, appeal either to the truly religious or to those who adhered to the traditional view that a Muslim should be guided by principles that would assure his salvation. Self-interest can never be put forward as a moral argument. But if Sir Sayyid did not convince, his critics and opponents were afflicted with moral and spiritual sterility, and could offer nothing by way of guidance.

[9] Ḥālī, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[10] *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, p. 119.

[11] See Rām Gopāl, *op. cit.*, about the contribution of Aligarh to the education of Indian Muslims during this period. P. 58.

[12] As, for instance, when he writes about national progress. *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, p. 136 ff.

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In fact, what the Muslims needed was to choose one of the two ways in which the ideal of the good life could be achieved: (1) An independent and uninhibited study of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, with a view to finding out what constituted the good life, and (2) living what healthy instinct, intuition and spiritual vision indicated to them as being the good life, and regarding the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* as sources of strength and inspiration. The two ways are not mutually exclusive or inconsistent. Without healthy instinct, intuition and spiritual vision, study of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* can produce only the type of *'ulamā* who have been continuously and justly condemned, and the idea of the good life will inevitably take the form of a *taqlīd* that leads to isolation from contemporary cultural and political movements and thwarts all attempts at understanding the problems that challenge the exercise of moral and spiritual power. The good Muslim should decide, first, what constitutes *'amal-i-ṣālih*; he should then set out to discover himself through his work, accepting the social and political responsibilities without which he cannot become a moral person. Two thinkers who followed Sir Sayyid, Dr Iqbāl and Maulānā Āzād, had a much better chance than he of defining *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ* and giving a new significance to religious life. It is unfortunate that one of them could not do so, and the other, who did, stood alone.

Dr Muḥammad Iqbāl (1876-1938) was among the most eminent and honoured Indian Muslim figures of the twentieth century. The publication of some of his poems could, without exaggeration, be regarded as a significant event in the history of the Indian Muslims, and the fulfilment of a tradition which has made poetry a cherished vehicle of religious thought. Dr Iqbāl had a deep, all-consuming love for his community, an intense faith in Islām and profound reverence for Islāmic traditions. The appeal of his poetry was stupendous. Any attempt at criticism or even an objective appraisal can, therefore, in the words of Dr Zākir Ḥusain, seem like 'nibbling at his greatness with tiny, ineffective teeth'. Here, however, we are not dealing with his poetry[13], but those religious, philosophical and social ideas to which he himself attached great importance and which are his contribution to Indian Muslim religious thought. This does not mean that a clear distinction can be made between his poetry and his philosophy. Iqbāl the thinker was too often Iqbāl the poet wearing a transparent mask. But it would be misleading to confuse the two aspects of his creativity—his poetry and his philosophic thought.

His career as a poet began when he was still a young man, experimenting in new styles but also forced to think about the existing

[13] Iqbāl as a poet has been discussed in a subsequent chapter.

condition of his community. To make himself intelligible and acceptable, he had to adopt the approach of the preacher (*nāṣiḥ*) and the apologist in the traditional sense, but there is also evident, in his earlier poems, the belief that the Indian Muslims ought to rehabilitate themselves through co-operation with the other communities of India, to become a healthy and active part of the nation and to serve their country. But after studying in Europe, his views changed. He had an extraordinarily sensitive mind, with a philosophic bent which probably made him impatient of the opportunism and vague hopes on which political policies are usually based. His nature demanded finality, and he found the ultimate solution of the philosophical, social and political problems of his time in Islām. A statement of these problems is necessary for the proper understanding of his thought.

There was, first, the indifference to spiritual and moral values or, as in Europe, the existence of conditions in which these values could be given a secondary position or even regarded as irrelevant. Secondly, there was nationalism, with what Dr Iqbāl considered its inevitable concomitants, organized pursuit of self-interest, aggression and war. Thirdly, there was atheistic socialism, with its concept of social and economic justice, which implied the destruction of an existing order and the building up of a new one on the human sense of equality and justice alone. All these problems necessitated a revaluation of values. The correct approach to them and their solution was for Dr Iqbāl a matter not only of national or human but of cosmic significance, of a choice between the creation of a higher form of life and annihilation. He believed that understanding of Islām would provide the answer to all questions, and he preached his interpretation of Islām with an intensity and a fervour that could convert a poetic image into the concrete substance of life.

As we have already stated, Dr Iqbāl was both a poet and a thinker, and there is hardly any poetic composition of his which does not present an intellectual conviction or some aspect of his philosophical ideas. In two of his works, the *Mathnawī Asrār-i-Khudī wa Rumūz-i-Bekhudī* and the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām* he has, however, given a systematic exposition of his doctrines, and a discussion of these will enable us to assess his contribution to Indian Muslim religious thought.

The human personality and the Perfect Man has been a constant subject of poetic and mystic contemplation and philosophical speculation among Muslims. In his *Mathnawī* Dr Iqbāl has presented what might be called an integrated concept of the Self, fusing together the *ṣūfī's* passion for union with God, the idea of dynamism expounded by Bergson, the groping for self-assertion which was the

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philosophy of Nietzsche, and the *sharī'ah* of Islām. The secret of the Self is man's striving for freedom, his creating within himself the 'tension' which builds up his power, and devoting this power to the service of the highest purpose. The human Ego in its movement towards 'uniqueness' has to pass through three stages, obedience to the Law, self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or ego-hood, and divine vice-regency[14], and these are the stages of Selflessness which justify as well as consummate the growth of the Self.

There is an element of the universal in this concept of the Self. But the similes used, such as lion and eagle for power, are unfortunate, the references to the use of the sword as the symbol of self-assertion overshadow the emphasis on peace, humility and love. Eventually the Self and mankind become the Muslim and the Muslim community, and perfect faith in the Oneness of God and in prophethood and the observance of the injunctions of the *sharī'ah* in regard to prayer, fasting, *zakāt* and the pilgrimage are implied as being the only means of the attainment of Personality. With this the Muslim may not disagree; he may even accept the responsibility of holding that propagation of the faith is his principal function. The concept of 'the enemy' as symbolic of the obstacles in his path may stimulate him[15]. But complete identification with the community, the injunction to avoid *ijtihād*—which in contemporary life would mean avoiding experiment in social organization and intellectual adventurousness—and not to look for other than the explicit meaning of doctrine and law, for God Himself is the jeweller who has cut the jewel of the *sharī'ah*, and the declaration that the Muslim has been released from the fetters of nationality and country reduce the teachings of the *Mathnawī* to a form of apologetics, a glorification of the beaten track of Muslim history and thought. The Muslim who wishes to interpret the doctrines of Self and Selflessness in terms of everyday life, therefore, finds little guidance beyond the exhortation to discover for himself the totality of wisdom and virtue which is comprehended within the *sharī'ah*. The *ṣūfī* emphasis on Love as against that prudence and worldly wisdom which constricts the heart of man acquires in Dr Iqbāl's thought an anti-intellectual quality which makes his advice to the Muslim to study and acquire power over nature appear as a half-hearted concession to the needs of the modern age.

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām is an exposition of Islāmic doctrine in the terms of modern philosophy and science.

[14] *Secrets of the Self*, translated by R. A. Nicholson. Ashraf, Lahore, 1950. P. XVIII.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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Religion, Dr Iqbāl argues, is rooted in a type of experience which is a state of feeling with a cognitive aspect. The content of this experience cannot be communicated to others except in the form of a judgement whose validity can be determined by means of intellectual and pragmatic tests. These tests, which constitute a comprehensive philosophical criticism, lead Dr Iqbāl to the conclusion that the ultimate reality is a rationally directed creative life, not a formless fluid but an organizing principle of unity. The conception of God and the meaning of prayer are then discussed, and all search for knowledge is declared to be essentially a form of prayer. This view of religion and creative activity forms the background for an exposition of the place of man in the universe and of his function. It is clear from the Qur'ān that man is the chosen of God, that he is meant to be His representative on earth and that he is the trustee of a personality which he accepted at his peril. This personality is not a thing but an act, as the human soul proceeds from the directive energy of God. It is open to man to belong to the meaning of the universe and become immortal, not as of right, but through personal effort[16].

In a chapter on the spirit of Muslim culture, Dr Iqbāl says that in Islām prophecy reached its perfection and therein abolished itself. The birth of Islām is the birth of the inductive intellect, and Muslim culture, for purposes of knowledge, fixes its gaze on the finite and the concrete, all lines of Muslim thought converging on a dynamic conception of the universe. The anti-classical spirit of the modern world is claimed to have arisen out of this quality of Muslim thought. As a social movement the aim of Islām was to make the idea of the unity of human origin a living factor in daily life, and thus carry it towards fuller fruition.

The Islāmic society, Dr Iqbāl continues, must reconcile the categories of permanence and change. It must possess eternal principles to regulate its collective life, for the eternal alone can provide a foothold in a world of perpetual change. But eternal principles, when they are understood to exclude change—according to the Qur'ān, one of the greatest 'signs' of God—tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature. Islam has, therefore, included in itself a principle of movement which is known as *ijtihād*, or the exercise of judgement. Dr Iqbāl discusses the degrees of *ijtihād*, and the reasons why it was decided not to exercise it any more after Muslim jurisprudence had reached a particular stage of development. He regards the claim of the present generation of Muslims to reinterpret the foundational legal principles as perfectly justified,

[16] *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām*, Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1944. P. 120.

and thinks that the world of Islām should proceed courageously to the work of reconstruction. The purpose of Islām has hitherto only been partially revealed, as the early Muslims, emerging out of the spiritual slavery of pre-Islāmic Asia, could not fully understand the significance of the idea that, as there could be no further revelation binding on man, the Muslims ought to be spiritually the most emancipated people on earth. The Muslim of today should appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles and evolve out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islām that spiritual democracy which is the aim of Islām.

The first reaction to the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is that it attempts to cover too wide a field. This is due partly to Dr Iqbāl's wide interests and extensive study, but partly also to his anxiety to demonstrate his responsiveness to the ideas thrown up by the advancement of knowledge, particularly of scientific knowledge, and to prove at the same time to the Muslim intellectual who was becoming indifferent to Islām that an enlightened interpretation of the Qur'ān would show that it comprehends and explains all the fundamental problems of our time. The result is an assortment of ideas selected from all sources, from the writings of physicists, philosophers and poets of the West as well as of Muslim scholars of the past, with the too evident purpose of showing that they were more or less right because their opinions conformed with what was written in the Qur'ān or in error because they did not. The quotations from the Qur'ān are sometimes irrelevant or meanings have been forced into them which they do not seem to bear[17]. The method of exposition is such that a reader who does not possess sufficient grounding in Western thought would find it difficult to appreciate the argument, and anyone who has thought over or studied for himself the problems discussed would find the argument unsatisfying. Finally, the challenge thrown out to the Muslims to reconstruct their life in accordance with the ideals of Islām is reduced to a hesitant and formal admission that some change might be made somewhere, but caution is more necessary than courage[18]. This is all the more surprising in view of Dr Iqbāl's ideals of social justice and personal self-realization and the exalted expression he has given to them.

But it would be unfair to identify him entirely with any particular line of his own thought, however systematically and continuously he may have expounded it. He never ceased to be res-

[17] See, for instance, the quotations on pp. 116-7, 120, 122, 131.

[18] Compare what has been stated above in regard to reconstruction of Muslim society so as to realize the ideals of Islām with the reservations made on pp. 167, 175 and 176 and the warning against liberalism, pp. 153 and 162-3.

ponsive to truths and facts, even though this responsiveness led him to inconsistency. In his poem, 'God's Commandment' he has asked for the destruction of the existing order, and Lenin's defence in God's presence acquits him of all blame, even though he was the most powerful representative of atheism. The evidence for declaring Iqbāl to be a Muslim poet is overwhelming, but there is also evidence to show that he looked beyond the people and the traditions which he loved to the human being unqualified by any historical or religious associations. Unfortunately, the people to whom Iqbāl addressed himself did not possess the faculty of self-criticism. They identified themselves with the poet's vision of man, and lost the chance he offered them of shedding their narrowness and their fears and becoming the 'true believers', the 'men of God' whose work endures for all time.

Maulānā Āzād (1888-1958), the other religious thinker of our age who, as we have said, had the chance of defining *'amal-i-ṣālih*, was a person of an entirely different stamp. He was born in an extremely orthodox family of *ṣūfīs* and divines, and was brought up to lead a religious life. But he was intellectual and sensitive and responsive to influences. Even before his education had been completed, he became restive under the restrictions imposed on him by the opinion of his family and its large circle of followers. We have in his *Tadhkirah* an almost allegorical account of his doubts, his spiritual agony, his return, like the prodigal son, to the bosom of his faith. He hints at having tasted forbidden fruit, but mentions only music. However, once he was firm on his feet, the pent-up forces of his personality were released. He took educated Indian Muslims by storm with his eloquence and fervour when he began the publication of *Al-Hilāl* in 1912, and remained in public life till his death. We have dealt separately with his political ideas and activities. What we need to note here is that his political ideas were the expression of his inmost belief. This took time to mature, but he had begun work on his commentary on the Qur'ān in 1916, and the vicissitudes of his career served only to confirm him all the more in his faith.

Maulānā Āzād's writings, except for his *India Wins Freedom* and two collections of letters, had a deeply religious colour. Indeed, he seemed always to be talking the Qur'ān. The difference between him and others who establish their arguments in a similar fashion is that he considered the Qur'ān as the real basis of the faith, and it inspired all his thinking. He did not limit his horizon by accepting traditional interpretations, by deriving his opinions from other sources and using the Qur'ānic text as formal proof. He could, therefore, think more freely and independently than others, and warn and guide with complete self-confidence.

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As early as 1913, Maulānā Āzād had arrived at definite conclusions on some fundamental issues:

'The purpose for which Islām came into the world was to command what is (recognized as) good and forbid what is (recognized as) prohibited, and commanding what is (recognized as) good and *jihād* are two forms of the same injunction. Therefore, every effort devoted to what is right, every expenditure of resources that serves the cause of truth and goodness, every labour and burden undertaken to promote justice, all pain and suffering endured in the body and the mind while striving in the way of God, all the fetters and shackles of the dungeon that bind hands and feet in punishment for proclaiming the truth, every scaffold to which the beauty of truth and the love of justice leads, in short, every sacrifice of life and property, every service with tongue and pen, performed in the cause of truth and justice is *jihād* in the way of Allāh, and is comprehended in the meaning of *jihād*.

'This is the reason why the command of *jihād* follows inevitably from (belief in) Islām, and no one can be a Muslim and a believer in the one God unless he undertakes *jihād*'[19].

'Islām does not commend narrowmindedness and racial and religious prejudice. It does not make the recognition of merit and virtue, of human benevolence, mercy and love dependent upon and subject to distinctions of religion and race. It teaches us to respect every man who is good, whatever be his religion, to let ourselves be drawn towards merits and virtues, whatever the religion or the race of the person who possesses them. . . . But above and beyond this law of universal goodwill, and I do not hesitate to own it even in this age of hypothetical impartiality, is the *jihād* of helping the cause of justice, worshipping Allāh and establishing rightmindedness and justice. Islām teaches us that the purpose of the creation of man is that he should represent God on earth, keep burning the torch of truth and light'[20].

'Muslims today do not need to lay new foundations or to exercise ingenuity. They have only to revive and reaffirm what has been commanded. There is no reason why we should feel distraught over the new houses to be built; we need only to settle down in the dwellings we have forsaken. This is the difference in principle between my conviction as regards what is to be done and the methods of my contemporaries'[21].

These were not academic opinions. Maulānā Āzād could warn with

[19] *Al-Hilāl*, No. 3, Vol. II, January 1, 1913.
[20] *Al-Hilāl*, Nos. 14-15, Vol. II, April 9-16, 1913.
[21] *Al-Hilāl*, No. 21, Vol. II, May 29, 1913.

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all the fire and fervour of the traditional preacher. One of the articles in the *Al-Balāgh* may be taken as an illustration of his particular method. In the actual context, the reference is to the Israelites, but it is also obvious from Maulānā Āzād's paraphrase of the verses that he is challenging the Indian Muslims to consider whether the statements do not apply to them also.

'Now their condition is such that whether they are threatened or not threatened, it is all the same to them; whether you warn them of the consequences of their actions or not, they will never listen; because of the falsehood in them God has sealed their hearts, closed up their ears, and thrown over their eyes a veil so that they have become ignorant and hard-hearted. No matter how many lamps are lighted in front of a blind man, he cannot see the light, and without doubt this is an utterly wretched condition.

'The real reason for this is that to call upon a person to break the chains forged by centuries of custom and habit, belief and practice, and adopt a new line of thought and action; to step all at once out of an environment of particular beliefs and practices in which his mind has developed from childhood to old age; to call upon him to do this is to ask him to acquire a new body, a new mind, a new imagination, new senses; to turn away for ever from, or rather sever all relations with, everything that was near and dear to him; to wipe his mind clean of all that he liked and was habituated to; in brief, to be born again, to go through a mental renascence. To achieve this is one of the most difficult tasks human resolution could set itself'[22].

In the *Tadhkirah*, Maulānā Āzād went further. He made it clear that the major influence responsible for breeding among the Muslims the mentality of the Israelites was the juristic view of Islām, in which the criterion was not the Qur'ān but legal opinion, not the ideal life which the Qur'ān asks us to lead, but conduct—whether intrinsically good or bad—that could be proved correct under the law. He condemned this attitude, and praised those who rebelled against it with a moving eloquence. But in the *Tadhkirah* his thinking—and also his writing—is not systematic. His appeals to the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* give only a vague idea of what he had in mind, and do not indicate what he considered to be correct belief and practice. But we shall be accepting much if we accept Maulānā Āzād's view that the juristic interpretation of Islām, which had been passively acknowledged by the Muslim community or had been forced upon it, was in fact a misinterpretation that obscured from

[22] *Al Balāgh*, Vol. I, No. I, November 12, 1915, p. 4(h).

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the eyes of the Muslims many of the highest moral and spiritual values of Islām.

Maulānā Āzād's maturest thought appears in the *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*, the first volume of which was published in 1931. The *Tarjumān* is a commentary, and is technically concerned only with what is stated in the Qur'ānic text, which has been closely followed. But the questions which Maulānā Āzād has raised are all relevant to life, his range of thought is wide and comprehensive, his conclusions clear, reasonable and satisfying. The *Tarjumān* is free from any tendency towards apologetics, and from any attempts to read into the Qur'ān what is really not there. This is because Maulānā Āzād's thought in fact does spring out of the Qur'ān and from no other source, and he has brought to the understanding of the Qur'ān a rich and varied experience and an intensity of suffering along with the necessary knowledge. He has not written with an eye on the Western, or even the Indian Muslim reader. The *Tarjumān* is the product of deep personal conviction, of belief unpolluted by any extraneous considerations. It is, perhaps, the finest example of the constructive thinking enjoined on the Muslim.

There may be much in Maulānā Āzād's interpretation of details that is new, but discussion of these would take us far afield. The most significant characteristic of the *Tarjumān* is its approach, and this is fully explained in the commentary on the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*, the opening chapter of the Qur'ān. A discussion of this would enable us to indicate what Maulānā Āzād himself considered fundamental.

In this introduction, Maulānā Āzād gives an outline of the historical development of belief in God, but he does not concern himself with philosophical or scientific proofs of the existence of God. He begins with an exposition of what the attributes of God as given in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah* imply. The first is *Rabb al-'ālamīn*. God is *Rabb*, and *Rubūbīyah*, or being *Rabb*, means 'to develop a thing from stage to stage, in accordance with its inherent aptitudes and needs, in order that it might fulfil itself'[23]. *Rubūbīyah* has an external aspect, which is nature and all that occurs in nature to make life possible. It has an equally significant, and for human beings perhaps even more important inward aspect, which is seen in *Taqdīr* and *Hidāyah*. *Taqdīr* is the assignment of a particular role to everything, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the universal order, the means to fulfil the assigned role are provided and the role is, in fact, fulfilled. *Hidāyah* is guidance, most obvious in the form of instinct. The assignment of a proper function and the guidance towards its performance together constitute proof that creation has a purpose and

[23] *Mufradāt-i-Rāghib Iṣfahānī*, a work on rhetoric. Reference given in *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*, Zamzam Co. Ltd, Lahore, 1931. Vol. I, p. 35.

an end, that it is not without meaning and significance. It is evidence that leads us on to belief in the Oneness of God, in revelation, in prophethood, in life after death. They are fundamental to the universal order, to its purpose and its meaning.

These ideas would not have needed such detailed statement if they had not formed the basis of Maulānā Āzād's exposition of the other attributes of God mentioned in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*, His graciousness, His mercy, His justice. Reflection on the evidence we see of these attributes leads Maulānā Āzād to the view that the basis of devotion to God should be the belief, which the Qur'ān definitely inculcates, that human thought and activity should reflect these attributes. It should be man's function to help in the development of the society to which he belongs from stage to stage, in accordance with its needs and aptitudes, in order that it might fulfil itself. He should be gracious, merciful and righteous; he should not passively accept what is wrong, but strive actively for the justice, the balance, which is seen in the works of God, with the realization that patient waiting for results is a part of faith in God and His universal order. There are, of course, in every society those who refuse to believe. This refusal can either be passive, and due to lack of understanding or desire to follow the ancestral faith (of polytheism and idolatry); or the refusal can take an active and aggressive form. Both kinds of refusal amount to *kufr*. In regard to the first, the injunction of the Qur'ān is to accept disagreement: 'To you your faith and to us ours'. Against *kufr* of the second kind, a struggle may be unavoidable and may even become obligatory, depending on the degree of the aggressiveness[24].

The Qur'ān bases belief in God on an inherent and universal urge in human nature. Anything over and above this is left to personal thinking and experience, and the Qur'ānic concept is thus comprehensive enough to include all forms of monotheism. Islām, the universal faith (*dīn*) revealed in the Qur'ān, is a confirmation of all monotheistic religions. It is against Islām to discriminate among the prophets, to follow some and to reject others; they must either *all* be accepted as having preached the universal faith, or *all* be denied; to deny even one of them is to deny all[25]. But what of religions like Hinduism? Maulānā Āzād rejects its polytheistic and idolatrous elements; he believes that definition of the Absolute by a process of negation, as in the *Upanishads*, denies man the possibility of positive belief; and though it may promote a philosophic outlook, it cannot create an active, living faith. But as *dīn* consists essentially in devotion to God and balanced, righteous action, it follows, by

[24] *Tarjumān*, Vol. I, pp. 111-3.
[25] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 201-3.

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inference, that it is for the Hindūs themselves, and not for the followers of Islām, to declare whether they do or do not believe in the universal faith. Maulānā Āzād regrets the fact that Hindūs who knew better have, throughout history, been willing to make compromises with, or take for granted as the fate of the ignorant, forms of belief that were polytheistic or idolatrous[26]. This is a kind of tolerance which he does not consider virtuous or even morally justifiable. There will, of course, be those who just profess the faith and observe its basic injunctions, as there will be those whose faith draws sustenance from an absolute conviction and those who, as it were, live in the sight of God. But this does not permit us to recognize any distinction between the masses and the elite, the worldly and the religious.

The Qur'ān does not ask followers of other religions to accept Islām as an altogether new faith. On the contrary, it asks them to return to the true form of their own religion[27]. One of the reasons for the opposition by Jews, Christians and the idolators of Mecca to Qur'ānic teaching was that it did not make any compromise with the spirit of exclusiveness. The Jews disliked its recognition of Christianity, the Christians its recognition of Judaism, the Meccans its recognition of non-Arab peoples. 'The Qur'ān says, if you do not deny that there is one Creator who has created this universe, with all that goes on in it, that there is one Providence which nurtures all alike, then why do you deny that there is only one Law, one spiritual truth, which has been revealed in the same way to all mankind? . . . You have one Father (*Rabb*), you all repeat the name of the same God, all spiritual leaders have shown you one and the same path. Is it not, then, the extremity of misguidedness, the murder of common sense, that every group is the enemy of every other group, and every man hates every other man, when there is one basic relationship, one purpose, one path? In whose name and for whose sake is all this dissension and war? Is it not in the name of the one God, and of the religions revealed by this one God, which have made all bow at the same threshold, and united all in the same bond of brotherhood?'[28].

One cannot say whether Maulānā Āzād realized the full implications of this doctrine. If the one God Whom all worship revealed all the religions that centre round belief in Him, His providence, His graciousness, His mercy and His guidance, and the mission of Islām was to make believers in one God realize that there was a spiritual bond uniting them all, then the fact of the Muslims regarding them-

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 137 ff.
[27] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 205.
[28] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 204.

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selves as a separate community must be considered a historical accident and not a doctrine of Islām. Maulānā Āzād emphasizes the difference between *dīn* and *sharī'ah*, and holds that while the *dīn* is essentially one, there must be a variety of *sharī'ahs* in view of the diversity of circumstances in which human groups have developed[29]. These *sharī'ahs* need not be exclusive or antagonistic; if they are, they need to be reformed in the light of the fundamental principles of the *dīn*. The *sharī'ah* of Islām, however highly one may think of it, is also the result of a historical development. It ought not to be exclusive in spirit when the *dīn* is inclusive; and if, in any instance, we find that it divides where it should unite, the validity of the relevant injunctions should be examined. This would not be anything new, as juristic interpretations of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* have been continuously called into question. But if we adopt the attributes of God and the universal quality of *dīn* as our criterion, the results might be explosive enough to destroy the distinctions created between Muslims and monotheists professing other religions. The Muslims would then have no justification for confining their thoughts and activities to their particular community. They would have to be as universal in spirit as Islām. During the days of the Khilāfat and Non-cooperation movements, Maulānā Āzād made his own position perfectly clear. He asserted that any form of association with the British government in India was a repudiation of Islām, and that friendship and co-operation could make Muslims and Hindūs into an *ummah al-wāḥidah*[30]. His authority for this assertion is that the Prophet Muḥammad used these very terms in an agreement with non-Muslim tribes settled round Madīnah, but in fact his view was based on the deep conviction that such friendship and co-operation was a fundamental injunction of Islām and represented its true spirit. This view is diametrically opposed to the *fiqh* and has not been even regarded worthy of consideration by the most liberal interpreters of the *sharī'ah*. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in holding this view Maulānā Āzād stood absolutely alone, for Indian Muslims and non-Muslims all disagreed with him in principle. But his faith was so deep-rooted that he could stand alone. And perhaps some day it will be acknowledged by the Indian Muslims that he had in fact discovered a new world of religious thought to redress the balance of the old.

[29] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 213.

[30] *Ummah* can be translated as 'people' or 'nation'. In the context of the agreement made by the Prophet it could also mean 'body politic'.

CHAPTER XXI

POETS AND WRITERS

THE literary urge of the Indian Muslims, to which is due their contribution to the regional languages of northern India, found its most characteristic expression in the development of Urdū. This language was used first by the *ṣūfīs* for propagating their ideas; some sulṭans of the Deccan experimented with it as a medium of poetry, but Walī of the Deccan (1668-1744) was the first poet to use it with any striking success. The opportunity it offered of combining the aesthetic values of Persian and Indian culture were immediately realized, and the poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in particular Ḥātim (1699-1799), Maẓhar (1698-1781), Dard (1719-1785), Saudā (1713-1781) Mīr (*c.* 1724-*c.* 1810), Inshā' (d. 1817) and Nāsikh (d. 1838) used their taste and feeling for the music of words to give it the strength of an all-purpose tool and the sparkle of a well-cut diamond. The names given to this language were Hindī, Hindvī, Rēkhtah, but finally it came to be called Urdū. Persian remained the official language as well as the language for serious writing in prose and for correspondence till well into the nineteenth century, but already by the middle of the eighteenth century Urdū had become its rival in poetry and was fast becoming the favourite. Kings and princes and courtiers began to patronize it; it became a symbol of the common culture that emerged out of the prevailing political chaos. Its words, phrases, idioms became a matter of deep, sometimes passionate concern, and whether originally of Arabic, Persian or the local dialect, they were adopted or discarded in accordance with their ability to fulfil the requirements of prosody and refined taste. The Persian tradition remained predominant, for poetry must have a background and the poet's personality must have other personalities to serve as sign-posts on the road to self-realization. Urdū never broke with this tradition, and it would have been a serious loss if it did, for the Persian tradition represented in a unique form the union of the spiritual and the physical, the godly and the human at the highest aesthetic level, and its images and conventions

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enabled the mind to seek self-expression with a boundless freedom[1]. But the Persian tradition did not exclude others, and while among the compositions of all Urdū poets one will, more or less frequently, come across a verse classic in its directness and simplicity, Indian Muslim search for beauty of sentiment and expression created a mass of poetry in Hindī, by which was meant the unadorned language of the people, the like of which is not found in the literature of formal, Sanskritized Hindī.

Persian poetry has many forms, the *mathnawī*, the *qaṣīdah*, the *ghazal*, the *qiṭa'*, the *musaddas*, the *mukhammas*, the *rubā'ī*, the single verse, called *bait* or *fard*. The *mathnavi* is used for epics and romances; the *qaṣīdah* is generally a long poem that may be descriptive, or a panegyric or a satire; the *qiṭa'* can be as short as two couplets or as long as a *qaṣīdah*; the *musaddas* consists of sets of six, the *mukhammas* of five lines; the *rubā'ī* is a quartrain. The *ghazal*, which gradually became the most popular form, consists of verses in the same metre with *qāfiyah* (rhyme) and *radīf* (double rhyme), the number of verses being at least five. All these forms were taken over into Urdū and used by most poets, but the *ghazal* acquired pre-eminence, probably because of its suitability for the *mushā'irah*. Critics of the *ghazal* disapprove of the restrictions it imposes on the poet and the artificiality it promotes by the insistence on rhyme, and it is indeed true that in most *ghazals* the same level of expression is not achieved in each of the verses. The rules of rhyme also discourage the continuity of thought from verse to verse, and a virtue

[1] Rām Bābū Saksēnā, in his *History of Urdu Literature* (Ram Narain Lal, Allahabad, 1940, pp. 23 ff.) has much to say against the blind adoption of the Persian tradition, which he calls 'servile absorption' and 'servile imitation'. There is nothing Indian, he says, in the birds, flowers, trees, paragons of love and beauty and justice to which allusions are frequently made in Urdū poetry. 'The heat of India, the spring, the eternal snows of the Himalayas, the fertilizing power of the Ganges and the Jumna with their magnificent flow have all escaped the attention of the early poets'. This statement may be roughly correct about some early poets, if Mīr Taqī Mīr and Naẓīr Akbarābādī are not included among them, but the implications of Saksēnā's argument are that this criticism applies to the whole body of Urdū poetry. That is patently incorrect, though the institution of the *mushā'irah* did indeed produce a mass of *ghazals* with which no sensible critic ever concerned himself. Dr R. C. Majumdar, in his *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century* (Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1960), after tracing the regeneration of Bengal to Western education and Western ideas, has this to say of Urdū poetry: 'The Urdū poems written in India in the nineteenth century would make one think that they were all written on the soil of Iran, and the entire Urdū literature conveyed the notion that the Muslims were in India, but not of India' (pp. 76-7). How much of Urdū poetry and 'the entire Urdū literature' would Dr Majumdar have read to form this judgement? And how is it that Iranian influence does and Western influence does not interfere with a Muslim or a Hindū being genuinely Indian?

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has to be made out of necessity by having a different topic for each verse. A translation into any language where the form of the *ghazal* is not known appears to be a deliberate desecration of the original. On the other hand, the need to compress thought and image within the compass of a single verse, 'to pour the ocean into a cup', was a challenge that produced masterpieces of terse and epigrammatic expression.

A real understanding of the Indian Muslim mind, it can be said, is impossible without a study of the development of Urdū literature, in particular of Urdū poetry, for it was in literature, even more than in architecture, that the creative genius of the Indian Muslim found its fullest and richest embodiment. We cannot here, however, do more than present a few significant types of poets and poetry, and it seems most appropriate to discuss, among the poets, Ghālib, Akbar and Iqbāl, as Ghālib represents the consummation of the humanistic element in Indian Muslim culture, Akbar (Allāhābādī) the harmonization of the values of poetry and humour and Iqbāl the beginning of a new age, a new search for values and forms, both of poetry and of life.

Ghālib was born at Āgrā in 1796, and died at Delhi in 1869. He came of good Turkish stock and his father and uncle were officers in the army. He spent his early years at Āgrā and studied under Shaikh Mu'aẓẓam, a well-known teacher, and possibly also under the poet Naẓīr Akbarābādī. When he was fourteen, an Iranian scholar taught him Persian for two years. But Ghālib was right when he said that whatever he had of knowledge had been granted to him by the supreme dispenser of grace: he had not obtained it from any teachers or any system of education. Ṣūfism, by which he was most deeply influenced, he studied for himself. Nature as well as culture made him a man of many social virtues, the most outstanding among which were his sense of humour, his sympathy, his generosity and tolerance. It was widely known that he drank wine, and he himself made no secret of it. He did not fast or pray, but it is quite obvious from his poetry that he was deeply religious. His life, from the point of view of income and expenditure, was full of worries. He had constantly to look for means of support which, in the economy of his time, could only take the form of maintenance grants in return for a type of flattery, and the very idea that he wrote odes to please the high and mighty creates resentment. He had a large number of pupils and admirers, and his complete freedom from jealousy and hearty appreciation of excellence in his friends and pupils won him the deepest respect. For his time, for ours and for all time he represents the charm and the dignity of pure culture and humanity.

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Ghālib's principal works are his Urdū *ghazals*, which have been published in several editions, his Persian *qaṣīdahs* and *ghazals* and his letters. He began writing first in Urdū, then for a number of years he wrote almost exclusively in Persian, and then again changed over to Urdū. He thought much more highly of what he had written in Persian, and it is true that he was much less under the influence of contemporary taste when he wrote in Persian. But a large number of his *qaṣīdahs* are odes in praise of government officers and princes, and in many of his *qaṣīdahs* and *ghazals* he seems to have deliberately attempted to surpass the work of old masters by using the same rhyme and metre. In the first phase of his Urdū poetry his language is highly Persianized; in the last phase it is very often simple and direct. While he was composing poetry he was also writing letters in a style that was refreshingly informal and conversational. He was unique as a poet and he was also one of the founders of modern Urdū prose.

Much of Ghālib's poetry has become a part of everyday speech, and he could be properly regarded as a poet of the people. This is most true of the last phase of his work. But he was by nature inclined to concentrated expression, to a style heavy with meaning, and he could with equal justice be called a poet of the few. In him a mystic, aesthetic and humanistic tradition, an urge to make poetry the self-expression of the free personality, reached almost its highest point, and the full significance of some of his verses can be realized only through an identical experience. But he followed a literary tradition and confined himself within it almost entirely. He wrote for *mushā'irahs* and also for himself; he wished to be appreciated and understood, to excel in neatness of form; he also wished to be himself, to compress within the narrow limits of a verse the vast horizons of his vision. He and some of his friends weeded out what seemed to them unfit for inclusion in a selected edition of his *ghazals*, but this edition contains much that is banal and commonplace, and the unweeded edition, the *Nuskha-i-Ḥamīdiyah*, contains *ghazals* where he is at his best. The first line of Ghālib's *Dīwān*, included also in the selected edition, is apparently meaningless, but has served as inspiration to a modern painter:

> Whose bold writing is this, that the very
> letters cry out against it?

Another modernist painter, Satīsh Gujrāl, introducing an exhibition of his work in which he had employed an entirely new technique, concluded his exposition of this technique with a line of Ghālib:

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Behold how passion's upsurge makes all
creation reel:
The keenness of the sword bursts from
its breast of steel.

Ghālib has been appraised by Urdū critics of the old school by comparisons with other masters of Urdū verse, by fixing topics and categories—jealousy, love, mysticism, etc.—and mechanically fitting Ghālib's verses into their supposedly proper place. Leftist and progressive writers have determined standards for the judgement of art, but realized that it would be too much of an impertinence to apply these standards to Ghālib's poetry. In fact, Ghālib has to be appreciated by everyone for himself, and this appreciation can be real and inspiring only if it is accompanied by a fresh, uninhibited search for meaning, by seeing the uncreated forms within creation.

Vision hath he who, before the power of
love he measures,
Has seen the dance, within each stone,
of uncreated figures.

But the search for uncreated figures, for dynamism within the static, for meaning within silence is really a search for ourselves, and if we stop anywhere it must be either because of the bliss of perfect self-realization or because of weariness and defeat. In our adventure with Ghālib we do stop here and there, and then, feeling the heart-beat slow down, again take to the road.

I'm sick and cold, where art thou, O desire?
Let fly the arrow of a sigh
And fill my heart with fire!

Love, for whose life-giving touch the poet yearns, is not a theme, not a passion, but the supreme Reality which transfigures man's being. It has a physical aspect, but the physical is not the real. It is, in fact, a metaphor, a symbol, a convention, an intimation of the supra-physical, the ineffable. In all Persian and Urdū poetry which has been influenced by mysticism, the beloved has been conceived as a person without sex, or as a woman without family and social relations—woman in the abstract—or even as a geometrical figure, with the mouth or the waist reduced to an invisible line. The obvious purpose of this literary convention was to safeguard aesthetic contemplation against gross physical reality. On the other hand, the lover himself remains intensely and proudly human. Ghālib follows tradition, and if the critics quote his verses as theologians quote the

Traditions, enough evidence could be produced to accuse him of artificiality, even of poor taste. We may regret, as one critic does[2], that he cannot see love as the ideal of personal life and the beloved as a companion whose beauty purifies as it exalts. But even in English literature we do not find the poet confined to any one concept of love or to any one aim or one sphere of society in his search for beauty; even the provocation, the piercing glance, the wiles, the indifference and the heartlessness will be found there, though not the exaggeration which makes the beloved into a bloody executioner and the lover into the victim suffering the convulsions preceding death. But the imminence of death has always been a part of consciousness in the East, and conditions of insecurity, if not anarchy, in which any misfortune could happen, have been prevalent so often and for so long that the poet cannot really be accused of having invented improbable situations and possibilities. Ghālib's beloved has all the usual features. But he was too genuine to be satisfied with stylized images and hackneyed symbols. Amidst the conventional love-making and adoration of the beloved we clearly discern an intense passion for a person of real flesh and blood. His descripitions of charm, provocative glances, indifference and incredible callousness are also conventional, but sometimes we are roused by the naughty or deliciously perverse suggestiveness of a touch or an epigrammatic description.

Artless, artful, aware, unaware:
The closed eyes of beauty
Are my despair.

★

Blushing avert your face to hide love's
strain,
And I'll forego endearments and caresses;
Flash anger from your dark, dishevelled
tresses
And I'll not ask for jewelled smiles again.

Much of Ghālib's lyrical poetry, whatever its excellence, follows accepted patterns of thought and imagery rather too closely. He is much more himself when he contemplates the solitude, the grandeur, the sorrow, the stupendous frustrations, the cataclysmic ecstasies of man. But one variety of experience does not exclude another. The poet is not, and should not be fettered with logic and system, and in a poet so conscious of his humanity as Ghālib, the inner consistency of the creative mind weaves contradictions together into a

[2] Shaikh M. Ikrām, *Ghālib Nāmah*, Tāj Office, Bombay, 4th Edition, p. 296 ff.

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well-knit aesthetic whole. With Ghālib we adventure into strange lands without losing touch with the known and the familiar. But the passion for fresh experience is irresistible.

Again my heart is restless, again my
breast
Yearns for the mortal wound of love.

Each mortal wound is healed, as soon as it is inflicted, by the objectification of a new passion in a new image. It is we who might be unable to bear the constant swirl of emotions. 'How shall I make manifest the fiery quality of my imagination, when even an inclination to frenzy sets the wilderness ablaze?' Ghālib lives in a world of feeling the intensities of which we cannot conceive. It is a world where pride in humanity is supreme, but where the freedom to desire creates exasperating conflicts, so that the poet feels that he is being trampled over by the multitude of his own passions. There is no remedy for the conflicts; their causes lie too deep. Their intensity is sometimes modified by melancholy, sometimes they lead to a pessimism which overhangs like a dark cloud, or is the gloaming in which wisdom and resignation mature. Sometimes there is just a fatalistic defiance.

I'm not a melody bursting like a flower
Or a string with tunes replete;
I am a chord that has just snapped:
The image of defeat.

★

Enough, Despair, enough, or even this joy
Of blind and hopeless striving
Will turn to death and dust.

★

How shall I know where all my effort
leads?
I'm like the caged bird that fondly
gathers
Straws for a nest out in the garden air.

★

I long to live in utter loneliness,
With none to speak to, none to share
my thoughts,
In a sheer dwelling, without roofs
and walls,
Or neighbours guarding against fate
and thieves,
With none to tend me if I'm sick and
prostrate,
And none to mourn me if I pass away.

★

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Within this magic dust in ambush lies
A world of madness. I know what peace
and bliss
Comes to the head that rests in death
Upon annihilation's couch.

★

I'm all suspicion, all despair
Like the heart, lured and betrayed
By the sweet words of the fair.
Seeming not to mind at all,
Yet inwardly in anguish,
I am the smile of fading flowers
That in the autumn languish.

★

This universe is nothing but
Thyself in peerless glory;
We exist, since Beauty takes
Delight in seeing Itself.
What heartlessness to make us see
Life's spectacle and not enjoy or learn;
What misery to yearn for things
When soul and body both are nought.
The notes of life and death
Pitched high or low
Are but a screech;
Sober and mad
Are fatuous distinctions;
Foolish, this brag of knowledge,
Futile, this prayer and fasting;
Dregs of a stupefying cup
Our Here and our Hereafter.

★

From such depths, Ghālib's spirit rises again and again, on the wings of its mystical and humanistic intimations. Ardour provides the wherewithal for the humble and the insignificant entity to become the whole where it seems to be only a minute part, so it can be said that

A grain of sand the desert holds,
A drop contains the sea.

The poet has his own nature, function and destiny:

Fate has an instinct true:
They that are fleet of foot
Are chosen to traverse
The endless vale of grief.

★

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You are a nightingale, and being caught
Within the net, life puts you in a cage
That you may fill the world with song.

*

'Tis poetry that lures us from the bowers
Of paradise to where the loved one lives;
It weaves a path that wayward winding leads
From desert to the multitude of flowers.

Love and wine are poetic images which the *ṣūfīs* adopted as symbols. Ghālib was not content with metaphoric inebriation; he unified the values of aesthetic enjoyment and spiritual exaltation. His recognition, as a believing Muslim, of the sinfulness of drinking is hearty and cheerful, his assertion of its stimulating power bold and uninhibited.

They have indeed told you that wine's forbidden—
It's just a falsehood told with good intent,

when

There's wine in the air,
To breathe is to drink.

*

Ghālib, like all the poets who were influenced by ṣūfism or who found spiritual satisfaction in challenging and ridiculing the restraints imposed by narrow-minded, legalistic protagonists of righteous living, often conceives of man as the prodigal son who is beloved because of the demand he makes on the generosity, the tenderness, the understanding of the Father. Ghālib is sometimes the complete pagan—

I have man's nature, I am born of man
And proud that I commit the sins I can.

Sometimes he is aggrieved because there are not enough sins to commit, sometimes he expects a pat on the back for involuntary abstinence.

If punishment there needs must be
For sins I have committed,
Give me my meed of praise, O Lord,
For sinful longings unfulfilled.[3]

[3] This translation is by Dr Hāshim Amīr 'Alī, Director of the Rural Institute, Jami'ah Milliyah.

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This attitude towards sin, this dealing on terms of familiarity with the Creator, the Father, the God of Justice and Mercy is distinctively Islāmic. It has been distilled out of man's original innocence and his right to knowledge of himself and his world; out of the *ṣūfī* belief that the ways to God are numberless, both within and without the fold of Islām, and that the repentant sinner is dearer to God than the man of constant piety; out of the concept of God as the supreme Beloved, the Friend whose pleasure one must seek in every way; out of the deliberate equivocation of regarding beloved, love and wine as physical realities and spiritual symbols; and out of the light-hearted treatment by poets and rejection in all seriousness by the *ṣūfīs* of heaven as a reward to the attainment of which human endeavour should be directed. Sin having become a kind of error, charming and inevitable, and a means of enabling God to exercise His mercy, the poet contemplated life and religion without inhibition or fear of serious inquisition. Ghālib could pretend to be greedy and ask for a wider field of knowledge and experience than this world and the next, or he could proclaim absolute disinterestedness.

> The severed hand is my symbol,
> I cannot tell beads and pray,
> Nor can I hold the wine-cup
> To drink all wisdom away.

He could revel in his humanity, in being privileged beyond those who begged for favours and endured indifference or neglect:

> Even in obedience I'm so free, so proud,
> Upon the Ka'bah I have turned by back
> Unless I found its door in welcome open,

or he could claim that awareness, knowledge, free will were impossible because of the very nature of things, for when in reality vision, seer and the object seen are one and the same, the question of seeing does not arise. He could scorn those who identified religion with ritual—

> God is One, that is our faith;
> All rituals we abjure.
> 'Tis only when the symbols vanish
> That belief is pure.

and those who made religion exclusive—

The real faith is constancy, the Brahman
Who in his temple lives and dies is worthy
Of honoured burial in the House of God[4].

He explains particularism and exclusiveness in institutional religion as a sign of man's incapacity for endless striving—

At every step the weary stopped and stayed;
Not finding Thee, they built Thy house and prayed.

★

What is the temple, what is the Ka'bah?
Baffled passion for union constructing
Myths and illusions, asylums to shelter
Its ardour, its hopes, its dreams and despair.

If religion as commonly understood is a reflection of man's failings, man himself is responsible. His ears are deaf to the mysterious music that fills all creation, his instinct does not tell him that truth is like the notes that burst out of the strings of the lute, and will be revealed if he knows how to play the instrument. Ghālib himself can be spiritual in the most exalted sense, rising above all sentiments and beliefs that are inconsistent with universalism:

No grain of sand but must abide
Upon the road to Thee:
In seeking Thee we may indeed
Take the vast desert for a guide.

and feel that in his sufferings man is not alone—

The pain of separation's keen,
But do not grieve or pine;
There is a heart, behind this screen,
Which throbs in tune with thine,

and the intensity of his suffering may be an indication of God's regard for him:

So that His friend from hostile eyes remain concealed,
His love is through ordeals of pain revealed.

Ghālib professed Islām and wrote odes and poems of a religious character. It can be proved that he was not only a Muslim but a convinced and earnest Shī'ah. It can also be argued that what he has written in praise of 'Alī is not enough to prove that he was not a

[4] The Ka'bah in Mecca is also called the House of God.

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Sunnī. But Ghālib had no intention whatever to preach or even talk religion or worldly wisdom. Observance of conventions apart, he did not, as a poet, have any precise religion. For him man, even as nature had created him, was not only 'a multitude of thoughts and images' but a supreme mystery, an incalculable power, an infinity of life within a finite existence, a creature able to look his Creator in the face, and reject, accept or identify himself with the conditions imposed on his self-realization. Ghālib was a conventional lover, a pagan, a humanist, a mystic; he could talk the language of love and kisses, of light-hearted wine-bibbing, of cynicism and frustration, of piquant wisdom, profound melancholy and supreme exaltation. And whatever language he spoke, he presented with deep knowledge and striking truthfulness an aspect of the free mind understanding, exulting in and fulfilling itself.

Turning from Ghālib to Akbar of Allāhābād (1846-1921) one could have the feeling of moving from a world of the imagination to the realities of life. Though born before Ghālib died, Akbar's environment and circumstances were quite different. He came of an impoverished family of Sayyids of Bārah, near Allāhābād, and like Khusrau and Ghālib before him, he did not receive formal or systematic education. But he had the good fortune to receive instruction from a few eminent scholars, and his environment stimulated his literary talent to such a degree that he began composing quite presentable verses while still a very young man. He impressed all those to whom he went in search of employment and improved his knowledge with each opportunity. He was first engaged as a clerk by the engineer in charge of the construction of the Jamnā bridge at Allāhābād, and then in the railway goods yard. Getting tired of such work he applied for a job to an English officer who appointed him as copyist in the court. Akbar's first application for this post was on a small slip of paper and got misplaced. When he came to enquire about the result of his application, the officer pointed to the heap of papers on his table, and said that a slip such as he had submitted could easily get lost. Akbar appeared the next day with several large sheets of paper joined together on which he had written a fresh application, using his finger as a pen. The English officer was struck by this boldness, and while appointing him advised him to learn English as soon as he could. This Akbar did with remarkable assiduity and success, and rose from the position of a copyist to that of a revenue officer. But finding that his duties kept him away from cultured society, he resigned and took up the study of law. He was quite successful as a lawyer also. However, he accepted a judicial post and rose steadily in rank. When he resigned in 1903, he was a judge of the Small Causes Court. He had already

achieved fame as a poet, and was given by his contemporaries the title of *Lisān al-'Aṣr*, the Voice of the Time. He was also made honorary fellow of the University of Allāhābād.

Akbar praised all the virtues and impressed upon his co-religionists the wisdom of believing in God and being good Muslims. A substantial part of his didactic poetry consists of rhymed platitudes. But he lived a full life. Much of his income as a lawyer went to women-singers and boon companions, and some of his poetry is quite obscene. He also experienced qualms of conscience and finally repented. But his mind continued to have its naughty moments, and to the end his creative power was not inhibited. If he could be grim and talk of the grave and the Day of Judgement, he never failed to see the lighter side of human problems and grin as he preached wisdom. Besides, there was no group or type of men among his contemporaries with which he could identify himself. He ridiculed those who had adopted English ways, on principle or because of opportunism, but he could not bear the ignorance, the unscrupulousness and the arrogance of those who represented traditional religion. He could try to show that modern concepts of progress lacked spiritual content and were sure to prove illusory, but he could offer nothing instead, and he was discerning enough to realize this. In his poetry we see life from all angles, and its didactic element only makes us feel that we cannot understand ourselves and our life unless we look at it also from the firm and lofty ground of reverence and self-respect.

The two all-important issues during Akbar's lifetime were: what policy should the Indian Muslims follow in the existing political situation, and how should they maintain their cultural and religious identity amidst the tumultuous forces let loose by the civilization of the West. It is not the function of the poet to discuss such issues and offer reasoned, philosophical answers to social, political or religious questions. Akbar should not be judged on the basis of any ideas or theories found in his verses. He did not have a political or a theological mind. But nothing escaped his scrutiny. He subjected to ridicule, to scathing criticism or damning exposure the social and political strategy of imperialism, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's policy of friendship and loyal, gentlemanly co-operation with the government and the oppressiveness of what was technically called law and order. But he was also amused, embarrassed and sometimes distressed by the fact of himself being in the service of the government and, later, of being its pensioner—or, as he once said, its kept mistress. On the second issue he could express himself boldly and freely. But he could not adopt a consistent attitude. The phenomena of social and cultural life were too diverse, the conflicting forces too

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many and ubiquitous. He was like the man who finds that his raincoat and umbrella cannot protect him because the wind is blowing the rain from all sides, and seeks comfort and solace in laughter.

Akbar's usual term for the Indian Muslim, when he is judging him as a preacher, is *shaikh* or *shaikhjī*, and there is hardly any aspect of this *shaikh*'s life on which he does not throw light. Very rarely is there any nostalgia for the immediate or distant past, but to make the Indian Muslim's position clear he had to say,

> The master is turned slave, such is the will of fate:
> The owner of the palace is now keeper of the gate.

He was too realistic to take refuge in apologetics, and recite to the 'keeper of the gate' the glories of those ancestors of his who lorded it in the palace. The change in status was bound to come.

> The reign of the Qur'ān is over
> And the days of world-wide trade;
> We subsist now as landlords on rents
> Or for clerical jobs are paid.

On the other hand,

> The Englishman is happy, he owns the aeroplane,
> The Hindū's gratified that he controls all trade,
> 'Tis we who're empty drums, subsisting on God's Grace,
> A heap of biscuit crumbs, the froth of lemonade.

Regeneration is of course possible, and Akbar often turns preacher. But he cannot help being sarcastic.

> Your godown's full of goods, why should you
> kneel in prayer?
> Your stomach's full of food, why should you
> think or care?

There are Muslims who are sentimental, pan-Islāmic:

> While we slave for food as clerks
> Our hearts bleed for Persians and Turks,

and there are Muslims who are not troubled by anything:

> The *shaikh ji* had two sons, and both were
> worthy fellows,
> One is a C.I.D. officer,[5] the other
> died on the gallows.

[5] Criminal Investigation Department of the Police.

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The normal remedy for such a mental condition and for backwardness generally is more and better education. The romantic young Muslim would not agree to this.

> Said Lailā's mother to Majnūn,
> My son, if the M.A. you pass,
> I shall forthwith take you to my bosom
> And wed you to Lailá, my lass.
> What funny ideas, replied Majnūn,
> A lover 'midst the din of a class!
> The gold of a romantic nature
> To be treated and hammered like brass!
> What has come over you, my old lady?
> Can a gazelle be loaded with grass?
> How confused you must be to mistake me
> For some paltry Har Charan Dās[6].
> I am willing to let my heart bleed
> But my mind shall never turn crass.
> If that's your condition for marriage,
> I decline with sorrow the offer
> Of the hand of Lailā, your lass.

Apart from the romantic lover, there was the potential renegade:

> I've failed in all my exams, so I vow
> I'll try my luck at being a rascal now.

But though Akbar was anxious that Muslims should get education, he had no illusions about the education that was being offered. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, it seemed to him, was doing everything wrong, and was getting public support—

> Sir Sayyid showed the (Government) Gazette[7]
> And gathered heaps of money:
> The poor *shaikh* went a-begging
> With his Qur'ān and—not a penny.

The real or imaginary support of the government, Akbar thought, had placed Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān in a position where he could ignore criticism, specially if it came from the religious-minded, and concerned matters of dress, food, behaviour and social relations. Akbar said sarcastically:

[6] A Hindū name. What is meant is that Muslims thought education was something good enough for the Hindū but beneath the dignity of a Muslim.

[7] All the notifications etc. of the Government of India are published in the official Gazette.

Why not invite the *shaikh* to come
And see Sir Sayyid's charm?
When there's such glamour and such crowds
A little sinning can do no harm.

When his own son married an English girl in London Akbar, in pathetic protest, laid the responsibility on those—meaning Sir Sayyid and his group—who had created a situation in which young men were exposed to every kind of temptation. Their wives were in the same position.

'Tis not for the sake of my neighbours
That I let my charms be seen,
But to meet and converse with high officers—
On that I am awfully keen.

But the unprincipled are only one type. The *maulwī* in government service, 'the Arabic translation of Western political policy' is no better. He propagates hypocrisy.

You can wear these socks and shoes
And be enamoured of Miss D'Souz';
If only you fast and pray
You can live and love as you choose.

We cannot say with certainty that Akbar seriously held the view, but his jibes at Western manners seem to indicate that he regarded them as the negation of all that is natural and decent. His 'Miss'—we do not know whether she is European or Anglo-Indian—is the modern young woman for whom traditional ideals of morality are something ridiculous and who regards love-making of any kind and to any degree proper, provided the man is rich, modern and contemptuous, like her, of everything old-fashioned. The Muslim who is convinced that being modern is necessary for happiness and success becomes an uprooted person—

To the civilized, home is a curse—
They live all their life in hotels
And die in the arms of a nurse,

or he becomes an imbecile, ridiculed for his lover's sighs and tears—

She saw my eyes bedewed, and gave her curls a shake:
'I see, 'tis the Canal Department,—my mistake!'

In such an atmosphere it was inevitable that pondering matters of religion and morality should be tabooed.

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Friends have reported to the police, so violent
is their rage,
That Akbar dares to talk of God in this
enlightened age.

Akbar could retaliate by asking that all such books should be proscribed because of reading which children began to think that their parents were old fogies, but he was also aware that the *maulwī*, with his idea of Allāh (God) as a fierce old man, did not have a high type of religion to offer.

The *shaikh* will not adventure
Into the mosque at night;
If he found Allāh sitting there
'Twould give him such a fright.

If Akbar attempted any systematic thinking, it was in relation to imperialism and imperialist policy in India. His poem on the Delhi Durbar of 1911 is an exquisite satire on the splendour of the British Raj, more effective because it is written from the point of view of the simple man who is only too willing to be impressed. After seeing the Duke of Connaught, 'the highest Lord', processions of elephants, and Lady Curzon dancing in the Hall, the simpleton concludes:

'Tis they who've called the guests,
'Tis they who serve the drink;
They're masters of the show,
I only stand and blink.

The basic social problem under British rule could be stated very simply:

I realized on thinking deeply,
Life is difficult for him
Who's neither Englishman nor coolie.

There could be no question of equality between the dispossessed Muslims and the English rulers of the land, even if Sir Sayyid and his group achieved some apparent success socially and a few score Muslims found employment under the government. In fact, this made the position of the Indian Muslims worse. In a bitter vein, Akbar says he can see nothing on which to congratulate the performing monkey; if at all, the trainer ought to be complimented. Another simile is equally apt:

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The fish has swallowed the bait
And merrily pulls the line;
The angler lets it run,
He knows the catch is fine.

The monkey-trainers and the anglers have not only political interests. They wish to undermine the religion and culture of their victims as well. In one of his poems, a 'Miss' tells a Muslim who is paying court to her that she will have nothing to do with Muslims. 'They are a people whose legends reek of blood; they are haughty because they say prayers; they turn into *ghāzīs* and attack the (north-west) frontier. If anyone calls himself a Mahdī, they rise against him; they spring into the fire and fling themselves against cannon. They become conceited if their blood is spilt on the battlefield; they raise hell if only they can be united. How can one', the enchantress concludes, 'be sure that they have turned a new leaf? The intoxication of *jihād* is still in their blood'. But the young man, who is completely under her spell, assures her that her suspicions and fears are no longer justified. 'There is no reason, my precious, for you to be angry with me. I am a Muslim, but only in name, and you may regard my Islām as something that belongs to the past'. 'If that is so,' she says, breaking into a laugh, 'you may take it that I am willing.'

The manner in which Akbar expressed his concern for the existing condition and the future of the Indian Muslims could create the impression that he was indifferent to the fate of the Indian people as a whole. But that would be far from the truth. He deplored Pan-Islāmism; he was sure that the Muslims could not make a separate deal with the British; he ridiculed the illusions and the essentially servile attitude on which Muslim politics was based—

They are Bengālīs who have proved a diet tough;
Praise be to God, the stomach of the West
As food finds me digestible enough.

He thought it absurd and painful that Muslims should make merry over the reverses suffered by the national movement because it was preponderantly Hindū.

I care no more if I've been smashed—
I want to see my rival thrashed.

He knew that there was a ruthless will behind the *Pax Britannica*, the government's conception of law and order.

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I fear to breathe, lest it imply
That I've let out a sigh.

'If the eyes,' he says elsewhere, 'are reluctant to be found open, if the tongue is afraid to move inside the mouth—God have mercy, how can one survive in such captivity?

'How can one be proud of such a time? Miserable indeed is the situation when one must either utter falsehood or say nothing, act like an unbeliever or do nothing at all'.

It's a great favour if they let you breathe
On the condition that your lips are sealed.

★

You always keep repeating, Islām with the
sword was spread,
But never a word you utter of what your
own cannon have bred.

Some of Akbar's poetry will bear translation; his charm does not lie only in his gift of rhyming, which was superb. He was a master of Urdū idiom, and he is at his best when he turns and twists an ordinary phrase into a striking epigram. He kept two generations laughing at themselves, bringing home the realities of the situation to them, giving forceful expression to truth without causing offence or hurting feelings. Times have changed; Akbar knew that nothing could be done about it.

Consider Akbar's verses a relic of the past—
What fate decrees will happen; he knows
the die is cast.

Today his objections to Muslim women giving up seclusion have only a historical value, but it does not need much intelligence to discover that what he said of the people of his own days would be applicable even now, and not only in India but in any country where human responses have not been successfully conditioned and controlled. Akbar would have thought it a libel if anyone called him a freethinker, but the latitude given to the mind by Indian Muslim cultural traditions allowed him to say what he liked, from the extreme of reverence and piety to sheer obscenity, and Akbar moved freely within these limits. In his exalted moments he may have expected too much from himself and from others; in his frivolous moods, too little. But he recognized, and asked for the understanding of the limitations of human nature, both in things sacred and profane.

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Be it love's anguish or delight,
It's hard to keep awake all night.

We have already discussed Iqbāl's religious thought, which became, after the first few years, inseparable from his self-expression as a poet. He may or may not have believed it to be the poet's function to rouse individuals and vitalize society through an inspiring affirmation of moral values, but there can be no doubt that, after 1908, he gradually came to regard himself as Islām's messenger to the Muslims. This created an embarrassment similar to that of a speaker addressing himself to a part, and by no means the larger part of his audience, and reduced the universality of his appeal among the Urdū and Persian-knowing public in India, which was both Muslim and non-Muslim. Ghālib and Akbar, with the traditions which formed their literary background, could not claim to have ignored all distinctions of religion and culture; Akbar, in particular, seems to have had Muslims in his mind most of the time. But if we compare Ghālib and Iqbāl in this respect, Ghālib represented the consummation in literature of the ideal of the Unity of Existence, *waḥdah al-wujūd*, while Iqbāl exploited to the full the religious and aesthetic possibilities of the other tradition, the Unity of Phenomena, *waḥdah al-shuhūd*, bringing man face to face with God in another setting. But even if Iqbāl called the man so brought face to face with Reality a Muslim, and gave his humanity a definite religious and cultural connotation, he could not exclude the purely human, because the Muslim he conceived of was the highest type of man. This makes it difficult for the Muslim and all too easy for the non-Muslim to exercise the right to adverse criticism. But poets have everywhere and at all times been so deeply influenced by the character, the values, the imagery and the idiom of the society to which they belonged that Iqbāl can only be said to have been too open and too precise in the statement of his religious affiliations. Criticism from the Muslim side would perhaps be more apt: that he forced the ideal Muslim, though postulated as the highest type of man, to find self-expression in forms prescribed not by Islām as the universal religion but Islām as the religious, cultural and political interest of the Muslim world of his time.

Iqbāl's life coincides with the period of resurgence of the Indian Muslims. Urdū was being cultivated with an almost ecstatic fervour in the Panjāb, and Iqbāl found, in Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan, the teacher of oriental languages in the college at Siyālkōt, an ideal exponent of the values of language and literature who helped to unfold to the full his remarkable literary aptitude. Iqbāl was forced by his admiring fellow-students to participate in *mushā'irahs*, and he began

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quite early making those experiments in form which released his genius from the trammels of the literary tradition that confined poetic expression to the *ghazal*, the *qaṣīda*, the *mathnawi* and the *marthiyah*. The first poem of his to be published was on the Himalayas, an interpretation of nature in terms of thought and mood and yearning. He wrote *ghazals* also, and followed literary custom by sending his compositions for 'improvement' to the poet Dāgh of Delhi—then resident at Haidarābād—who was the recognized master of Urdū idiom. But Iqbāl felt that the *ghazal* could not serve as his medium, and though he reverted to it in a sense when his genius had matured, he found its restrictions irksome. His ideas of love and beauty could not brook confinement within the stylized relationships of the lover and the beloved, of passion, faithfulness, abandon on the one side, and indifference, hard-heartedness, haughtiness on the other. Iqbāl also rejected the element of craftsmanship in poetic composition. He would not write when asked to, or write to a set metre and rhyme, as was customary in the *mushā'irahs*. When he felt the urge, he composed verses with the ease and fluency of a practised ex tempore speaker, his friends taking down what he recited. When he did not feel the urge he just did not write, no matter how much pressure was put upon him to do so.

Iqbāl was born a poet, but his most ardent desire was to study philosophy. He went to Lahore for graduate study, and there came under the influence of Dr—later Sir—Thomas Arnold, an orientalist of great learning, one of whose main interests was to stimulate the desire for knowledge. Iqbāl became one of his favourites, and it was largely because of his assistance that Iqbāl was able to go abroad for further study.

Iqbāl's career as a poet has been divided into three parts, a short, early period of experimentation, from about 1900 to 1905, a still shorter period of *Sturm und Drang*, when he was studying in Europe, from 1905 to 1908, and the third stage, which lasted to the end of his life, when poetry became a means of giving expression to his philosophy.

The poems of Iqbāl's first period are on a wide variety of subjects, most of them unconventional: The Himalaya, The Flower, Childhood, The Mountain Cloud, The Child's Prayer, Sympathy, The Mother's Dream, Lament of the Bird, To Those Sleeping in their Graves, The Morning Sun, The Faded Flower, The New Moon, Man and Nature, The Wave, The Story of Man, The Indian Anthem, The Glow-worm, The Morning Star, The New Temple, On the Bank of the Rāvī. He translated some poems of Longfellow, Emerson and Tennyson. He wrote poems for children. His *ghazals* of this period, though not without originality, are his weakest compositions, and

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he must have deleted many when making a selection for publication. But it would be wrong to regard his earliest poems as immature in any sense, because of the change of attitude after his return from Europe. His longing for unity among the Indian people, to which he gave frequent and forceful expression, had a deep spiritual basis and did not derive from any transitory political sentiment. He revoked his *Tarānah'-i-Hindī*—Indian Anthem—later by writing a Muslim Anthem—*Tarāna-i-Millī*—and condemning patriotism, as in *Waṭanīyat*, but the feeling with which he wrote the Indian Anthem was so genuine that in spite of political changes the song is still popular in India. It has been set to a marching tune, and was relayed by All India Radio during the Chinese invasion. In *Sargu-zasht-i-Ādam*, the Story of Man, and in *Shama'* we find ideas which he developed later. *Naya Shivāla*, the New Temple, gives perhaps the fullest expression to his early philosophy.

I shall tell the truth, O Brahman, but take it
  not as an offence:
The idols in thy temple have decayed.
Thou hast learnt from these images to bear
  ill-will to thine own people,
And God has taught the (Muslim) preacher
  the ways of strife.
My heart was sick: I turned away both from
  the temple and the Ka'bah,
From the sermons of the preacher and from
  thy fairy tales, O Brahman.
To thee images of stone embody the divine—
For me, every particle of my country's
  dust is a deity.
Come, let us remove all that causes estrangement,
Let us reconcile those that have turned away from
  each other, remove all signs of division.
Desolation has reigned for long in the
  habitation of my heart—
Come, let us build a new temple in our land.
Let our holy place be higher than any on the earth,
Let us raise its pinnacle till it touches the
  lapel of the sky;
Let us awake every morning to sing the sweetest songs,
And give all worshippers the wine of love to drink.
There is power, there is peace in the songs of
  devotees—
The salvation of all dwellers on the earth is in love.

There is a deliberate non-conformism in this poem which reminds

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one of the sharp attacks on Ka'bah-centred religiousness which are a feature of Urdū and Persian poetry. But we could also say that there is piety here rather than passion, tranquillity rather than intensity. Even if closer contact with the political realities and the vital ideas of his time had not induced a change, Iqbāl would soon have felt that his sentiments were leading him up a blind alley. If he had not become passionately Muslim, he would have become a revolutionary or a Marxist or something else. He was a poet by nature, but his nature demanded more than aesthetic satisfaction. He was also born to be a harbinger of ideas, an apostle of a faith.

In the Urdū poems written after 1908, published in the *Bāṇg-i-Dirā* and in his *maṯhnawīs*, *Asrār-i-Khudī* and *Rumūz-i-Bekhudī*, Iqbāl is the impassioned Muslim. The poetry is powerful, but also quite openly didactic, full of self-pity and self-praise. There is more reserve—and also much more of genuine poetry—in *Payām-i-Mashriq*, *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* and *Zubūr-i-'Ajam*. Allusions and occasional illustrations reveal the fact that Iqbāl's attitude is that of a Muslim, but as a Muslim he developed certain themes which give his poetry a universal character. One of these themes is Love, another Man, a third Satan; there are poems also on contemporary or modern personalities, ideas and tendencies. Instead of writing *for the Muslims*, Iqbāl now wrote *as a Muslim*, which may not betoken a fundamental change of attitude, but does indicate that Iqbāl's poetry, even if too obviously didactic, was no longer a form of apologetics. He had now found for himself a position from where he could look at life without being confused by its vastness or being carried away by its enveloping currents, a position from where he could also look beyond life towards the Absolute.

Iqbal's concept of Love is derived from the poetry and the philosophy of the *ṣūfīs*, and in fact it could be said that he has made a judicious selection of Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's ideas and images. But while the *ṣūfīs* set Love against Law and Obedience and claimed that it was the higher way of life, Iqbāl postulates Love as a principle. Time, he holds, enters into the constitution of Love in ways that have not yet been identified; it is not an emotion subject, like other feelings, to transience. 'Love is the exponent of religious truth, the commander of armies; it is the breath of Gabriel, the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad, the messenger and the message of God'. That is what Iqbāl feels while contemplating the mosque of Cordova as a work of art defying time and circumstance and a witness to the truth that the hand of the true believer, the *mū'min*, is the Hand of God. This poem is one of Iqbāl's masterpieces. It begins magnificently, and could have embodied one of the loftiest and truest definitions of art, but he passes on from art to the

qualities of true belief, ultimately implying that the Berber conquerors of Spain were true believers and that the sublime qualities of the mosque of Cordova as a work of art are an omen of the resurgence of the Islāmic world. The *ṣūfī*, who would have heartily endorsed what Iqbāl says of Love as a principle would have been aghast at his associating it with political expansion and dominance.

The *ṣūfīs* contrasted Love with religion learnt from books, personal experience of the Divine with study and undiscerning acceptance of authorities. Iqbāl, as we have pointed out earlier, elevates this difference of approach into a fundamental and almost eternal conflict between the Heart as the seat of Love and intuitive apprehension of the Absolute and the Intellect as a means of knowing and obtaining mastery over the physical world. This made a powerful appeal to the Muslims as symbolizing the difference between the spirituality of Islām and the materialism of the western world, particularly because western materialism was politically and economically in the ascendant. But there was also a deep poetic truth in the emphasis on the superiority of the Heart over the Intellect, for it is in his heart only that man is free and truly himself, accounting as gain what may appear to be loss, and as loss what the world regards as gain. Though cold logic may make Iqbāl's position appear indefensible, the whole tradition of poetry, idealism and personal freedom is on his side.

Iqbal's predilection for philosophical argument always induces and often compels the critic to examine his poetry as philosophy and to admire or disagree with him as a result of such examination. There is a basic inconsistency between his concept of man and his concept of Personality, between the poetic image and the Islāmic thesis. The poetic image has no logical implications. It stands by itself. The Islāmic thesis gets involved in questions of fact, and we are forced to ask again and again whether Muslim history is to be deduced from the incidents which Iqbāl refers to, and his concept of Personality to be identified with particular figures of the Muslim past. Iqbāl realized the significance of history as well as contemporary movements, events and personalities; his *Jāwēd Nāmah* contains many historical reflections and judgements. It is all the more disappointing, therefore, that he should have been content with traditional and hackneyed symbols, and confused the purely human with allusions to Muslim history which imply that it was different from what it is known to be.

On the other hand, Iqbāl has used the Islāmic doctrine in regard to Ādam's leaving Paradise with great effect. There, according to him, begins the story of man's search for knowledge of himself, of the world and of the meaning of life.

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What joy to make of life heartache and bliss,
To melt with one breath mountain, wasteland and desert;
To make a way from cage to garden air,
To journey to the heavens and whisper secrets to the stars,
To cast a knowing glance at Beauty's inmost shrine
With melting heart and strict regard for form,
To see just oneness in a multitude of flowers,
To pluck the prickly thorn and leave aside the rose:
I am all ardour, all the ache of passion,
I put my faith in fancies, dying to seek, to know.

But there is another side to this self-confidence, this spirit of adventure: the feeling of utter loneliness.

I went to the ocean and asked the restless wave:
Thou art ever seeking, aspiring, what ails thee so?
Thou wearest a thousand resplendent necklaces,
and in thy breast
Like mine there is the pearl of a heart.
The wave shuddered, raced away from the
shore and gave no answer.
I went to the mountain and said, How heartless of thee!
Dost thou never hear the sighing and wailing of
one stricken with grief?
If the ruby within thy rocks is a drop of blood,
Speak to me once, for I am oppressed with sorrow!
The mountain withdrew into itself, held
its breath and gave no answer.
I journeyed far and went and asked the moon:
O thou ordained to travel, art thou destined
To find a resting place? The world is silvered o'er
With light reflected from thy forehead—is this light
The blazing glory of a heart?
The moon looked jealously at the star, and
gave no answer.
I appeared in God's own Presence, beyond sun and moon—
There's nothing in Thy world I find congenial;
Thy world's devoid of feeling and I, a handful of dust,
Am nothing but a throbbing heart. Thy garden's lovely,
But quite unworthy of my song!
A smile played upon His lips and He gave
no answer.

God's silence does not silence man. He cannot live without self-realization, without discovering the meaning of things. He is bitter, he accuses, he retaliates.

The thorns their vengeance wreak on blistered feet,
The wilderness bears witness to our shame.

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His sin—refusal to prostrate himself—and ours
The tasting of forbidden fruit: from both,
That hapless one and us Thy face is turned.
The mind of man a hundred worlds creates, each world
A flower in bloom, while this, Thy universe,
Thy only handiwork, is built
With blood of hope and slaughter of desire. . . .
We thirst for change; give us new worlds. Away
With this poor wonder-house of night and day.

★

Why didst Thou me command to journey forth
From Paradise? Now wait for my return: the work
Of building a whole world takes time.

★

Is there no wine left in Thy glass? Confess,
It is Thy part to pour me drink.
From all Thy oceans I just get
Dewdrops to quench my thirst:
This is not bounty, it is stinginess.

★

Is Man, the Man I know, lord of the lands and seas?
What shall I say about this piteous creature,
Too blind to see himself, or God, or nature?
Is he the masterpiece Thy hands have wrought?

★

In one of his poems, Iqbāl reproduces a dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Satan, in a chance encounter somewhere between Heaven and Earth. Satan, according to Islāmic belief, was an angel who refused to obey the Divine command to prostrate himself before Ādam, for the reason that he himself was made of fire and Ādam was a lower type of being, made of earth. Satan was expelled from heaven, and since then his function has been to tempt and seduce mankind. As Ādam also was sent out of heaven because he had tasted the forbidden fruit, the heart—or soul—of man became the battle-ground between God and Satan, between good and evil, or unconditional obedience and unconditional freedom. In the Dialogue, Gabriel asks Satan how things are in the world of sense and colour, and is told that, as before, it is a world of heart-ache and harmony, pain and seared hearts, seeking and yearning. Will not Satan give up this and return to Heaven, where he is being constantly talked about? Satan is not willing. He cannot endure the monotony of Heaven, a land without palaces and hovels, where complete silence reigns eternally. He would rather despair of Mercy than hope for it. Your disobedience, Gabriel retorts, has deprived you of your lofty position and disgraced the angels before the Lord. This rouses Satan's indignation:

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My defiance has endowed a handful of dust
with the urge to grow,
My devices are the warp and woof of intelligence
and knowledge.
You watch the battle of good and evil from the
safety of the seashore;
Who endures the buffets of the storm, you or I? . . .
If you are ever granted the favour of a private
audience, enquire of God,
With whose blood the story of Adam has been made
so colourful.
I rankle like a thorn in God's own heart;
You just repeat His Name, for ever and ever!

Iqbāl's Satan resembles Goethe's Mephistopheles too much to be regarded as an original creation, but Mephistopheles is himself too far removed from the traditional Christian concept of the Devil to be regarded as Satan in his true form. In Iqbāl's imagery, Satan represents the principle of a self-centred search for experience and knowledge, the ubiquitous companion of man in the eternal adventure of life, singing the praises of a dangerous freedom and deriding the values of sterile obedience. It is obvious, however, that the principle represented by Satan and the spiritual values of Islām cannot be considered integral parts of the same pattern, and Iqbāl in a sense abandoned the poetic concept of Satan in one of his latest poems, included in the *Armughān-i-Ḥijāz—Iblīs kī Majlis-i-Shūrā* (The Consultative Council of Iblīs). Here he makes Satan take up the disputable position that the Muslims have been his greatest adversaries and they should not under any circumstances be allowed to become aware again of the moral and spiritual values of Islām.

Iqbāl is most a poet when he is in intimate converse with God, and it is here, and not in his didactic poems that his genius reflects the highest and most distinctive aspects of Muslim culture. His concern for the Muslim *millah* is here transformed into a concern for man, for the purpose of his life and its fulfilment, a concern for God Himself:

More blissful than a thousand pious acts
Is for Thee and me to come a step nearer by way
of friendship.
Come, rest a while in my bosom
From the toil and weariness of Godhood.

One of the shortcomings of which the Muslims have been accusing themselves, particularly during the last hundred years, is lack of awareness. That is materially true, but there have been among them

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persons very sensitive to the change of circumstances and, therefore, keenly conscious of defects in the attitude of their community towards the world situation. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was the first who succeeded in getting an audience and a group of sympathizers, but he was not the first to attempt an understanding of western civilization. A number of persons before him visited the British Isles and Europe, and wrote accounts of what they had seen. Four such accounts are known—I'tiṣāmuddīn's *Shigarf Nāmah-i-Wilāyat*, Mirzā Abū Ṭālib Khān's *Masīr-i-Ṭālibī fī Bilād-i-Afranjī*, Yūsuf Khān Kambalpōsh's *Safar Yūsuf Khān Kambalpōsh kā Mulk-i-Inglistān meṇ* and the *Autobiography* of Luṭfullāh. Other accounts would perhaps have been available if Indian Muslims and scholars generally had been interested in studying this subject and searched for material. So far no detailed study has been made even of the accounts that are available.

I'tiṣāmuddīn went to England shortly after the Treaty of Allahabad (1765). He was to carry a letter and presents from the Emperor of Delhi to the King of England. But Clive was also involved in this matter and I'tiṣāmuddīn's ship had already set sail when he found that Clive had not given the letter or the presents to the captain, as had been arranged, but only asked him to await his arrival in London. He had promised to come within six months; in fact he came a year and a half later. And then he ignored I'tiṣāmuddīn altogether, suppressing the Emperor's letter and offering the presents on his own behalf[8]. I'tiṣāmuddīn was, therefore, left to his own devices. He could not get introduced into English society and examine the English way of life from close quarters. He, therefore, turned to history and to a general discussion of religious and national differences in Europe. England was being rapidly industrialized, but the results of industrialization were not till then very striking, and I'tiṣāmuddīn does not appear to have been aware of them. He did not have the opportunity to collect all the information necessary to give a complete picture; still, he had no illusions and no lack of self-confidence. So far as he was concerned, the success of the western nations had been military and political. They did not represent a better system of organization and administration, and certainly not a higher code of conduct.

Mirzā Abū Ṭālib, born at Lucknow in 1752, did not, perhaps, have a background very different from I'tiṣāmuddīn's, but he had a rare type of mind, objective, analytical and yet aesthetic and liberal. His life was full of vicissitudes, from which he tried to learn as much as possible himself and also to instruct others. He has given an account

[8] I'tiṣāmuddīn, *Shigarf Nāmah-i-Wilāyet*. Mss. in the National Archives of India, p. 6 ff.

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of his performance as a government officer, military commander and politician in his history of Āṣafuddaulah[9]. He displeased many because of his unhesitating exposure of dishonesty and injustice, and because he was unable to find employment or live in peace at Lucknow, he retired to Calcutta in 1787. Here, in 1791, he brought out an edition of the *Dīwān-i-Ḥāfiẓ*, and, shortly after, a compendious account of ancient and contemporary poets, which he called the *Khulaṣah al-Afkār*. History seemed to share his interest equally with literature. He prepared a history of the kings of India and planned and partially carried out an ambitious project of writing a universal history, to be called *Lubb al-Tawārīkh*. He was himself something of a poet, and there is a mss. of his *Dīwān* in the Bodleian. He composed a poem, *Surūr Afzā*, in praise of London, and a poem glorifying the charms of Miss Julia Burrel, which was translated and published in London by George Swinton. But Abū Ṭālib's *chef d'oeuvre* is his *Masīr-i-Ṭalibī fī Bilād Afranjī*. The Persian original was edited and published by his son, Mirzā Ḥusain 'Alī, in Calcutta in 1812, but an English translation of the work by Charles Stewart, under the title, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 and 1803*, in two volumes, was published by Boxbourne, London, in 1810. A year later, a French translation of Stewart's work appeared in Paris, and two years later a German translation at Vienna. The last of Abū Ṭalib's scholarly enterprises was a metrical treatise on astronomy, with a prose commentary, entitled *Mirj al-Tauḥīd*. But literary pursuits could not provide means of livelihood. From 1787 onwards, Abū Ṭālib was in more or less straitened circumstances. He was appointed *'Amaldār* in one of the districts of Bundēlkhand in Oudh in 1806, but he died shortly after.

In better times, Abū Ṭālib would have proved an able and honest administrator, dedicated to the task of making government a means of promoting welfare and happiness. But though he performed his duties under Āṣafuddaulah and in the service of the East India Company with remarkable conscientiousness and diligence, he could not maintain himself in any position for long because of the rampant corruption. This forced his sensitive mind to consider the deeper causes of the political and social malaise, and he also strove to realize in himself those values which he found necessary for a successful and healthy social life. So, although his strictures alienated incompetent and corrupt officials, his personal accomplishments won

[9] A mss. of this history, entitled *Tārīkh-i-Āṣafī*, is in the Raḍa Library, Rāmpūr. W. Hoey translated and published this work as *The History of Āṣafuddaulah* (Allahabad, 1885), giving the title of the original as *Tafḍīḥ al-Ghāfilīn*.

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him many friends. It was out of esteem for him and his gifts that an English friend invited him to accompany him to England, and, wherever he went, Abū Ṭālib soon became a favourite. His ability to adapt himself was unique, and because he was always careful to find out the etiquette to be observed, he seemed hardly to have ever done or said anything that was contrary to the approved rules of behaviour in English society. His Indian dress attracted attention at once, and his personality was such that even the curious could not but be respectful[10]. His ready wit, his language, his gift of versification combined to make him prominent, if not the central figure, at social functions to which he was invited. And he had the good fortune to be acquainted with Englishmen in India who introduced him to the most exclusive circles in English society.

Abū Ṭālib's comments and descriptions make his work valuable for anyone who wishes to undertake a comparative study of contemporary sources for social life and conditions in Ireland, England and France during the first years of the nineteenth century. For us his judgements, based as they were on wide experience and keen observation, are more important. He seems to have put his finger on the weakest points of the Indian Muslim society of his day—in addition, of course, to the intrigues, the corruption and the sheer incompetence of the Nawwāb and his favourites. He refers to 'the base conduct and evil customs which have become general in a new form in Muslim countries and among Muslims. Respected and wealthy persons are intoxicated with the wine of indolence and haughtiness, and not only satisfied with what they have but regarding omniscience as bounded by their own defective knowledge and within their power. The generality of the people and the poor, because of insecurity and the difficulties of earning a livelihood, are so exhausted by the burden of obtaining their daily bread that they hardly have time to scratch their heads. How can they get anything through that desire to investigate and to acquire fresh experience which God has implanted in human nature and made into a source of distinction for man?' He is afraid that no one will read his book, that it will be looked upon as a fairy tale or arouse prejudice and hostility. But he abides by his original resolve to inform Indians in general about the political and economic conditions, the industry and the social and cultural life of the Europeans. The benefits of their civilization are obvious in their society, and their way of life, as represented in their cultural and political system and their

[10] Abū Ṭālib was once advertised as a Persian prince to draw spectators for a charity show. *Masīr-i-Tālibī fī Bilād Afranjī*, Persian text, Calcutta, 1812, p. 352.

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industry, is 'not inconsistent with or opposed to the laws of Islām'[11]. But nothing impresses him so much as to make him lose his balance, not even the charms of mixed society, or the beauty, graciousness or personal regard which individual women had for him, and which might well have turned his head.

After a detailed description of almost every aspect of English life, Abū Ṭālib sums up the British national character thus: They are conscious of the demands of national honour and prestige, particularly the upper classes; they place a high value on merit, and give it due recognition; they are afraid to break the law, and each individual tries to remain within the limits prescribed by it; they discourage excessive ambition; their intellectual leaders are appreciative of everything that leads to the maximum benefit of all, and dislike everything that harms the generality; they are willing to accept what is new, whether in the organization of the household or the means of production; they are naturally inclined towards mechanical devices, towards simplification, towards search for better means of doing things; they desire durability and stability; they are not slack in their striving for wealth and honour, and they believe in human progress[12]. He had already mentioned, with implied approval, that the British do not rush ahead with changes for the better; they proceed slowly and cautiously, after full consideration of the consequences[13]. As against these virtues, Abū Ṭālib also notes defects. There is no deep religious faith, no concern for the after-life; there is an inclination, evident in the lower but likely to spread to the upper classes, to grab as much as possible while remaining within the law; they are haughty; they have excessive love of wealth and of mundane things, which may be a healthy symptom during prosperity, but would produce baneful results in days of adversity; they are meek and gentle beyond measure when they have to attain a personal end, but having attained it, their attitude changes, and they treat friends as strangers; their young women too often run away with their lovers and have dinner before grace; they do not give proper consideration to the merits in the customs and religious laws of other peoples, regarding their own as flawless and just; the upper classes are too lavish in their expenditure, and although the consequences of spendthrift living are not apparent at the moment, except in the high prices of goods, the possibility of a revolution such as had occurred in France could not be ruled out; the administration of justice is expensive and corrupt, because all the expenditure, apart from the salaries of the judges, has to be met from fees

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 455-60.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 403-4.

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charged from both parties to a case; trial by jury is just make-believe, the judge, in fact, directing the jury in regard to the verdict they should give. In this connection Abū Ṭālib recounts the iniquities in the administration of justice and the hardships inflicted on witnesses in the East India Company's courts at Calcutta[14].

Abū Ṭālib also throws light on class relations and the position of women. The British, he says, wish to maintain the strength and pride of the lower classes. No distinctions are recognized on the streets; the rich can be jostled by the poor, masters by servants. But within the house, the compulsion to observe all forms of respect is greater than in India. Servants have their rights and cannot be ill-treated, but they cannot leave service till they have fulfilled the terms of their contract. This leads Abū Ṭālib to the apparently extravagant conclusion that slaves in India are 'sulṭāns' by comparison with domestic servants in England. (He was thinking probably of the power acquired by favourite slaves in the households of the indolent rich). An equally extravagant statement which, however, needs to be objectively examined, is that the difference in the standard of living between the rich and the poor is greater in England than in India, and poses a more delicate social problem[15].

Abū Ṭālib recognized the advantages of mixed society for the maintenance of emotional balance[16], and he appears to have felt quite at home in it himself. He gives a very accurate description of the routine of an English household of the upper middle class[17], and notes that there was a division of labour between men and women, both in domestic life and in business. He takes the institution of shop-girls at its face value and frankly admits that their appearance and smiles provided an attraction for himself as for other male customers. But he does not regard Englishwomen as being really free, although they could meet men and talk to them. Their movements were controlled; a husband could lock up a disobedient wife and beat her. Though Indian—or rather, Indian Muslim—women were made to observe *pardah*, they had more legal rights than women in England, and, no husband could stop his wife from going and living with her parents, relatives or friends, if she wanted to do so[18]. Abū 'Ṭālib even wrote an article defending the *pardah* system, because he was challenged by an English lady to prove its superiority. But his arguments are biased, and would not carry conviction with anyone who was aware of actual conditions in India.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 460-502.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 403 ff.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 116 ff. and pp. 389-92.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 396-8.

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Abū Ṭālib was without doubt most deeply impressed by the progress in mechanical inventions to which, he says, the excellence and plenitude of British manufactures is due. He was thorough enough to make drawings of wind and water-driven mills, spinning, weaving, needle-making, pumping, paper-making and printing machines; unfortunately, these were not reproduced in the Persian text of his book published at Calcutta. Abū Ṭālib also visited the shipyards and arsenals at Dulwich. He expatiates on the advantages of having a strong navy, and adduces the success of the British against the French and the expansion of the British power to the superiority of their navy. He narrates the events leading to the Battle of Copenhagen to show how the navy turned the tables against the enemies of Great Britain[19]. Ḥaidar 'Alī had, of course, discovered much earlier that strength on land in India would be put to a continuous test of attrition so long as the British controlled the seas and could land their forces just where they liked. Abū Ṭālib argued this case further and from another angle. A British statement of the same facts, in much greater detail, no doubt, appeared much later, in Mahan's classical work.

Abū Ṭālib did not develop any philosophy of history or any sociological theses on the basis of what he experienced and observed in India and outside. But he had a scientific mind. He was aware of the conflicts of class interests, in a virulent form in Oudh and a mild form in England. He was something of a positivist also, as one sees from his discussion of the influence of climate on activity and efficiency[20] and the implied correlation between wealth, utilization of economic and industrial resources and the political system[21]. One admires above all, however, his personality, his versatile mind, his general attitude of intelligent appreciation of all that was good in persons and institutions and his rejection of all that was unsocial or morally reprehensible. He could very justly be considered one of the most sensitive and critical social philosophers of his day.

Mirzā Abū Ṭālib belonged, however, to a respectable and fairly eminent family, and is to be credited with having taken full advantage of the means of education available. Luṭfullāh's family was only technically respectable, because it was so poor as to live practically on charity. His father was educated to be a *maulwī*, and Luṭfullāh was born on November 4, 1802, of his second marriage. When he was four years old, his father died, and the responsibility of bringing him

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 357-65.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 167 ff.
[21] He gives a detailed description of the working of the British constitution (p. 414 ff.) and notes also the means for the expression of public opinion (pp. 353-4).

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up fell on his maternal uncle. As a child, Luṭfullāh was very mischievous. He set fire to the beard of an old man who came and worried his uncle; he gave *croton tiglium* to his teacher because he was very harsh. Luṭfullāh himself was taken to a tank and tempted to try swimming by boys who were hostile to him for family reasons, and he was saved from drowning just in time by the Brahman priest of a temple near the tank. In spite of all this, Luṭfullāh learnt to read the Qur'ān, Persian and Arabic grammar.

This is how his *Autobiography* begins[22]. It was written in English, during and after his visit to England, in a style that is simple and direct, and it could claim to be not only the first but almost the best autobiography by an Indian in English. It is a mine of information on social conditions and full of picturesque details. The editor abridged it somewhat before it was published, and we can only hope that he made a proper exercise of his discretion.

There was terrible insecurity in central India during Luṭfullāh's youth. Towns could be attacked at any time by Pindārī brigands or chiefs wanting to levy contributions. Thugs and courtesans worked together to entice and murder travellers; once Luṭfullāh was nearly killed by a thug, and at another time by a Bhīl chief who employed Pathāns to decoy travellers to his hide-out in a dense forest. This was also the time when the British were gradually establishing their authority.

> 'Strange things were said regarding this wonderful people who, it was affirmed, had no skin, but a thin membrane covering their body, which made them appear abominably white. They were perfect in magical art, which made them successful in all their undertakings. They did not believe in our sacred Prophet, and they called themselves Christians, but would not act upon the laws of the sacred *Anjil*[23], which holy book they changed in several places to serve their worldly purposes. Most of them still worshipped images, and they ate everything, and particularly things forbidden by the holy Moses, and this in spite of the order of the sacred *Anjil* (St Matthew, vv. 18 and 19); nay, they did not spare even human flesh when driven to an extremity. They had made three Gods for themselves instead of one—the only Omnipotent, Supreme Being—contrary to their first commandment; and, most absurd of all, they attributed to the Almighty God the having wife and children; and by the same token, they called their Prophet and themselves the Son and children of God. Such

[22] The *Autobiography of Luṭfullāh*. Edited by Edward B. Eastwick, F.R.S. Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1857. Library of the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

[23] The New Testament.

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reports were the topic of almost all conversation and many other things were said against them, and only one in their favour—that they were not unjust; but in the administration of justice they never deviated from the sacred book of the ancient law of Solomon, the son of David, etc.'[24].

When still a small boy Luṭfullāh happened to visit Barōdā with his uncle and saw Englishmen for the first time.

'One morning, as I was walking in the city to divert myself, I saw four men, two of them on horseback and the other two walking along with them; to my great curiosity, I found their complexion corresponding with what we had heard. I heard them talking among themselves, and their jargon sounded wild and harsh to my hearing. Their dress tightly fitted to their bodies, without any skirt to screen such parts as the law of modesty has taught man to conceal. I felt inclined to accost them; but thought myself too young to venture on such an intrusion in a foreign city. I raised my hand, however, to my forehead, in token of salutation, without uttering the sacred sentence, *Assalāmun 'Alaikum*, to which my mind whispered none were entitled except true believers. They returned my salutation very kindly, which civility greatly softened my prejudices against them'[25]. Luṭfullāh follows this up with a discussion which presents his attitude at a later period. He is critical of 'the antique Jewish ceremony' of circumcision, 'when prayers and fasts are observed by very few of the religious character only, and the prescribed charity by one among a thousand of the rich. Pilgrimage is performed by very few people of affluence; it is resorted to, in general, by the poor wretches who either find or render themselves useless to the world. Those who abstain from intoxicating drugs, or liquors, do not exceed one in five thousand; and those that are clean from the crime of usurious transactions are, I may safely say, absolutely none'[26].

Luṭfullāh's mother married again, and Luṭfullāh heartily disliked his step-father. Still, he got the opportunity to learn horsemanship and the use of arms. At an audience he had with the Mahārājā of Gwalior, Luṭfullāh was presented with mss. copies of the *dīwāns* of Ḥāfiẓ and Sa'dī. This was all before he was ten years old. He ran away from home because his step-father began to ill-treat him, and lived at Āgrā for five years, till the beginning of 1817, with the

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

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family of his father's first wife. For some time he was in the employ of the personal physician of Hindū Rā'o; then he made an unsuccessful attempt to go to the Deccan and, returning to Indore, was appointed a district post clerk under the Company. Luṭfullāh's career really began with his appointment as Persian teacher to Lt. MacMahon, agent for the Bhīl tribes at Nālchā. He worked regularly till 1835 as teacher of Persian, Hindūstānī, Arabic and Marāthī to army officers, with one of whom, Ensign W. J. Eastwick, he established a very deep relationship. He travelled with his different pupils all over western India, and was in Sind when the treaty, the injustice of which he does not disguise, was forced upon the Amīrs. It was in Sind that Luṭfullāh met for the first time a lady who did not observe *pardah*. She was the wife of 'Abdur Raḥmān Khān Durrānī. Luṭfullāh was enchanted by her graciousness and conversation but, after a discussion of the question he declares his preference for the system of seclusion. This in spite of the fact that he himself had got married to a lady who observed *pardah* and repented having done so.

Luṭfullāh's service as teacher to British military officers was not continuous, and during one of the intervals he entered the service of the Nawwāb of Sūrat. While teaching other languages to his pupils, Luṭfullāh himself had acquired a working knowledge of English, and the Nawwāb assigned him the task of translating Goldsmith's *Natural History* into Persian. He wrote about 200 pages, which the Nawwāb read 'with great avidity'. But soon the Nawwāb died, his family was disinherited, and his son-in-law, Mīr Ja'far 'Alī Khān decided to proceed to England to plead his case. He took with him, as his secretaries, Luṭfullāh and an Englishman, Mr Scott. There were also, of course, hangers-on without whom it was indecorous for a Nawwāb to move about.

The travellers first went to Ceylon, and sailed from there *via* Aden.

'Some uses in one country are abuses in another,' Luṭfullāh reflected when riding on asses at Aden. From here the party sailed to Suez, and then went by land to Cairo. Luṭfullāh had an opportunity to meet Muḥammad 'Alī Pāshā, of whom he gives a very striking description. 'Muḥammad 'Alī was of middle stature, and slender but compact in make. His complexion was nearly fair, and his head well-shaped. His forehead was high and broad, having a plurality of horizontal wrinkles that appeared and disappeared according to the working of his mind. He had an oval face, fringed with a short, white beard, expressive features, an aquiline nose, and black, penetrating, keen eyes set deep under arched eye-brows. His deportment in general was grave, disclosing the mental energy

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which distinguished him; but he seemed to have a liveley disposition and fascinating manners upon the whole, combined with the air of authority'[27].

It appears from Luṭfullāh's statements that he had read Gibbon, a Latin book on the customs and institutions of the Turks by some Dr Smith, a '*Universal History*' by Dr Philip Prince. He had also made another discovery. 'The fact is, that the more you proceed towards England, the more you find the English people endowed with politeness and civility'[28]. At Alexandria Luṭfullāh was invited to several houses, and he found the ladies to be absolutely admirable. In England also he had a favourable reception, because of his contacts. He met John Shakespeare, the author of the *Hindustani Dictionary* who, he found, could not speak Hindustānī; Professor Wilson, the Orientalist; Colonel W. H. Sykes, F.R.S., to whom he sent the manuscript of his *Autobiography* after its completion towards the end of 1854. He played chess with Viscountess Jocelyn, 'this nymph of Paradise'. He visited East India House, Leadenhall Street.

'It is a place where the destiny of my sweet native land lies in the hands of twenty-four men, called the Honourable Directors of the Honourable East India Company, who are the principal movers of the string of the machine of the Government of India'[29]. He visited the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Asiatic Society, the British Museum and, of course, Westminster Abbey. He saw the display of fashions at Ascot. He heard a lecture on anatomy, and later visited St George's Hospital and the College of Surgeons. 'I became convinced that a great part of what I had studied in "Galen's Anatomy" in Persian and Arabic was founded upon fancy and conjecture, and that it was impossible for anybody to acquire a thorough knowledge of this most useful study for mankind without the practical course of dissection'[30].

Whenever he had a free evening, Luṭfullāh went to some theatre or opera.

> 'At half-past eight,' he says, describing his visit to the Italian opera, 'the curtain was pulled up, and two handsome ladies, very indecently dressed . . . appeared on the stage. They sang, I fancy, some historical ballad, in conjunction with the instrumental music, and danced very expertly. Whilst the females whirled round in their dancing, their short gowns flew up to the forbidden

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 393.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 398.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 410.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

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height. Tantalizing the assembly, it appears, was their principal aim by such a violation of decorum.'[31]

Luṭfullāh returned from England towards the middle of November, 1844. His first wife died in 1847, and very soon he married again. His *Autobiography* ends pathetically.

'By this lady I am blest with four children, three girls and one boy. May God bless them all! My domestic cares are now aggravated, my years advanced, and my income inadequate to cover the expenses of a large family. But I resign myself to the will of the Omniscient Being, whose omnipotent power first creates the food, and then His creatures destined to live upon it. Amen!'

Two editions of Luṭfullāh's *Autobiography* were published in England. The reviewers were enthusiastic. 'We have read this book with wonder and delight,' wrote *The Athenaeum*. *The Leader* went further. 'Read fifty volumes of travel and a thousand imitations of the oriental novel, and you will not get the flavour of Eastern life and thought, or the zest of its romance so perfectly as in Luṭfullāh's book.' Another critic described it as 'A treasure as well as a rarity in literature'. In India Luṭfullāh is almost unknown even to scholars who specialize in this period of modern history. It has been assumed that the Indian Muslims, with the outcry they made against English education, would not write books in English.

We have discussed elsewhere the reasons and the justification of the Indian Muslim attitude towards English education. Ultimately, mercenary motives prevailed and English began to be learnt for purposes of employment. But it was only in the small circle of those in whom knowledge of English bred haughtiness and disdain of everything Indian that Indian languages lost favour. Ṭabaṭaba'ī's *Siyar al-Muta'a<u>khkh</u>arīn* is one of the most important source books for the last days of Muslim rule in north India, and though historiography lost its privileged position because of political changes, the study of history continued. Amīr 'Alī's *History of the Saracens* is a classic; so is his *Spirit of Islām*. The natural sciences, unfortunately, suffered neglect, and in the social sciences much more could have been done. But the task of adapting Urdū to the new role language had to play because of the enormous and rapid advance of knowledge was not begun seriously till the 1920s, and then also it was not organized and systematic enough. Now not only language but education itself is in the melting-pot and ultimate results are a matter of speculation. Indian Muslims may or may not have a

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 409.

common language like Urdū fifty years hence, but there seems to be good reason to believe that they will make a contribution to the regional languages and to Hindī which will be in keeping with their natural aptitudes and traditions.

CHAPTER XXII

SOCIAL LIFE

I

1750-1857

THE political history of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveals a rapid decay of the forces which integrated society as a body politic, and a general tendency among those struggling for power to discard all considerations other than those of personal benefit. But without ideas and ideals even personal benefit cannot be given a stable and enduring form, and it becomes difficult to repress the urge to destroy what belongs to others if one cannot have it for oneself, or to expend in spectacular forms what one has butcannot long retain. It would be unfair to accuse only the Muslim princes, princelings and nobles of being victims to this tendency. It was general, and gradually took the form of a creeping paralysis of the constructive and organizational faculties which made the acquisition of the country by the British inevitable. Mīr Ja'far of Bengal, who deliberately let the British win at Plassey (1757), and Mīr Ṣādiq of Mysore[1] are quite justly execrated as examples of treachery, but they were not the only ones who betrayed their trust. They have to be regarded as the most obvious symptoms of a fatally common disease.

The courts of the Indian Muslim princes after 1750 were miniature copies of the imperial Mughal court. But while the latter was, till the death of Auraṇgzēb, the nerve-centre and the throbbing heart of a far-flung administrative system, and its routine was the procedure of a government attempting to fulfil enormous responsibilities, the courts of the princes—with the exception of Mysore under Ḥaidar 'Alī and Ṯīpū Sulṭān—were, at their best, mere exhibitions of pomp and courtly etiquette. A Mughal prince, Mirzā 'Alī Bakht Bahādur Muḥammad Ẓahīruddīn 'Aẓfarī', who was born in 1758 and escaped from the palace, the 'royal prison-house'[2] in 1789,

[1] See Muḥibbul Ḥasan Khān, *History of Tipu Sultan*. The Bibliophile Ltd., Calcutta, 1951, pp. 315, 325-9, for the intrigues of Mīr Ṣādiq.

[2] The practice of keeping princes under strict surveillance in the palace began in the time of Jahāndar Shāh (1712-13).

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wrote a diary of his travels[3], and his account reflects the princely mentality of his times. Aẓfarī was quite talented, and received an education commensurate with his talent. He acquired mastery over Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and learnt, besides, medicine, astrology and prosody. He may not deserve being called a poet, but he could compose verses in Urdū and all the other languages he knew. One is, therefore, inclined to sympathize with his desire for freedom. But he had not the type of mind which could derive any advantage from freedom, once it had been attained. He believed in scrupulous observance of etiquette, and he was supremely confident that all others believed in it too. He was sure that wherever he went, he would receive the honour due to a Mughal prince, and paying honour to him meant also paying tribute to him as to an overlord. Aẓfarī's expectations were fulfilled everywhere. The Mahārājās of Jaipūr and Jōdhpūr, the Nawāb Wazīr of Oudh, and finally the Nawwab of the Carnatic behaved as his subordinates and provided for him money and means of comfort in keeping with his exalted position. Even though altogether dependent on his hosts, Aẓfarī maintained the royal Mughal practice of not acknowledging and returning the salutations of those who were not his equals, and far from causing resentment, this assertion of a surpassing dignity pleased all who had the chance of meeting him. According to our standards, Aẓfari was a princely beggar; according to contemporary standards, he conferred honour on those who provided for him.

Aẓfarī travelled all over Rājasthān; he spent a little under seven years in Lucknow; and on his journey to Madrās he passed through Banāras, Patnā, Murshidābād, Burdwān, Calcutta, Pāndua, Hooghly, Cuttack, Masulipatam, Chenapatam. Here and there, in connection with discomforts he suffered or escaped, he describes the route or briefly mentions things that could, perhaps, appear relevant to us. Otherwise it is quite obvious that he was interested only in the etiquette observed by his hosts and others whom he met. But we cannot accuse him alone of having isolated himself mentally; the whole princely class seemed to have lost consciousness of its duty and of its fundamental obligations. The Nawāb Wazīr of Oudh, Āṣafuddaulah, for instance, was 'a prince with a strangely heedless disposition. His whole time was spent in amusements. He was not concerned at all with the affairs of the state or with friend or stranger'[4].

There was a philosophy behind the complacence with which Aẓfarī refers to the qualities of Āṣafuddaulah. 'It has been the rule

[3] 'Azfarī', *Waqi'āt-i-Aẓfarī*, translated by A. Sattār. Oriental Research Institute, Madras University, 1937.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

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throughout that the powerful bring the weak under their domination. Just as Delhi was ruled for a long time by Hindū rājās, then for a period by the Pathāns, and was then under the sway of the Mughal Turks, after whom came the turn of the Deccanis (the Marhatta Pēshwās), so it is no cause for wonder if now the magnificent people, the English, possess and dispose of everything there. These people are wiser than their predecessors. . . .' This evidence of history clinches an argument in regard to the real nature of the British. Aẓfarī praises their administration, their sense of order and justice, their regard for their promises, their well-equipped armies, their neat and beautiful cities, their absorption in study (of languages, etc.), their general conduct, which resembles that of the philosophers and 'their honest management of affairs and truthfulness in conversation', because of which 'they just fall short of being prophets'. It was to these virtues that they owed their success. There were, however, critics who said that the British were honest in small matters, dishonest in big ones, and quoted their dealings in Bengal as proof. But Aẓfarī thought it silly to make such accusations. 'Wise men do not deliberately suffer losses.' The British were like the Indians, and no worse, in evading fulfilment of promises if it was advantageous to do so[5].

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Indian Muslim rulers had reconciled themselves to the fact of real power being in the hands of the British, and Wellesley's system of subsidiary alliance completely atrophied whatever courage or political imagination was left. The courts of Ḥaidarābād and Oudh offer the most tragic examples of degeneration. Oudh was perhaps the worst. The title of Nawwāb Wazīr given to the ruler of Oudh was converted into a kingship in 1818, 'in the presence of English officers', and Ghāziyuddīn Ḥaidar (1814-1827) was the first to assume this dignity. His queen, Bādshāh Bēgam, was an ambitious and intriguing woman, and keeping her under control seems to have been the major problem during the thirteen years of his rule. Bādshāh Bēgam did not bear him any male children; his son and heir, Naṣīruddīn Ḥaidar, was born of one of Bādshāh Bēgam's maid-servants, who was most cruelly done to death upon the birth of her child. Bādshāh Bēgam wished to kill the child also, but was induced to spare it, and soon became its fond step-mother. Her influence was most pernicious. She brought up Naṣīruddin Ḥaidar in an atmosphere of superstition, to which was added a disgusting effeminacy that lurked in his own disposition.

Wājid 'Alī Shāh, the last of the line, though an accomplished musician and dancer, was perhaps the most depraved and foppish

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 182-4.

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of them all. Whatever the real sentiments of the ministers, officers and courtiers may have been, they were mean and immoral enough to derive what personal advantage they could from the follies and perversities of the kings and princes, and must share in our condemnation[6].

By 1848, the British were supreme in India, but only about two-thirds of the country was directly under British rule. The assumption of full administrative responsibility by the British was a gradual and fairly slow process, and in the period of transition there was frightful disorder. The control of the 'established' authorities, the Mughal Emperors, the provincial governors who had become independent, and those to whom power had been officially delegated by them, was largely fictitious. The big and petty landlords, with their forts and miniature armies, could do very much as they liked, and generally what they liked was to fight each other, practise highway robbery, and squeeze what money or goods they could out of the peasantry. The ravages and atrocities of the Pindārīs, who were originally light-armed irregular troops attached to the Marhatta armies, became notorious, and a campaign for their suppression was organized in 1817. The nefarious activities of the thugs were put to an end by Bentinck in 1830. But the methods of plunder and extortion followed by the Pindārīs and the thugs were copied in almost every detail by the landlords, whom the Indian rulers could only occasionally frighten into submissiveness by a threat of superior force. They formed a whole class dedicated to the cause of anarchy.

A typical case may be quoted from Sleeman's *Journey through Oude*. Malik Ghulām Haḍrat was one of the ambitious and active landlords of a district near Lucknow. He augmented his estates by openly seizing the property of his neighbours. In order to increase his little army, he sent some men on November 10, 1849, to aid the prisoners in the great jail at Lucknow to break out, and forty-five prisoners escaped, among them one who had assassinated a minister. Ghulām Haḍrat attacked the Rājpūt landlord of Golhā at the head of his gang, killed five of his relatives and servants, burnt down his house, and took possession of his estate. A good many powerful landlords were always ready to support him against the government, on condition of his supporting them when necessary. He was surprised into surrender by British troops, but he had so many influential friends about the court, with whom he had shared his plunder, that his ultimate punishment was doubtful[7].

[6] See, for example, 'Abdul Aḥad, *Tārīkh-i-Bādshāh Bēgam*. Translated by Muḥammad Taqī Aḥmad. Indian Press Ltd, Allāhābād, 1938.

[7] Sleeman, *Journey through Oude*. O.U.P. P. 21.

The ruin of thousands of well-to-do Muslim families in Delhi, in Lucknow and other cities and rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihār because of the upheaval of 1857-8 is generally looked upon as a misfortune and the cause of the submergence of the Muslims as a community. But the landlords of the rural areas cannot be regarded as social assets; and in the capital cities, the petty princes, their officers, courtiers and hangers-on, and members of families classed as 'noble' had become incurably degenerate. If they had continued to set the standards of ethics and morality, the recovery of the Indian Muslims under British rule would have become extremely difficult. The upper class of Muslims in north India which survived the catastrophe of 1857-8 by accident or because of having performed what the British called acts of loyalty to the Government became the residuary legatee of all cultural values. It diverted the attention of the government and the people towards its own needs and grievances and gave a wrong direction to political and social thought. The Muslims were not able to respond more than they did to the demands of the conditions that prevailed for a century before and half a century after 1858 because of a selfish and parasitic upper class.

When discussing the political system of the Muslims, we noted that the capture of the sea-routes and the carrying trade by the Europeans made the Mughal empire into a landlocked state depending mainly upon agriculture. The anarchy of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century crippled internal trade by making the roads unsafe. Calcutta, Madras and Bombay became the chief centres of trade and commerce, and cities that had large populations and thriving industries during Mughal rule, ravaged as they were by the forces of anarchy, were also strangled economically. Profitable business was safe and possible only under the shadow of the British power and only through the acceptance of the new economic system, which more or less forced the princelings to become the purchasers of what was offered to them by foreign adventurers and made India into a market for goods produced in the factories of Europe.

One important result of extreme insecurity and economic decline was the loss of hold upon life, reflected in the widespread belief in magic and in the supernatural. We have referred several times in earlier chapters to belief in astrology. Ṯīpū Sulṭān 'was extremely superstitious, and believed that the performance of certain ceremonies could avert misfortune. Every day he consulted the astrologers attached to his court about his stars. He fed Brahmins, bore the expenses of Hindū 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 pan full of sesame oil, of a blue cap and coat and one black sheep and some money'[8]. A psychological analysis might have revealed that people who no longer possessed the capacity to achieve had taken to dreaming achievements; they tried to obtain the favours which fortune bestows on those who spend their energies in various types of meaningful activity by resorting to esoteric methods. The *ta'wīdh* was widely regarded as a means of attaining in a supernatural way what could not be obtained otherwise. The writing of the *ta'wīdh* became an occult art and even a person like Shāh Walīullāh could dilate upon the various types of *ta'wīdh* and their effectiveness. Ja'far Sharīf, in his *Qānūn-i-Islām*[9] has reproduced several varieties of *ta'wīdh*, one of which was used to exorcize devils. But even more dangerous to mental health was the belief in good and evil omens and in dreams. All this had some foundation in theology, but carried to the length it was in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it tended to destroy reason and common sense, and undermine confidence in the value of planned thought and action. Shāh Walīullāh, in his *Qaul al-Jamīl*[10], after describing the various spiritual exercises of the orthodox *ṣūfī* orders, explains the methods of obtaining knowledge of future events, and prayers for cure of hydrophobia, prevention of small-pox, protection against the evil eye, eradicating the fear of rulers, exorcizing the evil spirits, identification of thieves, recovery of runaway slaves; for these purposes the days of the week and the time of day and night also assume an importance. We have mentioned in the discussion of the earliest phase of ṣūfism that people came to the *ṣūfī* for blessings and guidance and assistance in all kinds of situations. The *Qaul al-Jamīl* represents the reduction of this function to a pseudo-science.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz once had pain in his toe. He read in a book that as cure for such pain one should take the hair of a child more than forty days and less than six months old and tie it at the affected spot. He did so and was cured. He advised persons afflicted with love to go to a stall for mules, take off their clothes and roll about on the ground till the whole body was covered with dust[11].

The rites and ceremonies connected with birth and marriage, where they did not originate in the traditional tendency towards

[8] Muḥibbul Ḥasan, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

[9] Ja'far Sharīf, *Islām in India*, or the *Qānūn-i-Islām*. Translated by G. A. Herklots, M.D. Edited by W. Crooke. Oxford University Press. Chapters XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, pp. 218-82.

[10] Published by 'Alībhā'ī Sharaf 'Alī, Bombay.

[11] *Malfūẓāt-i-Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz*. Edited by M. Bashīruddīn Ṣiddīqī, Matba' Mujtabā'ī, Meerut. P. 34.

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lavish expenditure, were due almost entirely to belief in magic and omens. In the imperial household, the navel cord of a new-born child was severed with a thread and put in a small bag along with a *ta'wīdh* containing magical symbols. This bag was placed under the child's pillow. Sometimes the knife used to cut the navel cord was kept as a protective against the evil eye and taken with the child when it was bathed or carried out. In some families the mother did not receive even a glass of water, to say nothing of betel, perfumes or other luxuries, till the child had been named. In Gujarāt, the mother, in accordance with a Hindū custom, was led to a window and made to count seven stars. The parting of the mother's hair was also supposed to have a magical significance, and so on the third day after the child's birth the mother's hair was parted in the middle. The child was clad only in borrowed clothes or in pieces taken from the garment of some holy person. A plate full of food was laid aside from the evening meal to prevent the child from growing into a greedy person, coveting every kind of food that it saw. In the centre of this plate of food, a lamp made of flour paste with four wicks was lighted, friends of the family dropped coins into it and it was kept burning all night. In the Panjāb, among people who did not seclude their women, when the child was one month and ten days old, the mother bathed, dressed in new clothes, put a couple of jars filled with boiled grain on her head and went to the well to offer the food to the water saint, Khwājah Khiḍr. After offering the food she filled the jars with water and went home[12].

Shāh Ismā'īl, in his *Tadhkīr al-Ikhwān*, has given a long list of customs that were being followed, though they were opposed to the *sharī'ah*. Among these customs were: sacrificing a goat and firing a gun on the birth of a child, placing an arrow and the Qur'ān on the bed of a woman who had been delivered, celebrating the sixth day after the birth of a child, taking a boy before his circumcision to a grave or to salute a banner, tying a bracelet of hair on his wrists, placing a piece of iron on his hand, celebrating betrothals, making marks with indigo or lime upon doors, regarding the month of *Ṣafar*, and in particular the first thirteen days as inauspicious, having fireworks and illumination and making *ḥalwā* in the month of *Sha'bān*, not celebrating marriages in the month of *Dhu'l-qa'd*, observing the third, tenth and fortieth day, the sixth month and the anniversary of a person after his death, using magical words and symbols, regarding Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and certain dates of a month as inauspicious, fixing signs of ill-omen for horses, houses and women, not giving the daughter her share of inheritance, not

[12] Ja'far Sharīf, *op. cit.*, p. 25 ff.

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allowing remarriage of widows, considering the crockery or the water or the body or clothes of a Muslim unclean, bathing for all sorts of reasons like the Hindūs, bathing on Wednesdays because of thinking oneself unclean and not going out on that day, not eating meat one day in the week, giving up a particular variety of vegetable, etc.[13]. The fact, as we have indicated earlier, was that in most families, women were on the look-out for rites and practices regarded as propitious, and added them on to those they already knew for good omen and for protecting and prolonging life. They had no scruples about the origin or theological implications of a rite so long as a sufficient number of people assured them about its effectiveness.

In the celebration of marriages the princely and noble families displayed the utmost extravagance, and other classes and families could not but regard it as a point of honour to emulate them. In north India, the marriage ceremonies took over a week, in Gujarāt somewhat longer, and in South India they continued for almost a year, intervals of about a month being set between the various functions in order to prolong the festivities. In north India, if haste was unavoidable, marriages could take place within a day, the usual intervals between the different ceremonies being reduced to an hour or even less. But all the ceremonies usual in the region or in the particular *kufw* had to be performed, and to ignore or overlook the more important ones would vitiate the marriage itself, or be regarded as an evil omen.

Match-making was generally the business of women, but marriages for political reasons were arranged by men. There were different means of announcing a betrothal, the poor sending betel-leaf, middle-class people sweets, the rich people celebrating it as a full ceremony. The marriage proper began with an exchange of gifts (*sāchaq*), after which the couple could be referred to as bride and bridegroom. The hands and feet of the bride and groom were ceremonially dyed with henna, their bodies annointed with a mixture of flour and various powders, known in north India as *ubtan*; they were kept in isolation, the bride in a room in her house and the bridegroom in his, for a number of days that varied according to their social status. They did not change their clothes, in order to avoid the Evil Eye. These were Hindū customs which the Muslims had adopted. Muslim law in regard to *mihr*, a sum of money the amount of which varied according to the custom of the *kufw*, of the region or the locality or the social status of the parties to the mar-

[13] Shāh Ismā'īl Shahīd, *Tadhkīr al-Ikhwān*, Iqbāl Academy, Lahore, 1948. Pp. 25-8 and 51-2.

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riage contract, was technically observed[14], but had lost all value if the intention was to provide for the material needs of the woman in case the marriage contract was dissolved. Sometimes the *mihr* used to be settled beforehand, but even if that was done, the final agreement was made just before the marriage. Muslims had adopted the Hindū superstition in regard to the auspicious day and hour for marriage, and in the *Malfūẓāt* of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz we find a question as to whether or not there were auspicious days or times for marriage. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz replied that marriages could be performed when convenient, as all days were God's days, but Mondays and Thursdays could be preferred.[14a]

The bridegroom arrived with his party in a procession the noisiness and grandeur of which depended on his status. His entrance into the bride's house was in many cases barred, according to a Hindū custom, by the relatives of the bride, who put up a mock resistance. Other customs followed on this occasion had also been borrowed from the Hindūs. In the Deccan, before the bridegroom alighted from his horse, the bride's brother gave him hot milk or *sharbat* to drink, a coconut was dashed on the ground, lemons were cut and thrown over his head to the four quarters to scare away evil spirits. In Gujarāt, the bride dropped rice over the bridegroom from a window as he entered her house. In other places the bride was given flowers, sugar and rice to throw three times over the bridegroom from behind a screen. Ja'far Sharīf mentions the curious but highly significant fact that *nikāḥ*, which is in Muslim law the only ceremony of consequence and at which the bride and the bridegroom declare their intention to contract a marriage was in north India used, not for the proper, but for the informal marriage. It is quite apparent from the details of the ceremonies performed that the essentials of a Muslim marriage had become so overloaded with borrowed customs as to appear to be an irrelevant detail, much more importance being attached to matters which were considered of good or bad omen or which provided opportunities for display of wealth[15].

During this period there must have been an intensification of that system of segregation which divided the family dwelling into a men's quarter (*mardānā*) and a women's quarter (*zanānā*), and the conditions of insecurity resulting from the breakdown of Mughal administration must have made the men of every respectable family

[14] In some parts of Mālābār the practice of having a fixed *mihr*, very small in amount, became common and was legally recognized. It originated most probably in the need of Arab sailors to contract marriages as quickly and inexpensively as possible. D'Souza, *Islāmic Culture*, Vol. XXIX, p. 266 ff.

[14a] P. 91.

[15] Ja'far Sharīf, *op. cit.*, p. 62 ff.

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anxious to see that their womenfolk remained concealed from the eyes of strangers and unobserved by them. The ideals of virtue and chastity were women like Tāj Maḥal, the chief queen of the emperor Muḥammad Shāh. She would not take a male child in her lap; she covered her face even if a boy of four came into her presence, and even when dying she did not allow a physician to feel her pulse[16]. This concept of modesty survived to exercise its influence till the first decades of the twentieth century, when there were still women like the wife of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān who believed in and practised absolute seclusion. They not only avoided being seen by male relatives within the degrees in which marriage was possible; they thought it immodest even to let their voices be heard by them. They took care that washermen did not touch or see their soiled linen.

At the same time we see in Lucknow a replica of the frivolity and lasciviousness described in the *Muraqqa'-i-Dihlī*. Not only were conditions in the royal court much worse; the *Mathnawīs* of 'Shawq' (1783-1871), published between 1850 and 1860, reveal the fact that search for the delights of love was not unknown among women of respectable families. The rules of *pardah*, of remaining concealed from the eyes of men, were observed, but festivals and visits provided opportunities for men and women to catch glimpses of each other that could serve as the initial step towards subsequent meeting and love-making. In his first *mathnawī*, *Farēb-i-'Ishq* (The Wiles of Love) Shawq relates what appears to be an autobiographical anecdote of a group of gay friends catching sight of a young woman behind the screen of a palanquin, of one of the young men—presumably 'Shawq' himself—falling madly in love with her, and bribing the lady's maid and the palanquin-bearers to deposit her in his garden when she next went out to the Karbalā, (the sybmolic graveyard of the family of Imām Ḥusain, the martyred grandson of the Prophet). When the lady discovers what has happened she gets very angry, and the savour of the story is in the conversation between her and her bold and scheming lover. Ultimately she is seduced with promises. But all that she says to the young man indicates that she knows that love-making behind the curtains of respectability is quite common, and indeed that the young man who has enticed her is himself notorious for his charms and his fickleness. In *Bahār-i-'Ishq* (The Spring of Love) the lover falls ill, and the news that he is about to die because of his unrequited passion is conveyed to the lady. She is too compassionate to bear the thought of anyone dying in his youth and pays him a visit in order to console him. The conversation and the play-acting follow the same pattern as in *Farēb-i-*

[16] Aẓfarī, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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'Ishq. In the last *mathnawī*, *Zahr-i-'Ishq* (The Poison of Love) the atmosphere is somewhat different, the heroine herself being as passionately in love as the hero. This does not, however, elevate the quality of their love. They hear of each other, exchange a few sentimental letters, see each other from a safe distance and then arrange to meet privately. Their love is none the less mere sexual indulgence. Soon the girl's parents decide to take her away and marry her off, and after a final meeting with her lover, she takes poison and dies. The lover follows her bier to the grave and there he dies of a broken heart. Loyalty to social restraints is the only edifying feature of the story. The lovers conceal their relationship while it lasts, and the girl's last entreaty is that, whatever happens, her lover should not, through his behaviour, reveal the secret of their love. The *mathnawīs* of Shawq were for a long time regarded as obscene and poisonous literature; women who led a clean life were not supposed to read them. Critics of the nineteenth century tried to avoid mentioning Shawq among the poets. This is not surprising, as the poems laid bare the emotionally limited, if not coarse, conception of the relationship between men and women, and the restrictions under which women lived could give the incitement provided by them an explosive character.

There are instances during this period of Muslim women marrying Europeans. Bēgam Samrū (1751-1836), who married the European adventurer, Reinhard, belonged to a respectable Muslim family. She became a Christian only after the death of Reinhard, and to the last observed a restricted kind of *pardah*[17]. The Muslim wife of an Englishman invited Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd and his party to a meal while he was on one of his tours. As such marriages were, in his opinion, contrary to the law, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd declined her invitation, but agreed when her English husband invited him[18]. In Banāras, Ḥayatunnisā Bēgam, who seems to have been a well-known figure in the city, offered him money and gifts of various kinds. He refused to accept them because she had once been married to an Englishman[19]. We must assume that between the 'free' woman of good family and the courtesan who was unable or unwilling to give up her profession, there were women belonging to families each of which represented, for the strictly honourable and old families, its own peculiar form of degradation. There would be descendants of mistresses who had got married and of those who had not, of men who were sons of mistresses or courtesans who had taken advantage of the adverse circumstances of an otherwise good family and

[17] B. Banerji, *Bēgam Samrū*. M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1925.
[18] Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, *op cit.*, p. 195.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

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married into it, of men and women who had done nothing worse than marry below their rank, and so on. Violence that could be perpetrated because there was no one to prevent it must also have taken its toll of girls of good families. While the general tendency among the good families naturally was to maintain their honour at all cost, there was also a spirit of social egalitarianism. During one of his tours, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd found a community of brick-burners near Mirzāpūr who were regarded as untouchables by the local Muslim community. He and his party had a meal with them, to recognize and assert their rights to equality. In Bengal, the Farā'iḍīs were active advocates of egalitarianism, sometimes even showing hostility to Muslims of the upper classes who opposed them or were not generous enough in their support. Shah Ismā'īl Shahīd and Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd, though strict in matters of the *sharī'ah* and considering *pardah* necessary, did not abandon courtesans as unredeemable. We have an interesting story of how Shāh Ismā'īl, while still a novice in the field of social reform, once saw small processions of richly dressed women in conveyances of all kinds passing through the streets of Delhi. On enquiry he found that they were all courtesans going to the house of one of the prominent personages of their profession to attend a celebration of some kind. He thought this a fine opportunity of converting them, and assuming the guise of a *faqīr*, he obtained admission into the house where they were all gathered. He had an imposing appearance and was, moreover, well-known enough to be recognized by the hostess as soon as he was presented to her. When asked what had brought him there, he recited verses from the Qur'ān and preached a sermon which brought tears to the eyes of his audience[20]. Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd insisted on the wives of the members of his party receiving and treating as their equals some courtesans who had repented and become his followers.

Marriage and home life as prescribed by the laws of respectability did not, as we have stated earlier, provide what we now regard as cultured social intercourse or companionship. The fulfilment of this need was still the function of the courtesans, who were naturally hated and despised by respectable women, but who led society as it were by the nose. In *Umrā'o Jān Adā*, a novel by Mirzā Muḥammad Hādī 'Ruswā', we have the autobiography of a courtesan who lived during the last years of the kingdom of Oudh. She came of a poor but honourable family of Faiḍābād, and was kidnapped when very young and sold to a woman at Lucknow whose business it was to train girls for the profession of singing and dancing. Umrā'o Jān

[20] Mirzā Ḥairat Dihlavī, *Ḥayāt-i-Ṭaiyyibah*. Thanā'ī Barqī Press, Amritsar, 1933.

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was not very beautiful, but she could sing well and had considerable literary talent and conversational ability. She was not ambitious or greedy, and in spite of being brought up with girls who aspired to surpass the well-known courtesans of the day, she preserved a simplicity of nature which she did not adorn with anything except wit and the charm of conversation. She gives an account of her life without passion and without guile, and in the pimps, thieves, robbers, rakes, hypocrites and men of pride and honour whom she describes we get a complete picture of the society of her time.

Women like Umrā'o Jān Adā and those brought up with her had to endure the indignity of their profession and survive the curses of the poor wives whose husbands sought company and amusement outside their home. But men of means thought it a sign of independent social status to keep or even marry women of the courtesan class who could sing or dance well or were accomplished in the art of conversation. A high value was placed on witty and well-turned phrases, and every educated person desired to achieve distinction in his particular circle through his mastery of speech. Courtesans generally had their salons, the quality of their visitors varying in accordance with their reputation for wit and beauty, and the art of conversation, which included the ability to quote or improvise verse, was a necessary accomplishment for those who attended the salons.

The political power of the Mughal emperor ceased to be of any account after Nādir Shāh's capture of Delhi and the emperors also rapidly lost prestige. But the courts of Oudh, Rājasthān, Central India, the Deccan, parts of the South and, later, the Panjāb desired to adopt or adopted the Mughal etiquette, and one code of address and behaviour, one style of food and dress—with certain inevitable local variations—was recognized and followed all over the country. In the towns of Bombay, Madras and, above all, Calcutta, crudely pragmatic views of life began to emerge because of British influence, but in the inland cities culture of the mind seemed to have become able to ignore, if not to remove those restraints which had been imposed by religion and social laws. The celebration of festivals, *Muḥarram, Dasehra, Hōlī, Dīvālī,* and the anniversaries of saints were particular occasions when people professing different faiths came together; but apart from them, and on a much higher level, assimilation was promoted by concentration on personal accomplishment and social grace. There was more cultural uniformity in India between 1750 and 1850 than there has been ever before or since.

This was the century in which the Urdū language developed and the *mushā'irah* became a popular feature of social life. It had originated in the practice of poets reciting their odes in the courts of

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rulers or in the houses of patrons; now it became much more democratic, because a literary medium had been discovered which stimulated a far larger number of people to exercise their mind in the composition and appreciation of poetry. The style of the *qaṣīdah* fell into the background, the *ghazal*, with its opportunities for terse, epigrammatic expression, came to the fore. Hardly any educated person would have been willing to admit that he did not have the intelligence or taste to appreciate poetry, and most aspired to the ability at least to string meaningful words together into a verse and verses into a *ghazal*. *Mushā'irahs* were occasions for attracting notice and winning applause and esteem, and it also happened that people who had no aptitude for versification persuaded or paid others to write *ghazals* for them. *Mushā'irahs* were held in the courts of Oudh and Delhi, but anyone well-known enough to play the host could hold a *mushā'irah*. The general procedure was to send an invitation and announce at the same time a *miṣra'-i-ṭaraḥ*, a half-verse to show the metre and rhyme in which the *ghazal* was to be composed. When the poets had assembled, and generally they took their time, a candle was passed around, being placed before the poet who was to recite his poem. Much importance was attached to the order in which the poets were requested to recite, the beginners and the less well-known coming first, those with established reputations coming later, and often—perhaps too often—unpleasantness was caused by a poet being asked to recite too soon or before another poet whom he considered his inferior. Poets had their own circle of admirers, who were anxious to see that the eminence of their literary hero was recognized and that he got his due share of applause, and *mushā'irahs* sometimes led to bitterness and conflict. One of the last *mushā'irahs* to be held at Delhi has been brilliantly described by Mirzā Farḥatullāh Bēg[21].

The *mushā'irah*, for all its obvious drawbacks, was a means of public appraisal of cultivated expression. There was much quarrelling over the meanings and uses of words and idioms, but there was also an elaboration of concepts, particularly of personality, love, beauty and freedom. This century was the century of Mīr and Ghālib, in which the poet attempted to build out of the ruins of institutions the ideal of a new man and a new faith.

Many poets who attained literary fame can also be regarded as typical representatives of the culture of this period, Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib being among the last. We have already discussed his poetry in a previous chapter. To the earlier part of this period belong Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānān, whom we have already described,

[21] *Dilli ki Akhiri Shama'*. Published in the *Urdū* and also separately in several editions.

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Khwājah Mīr Dard (d. 1199/1784) and Naẓīr Akbarābādī (1739-1830).

Khwājah Mīr Dard belonged to a *ṣūfī* family distinguished for learning and piety. He wrote his first book at the age of fifteen and withdrew from the world at the age of twenty-two. But he was a poet, a master of the science of music, a thinker and writer, and his eminence in all these fields made his *khānqāh* into a cultural sanctuary which it was an honour to visit. Here came aspirants to literary fame for guidance, musicians and singers to have their accomplishment tested and approved, men of status to acquire the graces of social life. The Emperor Shāh 'Ālam was a great admirer of the Khwājah. Once when he was in the Khwājah's assembly, he stretched his leg because it was paining him. The Khwājah at once pointed out that it was improper to do so, and when the Emperor in all humility requested to be excused, the Khwājah curtly told him that there was no need for him to come if he had pain in his leg. The etiquette of a *faqīr's* assembly could not be disregarded on any account.

Khwājah Mīr Dard's spiritual affiliation was with the Naqshbandī Order, from whose point of view the doctrines of ṣūfism have been presented in his most outstanding contribution to *ṣūfī* literature, *'Ilm al-Kitāb*. But as a poet and as a cultural type, the Khwājah belongs to those immanentists for whom the oneness of God was necessarily reflected in the oneness of mankind, and all differences had to be regarded as illusions.

Naẓīr Akbarābādī, a picturesque character, poet, philanderer and philosopher, is typical of another pronounced cultural tendency of this period. He was born about 1739, and died at an advanced age in 1830. His education was limited to a little knowledge of Persian and Arabic, which probably gave him the courage to exploit to the full the resources of colloquial Urdū, and it is generally agreed that he enriched its vocabulary more than any other single writer. He was gifted with a remarkable receptivity, and was singularly lacking in any desire for literary fame or even respectability. In his youth he seemed to have gone around keeping company with all sorts of people, and doing just what caught his fancy; his poetry reflects the gay, some would say immoral, abandon of the *Hōlī* festival, the comradeship of beggars, acrobats, bear-tamers, wrestlers, sluts and all the riff-raff that collects at fairs and festivals, and it does not seem to have been subjected to the scrutiny of a moral, aesthetic or literary conscience. He is reputed to have had relations with a courtesan. But if the *Muraqqa'-i-Dihli*, which we have referred to earlier, is at all a true picture of the age and time, Naẓīr did nothing more than describe what he saw, and what his contemporaries knew

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about and perhaps could not have avoided seeing. But he was frowned upon for using obscene language, and for having introduced into poetry subjects and sentiments and styles that were derogatory to its dignity. Naẓīr, however, was not concerned; he had no desire for a career of any kind, and when the urge to taste of everything in life was satisfied, he settled down as tutor to the children of a wealthy Hindū family at Āgrā.

Naẓīr was free from prejudice, and was by nature courteous, gentle and modest. When he changed, he changed completely, and the wild frolic of his earlier poetry was replaced by a deep spirituality. Here, again, he was straightforward; his language was the people's idiom, with no philosophical concepts obscuring the simple, natural sentiment. The poems of this period are studied and honoured as literary masterpieces and expressions of eternal wisdom. If we take both phases of his life together, there is perhaps no Indian Muslim in whom the joy of being Indian was more intense and genuine.

Music continued to receive the patronage of the princes and chiefs. The system of instruction remained unchanged, each master specializing in some style and having his own group of relatives and pupils who were devoted to him and carried on his tradition of excellence. This led to the formation of *gharānās* or family groups, and every musician was distinguished by the *gharānā* to which he belonged. In 1813, Muḥammad Rāḍā compiled the *Naghmāt-i-Āṣafī* after consultation with the leading artists of his day .It is one of the best guides to Indian music, apart from its historical significance. But the greatest contribution to music during this period was made by Wājid 'Alī Shāh, the king of Oudh, and Shōrī Miyān of Lucknow. Wājid 'Alī Shāh evolved the *thumrī* style, which is more based on the words and meaning of the verses sung and is generally a musical rendering of the sensuousness of poetry. Though frowned upon by those who adhered to the musical values and the restraint of classical styles, the *thumrī* became very popular. It has also come to be regarded as a distinctively Indian Muslim style. Shōrī Miyān's contribution was the *tappā* style, which he developed after a study of the folk songs of the Panjāb.

We have referred earlier to the Indian propensity to create myths. There is also a general and strong tendency to make the practice of particular concepts of ethics and of art into a cult. The formation of *gharānās* of musicians and the attachment of music lovers to *gharānās* of their choice made the profession and the appreciation of music into a cult. Music was not only an art but the basis of a philosophy of life, a form of dedication; it was, for the musician and the lover of music, the highest value. So, while the standards of performance remained very high, musicians and music lovers became

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a class apart. Most of the *gharānās* were Muslim, and even now, in the middle of the twentieth century, there are many non-Muslim music lovers who assert that the music of north India is almost entirely an Indian Muslim art, and other Indians cannot attain the same excellence. On the other hand, among the Indian Muslims themselves, the study of music has been persistently discouraged because of the fear that it would lead to the acceptance of an outlook that would disable the persons concerned from being normal and rational. The survival of music as an art practised by Indian Muslims depends entirely on the few *gharānās* that still exist.

We have discussed the character and beliefs of the reformers who attempted to give a distinctively Muslim orientation to Indian Muslim life. Changes were also taking place in education not controlled by the orthodox which foreshadowed the seriousness of the issues that were to come up in the following period. Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madrasah and Ḥājī Muḥsin, a prosperous merchant of Hooghly, advanced a loan of a crore of rupees to the East India Company on five per cent interest, the proceeds to be spent on promoting the education of the Muslims of Bengal, and providing scholarships for those wishing to study English. The Madrasah 'Ālīyah of Calcutta is maintained with the income from the Muḥsin Fund, and among those Bengali Muslims who benefited from the scholarships were Sir Amīr 'Ali and Sir 'Abdur Raḥīm. Ḥājī Muḥsin was able to devote such a large amount to education because he was childless and did not have to withstand pressure from greedy relatives; still his fund is an outstanding example of munificence for a really useful social purpose. Personally also, Hājī Muḥsin was a remarkable man, being a calligraphist, weaver of designs in lace, gunsmith, and inventor in styles of cooking. The Madrasah Ghāziyuddīn, founded in 1791 for the study of oriental languages, was converted in 1824 into a College known as the Delhi College. It was an early and significant enterprise in secular education. Many Muslims who distinguished themselves later had studied in this College and it became the nucleus of a group of people who aimed at a revaluation of inherited ideas and beliefs. We cannot say that the process of change in the educational sphere was generated by elements within the system itself. There would, in that case, have been more effective resistance to the policy which later became official and dominant, of adopting English as the medium of instruction. But even if the initial stimulus came from outside, the response was not inconsiderable, and sprouts appeared on the spreading tree of Indian Muslim culture before the bark had become too dry.

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CHAPTER XXIII

SOCIAL LIFE

II

1858-1960

FOLLOWING upon a century in which a large part of India could be said to have recognized common cultural standards and a common way of life, we find the Indian Muslims becoming more and more possessed with the anxiety to establish their cultural and political identity, to adjust themselves to a situation which threatened their future as a distinct community. Their thinking and living begins to revolve around the question of their status. The reasons for this were the establishment of British rule, the new system of education and the catastrophe of 1857-8. All three together shook the very foundations of Indian Muslim life and thought.

In 1856, the kingdom of Oudh was annexed, and the whole social structure of the state was upset. The catastrophe of 1857-8 resulted in the elimination of the imperial family at Delhi and of the local aristocracy along with it. Many of the landed gentry of the United Provinces (now called Uttar Pradesh) were liquidated or dispossessed. This represented, to contemporary Muslims, the total destruction of the old order. To add to the shock, British administrators remained for a considerable time openly and professedly hostile. Till 1857, English had been made the official language only in areas directly under British rule; after 1858, it became the official language also in what were regarded as the centres of Indian Muslim culture, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The new system of education, against which Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had issued a *fatwā* more than fifty years earlier was now a real antagonist, challenging the old order. The Muslims, broken and beaten, had still to meet this challenge.

That the old standards of culture would no longer apply was evident long before 1857, when the court etiquette had to be changed to make due allowance for the fact that the Emperor was Emperor only in name and the British officials who came to visit him, though far below him in rank, possessed real power. An example that is perhaps more relevant is offered by the story of the poet Ghālib,

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who was being considered for appointment at the Delhi College. Ghālib went in a palanquin to meet the Resident, and waited in his palanquin at the entrance of the house, expecting the Resident to come out and receive him. The Resident waited inside, expecting that the applicant for a post under the government would appear before him. Both remained where they were and did not meet. Both were right according to their standards, but Ghālib was not appointed.

What is called the common culture of India was repudiated first by the Hindūs of Bengal, in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The Muslim rulers of Bengal were displaced in 1765, only the collection of revenue being entrusted to Muslim officers. Within seven years they were deprived of this function also. The Permanent Settlement of 1793, though meant to create a class of landlords loyal to the government and able to look after their estates, wiped out Muslim landlords as a class. The culture of a people who had lost both political and economic status could not be regarded as a standard when a new culture had established itself along with a new administration, and qualities and accomplishments of a different kind were required for getting on in life. The repudiation could have been less vindictive[1], but the old culture could not have been maintained. A change similar to that of Bengal took place in North India also, but here it was more gradual, because the number of non-Muslims who had imbibed the common culture was much larger than in Bengal, and had been objectified in the form of a common language. But the future could be prognosticated from the attitude of the government after 1858 and from the religious objection of the Muslims to English education.

We have outlined in a previous chapter the movement for reform and for the organization of political action against the new system by the militant protagonists of the *sharī'ah*. To be successful, such action required a deep study of actual conditions and the enlistment of effective non-Muslim support through the formulation of a programme that would create a common interest, which fervent assertion of the *sharī'ah* alone could not do. These considerations were beyond the intellectual horizon of the militant *'ulamā*, and their courage and persistence made their failure all the more disastrous. After 1858, in particular, the continuation of a small-scale resistance far away on the frontier heavily compromised the position of the whole

[1] The first secular institution for English education established by Indians was the Hindū College at Calcutta. It was founded in 1817, and 'by its foundation charter the College could not admit any student who was not a Hindū'. R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1960. P. 48.

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Indian Muslim community. There was first expression of difference on an individual basis with the view that India had become a *dār al-ḥarb*, and therefore *jihād* was obligatory. In the 1870's there was a move, initiated probably by the Governor-General, for a general declaration of opinion on this point, and there was no *fatwā* declaring that India was *dār al-ḥarb*. A centre of resistance on the frontier was maintained till the second decade of the twentieth century, but the general opinion that *jihād* was not obligatory was a condemnation of all that the militant *'ulamā* had done. This condemnation was far more significant socially than it was theologically, because it brought discredit upon a very courageous and sincere section of the Muslim community and upon the values which it represented. Suffering and sacrifice for a just cause ceased to be regarded as virtue or wisdom, and even the exalted passion that distinguished the Khilāfat movement of 1919-24 failed to revive the idealism which had been destroyed by repudiating the achievements of the militant *'ulamā*. Standards of public morality could not be high when it was assumed that a Muslim need not dedicate himself to a cause to the extent of risking his possessions and his position, to say nothing of his life.

The establishment of the *Dār al-'Ulūm* at Dē'ōband in 1867, though doubtless an act of foresight, was also a withdrawal that showed acceptance of defeat. It not only became but was conceived as an intellectual and academic *dār al-Islām*, where the doctrines and practices of the *sharī'ah* could be kept alive and from where a *jihād* for observance of the *sharī'ah* could be carried on. It represented simultaneously intellectual isolation and missionary activity. The isolation consisted in reducing Islām to a fixed syllabus of study, and the denial of the need and value of further knowledge. This attitude can be interpreted as fear of new ideas; it was more probably a determination to adhere to essentials, on the principle of first things first. The missionary activity consisted in Dē'oband graduates seeking—and finding—employment as teachers of theology, as tutors in well-to-do households, as teachers in *maktabs* and as *imāms* in mosques. Muslim educational institutions had to have teachers of theology, Muslim parents were anxious to give religious instruction to their children, teachers had to be found for *maktabs* and *imāms* for mosques. The ground was thus already prepared for missionary work. But the *Dār al-'Ulūm* graduates were brought up in a particular tradition. 'Innovation is the worst of all bad things, and the innovator is not even granted an opportunity for repentance.' Preferring tradition and custom to the *sunnah*, not declaring the *sharī'ah* out of fear or for worldly considerations, adopting a policy of peace and goodwill in disregard of the *sharī'ah*

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was most reprehensible, when anyone who followed traditions rather than the *sunnah* was under the wrath of God, cast out from His presence and to be counted among His enemies. Innovations were not difficult to detect, for 'what is not permitted is forbidden'. There could be no question of justifying on any ground a practice not explicitly permitted, for 'the intellect must obey the *sharī'ah*, the *sharī'ah* was not subject to the intellect'[3]. The Dē'oband graduates could not practise the courtesy and sweet patience commended by the *sharī'ah*, and could not earn the gratitude and respect of the people among whom they lived by the exercise of humility, tolerance or tact. More often than not, they excelled in fault-finding, and condemning and anathemizing adherents of other schools of thought as well as all those who happened, intentionally or otherwise, to say or do the wrong thing. There were no degrees of error so far as they were concerned. Their objections extended to such details as the raising of hands for prayer (*du'ā*) during the *khuṭbah* on Friday, reading the *khuṭbah* sitting down, embracing each other after the *'Īd* prayers, and preparing *siwa'īn* (sweet noodles) on *'Īd* day, extravagance in greetings and demonstrations of respect, wearing silk clothes, or trousers that covered the ankles, shaving the beard and discussing such subjects as *waḥdah al-wujūd*, *waḥdah al-shuhūd*, predestination, and free will[4]. They condemned as errors scientific theories that were so universally accepted as to be taught—along with convincing, objective proofs of their correctness—in primary and secondary schools, and naturally they acquired an unenviable reputation for rejecting obvious facts and for refusing to apply commonsense in the judgement of any issues.

The *Nadwah al-'Ulamā* was, as we have seen, an attempt to make up for the deficiencies of the Dē'oband syllabus, and at least one sensitive Indian Muslim, Shiblī Nu'mānī, hoped that it would be possible to combine the study of religion and of secular subjects in such a way as to realize the values of both. But his hope was not fulfilled. The idea that a little knowledge of English, history and geography would broaden the mind and create understanding for modern scientific knowledge was itself wrong. Besides, the *'ulamā*

[3] Shāh Ismā'īl Shahīd, *op. cit.*, p. 33 ff., and p. 62.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-8. In the year 1893, a suit was filed at Mirzāpūr by a Ghair Muqallid (i.e. one who does not follow any of the four schools of jurisprudence) against the management of the Jum'ah Masjid for having refused to let him pray in the mosque and ejected him. The reply of the defendants was that the mosque belonged to the Sunnīs, that the Ghair Muqallids had no right to enter the mosque because, by folding their hands high up on the chest and saying *'Āmīn* aloud they had not remained on the path of Islām. *Two Decisions on the Right of the Ahl-i-Hadīs to pray in the same Mosque with the Sunnis.* Panini Office, Allahabad, 1907.

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could not be made to realize the real significance of secular knowledge[5]. Shiblī's idea, however, did not fail to find expression. To some of its founders, and above all to Shaikh Maḥmūdal Ḥasan, the leading personality of Dē'oband, the Jami'ah Millīyah Islāmiyah, established in 1920, was to serve as a means of integrating religious and secular knowledge, and for the first two or three years, the insistence on its religious and conformist character was very pronounced. But the founding of such an institution was itself an admission of the fact that the Indian Muslim community could not establish its intellectual status solely on the basis of the *sharī'ah* as understood by the militant *'ulamā* or the educators of Dē'oband, *Nadwah* and other theological seminaries.

Another point of view, that Indian Muslims could adhere to the *sharī'ah* as well as do all that was needful to acquire full political and social status as a community was represented by Maulwī Karāmat 'Alī in Bengal and Sir Sayyid in north India. In a way this view was endorsed by the *'ulamā* who gave the *fatwā* that India under British rule was not *dār al-ḥarb*. But there was a deep difference of motive. The *'ulamā* were concerned only with the theological aspect of the question, and did not mean to commit themselves any further. They objected to any form of cultural and social assimilation, and even till the first decades of the twentieth century, the more strict among them would wash their hands if they had by chance greeted an Englishman or a Hindū with a handshake. Maulwī 'Abdul Bārī of Firaṇgī Maḥal objected to Mahatmā Gāṇdhī wearing a *dhōtī* that did not cover his knees. The *'ulamā*, quite logically perhaps, regarded the *sharī'ah* as an indivisible whole, not as a body of beliefs, injunctions and prohibitions from which anyone could pick and choose according to his fancy. For Sir Sayyid the issue was of social and economic survival. He believed, as sincerely as any *'ālim* of his day believed in the perfection of the *sharī'ah*, that it was essential to accept the new education, to adopt English clothing and table manners, to cultivate friendly relations with Englishmen, and he presented a view of his *sharī'ah* which not only enabled but enjoined what was otherwise necessary or advantageous. This roused the fury of the *'ulamā*, and created a deep rift between them and the recipients of the new education, who did not possess the attitude of reverence, the sincerity or the courage of Sir Sayyid

[5] The *Nadwah al-'Ulamā* was given a donation of Rs. 50,000 in 1908 for its building, with the promise of a further donation if this amount proved inadequate, by the Dowager Bēgam of Bahāwalpūr State. The second instalment was not given because in the meantime some *'ulamā* went and convinced the Bēgam that the *Nadwah* was spreading unbelief and atheism. M. Ikrām, *Shiblī Nāmah*, Taj Office, Bombay. P. 143.

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and his group. A sentiment became prevalent among the educated that but for Sir Sayyid and his rational outlook, Indian Muslims would have been debarred by the *'ulamā* from the advantages which they had obtained through education and social contacts with Englishmen and the *maulwī*, the man who had studied only theology and Arabic, became an object of ridicule or mild contempt. Sir Sayyid had been called a *kāfir* and nothing happened; nothing happened to the recipient of the new education who had got on in the world. He could say, like Sir Sayyid, that the *maulwī* was not representing the *sharī'ah*. Generally, he had his own view of the *sharī'ah*, for which he considered no authority or knowledge to be necessary; it was enough if he had the feeling of being a Muslim.

But did the number of such individuals, however large, give the Muslim community a status?

Apparently, it did not. But the reasons were complicated. The determination of the status of the Muslim community could not be simplified into cultivating friendly relations with Englishmen, and being regarded by them as socially acceptable and politically reliable.

The British had taken India from the Muslims, the Marhattas and the Sikhs. They had been the cause of the economic ruin of Muslim artisans. They had taken fierce revenge on the Muslims for their participation in the upheaval of 1857-8. They possessed and exercised authority very much as they chose. It may have been politic for the Muslims to lie low for a decade or so, even to establish contacts with the British that would prevent actual or potential 'disloyalty' from being used as a final argument against them. But it was surely more advantageous to join a growing opposition to British rule than to regard this rule as a means of protection and promotion of their interests. This course was not adopted because the Indian Muslims were led to believe that the opposition to British rule was not national but communal in spirit, and it would be to their interest to demand only the rights and the status due to the Muslims as a community. This demand could be fulfilled, if at all, only by the British, because of their discretionary power as rulers. If it was fulfilled, individual Muslims would get their rights—by which was meant the right to government service and to public recognition of their eminence in the Indian Muslim community by appointment or indirect election as chairmen or members of municipal committees, as honorary magistrates or in some other form, the ambition depending on the ability and aptitude of the aspirant and the opportunity available. This was a simplification of issues which was sure to prove all the more disastrous because it appeared reasonable and adequate.

The method of establishing personal relationships inspired by the

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ideal of loyalty and mutual regard as between friends, to which Sir Sayyid had pinned his hopes, could not work because the British administrators, though always making demands that would help them out in minor embarrassments, were less and less able themselves to fulfil demands. The British Government of India, from the Governor-General (later Viceroy)-in-Council to the members of the Imperial Civil Service, consistently worked for a decentralization by law and by convention in order to be able to exercise greater initiative. This led to a gradual expansion of the central and provincial Councils and opened the way for Indianization. On the other hand, the awakening conscience of the British administrators induced them to take interest in the political education and welfare of the people. In any system of political education the will of the majority would have to be considered, and preferential treatment would militate against this principle. In course of time the opportunities for Indians in employment and the achievement of influence and eminence increased, and it was self-evident that ability and merit, not the goodwill of the British administrators concerned, would be the conditions for deriving advantage from the opportunities available.

The majority community, the Hindūs, who appeared to the Muslims to be most favourably placed in respect of employment and influence in the government, had to struggle against a conservatism far stronger than that of the Muslims. There was no scripture to the injunctions of which an appeal could be made against a custom or tradition to which the conscience of an individual or a group objected. While Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd could insist upon and perform the remarriage of widows on the ground that it was a right granted to them by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, and get this right generally recognized, the hideous custom of burning the widow had to be abolished by the British government by law. In the twentieth century also, reformers have had recourse to legislation to abolish child marriage, to give women rights to inheritance and safeguard them against the custom of dowry. But the Hindūs of Bengal, and soon those elsewhere also, took to English education, and one of the reasons for the adoption of English as the medium of instruction was the insistence upon this by the Hindūs of Bengal, particularly of Calcutta[6]. By the time Sir Sayyid began advocating the adoption of

[6] It will be remembered that the Muslims relaxed the hold of Sanskrit by making Hindī and Bengālī the languages of religion and culture, and the English system of education threw Sanskrit even more into the background, though its study was cultivated. The setback to the development of the regional languages because of the adoption of English has now created a very serious situation. The Muslims never abandoned the idea of making Urdū,

the new system of education and the English style of living, the number of Hindūs who had done so was effective if not very large, considering the numerical strength of the community. On the other hand, Swāmī Dayānand Sarasvatī (1824-1883) initiated a movement of reform in the Panjāb and constituted the Ārya Samāj in 1875. Basically, Swāmī Dayānand was a conservative; his ideal was to revive Hinduism in all its pristine purity. He appealed to the Vēdas in almost the same spirit as the Muslim appeals to the Qur'ān; he rejected idol worship, the caste system and much of traditional ritual; he believed in equality, and though their legal status was not improved, he made the education of women almost into a religious duty. The rejection of the caste system enabled him to transform Hinduism into a missionary religion. The Ārya Samāj realized the value of education as a means of influencing both the youth and society, and apart from carrying on an active struggle on two fronts —against the traditionalists among the Hindūs and against the Muslims—it established a large number of schools and colleges in the Panjāb and Uttar Pradēsh. Its missionary efforts among semi-converted groups and its attitude of militancy on all occasions when differences between Hindūs and Muslims assumed the character of conflicts caused serious alarm among the Muslims.

When two or more communities live together, it is natural and justifiable that each one of them should want to know what its rights and duties are in the collective community or body politic. But what kind of a community were the Indian Muslims? They were not immigrants asking for a proper share of rights in the country of their adoption. They were people of the land, with beliefs and customs that had been deeply influenced by their fellow-inhabitants of another faith, but with a catechism which rejected many of the things which would identify them with non-Muslims. It was only after 1858 that they became gradually and painfully aware that they were not only fewer in number compared with the non-Muslims, but a 'minority'; that they could not regard themselves as *the* community in any realistic sense; that their getting a full share of the good things of life was no longer a matter of predestination but of chance;

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which they claimed was the common language, the medium of instruction and placed themselves at a disadvantage by insistence upon its being taught in schools, as a condition for sending their children to school. It is instructive to consider, in this context, a Note submitted to the Government by some leading persons of western U.P. in 1867, arguing in favour of a parallel system of education through the medium of the regional language. (Home Edu. Progs., Sept. 1867, No. 19. National Archives of India). Unfortunately, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who was among those who prepared this Note, soon abandoned his position.

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that they might have been rulers for centuries and set the standards of cultured conversation and behaviour, but now they were backward subjects of a non-Muslim state, and it was others who would judge their present condition and past achievement and apportion credit or discredit. Obviously, the status of the Indian Muslims could not be defined to their satisfaction in terms of law and constitution. What was worse, they became by degrees despondent about any party, the British or the Hindūs, wanting to accord them any status at all.

Orthodoxy, which regarded it as indispensable and inevitable that Muslims should be a distinct community, also laid down that they should take no action as a community, whether in politics or in matters pertaining to the *sharī'ah*, except under the guidance of a leader, or leaders. In Muslim theology this leader had been variously called *Imām* or *Imām-i-'ādil* or *sulṭān*, and was to be the possessor of comparatively the greatest power and resources; in matters of the *sharī'ah*, leadership was the function of those recognized as possessing knowledge, and only a consensus of such persons—of course, subject to the principle of *taqlīd*—could make a decision valid. A community that was obliged by its own scripture to believe in equality and in man being God's vice-regent on earth, had so fettered and bound itself by its own decisions and traditions as to deprive individuals of all initiative and make them depend entirely on their 'leaders'. Seen in this background many features of Indian Muslim social life fall into a pattern. We realize why they hungered for the self-praise which characterized their apologetic literature, why they demanded intensity in the expression of their rudimentary political sentiment, why their hopes ran wild or a deep depression took possession of them, and why the absence of an external stimulus or provocation left them apathetic.

The quality of leadership is largely determined by the followers. Those educated and sensitive Muslims who were affected by the unfortunate situation in which their community found itself had to discover also the means by which the greatest response could be evoked and to use these means as much and as effectively as they could. It is a moot point whether the situation itself or the working of the Indian Muslim mind dictated or prescribed the means to be adopted. But it can be said that till 1919 there was no Muslim leadership that could be definitely identified as representing the common Indian interest. It is true that a speech or two of Sir Sayyid's can be quoted to show that he was not concerned exclusively with the Muslims, that he had Hindū friends, admirers and supporters; that Badruddīn Ṭayyabjī and some other prominent Muslims were with the Congress almost from the very beginning, and

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their number might have increased if the personal and official influence of the British administrators, the fears of the conservative leadership among the Muslims—Sir Sayyid himself among them—and the shortsighted haste of the majority community in demanding to the full its rights as a majority had not turned the scales against them. But either the leadership was unable to adopt any other form for the expression of its ideas or the people themselves were unresponsive; in any case, Islām and the ideals and special interests of the Indian Muslim community seemed to be the only means of establishing an effective relationship between leaders and followers. During the days of the Khilāfat movement, most of the leaders were in a mood of religious exaltation which they invited the generality to share with them, that they might together become not only a well-knit Indian Muslim but an Islāmic community. We do not know what would have happened if Muṣṭafā Kemāl had not burst the bubble of the Khilāfat, but it is clear that the movement gave a completely unrealistic orientation to Indian Muslim political thought and social sentiment.

Among the Indian Muslim leaders many were high-minded and imaginative. But there were also men with more ambition than ability and honesty who exploited and often created situations in order to push themselves forward. They always did more harm than good, as their weapon was the yellow press and their technique consisted in playing upon passions and creating an atmosphere of suspicion. They were generally amenable to some form of bribery, and they compensated for this weakness by accusing of dishonesty and treachery those who came in their way. They dragged the standards of public life down to their own level of abuse and vulgarity and sorely tried the patience and tact of leaders who were capable and sincere.

A third category among the leaders were what might be called the realists, the businessmen, contractors, real property owners, whose ambition did not extend beyond membership of the municipality, the Qaiṣar-i-Hind medal or the title of Khān Bahādur. Such men were found in almost all towns and cities, and though as a rule they preferred to remain in the background where the larger issues of political life were concerned, they wielded considerable local influence. They were men on whom the British administrators relied as their 'eyes and ears', and generally such reliance was justified, the Khān Bahādur being universally regarded as a loyalist who would rather betray the interests of his community than disregard the wishes of the local British officials.

Of these three main types of leaders, the first, because of their sensitiveness, idealism and refinement were always in the weakest

position. They will form the main topic of any study which does not include investigation of a vast mass of the records of the administrative officers and the police along with assessment of ideas and representative literature. But it is very important to bear in mind that the outstanding and well-known political and intellectual leaders were in fact shadowy figures who materialized now and then on the public platform or in the form of a book or poem. The continuing interest of the Indian Muslims was in their local squabbles, and their main concern was the local leadership, which they delighted to criticize but could neither dislodge nor disregard. It was a great event indeed if on any issue leaders of the stature of Maulānā Muḥammad 'Ali carried the day against Khān Bahādurs and self-seeking local demagogues.

The Indian Muslims have not acquired even now the kind of reading habit that promotes thoughtfulness. Books giving useful information regarding the *sharī'ah*, such as Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī's *Bihishtī Zēwar*, books of litanies, *mīlad* and the like may have sold, as also books severely criticized in the press. Editions of the Qur'ān have all along had a good market. But a book dealing with political or social affairs in a balanced way was more likely than not to be neglected. Poets have been blamed for using hyperbolic language, but either prose-writers have shared this characteristic with the poets or the Indian Muslims have so long been turning a deaf ear to any but the extreme statement of a case that the speaker who was not extravagant in the use of adjectives had no chance of being heard. There were traditional terms of condemnation current among the *'ulamā—bid'ah* (innovation), *fisq* (deviation), *kufr*—and an act merely new or unconventional was liable to be magnified into one of open unbelief. On the other hand, the old etiquette required cultured persons to be generous with words of admiration and praise. Both may have helped to encourage and habituate writers and speakers to use superlatives. The lack of means of entertainment, of mixed society in which the presence of well-bred women imposes restraints, also induced people to identify self-expression with the use of passionate and stirring language. The writings of Sir Sayyid and his group, while vigorous, showed care in the choice of words; they were read and criticized, as also criticized without being read, because they represented a tendency of innovation. Maulānā Ḥālī wrote in a chaste, balanced style, but it is doubtful that he would have received much recognition if he had not been a poet and the author of the *Musaddas*. The Muslim public has made the personal relationship of speaker and audience, a fervour of speech that would enable it to feel convinced without having to think, and phrases, epigrams and anecdotes that would make it laugh a condition for popularity

and effectiveness. The virtues that it never learnt to cherish as civic virtues were consistency, perseverence and discipline. This must be borne in mind in any study of Indian Muslim leadership as a social phenomenon.

The apologetics and the emotional religious literature of this period has already been exhaustively studied and very ably analyzed and assessed by Dr W. C. Smith from a point of view which provides a very valid though exacting criterion of judgement[7]. The same task does not need to be attempted here. We have already dealt with Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Maulānā Āzād. A brief study of Maulwi Nadhīr Aḥmad, Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān and Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī will enable us to form an idea of the types of Indian Muslim leadership as well as to study the social significance of events that took place during their lives.

Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad was born in 1833 in the district of Bijnōr, in a poor family. His father, Maulwī Sa'ādat 'Alī, was his first teacher; at the age of nine he was taken for further study to Bijnōr, and five years later to Delhi. Here he was lodged in a Maulwī's house, taught theology, sent out to collect food from the neighbouring houses and made to grind spices[8]. Then, by accident, the Principal of the Delhi College met him, and was so impressed by his knowledge and intelligence that he admitted him to the College and awarded him a scholarship. Nadhīr Aḥmad studied all subjects, but not English. 'My father was one of the most religious men of his age. He told me quite plainly that he would rather see me die or beg in the streets than learn English'. After completing his studies, he was appointed a teacher in the Panjāb in 1854, then transferred to Kānpūr as Deputy-Inspector of Schools. In 1857, he resigned and returned to Delhi. During the disorders he happened to save the life of an Englishwoman, and as a reward was appointed Deputy Inspector of Schools at Allāhābād, where he learnt English and was commissioned first to translate the Income-tax Law and then the Indian Penal Code into Urdū. He was made a taḥṣīldār (revenue officer of a sub-district) and then Deputy Collector. A translation of an English book on astronomy came to the notice of the Prime Minister of Ḥaidarābād, and he was invited to join the service of the state in 1877. He rose to the rank of Member, Board of Revenue,

[7] *Modern Islām in India*. Revised Edition, Victor Gollancz, London, 1946, and M. Ashraf, Lahore, 1946.

[8] The grinding of spices had to be done in Maulwī 'Abdul Khāliq's house and the relentless tyrant who made him do it was the Maulwī's daughter. She hit him on the knuckles if he was slow. Later, the same girl was married to him, and they were very happy together. Naturally, Maulwī Nadhir Aḥmad thought that the *pardah* system did not deprive women of opportunities or rights.

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but then asked for permission to retire, because of some misunderstanding. He settled at Delhi and devoted himself to writing. He was awarded the LL.D. degree by the University of Edinburgh and the M.O.L. by the University of the Panjāb for the distinction he had achieved as a scholar and writer.

Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's life was one of the many examples in which personal gifts, appreciated and rewarded by individual Englishmen, led to what was generally considered a successful career. Since personal experience is regarded as the best evidence by all who claim to have had it, nothing could have shaken Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's conviction that if only the Indian Muslims made themselves worthy of it, the British government and its officers would provide them with opportunities for getting on in the world. The other side of this optimism was the conviction that the Muslims were listless and unaware of the real conditions of their life. This was the view of Sir Sayyid's group, on the fringe of which Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad stood, identifying himself generally with its educational policy, but disagreeing on certain theological issues and with its advocacy of the English style of living. He had all of Sir Sayyid's self-respect, and declined to attend a party given by the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi because a personal invitation had not been sent to him. What makes him typically Indian Muslim was his informality, his humour, his being under the spell, as it were, of the living idiom of Delhi, his wordy speech and writing. His works cover a very wide range of subjects: translations of legal texts, which are masterpieces of accuracy and inventiveness, a translation of the Qur'ān, expositions of the *sharī'ah*, ethics, logic, grammar, astronomy, and novels. Except in the translations of the law-books, the characteristics we have mentioned above are evident everywhere. His novels obviously imply that after having been in India for over seven hundred years, the Muslims had yet to learn that expenditure should not exceed income, that the young should discipline themselves, that wastefulness should be avoided, but they were very popular because the Muslims of his day wanted to be told these elementary things. The novel was a new and effective medium, all the more effective because Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad confined himself to the well-known, everyday facts of life. In his novels and speeches the use of the current idiom was something for which the historian should feel grateful, as it not only conveys ideas but presents, in picturesque and often dramatized form, a whole way of thinking. It made his writing and his speeches very attractive to his contemporaries. But it also necessarily involved a degree of informality which became a fixed habit. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad could not discard his colloquial style even when dealing with elevated subjects. His

translation of the Qur'ān, while it opened the way for readable as well as accurate translations, suffered from the frequent use of colloquialisms, and has been criticized for this reason. The same defect appears in the *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ*, which creates the impression that according to him any Muslim who was not lacking in commonsense and humour should accept the *sharī'ah* and follow it. He was shocked and surprised when he found the Muslims unwilling to forgive his colloquialisms in his book, *Ummahāt al-Ummah*, where he had dealt with the wives of the Prophet in his usual informal manner[9]. He had to withdraw the book from publication, and copies of it were collected and burnt at Kānpūr. There were limits to the willingness of the Indian Muslims to be instructed in an amusing way. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad's attitude towards money also illustrates one of the ingrained characteristics of the Indian Muslim. He believed and preached frugality; he acquired the reputation of being stingy, which he seems to have enjoyed; he openly lent money on interest, because he believed it was permitted. But he lent money without guarantees, and lamented having lost a large sum—about Rs. 300,000/-, according to his own calculation. He could not look after the property he had acquired, and lost on that also. But he went about doing business with the greatest earnestness[10].

Our next subject of study, Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān, was born at Delhi in 1863, in an old and highly respected family of physicians. His father, Ḥakim Maḥmūd Khān, was protected from harm in 1858 by the intercession of the Maharajas of Patiālā, Nābhā and Jhind, whose regiments formed part of the conquering army. During the siege and after the British victory, Ḥakīm Maḥmūd Khān did all that was physically possible to protect and relieve his fellow-citizens, and many who fled from Delhi left all their valuables with him for safe-keeping. Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān's eldest brother, Ḥakīm 'Abdul Majīd Khān, was anxious to save the Yūnānī system of medicine from the wreck, and established a school for teaching Yūnānī and Āyurvēdic medicine. He also began the publication of a journal, the *Akmal al-Akhbār*, and associated himself with the educational movement of Sir Sayyid. Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān studied medicine under his father and brothers, and also acquired a thorough knowledge of Arabic and Persian. He was a poet, an accomplished calligraphist and wrestler, and later, for diversion, played billiards and cards. In 1892, he was appointed physician to Nawwāb Ḥāmid

[9] Ḥāmid Ḥasan Qādirī, *Dāstān-i-Tārīkh-i-Urdū*, L. N. Agarwāl, Āgrā, 1957, pp. 520-21.

[10] This account is based on an article in *Urdū* by Mirzā Farḥatullāh Bēg, *Dāstān-i-Tārīkh-i-Urdū*, by Ḥāmid Ḥasan Qādirī and the writings and speeches of Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad himself.

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'Alī Khān of Rāmpūr, and held that position for nine years. During this period, while he was able to help the Aligarh College and public organizations and associations to obtain donations from the Nawwāb, he also lived a hectic life. He had a heart attack in 1904, just about the time his elder brother, Ḥakīm Wāṣil Khān, died and he succeeded to the responsibilities of the head of his family.

It is difficult for anyone who has not had personal experience of living simultaneously in two worlds to appreciate the achievement of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān in satisfying the standards of two radically different cultures, the aristocratic and the democratic. As personal physician to a Nawwāb he was in a world of affluence, of indulgence, of scorn for the undistinguished multitude and subservience to the great. He had to consider himself completely at the Nawwāb's disposal, and to show that he cherished the privilege of being in the Nawwāb's company. He could never let it appear that anything else in the world was important, when the Nawwāb did not think it to be so. But he did believe many things to be important. He had his old style *maṭab*, or consulting room, where he examined rich and poor patients and prescribed remedies. He wished to raise the status of his Yūnānī and Āyurvēdic medical school to that of a college, equipped to teach along modern lines, and to convince his countrymen and the government that the indigenous systems of medicine should be supported and developed. He was a trustee of the Aligarh College and keenly interested in its future. He was also a member of the governing body of the *Nadwah al-'Ulamā*, and more conscious than most of his countrymen of the need to make the theological seminaries and the *'ulamā* aware of their responsibilities under the new circumstances of life. Aligarh and *Nadwah* were, however, but symbols. The whole Indian Muslim community had to be roused, and as this was a political as well as a social problem, Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān was anxious to perform all the political service he could. But he could never, both in the public interest and because of his own loyal nature, break off his relationships with princes and aristocrats. He did what he thought was right, constantly and openly. His convictions as well as the trend of events made him a determined opponent of British rule, but he remained to the end a trusted friend of the Nawwāb of Rāmpūr, who was himself, of course, as loyal and subservient as could be to the British government. On the other hand, British officials, though they knew his views, had great respect for his integrity, his balanced mind and his straightforwardness, and were sure that an appeal to his goodwill would never fail to evoke a response.

From the moment Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān entered public life, he lived under a great strain. He never spoke aloud, never laughed, never

seemed to be in haste. An impatient young man[11], believing that even the conversation of a public worker and statesman should be according to a precise schedule, would have seen nothing but dilatoriness, evasion, irrelevance and undue regard for persons in Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān's method of doing things. But this would be the verdict of the impatient and the inexperienced. Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān's interests were so wide, the demands made upon him in his different capacities so great that he could fulfil them only if he kept the order of priority a secret, reserving the right to change his schedule and taking the risk of appearing weak and undecided. But he could be very firm on occasions. He forced the Nawwāb of Rāmpūr to make a public apology for having beaten one of his higher officers in public with a cane, although the other officers, who deeply resented the Nawwāb's conduct, were willing to forget about the incident because of habitual subservience[12]. In spite of the Nawwāb's dependence on him, he left the Nawwāb, even though he was ill, in order to attend the marriage of the daughter of his father's barber in Delhi[13]. In 1921, when he was president both of the Congress and the Khilāfat session, he used his presidential powers to rule out of order a motion that the aim of the Khilāfat organization should be complete independence and not *swarāj* (self-government). This motion had been brought forward earlier in the Congress and been rejected. It was tactless to raise the issue again at the Khilāfat Conference, when both the organizations were working in close co-operation. But a hot-headed element at the Conference refused to listen to reason and may have carried the Conference with it if Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān had not been firm.

It is impossible, within the short compass of this book, to give even an outline of Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān's activities. We can only point to some outstanding features of his personality and ideas. One of the most significant, because so very rare among Indian Muslim leaders in a realistic form, was his regard for women. He established a women's section in his Yūnānī and Āyurvēdic College in 1909, and towards the end of his life, in 1926, in as it were his parting message, he drew the attention of the *'ulamā* towards the physical deterioration of Muslim women because of the *pardah* system, which kept them confined to their homes, without a breath of fresh air. Another aspect of his character was his regard for the young. Muslim leaders

[11] Like the author of the present work, who had the privilege of meeting Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān in Europe in 1925. Impatience with the old standards was, unfortunately, a hindrance even when there was possibility of closer association later.

[12] M. 'Abdul Ghaffār, *Ḥayāt-i-Ajmal*. Anjuman Taraqqī Urdū, Aligarh, 1950. Pp. 478-81.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 485.

generally demanded respect and obedience, behaving as if the youth were there for their sake, and should be ordered about; Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān seemed to feel grateful that there were young men responsive to his ideas and ideals, and he obtained in return a deep affection and loyalty. His religion and his culture were not commodities of the political market-place, and he never complained of low offers or close-fisted customers. His belief in Hindū Muslim unity was not a matter of policy, it was a part of his heritage; it was in his blood, and the substance of his everyday life. He was completely broken when he found the two communities moving further apart in spite of his best efforts to bring them together—almost too sensitive to survive among a people who, having been granted a vision of the highest still preferred to remain uncharitable and mean.

Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān was no more representative of the generality of Indian Muslims than the Red Fort is of domestic architecture. He was extraordinary in many ways, but in every way the product of the finest Indian Muslim cultural traditions and ideals. He was loved and honoured, and most of all by those who themselves had high ideals of integrity and refinement. Mahātmā Gāṇdhī trusted him absolutely, and put the whole nation in his charge when about to be imprisoned in 1922. The Hindū Mahāsabhā elected him Chairman of its Reception Committee for its session in Delhi in 1921. But the ordinary man felt him to be remote, because he shared none of the common weaknesses and would never give his sentiments a free rein. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī (1878-1931) was altogether the man for the people, impetuous, dashing, irrepressible, demanding sympathy by laying his heart open, crying and raising laughter, and believing in God and God's mercy with an intensity that made him at times completely irresponsible.

He was born at Rāmpūr in 1879, graduated from Aligarh in 1898 and from Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1902. He received just that type of education which would make an Indian Muslim of his day self-satisfied. It gave the future 'Maulānā' Muḥammad 'Alī the feeling that he was the equal of anybody in the world, of the Viceroy of India and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and that he could chat and joke without diffidence and embarrassment among the high and mighty as well as his intimate friends. He resigned from service in the Barōdā State after having been there for eight years in order to become a journalist, and this as well as his publication of a weekly *The Comrade* (from January, 1911) from Calcutta without any financial resources were acts of great courage. He had already made a name for himself through articles in various British and Indian journals, and was in his own element as the editor of *The Comrade*. His conviction that Muslim assertiveness would teach the

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Hindūs to moderate their claims and make them prone to co-operate with the Muslims for the good of India on a fair and just basis made an immediate appeal to the Muslims; his English, written with ease and confidence, and displaying familiarity with British life and literature impressed them. The initial bias in his favour was not affected by the involved sentences, the constant digressions, the egoistic references to himself, because scattered all over, without any literary design and almost without intention, were witty remarks, epigrams, amusing anecdotes. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī's fund of humour was as inexhaustible as his wordiness.

It is said that high-ranking British officers subscribed to *The Comrade* when it began publication, because they desired to see someone speak up for the Muslims and against the Hindūs. But they were soon undeceived. *The Comrade* aimed at self-expression, it did not matter at whose expense. When the Balkan wars began it had transferred itself to Delhi—now the capital of India instead of Calcutta—and its tone had changed. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī had always been an assertive Muslim; now he became both outwardly and inwardly religious, filled with a deep love for his brother-Muslims everywhere in the world, but specially in those regions which were subjected to attack and annexation by the European powers—Tripoli and Turkey. There were few who openly expressed sympathy for the Turks, fewer still who did so in vigorous English. This, and the Medical Mission—which, however, he could not join—made Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī known among the Young Turks. In his enthusiastic, unrealistic moods, which were frequent enough, he was inclined to regard himself as a link, not only between Indian Muslims and the Turks, but also between the Turks and the rest of the world. He was interned in May, 1915, for an article on *The Choice of the Turks*, and was not released till the last days of 1919. This enforced inactivity made him more deeply religious. He had considerable poetic talent, which combined with his fervour and, let us not forget, the desperate situation in which Turkey found herself after the war, to create in him a feeling of impending martyrdom. However, when he went to England in 1920 to represent the Indian Muslim viewpoint in regard to the peace settlement with Turkey, he was the debonair gentleman, perfectly dressed, dispensing political wisdom, epigrams, jokes and anecdotes to representative British audiences. He impressed everyone except the imperialist newspapers and Mr Lloyd George—the only man who mattered.

On his return to India, Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī threw himself into the Khilāfat and Non-cooperation movements. He was now a figure of national significance. His dynamic personality, his great courage, his irrepressible sense of humour supported him; but he

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was not the type that can contain its religious fervour. He made the Qur'ān, the Prophet, the *sharī'ah* into blatant political arguments. One cannot but admire the self-confidence with which he made fun of the judge and jury at his trial in Karachi in October, 1921; but he had been arrested for causing a resolution to be passed which declared it against the *sharī'ah* of Islām for Muslims to serve in the British army, and his whole defence at the trial was based on the plea that he had done nothing but follow the injunctions of the Qur'ān, which the Queen's proclamation of 1858 entitled him to do. Earlier in the year he had quite unnecessarily created a most embarrassing situation by discussing on the public platform the question under what circumstances he would or would not fight the Afghāns. He seemed to be wanting to forget, as often as he could, the need to be tactful, in order that he might assert with ever greater vehemence the fact that he was a sincere believer in Islām.

It is true that the case of the Indian Muslims had not been fully and impressively stated. On the one side the European powers were bent on destroying the last vestiges of independence in the Middle East, on the other were the Hindū majority who, it seemed to religious-minded and politically conscious Muslims, would not accept the Indian Muslims because they had not thrown Islām overboard. It was a situation in which those who were at all predisposed to hysteria thought it a point of honour to wear Islām on their sleeves, as the only means of asserting and thereby saving themselves. They were only too willing to applaud any Muslim who proclaimed his Islām on the political platform. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī earned the gratitude and admiration of such people, but on sober reflection it will probably appear that he ultimately undermined his own position and damaged the very cause he aspired to serve.

Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī had made the Indian Muslims believe that there was one world of Islām, one vast brotherhood stretching across the world. This view was shared by many others also. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Ali, however, had called for contributions and sacrifices for the cause of the Khilāfat, and the response was enormous. But the Turks abolished the Sultanate and the Khilāfat, and the most enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Islāmic brotherhood did not know how to conceal his mortification except by sending telegrams to Muṣṭafā Kemāl and proposing to appear with a delegation to discuss the question of the Khilāfat with him. Those who had given their all, in terms of sentiment, jewellery and cash to the Khilāfat movement were disillusioned and embittered. There was talk of misuse of funds, the whispering about it even more fatal to enthusiasm than public statements.

But Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī continued to represent the Muslim

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cause. We have mentioned his opposition to the Nehru Report. He opposed the Sārdā Act, which sought to fix the lowest limits for the age of consent for boys and girls at 18 and 14 respectively. The vicious custom of child marriages and their dangerously early consummation was—and still is—followed almost universally by Muslims in rural areas and also by the lower classes in the towns, and has had no appreciable result in promoting morality. Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī could have tried to get the Act so amended as to show that it fulfilled the intentions of the *sharī'ah*, and he was aware that it did[14]. But he joined those who insisted on the Muslims being excluded from the operation of the Act, threatening that 70 million Muslims would be roused into open revolt, because the Act penalized early marriages while the *sharī'ah* had left early and late marriage a matter of choice. The Prophet and his Companions were dragged into the argument as if they were parties to the case, whose conduct had to be justified even at the cost of their honour in a society which sought to save girls from having to bear children at a tender age.

After 1923, when Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī drifted away from Mahātmā Gāṇdhī, he was just the unpredictable leader of a community and willing to get involved in any controversy. He did not lose his dynamism, now irrelevant, or objectively judge his own position. He was one of the persons whom the British government invited to represent the case of the Indian Muslims at the final sessions of the Round Table Conference in 1931. His appeal to the British to give India her freedom or else he would not return alive was no more than a pathetic admission of his failure.

After considering these types of leaders we shall now turn to the generality of the Indian Muslims.

One of the elements in the situation after 1858, the full implications of which became apparent only gradually, was the civil liberty of the individual. The government proclaimed its neutrality in matters of belief and practice of religion; it was concerned only with the rights and duties of citizens under the law. It regarded established custom as overriding religious law, and on this ground upheld the practice, wherever it had existed for a sufficiently long time, of not giving daughters the share of inheritance due to them under the *sharī'ah*. Administrators dealt with Hindūs as Hindūs or Muslims as Muslims, but their recognition as communities possessing political or legal rights was the result of constitutional enactment, and even then the Hindūs were listed for quite a long time as 'Non-Muslims'. The attitude of the graduates of Dē'oband, which we have described above, may have been different if the *Dār al-'Ulūm* had

[14] Afḍal Iqbāl, *Select Writings and Speeches of Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī*. Ashraf, Lahore, 1944, p. 448.

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impressed upon them from the beginning that now it was entirely a matter of choice for the individual Muslim to follow or not to follow the *sharī'ah*, that he was answerable only for breaches of the law of the state, and could appeal for protection to the law-courts and the police if pressure amounting to molestation was used to make him obey what were purely the ordinances of religion. The *sharī'ah* had to be made acceptable through the most appropriate form of persuasion. This was not done. On the other hand, the new education propagated by Sir Sayyid and other leaders elsewhere did not raise the standards of moral judgement or stimulate the study of Islām. It was generally thought that the conception of the *sharī'ah* as presented by the half-baked *'ulamā* was not and could not be the real Islām, and that seemed enough. But ignorance of Islām did not lead to the disintegration of the Indian Muslims as a community. They were saved from this not by themselves but by others, not by their own regenerative power taking new and durable forms but by continuing conflict with others.

We have already described the prolonged struggle of the militant *'ulamā* against the British from their small armed camp on the north-west frontier. We have also mentioned that the *Jam'īyat-i-'Ulamā-i-Hind* joined in the national struggle from 1930 onwards for purely political reasons, the attainment of independence being regarded as the highest common as well as the highest Muslim interest. If Indian Muslims generally had adopted this position, two results would have inevitably followed. The relationship between Hindūs and Muslims would have been established on a sound political and cultural basis, and the Muslims would have been able to define their attitude towards the West, the influences of which were rapidly penetrating their society. But the effective element among the Indian Muslims threw the responsibility of defining the political status of the Indian Muslims upon the British, the country being ultimately partitioned by an Act of the British Parliament and the territorial limits of the partition demarcated by a commission presided over by a British judge. The degree to which the culture of the West was to be accepted and the forms which this acceptance was to take were left altogether to the choice of individuals. The apologists praised the Muslim culture of 'the past', this 'past' meaning at one and the same time the simplicity and moral strength of the original Muslim community, the imperialism of the Banū Umayyah, the sophistication of 'Abbāsī Baghdād, the scholars and the centres of learning as well as those who condemned intellectual speculation and scientific investigation. There were, besides, the apologists of existing Indian Muslim culture, who preached satisfaction on the ground that the Indian Muslims, bad as they

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might be, were still better than the Hindūs and the peoples of the West.

The responsibility for serious thought and study could be shirked because of the conflict with the Hindūs. The reasons for this conflict have been discussed from all points of view. It has been said that it was not really religious, only certain interested persons made it appear so; that it was not really economic, but was given that colour, again by interested parties; that it was not really cultural, for Hindūs and Muslims had lived together in peace and amity for centuries. What was it, then, due to? No satisfactory answer has been given. We have to be content with stating the fact that two communities, not sure themselves of what precisely was meant by their being communities, had to adjust their life and thought to a foreign power ruling over them and to new ideas forcing their way into their minds through a new system of education. Sober thinking had to be done in an atmosphere filled with fears of the unknown. There was a lack of goodwill which could easily be transformed into hostility. The compulsion to establish peace and friendship was felt by the few who were not only politically wise but morally sensitive, and they also were liable to lose their balance when confronted with hardened unreasonableness. The far easier course, and the one immediately rewarding in terms of popularity and influence, was to assume that one party was guilty, or more guilty than the other, and to think and act on that basis. This course provided the best hunting ground for the two inferior types of Muslim leadership we have described above, and to similar types among the Hindūs. Rioting became endemic. Almost every riot was proved, after inquiry, if one was held, to have had three reasons, the belligerence of the Hindū leaders, the belligerence of the Muslim leaders and the instigation of government agents. Whichever of these reasons was given priority, the other two had also to be acknowledged, and as most riots occurred when there appeared to be a likelihood of political understanding between Hindūs and Muslims, the conclusion can be drawn that there was a sinister relationship between the government and the reactionary elements. Every riot was, therefore, an object lesson. Unfortunately, it only served as a provocation for the next riot. As the Muslims generally were more open in their attack or retaliation, larger numbers of them fell into the hands of the police and suffered the penalty of the law.

It is strange that even among those Indian Muslims who regarded the frequent riots as indubitable evidence of the hostility of the Hindūs, there was hardly any urge to build up the strength of the community. If anything was done, it was local and temporary, and was almost always put an end to by the ineptitude or dishonesty of

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the local leadership. Even in such a matter as the reconversion to Hinduism of partially converted families or groups of families, which was of serious concern to all the religious-minded, the action taken was noisy but generally ineffective. The Anjuman Ḥimāyat-i-Islām was founded in 1885, but it was not so active as the Āryā Samāj. So late as 1908, a 'Muslim Rājpūt Conference' was convened at Patiyālā to consider measures for counteracting the missionary activity of the Āryā Samāj, but nothing concrete resulted. Four years later, at the annual conference of the *Nadwah*, Maulānā Shiblī related with tears of shame that, in 1908, he had received a letter from a merchant of Shāhjahānpūr that a Rājpūt family in a neighbouring village was about to give up Islām and adopt Hinduism. He had gone himself, other *'ulamā* had come, tents had been put up at a spot two miles from the village. The *'ulamā* had not the courage to go into the village, although the police were there and no violence was to be feared. The neo-Muslim family begged them to come and remove their doubts; the *'ulamā* said they were prepared for a religious disputation, but would not enter the village. He himself had been willing to go, but he could not walk and no arrangements could be made for conveying him. Ultimately, the neo-Muslim family became Hindūs and the *'ulamā* returned to their homes. About the same time, Maulānā Āzād had written in the *Al-Hilāl*: 'It is a great mistake of the Muslims that they have got involved in the question of less or more numbers, and want to increase their numerical strength. But they do not strengthen their hearts, although Islām considers numbers as of no account'[15]. This attitude, too, was not adopted.

Indian Muslims would not accept the new education because no provision was being made for teaching religion. But early in this century Maulwi Nadhīr Aḥmad mentioned a typical instance where the education department of a state offered permission for religious instruction in its schools before or after school hours if the local Muslim community provided the teacher. The clamour for religious instruction ceased and the teaching was not organized[16]. The theology classes in Muslim schools were not taken seriously, and almost all well-to-do parents preferred to send their children to good schools rather than those in which religious instruction was given.

The atmosphere of religious conflict without effective and creative belief was maintained by provocations and retaliations among the Muslims themselves. We have already given the instance of a Ghair Muqallid getting his right to pray in the same mosque with Sunnī Ḥanafīs recognized by law. Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān referred in 1910 to

[15] M. Ikrām, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-4.
[16] *Al-Ḥuqūq wa'l-Farā'iḍ*, Vol. II, pp. 162-3.

numerous cases, costly to both parties, in which recourse was had to a court of law for judgement in purely religious matters[17]. There was an undercurrent of fear and suspicion in the relationships of the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs, and even as late as the 1930's there was open conflict between them at Lucknow. Trusts were established for the exclusive benefit of members of particular sects. Anyone who wished to collect contributions for a public purpose had to be on his guard against offending sectarian susceptibilities, even to the extent of avoiding mention of names of sectarian opponents to each other.

A symptom of the religious malaise was the birth of the Qādiyānī sect. The founder of this sect, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1839-1908) was a scholar of some repute who suddenly made a claim to being a prophet. He belonged to a middle-class family of landlords which was generally involved in quarrels and litigation. He was of a studious and retiring disposition and does not seem to have been popular with the members of his family. After the death of his father in 1876, he began to participate in disputations with Āryā Samājīs and Christians, both of whom were actively propagating their beliefs. In 1889, he declared himself to be Jesus the Messiah and the Mahdī, whose advent had been foretold. He had, of course, to face considerable and bitter opposition and condemnation, but he succeeded in establishing a community which kept on increasing in numbers and in solidarity. It has been the most active missionary body among the Muslims.

We cannot here examine the prophecies claimed to have been fulfilled in the person and the life of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, but even such facts as that he suffered from vertigo and diabetes, had straight hair, was wheat-coloured and occasionally stammered in his speech were declared to identify him as the Promised Messiah[18]. What makes his influence intelligible to a disinterested observer is the keen interest he took in countering the charges made against Islām and the Prophet by Āryā Samājīs and the Christians and the manner in which he associated the need for a religious revival with the events and the scientific and technical progress of the world. The impact he made can be easily imagined if we compare the hostile but baffled attitude of the *'ulamā* towards scientific inventions with his acceptance of all that had been achieved as a sign that Islām needed a new interpreter. This very acceptance enabled his community to organize itself, assist and be assisted by its members, and set high standards of cleanliness, efficiency and conscientious performance of tasks. But because of his claim to be both Messiah and

[17] M. 'Abdul Ghaffār, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[18] Haḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad, *Ahmadiyyat, or the True Islām*. The American Fazl Mosque, Washington, D.C., 1951, p. 13.

Mahdī—which must have been all the more irritating to the *'ulamā* because he used the same kind of arguments as they did to prove that their opponents were in the wrong—Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad was rejected by the mass of the Muslims, and his movement became one more source of dissension and strife.

It is quite intelligible that in the new circumstances the Indian Muslim community should not have been able to safeguard one of the most precious elements of its cultural heritage, the Urdū language. Urdū was the common language of Hindūs and Muslims at the end of the eighteenth century, and a process of assimilation of Hindī and Urdū was in progress. The British scholars of Fort William College, Calcutta, divided the two on the basis of their linguistic origin, their difference being emphasized at a time when Hindū scriptures were being printed and published in the Persian script. The two languages were studied, taught and patronized separately. In 1873, Hindī was made the language of the Bihar law-courts by administrative order, which had to be repeated in 1874, 1875 and 1880 because of the difficulties in making the change. An order to employ more Hindūs in the educational services was issued at about the same time in the Panjāb. In the last years of the nineteenth century, the Lieutenant-Governor of the U.P. made a move to promote Hindī by introducing it in the administration and the law-courts. Nawwāb Muḥsinul Mulk, one of Sir Sayyid's most outstanding colleagues, abandoning for this purpose the policy of his leader, openly opposed the government on this issue. He also founded the Anjuman Taraqqī Urdū as a department of the Muslim Educational Conference, which had already been holding annual sessions for over twenty years. From the beginning of the century till the partition the Urdū-Hindī controversy became more and more acute.

Probably nothing has hurt the Muslims of north India more than the deliberate and sometimes provocative way in which advantage was taken of the political circumstances and all other possible arguments to oust Urdū and replace it with Hindī. Changes take place in every living language, and the spoken language of Delhi or Lucknow in 1800 would not have been easily intelligible to a citizen of either city in 1900. But the adoption of Hindī became a question of religious and cultural self-assertion, and Urdū was given up in order that the identity and separateness of the Hindū should be emphasized. We have seen in an earlier chapter that all the beliefs and practices of the Hindūs, even untouchability, had been embodied in the common culture during the Mughal period and later. Hindūs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries modified the rigidity of their customs instead of increasing it, but with this modification and the reforms propagated by the Āryā Samāj there

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was also obvious the motive to move as far away as possible from the Muslims culturally. The Muslim reaction to this was to accuse the Hindūs of defection, of disloyalty to the common culture, to make claims on behalf of Urdū which transformed the question of language into a political issue. They did not realize that in this fashion they were inviting defeat.

There has been hardly any Indian Muslim able to speak and write who has not accused his community of indifference or ineptitude in all matters concerning its welfare. All have not been as eloquent as Ḥālī, but they have stated demonstrable facts, so that these allegations came to be accepted as basic truths about the Indian Muslims. In previous chapters on social life we have referred to a lack of economic sense among the Indian Muslims, apart from the trading communities; they were then saved by their possession of political power and the employment available under the government and in the army. But the earning of a livelihood without exploitation, the attainment of excellence in one's particular profession, the performance of professional tasks as a matter of duty were either not included at all or included only as matters of minor importance among the *'amāl-i-ṣāliḥ*, the good works which formed the counterpart of faith (*īmān*). After about a century or more of anarchy in some parts of north India, and a century of the East India Company's administration in others, the Indian Muslims began to expect their community to produce sober, thoughtful, frugal and philanthropic persons capable of facing the new situations. In fact, the community did produce such persons, but they could not impress the imagination when the number of those addicted to socially reprehensible or uneconomic or superstitious habits was incomparably larger. If the apologists who compared contemporary men and circumstances with the 'glorious past' of the Muslim world had turned instead to their immediate past, they would have found that a community whose pattern of culture and munificence had bred large numbers of parasites was transforming itself into a community in which each individual was to be responsible for himself without abandoning altogether his responsibility to assist, if not maintain, the less fortunate members. There was widespread poverty among the Indian Muslims, which was to be traced to changes in political circumstances, to the industrial revolution and to a lack of opportunity for which the individuals subjected to sermons and harangues at conferences could not be held responsible. But poverty was an undeniable fact, and it not only governed private conduct but continuously and seriously endangered the standards of public life. It created suspicions of neglect of duty, of misuse of public funds, of nepotism and other irregularities; and these suspicions were justified

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in a sufficient number of cases to be considered justifiable as a matter of course. What was equally bad, it bred an inordinate respect for men of wealth and position.

As against the self-denunciation of the Indian Muslims, we have statistics of education which show that Muslims were not as unresponsive to the new conditions as they were told they were. Sir Amīr 'Alī and Nawwāb 'Abdul Laṭīf took up the cause of Muslim education and employment in Bengal about the same time as Sir Sayyid in the north, and Maulwī 'Abdul Karīm (1863-1939?) did more to induce the Muslims of Bengal to accept the new education and to persuade the government to appoint Muslim teachers and include Urdū as a subject in the primary and high schools than any single person in north India[19]. The generality of Muslims were not as interested as the religious leadership in the effects of the new education on belief, or as engrossed as the social and political leadership in the question of status, and after 1871 Muslims, though undoubtedly backward, were not really as backward as they were supposed to be. Muslims who did the best they could under the existing circumstances were ignored. It was the well-to-do landlords, successful lawyers, doctors and businessmen and government servants who spoke for the community. These were individuals whose status, profession or service attached them to the British system of government, which did not recognize the community concept of the *sharī'ah*, and they sought such recognition in order to strengthen their position. It was among these individuals that the acceptance or rejection of Western influences was most frequently debated and the need for maintaining moral and cultural standards most often stressed; it was also among them that Western influences were most apparent and Islām and the *sharī'ah* given novel interpretations in practice, if not in theory.

One of the questions most frequently discussed, which is also an indicator of conservatism and change among Indian Muslims, has been that of *pardah*. Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd was very strict about it, in spite of his insistence on daughters and widows being given their rights, and the *'ulamā* have almost all been agreed on its maintenance. There was some justification for this attitude up to a certain time on social grounds. Hindū women belonging to the three upper castes, though not observing *pardah* in the same sense or to the same degree as Muslim women, did not go about freely or unaccompanied by their menfolk. It was only working women of the lowest Hindū castes and courtesans who moved about freely; and men in the streets and bazars would regard as a courtesan any woman who

[19] M. A. A'ẓam, *Life of Maulwi 'Abdul Karīm*. Published by the Author. Calcutta, 1939. Chapters V to X.

did not obviously belong to the working class. It was not possible to control, much less to educate the riff-raff of the towns, and in a way the insistence on *pardah* was due quite as much to the desire to save respectable women from offensive remarks and possible molestation as to the compulsion to obey the *sharī'ah*. But when European women had appeared on the scene, Hindū women had begun to attend educational institutions, the police could take action against bad characters and mixed gatherings were possible to which only those invited could come, a rigid observance of the *pardah* could be demanded only on purely theological grounds. These were weak. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad, when discussing the *pardah*, had to admit that as practised in India, it exceeded the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, whose aim was a chaste and pure life and not the seclusion or segregation of women. But he held strictness to be necessary, and if the *pardah* was an innovation (*bid'ah*) it was, in his view, an innovation for the good, because 'our nature is so rotten'. The *pardah* as prevalent in India was to be regarded as an institution for the protection of chastity; chastity was something that a woman held in trust on behalf of her husband, and though not impossible, it was difficult for a woman to be faithful to her trust without *pardah*[20]. Women did not possess the same intelligence and aptitudes as men, they were by nature foolish and headstrong like the (lower) self and if they were left to themselves by the men, they would get out of control and create a situation difficult to remedy[21].

But Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad was too wide-awake not to know that the situation was getting bad. 'In Islām there have been wives who thought it *kufr* to be displeased with their husbands, whereas now it is considered essential for conjugality for wives not only to remain displeased themselves but to displease their husbands'[22]. On the other hand, there were men who objected to the *pardah* system on the grounds that it deprived women of the right to education and to recreation, that it was a kind of imprisonment for life, that it ruined health and led to the physical deterioration of the race, that it showed distrust of women and, therefore, instigated them to deceive men, that it was the root of poverty, degeneration, ignorance and disgrace of the community[23]. Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad must have felt that there was some justice in this condemnation of the *pardah*, for he says that child marriages should be avoided, that some procedure for enabling young men and women to know each other before marriage should be adopted, and that they should be given

[20] *Al-Huqūq wa'l Farā'iḍ*, Vol. II, pp. 211-3.
[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 216 and 232.
[22] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 239 (note).
[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 209-10.

the right of choice[24]. He evidently realized that women did not want to go on bearing children, and were using means to stop childbirth[25]. Nevertheless he was determined not to yield. 'Women cannot fulfil their functions well unless they stay at home continuously. If this staying at home has transformed itself into the institution of the *pardah*, it means that *pardah* is something women require because of their very nature. That being so, to object to *pardah* is to criticize nature, which (God forbid) is to criticize God'[26].

From the discussions and the criticisms made of the innovators, men and women, who were supposed to be undermining the *sharī'ah* by 'breaking' the *pardah*—to translate the Urdū idiom literally—it would appear that there was something like a mass movement against it. In fact, all that happened was symptomatic or symbolic. But, as Professor Gibb has stated in a recent paper[27], 'The *ummah* (Muslim community) is a community of Will, not of elaborate doctrine', and, therefore, 'there is no heresy greater than acting in a manner to disrupt the *ummah*'. So, if one landlord in a U.P. city who had received an European education took his wife to a mixed party at her insistence or because it was awkward going without her when Englishmen and Hindūs brought their wives, those who were anxious to maintain the *sharī'ah* sincerely thought that the whole pattern of life would be changed. They were all the more sensitive because seeing and touching a woman were traditionally regarded as sexual acts[28]; at mixed parties women went dressed in attractive clothes, and would, it was assumed, arouse the passions of men. Mixed parties of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were extraordinarily dull, formal affairs, and the less formal mixed parties consisted mostly of people who knew each other and came together mostly as relatives. Those who were religious and did not belong to the high social circles in which mixed parties were coming into vogue, but could write with some authority about what was permitted by the *sharī'ah* and what was not, gave free rein to their imagination. They placed in the same category mixed gatherings of respectable and educated persons, mixed education—sometimes even education of girls in girls' colleges—the English club, scandals about which circulated widely whenever any occurred, mixed Indian and English clubs where there was drinking, the disreputable gaiety

[24] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 187-91.
[25] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 186.
[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 215.
[27] '*The Self-Image of Muslim Society*', a paper read at a conference held at New York, October, 1961, under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Near and Middle Eastern Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council.
[28] See, for instance, the Chapter on *Nikāḥ* in the *Fatāwā'-i-'Ālamgīrī*.

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of Bombay and Calcutta, and the fabulous obscenities of the night clubs of London and Paris. This can be construed as lack of understanding and insight or as a result of the starvation of those instincts which find relief in the companionship of man and woman. It certainly indicates complete ignorance of the general conversation and the moral tone of mixed social gatherings of educated people[29].

Where this state of mind prevailed, it was not likely that any concept of purposeful freedom would be developed, and the ways in which women could serve society as well as find personal happiness be seriously considered. Even Dr Iqbāl's poetic genius had nothing to offer as guidance except a sermon to emulate a particular historical example, too revered to be made the subject of discussion, but completely irrelevant to modern life. The latest and most categorical expression of the traditional insistence on *pardah* is Maulānā Maudūdī's book on the subject. It purports to be historical in its approach, but it is historical only in the sense that the immorality which became prevalent in ancient Greece and Rome and is now evident from the reports on delinquency, prostitution and traffic in women published in Western countries is painted in the most lurid colours. It assumes that there was no background to the erotic chapters of the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī or the *Bahāristān* of Jāmī, that the *Alf Lailah*, the *Arabian Nights*, was never written, that there never was any delinquency or prostitution in any Muslim society and that the law permitting cohabitation with slave-girls was never taken advantage of[30]. It assumes that, since the *sharī'ah* has declared that man shall be the pillar of support for woman, nature will provide

[29] In 1906, Maulānā Shiblī met 'Aṭīya Fyzee at Bombay. She belonged to a well-known family, and though very young, shared that family's interest in Islām and the Muslims. She had heard of Maulānā Shiblī as an eminent scholar and writer, and thought it a privilege to meet him and talk to him. Thus began an acquaintance which lasted for some years. If we consider Maulānā Shiblī's unhappy family life, we can realize what an effect the admiration of an educated girl, even if still an adolescent, must have had on him. He completely misunderstood 'Aṭīyah Fyzee's regard for him and began to dream impossible things. Other people—his admirers and critics—have argued with a ridiculous seriousness about his relationship and his correspondence, as if an allegation of misbehaviour had to be proved or disproved. For us it seems one of the rare occasions on which a scholar might have judged the institution of *pardah* in the light of his own experience of the spiritual value of companionship. But Maulānā Shiblī was not brave or sensitive enough to rise to the occasion.

[30] *Pardah*, Maktabah Jamā'at-i-Islāmī-i-Hind, Rāmpūr. On page 268 it is stated that a Muslim man can marry a woman of the *Ahl-i-Kitāb* or keep a(?) slave-girl, because it is permitted by the Qur'ān. Whether the text of the Qur'ān has or has not been correctly interpreted is not discussed, and it follows that in Maulānā Maudūdī's opinion, conjugal life would not be affected, no matter how many Muslims kept how many slave-girls.

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every Muslim man with all the moral, social and physical qualities of manliness. Woman's function is to be wife and mother, and Maulānā Maudūdī insists on this with such vehemence that the example of the *ṣūfī*, Rābi'ah of Baṣrah, seems to cause him embarrassment[31].

However, the discussion of *pardah* as a matter of the *sharī'ah* does not seem to have had much effect on actual practice. Muslim parents who could provide education for their sons were anxious to educate their daughters also, schools and colleges for girls were established, and Maulwī Karāmat Ḥusain of Lucknow almost dedicated himself to women's education. *Pardah* has been given up by women who were themselves sufficiently determined or who got support from their parents and husbands[32]. An eminent and honoured citizen of Lucknow changed his opinion about *pardah* and almost compelled his daughters and daughter-in-law to go out for walks—dressed in simple clothing, of course—and his action excited no comment, though his very eminence made his action into a precedent. On the other hand, the helplessness of wives who had no knowledge or experience of life and could take no interest in the affairs of their husbands has been a continuous source of frustration for the men. There have been many cases of men contracting second marriages because their first wives were quite illiterate or incapable of living in a clean and healthy way. Some men married non-Muslim women in order not to be answerable to anyone for following or not following what were regarded as the injunctions of the *sharī'ah* in their particular circle. The declarations of the *sharī'ah* in books and journals have been more than counteracted by short stories and novels which inculcated a free approach to the problems of relationship between men and women. The disorder during the partition induced many Muslim women to give up the *pardah* in order not to be distinguishable from Hindū women. Theologically the case for *pardah* has not been amended or withdrawn, and the *Jamā'at-ī-Islāmī* has raised its voice against Muslim girls participating in dramatic performances and singing in public. It may go further and object to co-education or even to the education now being given. There do not appear to be at the present time any tendencies in social life which make the maintenance of the restraints of *pardah* a real need, while their abolition offers distinct economic and social advantages.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 229. 'Nothing can prevent a woman from becoming a Rābi'ah Baṣrī'. The implications of the reverence in which this saint has been held are not discussed.

[32] Bēgam Ḥasrat Mōhānī gave up *pardah* in order to be able to do public work. Maulānā Ḥasrat Mōhānī was a poet of recognized eminence and a most courageous leader, though of the second rank.

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There have been changes in the organization of family life which point to the removal of *pardah* as a logical and inevitable change. The general tendency, from the earliest times till about the beginning of this century was to make the family as large a unit as possible. This was a measure of security, and also economically necessary. The rent and produce of land was generally the means of support, and the head of the family disposed of its resources and was supposed to look after all the members and do justice to all. Practice, of course, did not exactly correspond to theory; families broke up into smaller units because they had grown too large, because search for livelihood forced some of their adult members to settle elsewhere or because of discord, but it was very seldom that a unit consisting of husband, wife and children maintained itself separately as a matter of principle. Every new unit tended to collect around itself fragments of the old family, and the custom of cousin marriages or marriages within the *kufw* promoted this kind of agglomeration. Till recently it would not have been easy to find two Muslims in Uttar Pradesh belonging to the same *kufw* who were not even remotely related to each other. The composite family group survived because landlordism was maintained under British rule, but continuous growth of population made it necessary for adult members of all families to search for independent means of livelihood, and though it was considered meritorious for the successful members to support the others in every way possible, residence in the same house or the same town, and maintenance of the family from a common fund had generally to be given up. The female members of a family could not, therefore, continue to be regarded as the common charge of the males; in the smaller unit, the wife had to look after the household because the husband was employed, and the disabilities due to the *pardah* system have been a constant source of difficulty and worry and not infrequently of tension.

The structure of the house changed much sooner than the ideas of comfortable and happy living, though only in the towns and only among those who took to the 'English' style of living. The unit of the eighteenth century house was a room, a covered terrace leading out of the room, called *dālān*, and an open court. The size of these units would depend on the means of the owner, and they would be multiplied to accommodate the family, the desirable condition being that each married male member of the family, who could also be a son-in-law, should have a unit for himself. This composite house had a wall around it if it stood by itself; but there was only one entrance, the size and grandeur of which was an indication of the wealth and position of the master of the house. In the nineteenth century, as the British established their district and provincial administrative

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centres, they formed the nucleus of a new and at first exclusive settlement somewhat removed from the old town or city. The houses here were not enclosed within high walls; privacy was ensured by the closed door and not the locked gate of a walled enclosure. As a composition, the house consisted of drawing-room, bedroom, bathroom, with a variation of the old *dālān*, now called 'verandah'—lit. *barāmdah*, 'what comes out'—on all, or at least three sides. It became the ambition of every government servant, if he had the status and the means, to build a house for himself in the new settlement, called *ṣadr* or civil lines or cantonment, if forces were quartered there. The government, in any case, soon adopted this style for all buildings meant to house government officers, and Muslims in the service who were entitled to government quarters had to live in such houses. Those who built their own houses followed the official pattern. Their women, used to the freedom and privacy of the *dālān* and the enclosed courtyard, generally did not accept the new arrangement, and were loud and vigorous in their complaints. They converted the house into a men's and a women's section and, if at all possible, improvised an enclosure out of any open space facing their part of the house. The new styles of kitchen and bathroom were either not accepted at all or with great reluctance. In the men's part of the house, conflict of ideas was far less in evidence than the desire to follow what was supposed to be the English style in furniture and fittings. As more and more private houses began to be built in the new settlements and the towns to which they were attached, a furniture industry grew up which reproduced English furniture of all forms and varieties, and filled drawing-rooms with every description of junk. By the 1920's it could be said that the Indian Muslims generally were content to live in a fashion which they disliked because it was not their own, and which they could not change to their satisfaction because they had discarded their traditional ideas of elegance and comfort.

We have mentioned in previous chapters on social life the importance attached to 'good' family. The prevailing view in regard to this during the early twentieth century is presented in Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawi's *Bihishtī Zēwar*[33]. It has had very important results. Young men who could claim to be of 'good' family were given preference in opportunities for education, scholarships and service,

[33] Shaikhs, Sayyids, Anṣārīs, 'Alawīs are equals; the Mughals and Pathāns are all one race (*qaum*), and cannot compare with Shaikhs and Sayyids. Weavers, barbers, washermen are not the equals of tailors'. There is also a grading on the basis of whether the father or grandfather was converted to Islām. *Bihishtī Zēwar*, Part IV, pp. 9-10. Nūr Muḥammadī edition, Karachi. Date of publication not given.

and recommendations to and also by the British government officers generally stated that the person recommended belonged to a good or well-known family. This did not mean that any discrimination was practised in the matter of education and employment against persons who could not be certified as belonging to good families. But it did mean that people who did not belong to good families generally did not have the ambition to plan the education of their children, while those who did restricted their ambitions to means of livelihood that were deemed appropriate for their kind. For several decades all well-wishers of the community urged young men to take to business, while on the other hand, the young man who sat in his shop, although he may have earned more, was not given the same status as the petty employee of a court of law or a government office, because the latter possessed some semblance of power and authority. 'Reformers' talked of business because getting service under the government was doubtful, not because of their knowledge of economics. If they had had this knowledge, they would have encouraged young men to undertake productive work. Much harm was done by dissociating—or rather failing to associate—respectability with manual labour[34]. Productive work required manual and technical skill, which could be acquired only through a sufficiently long apprenticeship. Skill was respected in theory, but except in industrial centres like Bombay, Aḥmadābād or Calcutta, a young man of 'good' family who aspired to learn a skill in order to build up a workshop or factory would have been considered to possess queer ambitions. If Muslims had never been concerned with crafts—weaving, shoemaking, metal work, glass manufacture, lock-making, tool-making, etc.—it would be possible to understand and excuse the educationist's and reformer's neglect of those engaged in industry. But they were, in theory, proud of the performance of their craftsmen. It is, therefore, astonishing that the artisan class got no encouragement from the religious or political leaders of the community. The result was that they did not feel the urge to improve their condition and did not enlarge their knowledge or skill through becoming aware of changes taking place in the functional and aesthetic criteria of the goods they produced. Most of the industries and crafts practised by the Muslims that were flourishing fifty or sixty years ago have survived, but on a continuously diminishing scale, and it does not need much investigation to be convinced that families or groups of families

[34] Even an *'ālim* as enlightened as Maulāna 'Ubaidullāh Sindhī objected when he saw the author of the present work digging in his garden. Intellectuals should do intellectual work, he said, and employ labourers to work in the garden. Perhaps he was right, as the condition of the garden showed that the 'intellectual's' efforts were obviously not producing results.

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practising a particular craft or industry have avoided education because education, even where it has been in the hands of the Muslims, has disregarded their needs. Muslim leaders have demanded academic education and the opportunities it provided as the right of their community, but not technical or craft education.

Festivals and celebrations such as *'Īd, Baqr'īd,* or *'Īd al-Azha, Muḥarram, Shab-i-barāt, 'urs* anniversaries that were features of social life during the earlier half of this period remained prominent in this period also. But the sacrifice of bulls and cows on the occasion of *Baqr'īd* led to riots at several places each year. The occurrence of *Muḥarram* and the Hindū festival of *Dasehra* on the same or nearly the same dates has also produced crops of riots. Muslim participation in *Hōlī* and *Divālī,* as well as Hindū participation in *Muḥarram* and the anniversaries of saints was gradually reduced owing to communal tensions.

This review of social life from 1858 to 1960 began with the statement that Muslim life and thought during this period revolved round the question of the status of the Muslim community. The attempts to answer this question have led nowhere, as the partition of the country has only made the Indian Muslims a smaller community than they were. In a state that has declared itself secular, no community should ask for a definition of its status, but only assure itself that its identity as a body holding particular beliefs is respected. However, the idea that Indian culture is a community of cultures and the secular state a community of religious communities is being fostered by the state itself. But the control of the Muslim community over the individuals belonging to it, which had been considerably reduced by the establishment of the British government and the supremacy of its law, has been still further weakened. In spite of the efforts of such groups as the *Jamā'at-i-Islāmī,* it seems that the future of the Muslims in India will depend upon the ability of the individual Muslim to think for himself and arrive at conclusions that will create a new moral and spiritual community.

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CHAPTER XXIV

CONCLUSION

THE purpose of every analysis should be to discover or create a synthesis and it would be legitimate to inquire what conclusions this study has led to. But a synthesis of the different trends and tendencies in the life of a community can itself never be more than a partial statement, which needs to be supplemented by an intuitive apprehension of probabilities that defy precise statement. This book was not written with any preconceived notions and does not prove any theory in regard to the past or the future of the Indian Muslims. Its aim has been to emphasize certain aspects of Indian Muslim thought and life, so as to reveal some of its essential qualities, and thereby to remove, as far as possible, the fallacies and illusions that arise out of an identification of the whole Indian Muslim community with some element of its belief or practice, with some political figures or military or political achievements, with particular social forms and patterns of behaviour, with some historical tendency or present-day fact. Far from attempting a synthesis, this study should rather end with a note of warning that generalizations about the Indian Muslims can only be partial statements of the truth and would, therefore, be misleading.

It would be more useful, perhaps, to remind the reader, and in particular the Indian reader, that a satisfying presentation of Indian history is a task that has not yet been accomplished. Not only are there too many loose ends; it is not yet generally accepted that Indian history, like all human history, has been a complicated process of self-expression and self-realization, that we today are morally and spiritually involved in the strains and stresses, the joys and the sufferings of this process, and that we do not possess the freedom to dissociate ourselves from any of its phases or aspects. The Indian Muslims are judged by the non-Muslims and, vice versa, the non-Muslims by the Muslims, as if the historical record of one party could be separated from the record of the other, and each party was answerable only for itself. That Auraṇgzēb was a Muslim and Shivājī a Hindū is at the back of every historian's mind when he writes of them, and no criterion has been evolved by which they

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could both be judged. In other words, the continuing problems of Indian history—the absence or undependability of any concept of the common interest, of any general realization of the need for unity, not only at the spiritual but at the political and administrative level, of a desire to establish moral and social standards that would be applicable to the people as a whole, and not only to particular communities, castes or individuals—problems that face us today in the forms of localism, regionalism, linguism, communalism, casteism, still await a just and enduring solution, and historians have not acknowledged it to be their function to take the lead in discovering a solution. There is, indeed, less narrow-mindedness. It is realized that children brought up on distorted versions of Indian history cannot later correct their perspective and become fair-minded and tolerant citizens, and sufficient discretion ought to be exercised in presenting their history to them. But an adroit marshalling of selected facts so as to create the maximum of goodwill and self-confidence may easily become an evasion of the truth, and deprive the Indians as a people of the courage to face reality.

This study should have made it clear that the Indian Muslims lived their own life, according to their lights, that everything which might be considered as achievement was a part of the process of their self-expression and self-realization, and that the evils we see in their actions were, like all the evils we generally see in human actions or their results, due to diverse causes, of which the fact of their being Indian Muslims may or may not have been one. The acquisition of power and prestige by the Muslims in India and the loss of it in course of time, the exhaustion or the transformation of the dynamic forces which moulded their life are phenomena observed among other peoples and civilizations, and here again there is little reason to hold that events took a particular course because the Indian Muslims were Indians or Muslims. But we may here, by way of review, consider how the self-expression and self-realization of the Indian Muslims points to processes in the self-expression and the self-realization of the Indian people as a whole.

Every established body of beliefs must, in order to maintain itself, have an orthodox form. Technically, the Muslim state as well as the Muslim community was subject to the *sharī'ah*, which comprehended both doctrine and legal opinion. But we have seen that rulers acted independently in matters of administration, and the laws deduced by theologians from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* were not operative as constitutional, civil or criminal laws. No Indian Muslim state was or aimed at being a theocracy. It was 'Islāmic' only in the sense that the ruler was a Muslim and the ruling party mainly Muslim, the glorifications of court historians notwithstanding; and

there were almost always religious-minded persons or groups who on principle avoided kings and courts as something by nature evil. Examples could be given of rulers who were fanatical, but their fanaticism was a matter of personal disposition, and not a policy commended by the *sharī'ah* of Islām. Auraṇgzēb's decision to levy the *jiziyah*, for instance, may be regarded as a measure necessitated by financial stringency or as an expression of fanaticism, but it is extremely doubtful if it could be justified on grounds of the *sharī'ah*. Unfortunately, Indian historians of today do not have the patience to study even the elements of the *sharī'ah* for themselves and to examine independently statements in regard to Muslim rulers who committed acts of injustice or violence, claiming that they fulfilled the injunctions of the *sharī'ah*. The Indian Muslim states were not secular, but they were also not religious. They were governments of minorities ruling in their own interest; apart from the religious affiliation with the mass of the Muslims they could not even be called communal. The difference, from a sociological point of view, between the minority governments of the Muslims and of the Rājpūts who preceded them was that the ruling minority of the Muslims was not a clan or a caste or a class; it remained a minority but its members kept on changing. If adherence to religious tradition and law is adopted as the criterion, the Rājpūt Hindū state was perhaps more religious than the Indian Muslim. Those who object on any ground to expressions of fanaticism in any form among Indian Muslim rulers or Indian Muslims generally must view this phenomenon as one of the many expressions of fanaticism in Indian history, bearing in mind that aggressiveness can make fanaticism more obvious, but may not be morally much worse or socially more fatal than the condemnation for all time of those regarded as impure or defiled as lower types of human beings. The conflicts within the Indian Muslim community between the orthodox supporters of the system of domination and exclusiveness, the righteous *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs* who yearned for the realization of the true spirit of Islām, and the irregular *ṣūfīs* and mendicant orders who paraded their disregard for all religious conventions are perhaps the most direct pointers to secularism as the balance that should be achieved and maintained.

If the Indian Muslim state is divested of its pseudo-religious guise, the spirit of the political system will appear to be in accord with what is recognized as the national interest today. The country must be under one government, which may delegate other powers but must retain defence, foreign policy, communications as its own responsibility. The safeguarding of the country from foreign invasion by continuous observation of developments in Irān and Central Asia,

the maintenance of strict, central control over the army, the protection of the trade-routes and the exercise of real authority over the provincial governors, so that security and smooth working of the administration was ensured, were the aims of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. The regional units—*ṣūbahs*, provinces or states—did not have the right of secession. A revolution in the means of communication and transport has made it practicable to establish a government that is both national and democratic, but the obstacles to a one-nation concept still remain. They are being removed, no doubt, through political education and the realization of possibilities of external aggression. But at a time when education was not widespread and intercourse was limited by physical difficulties, when the state did not have the means to make its policies understood by the people, unity could be achieved and maintained only through the exercise of force, just as those who did not realize or recognize the value of this unity could express their disagreement only through violent resistance. The statesmanship not only of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, Akbar and Auraṇgzēb but also of Chandragupta Mauryā, Ashōka and Samudragupta becomes meaningless if we cannot discern in their ambitions the same striving for unity which has characterized Indian leadership in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, and which is the basis of our Constitution today.

The religious sentiment of the Indian Muslims was not represented by the official *'ulamā* or the state but by the righteous *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs*. The righteous *'ulamā* maintained reverence for the *sharī'ah* by emphasizing its ethical ideals, and the *ṣūfīs* sought to discover and reveal the personal relationship between God and man. They accepted the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim, but not the policy of exploiting it for political purposes. When there ceased to be rulers who could be expected to uphold the *sharī'ah* and, therefore, to require the services of official *'ulamā* the duty of maintaining the identity of the Muslims as a religious community devolved upon those who studied the *sharī'ah* and were willing and able to offer guidance to the Muslims. We have shown that an effective section of the *'ulamā*, in particular those associated with the *Dār al-'ulūm* of Dē'oband, though conservative in a theological sense, formed the spearhead of the nationalists among the Muslims.

India has now become a secular state, and all communities which have thought it prudent or necessary to find a place for themselves within the nation as religious, cultural and political units have been reviewing their position. In spite of the existence of a Muslim League in the South, there is no evidence of the Indian Muslims desiring to organize their community as a political party. But the feeling that

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as a community they have their beliefs and traditions, that they represent certain moral and social values and have their own way of life is strong, though its manifestations cannot yet be isolated and described. The upsurge of self-consciousness in the majority community, natural and inevitable in a free and democratic atmosphere, has created the fear that it will take advantage of its numerical preponderance to modify the secularism of the state and also reduce the cultural identity of the Muslims to something negligible if not meaningless. There is, for this reason, a growing realization among the Indian Muslims that they must organize the religious education of their children and illiterate adults to counteract what appear to be the anti-Islāmic tendencies of education in government schools as well as the increasing general indifference to religious and moral values. Muslim religious education can only follow the traditional pattern, and it is too much to hope that it will contribute to the search and discovery of those qualities of spiritual experience which confirm and vitalize the belief in the essential unity of all religions. Any other results of the efforts to organize the religious education of the Muslims cannot yet be predicted, but considering the fact that for the last two hundred and fifty years there has been no effective agency for enforcing uniformity of belief, the attitude of the Indian Muslims towards Islām cannot be regarded as depending on any pattern of religious education. It is true that many external forms have been discarded, that many educated Muslims have been affected by the intellectual fashion of minimizing or deriding the idea of conformity as nothing more than the requirement of prudence, and, on the other hand, the temptations to go astray, morally or intellectually, are not greater now than they have been during the last two centuries. The freedom—or the moral chaos—of modern life offers opportunities for the conscience of the individual Indian Muslim to assert itself, not only indirectly and in a limited sense, as among the non-conformist *ṣūfīs* and their adherents, but in the vast field of social life. This self-assertion of the individual conscience will not only be a fulfilment of the secularism of the state, but a means of enabling the Muslim to assert his own title to the heritage of spiritual and moral values which has so far been community property, with individuals debarred from making claims in their own right. The interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, of *'amal-i-ṣāliḥ*, *taqlīd*, *ijtihād*, in fact of all that can be called the directive principles of Islām will now be the task of the individual Muslim. His conclusions will be valid for him only, and he alone will be the judge of the manner in which he has performed his task of interpretation and the purpose which his interpretation could serve.

Will not the right of each Muslim to do as his conscience bids him

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lead to a complete disintegration of the community? The risk is, of course, evident, but there are two tendenices which can prevent the thoughtful Indian Muslim from losing his bearings. There is, first, the primarily social tendency to maintain the traditional pattern of belief by a profession of allegiance; there is, secondly, the belief in one God, which also has a traditional pattern. There is no commitment in this belief in one God to any philosophical definition, to any attitude; there is only a deep sense of personal relationship. The theologian has regarded this as a relationship between the Creator and the created, the Judge and the person called to account for his actions, the Lord whose wrath is to be feared and whose favour is to be earned by obedience to His commands; the mystic has sought personal union with God without reference to His attributes; the mystic who was also a poet transformed the relationship of man and God into friendship, where obedience was doing the Friend's will and belief was yearning for utter immersion in His Person; and, finally, the poet with mystical moods spoke of lover and beloved, of tavern and wine, of cup and cup-bearer, of ecstasy and anguish, fusing the physical symbol with the metaphysical doctrine, so that life itself became an act of obedience, and obedience a search for varieties and intensities of feeling. The Indian Muslim who was not a theologian, mystic or poet, willingly hearkened to all, for Islām is life according to nature, and nature being what it is, there was no reason to fetter conduct with logic and abstract theory. Desire for the comforts of life, for excellence in food and dress and conversation, delight in companionship and the investment of hospitality towards strangers, neighbours and friends with an almost religious quality became standards by which the Indian Muslim appraised himself and was appraised by others. The political conflicts of the last sixty or seventy years have and also have not affected the Indian Muslim tradition of generosity, but it cannot be denied that the spirit of calculation has entered into the picture. It was said by those tainted with this spirit that since the Hindū—by which was meant the politically-minded and, therefore, anti-Muslim, Hindū—was not equally generous in return, the Muslim's generosity, whatever form it might take, was wasted. The propaganda of the Muslim League intensified this feeling, and for a number of years after independence the question of dealing with non-Muslims according to the Islāmic traditions of generosity could have relevance only in the cases of those who were in a position or possessed the means to be generous. They have not been many, but they have enjoyed great prestige.

Though nearly twenty years have elapsed since the partition, there are still persons and political parties which accuse Indian Muslims of not regarding India as their motherland. One evidence of this, which

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is undeniable, is that the process of migration to Pakistan, though numerically insignificant, is still continuing. Another evidence, adduced by those whose patriotism is deeply dyed in religious sentiment, is that the Muslims show no particular reverence for the country, for the sanctity of its mountains and rivers and holy places; all their veneration is for Mecca and Madīnah, which lie outside India. This also is true to the extent that Islām's rejection of every form of idolatry and animism prevents the Indian Muslim from giving a religious colour to his love of his land or any of its features. The Muslim can, and some would say must, accept patriotism and nationalism in so far as they are moral values, but he is enjoined to regard all men as equal and not to distinguish between them on grounds of race or country or complexion. This has caused great embarrassment to the Indian Muslims, and weakened them politically by providing those who wished to keep them opposed to or aloof from the national movement the opportunity to argue that patriotism and nationalism in their prevailing forms were inconsistent with the teachings of Islām. On the other hand, it has to be admitted that the citizen can have a strong sense of moral and civic duty even though he abhors chauvinism and any form of adoration of his motherland. Indian Muslims have loved the places where they were born and brought up, but they have been less influenced by local and regional attachments than other Indians, and now, when localism, casteism, linguism and regionalism are becoming national problems, they can be just Indians in an unqualified sense. Communalism has done them great harm, morally and politically, but even the communalism they have practised tends to create a single, overriding loyalty, which is not modified by other considerations. Therefore, to the degree that their thoughts and feelings are purged of the narrow, unsocial, disintegrative elements of communalism, they will stand out as citizens of the country with only one loyalty—which may be loyalty to God or to man or to the state—to inspire and an unalloyed sense of duty to guide them. Since independence, individual Indian Muslims have felt weak and fearful because their community could not protect or promote their interests, and this was the main cause of migrations to Pakistan in search of employment. But the realization is growing that they must sink or swim, and the number of those who find that swimming is not too difficult if one decides upon it is gradually increasing.

The survival of the Indian Muslims in a culturally recognizable form is generally linked up with Urdū, and Urdū is considered synonymous with the Urdū script. Anyone who, like the author of this work, has spoken and loved Urdū and regarded the graces of conversation and behaviour as synonymous with that language

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cannot be expected to discuss its future with detachment. The advocates of Urdū have claimed that it is the national language, and that Hindūs and Muslims have both contributed to its development. This claim has been rejected; but the reasons for rejection would apply to any language that claimed the same position. The argument in favour of a national language is purely political: a nation must have a national language. But many languages are spoken in India and have been recognized by the Constitution; in fact, the country is now divided into linguistic states. Political policy in the matter of languages cannot be simple and straightforward, and one aim is modified by another. Urdū has been recognized as a language by the Constitution, but is not identified with any region or community. It enjoys some political support only in two or three states. Learning the Urdū script, therefore, is of no advantage to those who are not interested in Urdū literature. The absorption of the Urdū vocabulary into Hindī, wherever both are spoken, would have been a natural process but, very much against the spirit and the directive of the Constitution, the revivalist attitude of the advocates of Hindī has led to a systematic exclusion of Urdū words. However, it is not the Indian Muslims who are opposed to Hindī. The opposition comes primarily from those who are anxious, on the one hand, to promote their regional language by making it the official language of the state government and the medium of instruction in the high schools and universities and, on the other, to prevent being placed at a disadvantage in comparison with the Hindī-speaking in the competitive examinations for the Indian administrative and other services. This again creates the fear that linguistic loyalties will isolate the inhabitants of the various States and increases the reliance on English. There appears to be no way out of this vicious circle; most probably circumstances will decide the fate of Urdū as an inter-regional speech, cherished because of its polish and grace. The Indian Muslims are accepting the decisions of the majority in their respective States and the Union, and hoping for the best.

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