CHAPTER- THREE

THE ADVENT AND SPREAD OF ISLAM IN INDIA

Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) completely changed the intellectual outlook of the people. He (peace be upon him) was born in 571 C.E. in a noble and respectable Quraysh family of Makkah, who traced their descent from Ḥaḍrat ʿĪsāʾī (peace be on him), the son of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be on him), who flourished some two thousand years before the Christian era.

On the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) the expansion of Islam was not stopped. His followers and successors inspired by the doctrine of Islam and carried the banner of Islam to the different parts of the world. They soon became the master of a vast expire comprising Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Persia.1

After the conquest of Persia, the Muslims turned their attention to the east. The Arabs were famous for their trade and they had been coming as traders since pre-Islamic times to the territories of the eastern coast. So it was natural for India, a land of fabulous wealth to attract the notice of the Sons of the desert. During the Khilāfah of Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar (R.A.), the Muslims warriors made an abortive attempt to enter India. In consideration of the dangers and difficulties involved in distant adventures, the Khalīfa stopped further expeditions. During the Khilāfah of ʿAlī (R.A.) and Muʿāwiyya, several expeditions were undertaken none of which resulted in a permanent success. The arms of the Muslims remained in active for the next few years. But with the coming of the Umayyad Khalīfa, Al-Walīd to power, there opened a new chapter in the history of Islam. His famous general, Musā Ibn Nusayr subjugated the whole of North Africa while his lieutenant, Ṭāriq conquered Spain. In the east Qutaybah carried the banner of Islam far into Central Asia. It was at that time circumstances led the Muslims to the Conquest of Sind2 in the eighth century by Muḥammad bin Qāsim.3 He was a born leader and a man of versatile genius. He was a poet, a patriot, a statesman and an accomplished administrator. ‘His tender age, impressive figure, his dauntless courage and noble bravery, his brilliant victories in battles and wise method of administration and lastly, his sudden and tragic end make the story of his short and illustrious life one of the romances of history. He was
strongly against opponents and tender –hearted to his friends. “Muhammad bin Qāsim was one of the great men of all times.” Muslims made their settlements in three towns along the south Indian coast and in Ceylon. The Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar Coast about the end of the seventh century.

The Muslim army marched to Al-Nirun (modern Hyderabad) where Raja Dāhir the king of Sind was defeated and killed and the city was captured. There after other cities in Sind were occupied. After consolidating the Muslim Rule in Sind, the Muslim army crossed over the Punjab and conquered Multan in 713 C.E. in the north, a Muslim army under ‘Abdur Raḥmān b. Muḥammad invaded Kabul. In the South, a Muslim army under Muḥammad bin Qāsim invaded Sind.

The conquest of Sind by Muḥammad bin Qāsim, and the incorporation of that province into the Muslim universal Caliphate, brought the Hindus and Muslims in a relationship of a very different nature, a form of political relationship, which some centuries later extended to the whole of sub-continent.

Islam quickly spread in many parts of the world and the Islamic empire included in its orbit men of various tribes and nationalities. It spread in Western Central Asia, Africa, Spain, India and other parts of the world; it is sometimes supposed that the spread of Islam in India was due to force employed by the conquerors. This view is not correct for there are no instances in history of whole sole persecutions of non-Muslims.

A study of Islam in India in the eighteenth century is inextricably entwined with two strands, both of which are of primary importance. Great controversies, ideological and sectarian, whether over pantheism or Imamate, that shook other parts of the Islamic world, in due course, extended to India. On the other hand the entire question of co-existence of Islam with Hinduism presented a unique feature hardly paralleled in any other part of the world. Islam in India was particularly affected by successive waves of ideas and practices of Sufi thought from the Islamic world.

The earliest Muslims who came to India were traders who reached the coast of Malabar attracted by the profits of trade. The tolerant policy pursued by the Hindu Rajas both on the eastern and western coasts facilitated their task. After the invasions of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī quite a stream of Muslim missionaries passed into India. Nūrūddīn known as Nūr Saudagar came to Gujarat during the reign of Siddha Rājā
In the thirteenth century Sayyid Jalāluddīn of Bukhara (1190-1291 C.E.) settled in Uch and Sind and succeeded in gaining many converts. The most famous of all was Khwāja Muınuddīn Chishtī of Ajmer at whose influence, Islam spread over a wide area in Rajputana and other parts of India. The Sufī Saints of Islam lived among the people and attracted by their piety and spirituality many Hindus after conversion also became their disciples. The pantheistic doctrines of most of the Sufī mystics of India appealed much to the Indian mind and they soon gathered a large following around them. The most famous order was the Chishtiyah which included such men as (Khwājas) Muınuddīn Chishtī, Farīduddīn Shakarganj of Pakpatan, Nizāmuddīn Awliyā of Delhi and Naṣīruddīn Chiragh Delhi and Shaykh Salīm Chishtī of Fatehpur Sikri. These Saints exercised a profound influence on the state and society of their time and their teachings were appreciated by ‘Hindus and Muslims a like. The other notable orders were the Suhrawardī, the Shattārī, the Qādirī and the Naqshbandī which tried to spread the light of the faith among the people in whose midst they lived. Great success was achieved by Sufī Saints in Bengal but in Northern India orthodox Brahmanism made the progress of Islamic missionary activities slow and difficult. To the down-trodden of Hindu Society in Bengal, Islam came as a message of hope and deliverance from the tyranny of the higher castes.

The five daily prayers enjoined upon all Muslims by the beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) constitute a bond of unity which keeps them together and makes them feel as brethren. A person embracing Islam enters a brotherhood which knows no distinctions. Daily contact with Muslims must have brought about a change in outlook and perhaps a great many found no difficulty in changing their religion. It is quite true that these causes operated to spread the faith of Islam in India. These found a ready welcome in Islam which permits the Sweeper and the Prince to worship together without any distinctions of rank and wealth. The most powerful attraction of Islam in India has been its brotherhood which recognized the equality of all its members.

The contact of Hinduism, all other faiths and Islam in this country has produced far-reaching consequences. It has led to a new synthesis of cultures and
faiths. It has influenced the manners, habits and speech of many a great people inhabiting the Northern India.\textsuperscript{13}

It is true to say that Islam came to India through the Arab merchants, Sufi Saints and political conquerors. Leaving aside the earlier Arab invasion of Sind which, although not entirely devoid of results, entered on the western borders of India, the political conquerors of India were not Arabs, but newly converts. So the Islam which came to India was not only already conditioned by non-Arab influences but, what is more, it was confronted in India by a well-established civilization distinctly opposite and much older. After the dust of campaigns had settled down the mutual process of inter influencing began to take effect. While it is difficult to draw an exact balance sheet of this process of give and take it is evident that Islam in India was considerably influenced by its new environment.\textsuperscript{14}

They fused their Islamic doctrine with the culture and philosophy of India and evolved a new line of advance, which brought in hundreds and thousands of non-Muslims especially of the depressed orders, whose social status was such that they looked on the new faith as a great blessing from Heaven.

Summing up the following appears to be the more important causes for the spread of Islam in India.

- The prevalent caste system which, though organized with the best of intentions, had degenerated and had become unbearable to the low castes. By adopting Islam, a member of the lowest caste became entitled to equal status with those belonging to the ruling classes. He could intermarry and could expect promotion to the highest temporal and spiritual ranks in the community.

- Economic condition of the masses.

- Ignorance of their religion on the part of the masses.

- Occasional persecution of non-Muslims by nobles, generals and rulers.

- Encouragement given by the granting of appointments and offices or the remission of punishments.

- Missionary activity on the part of Sufi thinkers.\textsuperscript{15}
Causes of Conversion and Reversion

In the peaceful work of traders and missionaries, there were several other factors that helped the Spread of Islam in India. The reversion to Islam of over one-fourth of the Sub-continent’s population is due to a number of causes. To begin with, Islam Spread more rapidly in those areas where Buddhism had lingered on until the time of its arrival, as in some north-western and eastern parts of the peninsula. On the Indian coasts proselytization by Muslim traders and settlers was not regarded as a serious challenge by the Hindu Rājās, who imposed no restrictions on reversions to Islam which were in those areas. Brahmanical Hinduism offered a much more solid resistance to the spread of Islam.16

Message of Islam Imparted by Muḥammad bin Qāsim

After having conquered the capital of Sind in 93 Hijrah, the commander, Muḥammad bin Qāsim, sent massage to lords, rulers, ministers and dignitaries and even to general public inviting them to embrace Islam. He succeeded in making many leaders and large communities of native Sind, particularly the Buddhists enter into Islam, thanks to the just teachings of Islam and the humane qualities of that young commander whom Allah glorified despite his young age by selecting for the spread of Islam. It is certain that the majority of them embraced Islam after thorough scrutiny of it and due to a deep conviction. Because, they found in Islam and in Arabs, admirable qualities, and wanted to embrace this right religion, to live like Arab free in their religion, honored in their life. These people compared the teachings of Islam with the teachings of their earlier faiths from social, moral and economic points of view and found in Islam sublime values and just provision for the wellbeing of the humanity, apart from Islam’s call to worship of Allah. All this inspired them to embrace Islam on their own accord, as had happened, earlier, in other countries.17

In Siostan (city of Sind), a great part of Sind, a delegation of people of “Channah” came, and offered allegiance to Arabs. After a while, all of these people embraced Islam. They were formerly Buddhists. They are considered the first large group of Buddhists who embraced Islam during the days of victories, after having studied the teachings of Islam.18
The early history of Sufi Movement in India is most obscure but we may safely assume that Muslims with strong leaning towards Sufi thought were working in this country from the time of Islam’s earliest contact with it. Historians tell us that it was by way of three open doors- the sea, the land route leading Persia into Sind, and Khyber pass- that Islam entered India. Through these same doors there also must have come Sufis and wandering Darwishes, following the steps of peaceful Arab traders and military commanders.19

The writings of Muslim historians and Arab travellers show that Islam first appeared early in South India, on the Malabar coast, chiefly through the influence of Arab traders, who in most cases were also preachers of their new faith. Other channels of influence in those early days were Sufi Saints, who, as ever, were noted for their wandering life.20

Through India’s second gateway- which leads from Mesopotamia and South Persia through Baluchistan, south of the mountains of Makran into Sind- Islam made very early contact with India. But no Muslim colony resulted through the entrance made by this gateway until Sind was invaded by Muḥammad  bin Qāsim.

The third- the Khyber pass- through which Turk, Mongol and Afghan forces entered into India, proved to be the main entrance for Muslim ascetics and wandering Darwishes.

Thus, long before the Muslim occupation of any part of this country, Islam came into contact with Indian thought, and was, to some extent, definitely influenced by it, especially in its Sufi doctrines and practices.21

Early History of Sufi Movement in India:

Muslim Sufi Saints of Arabia Persia and Central Asia arrived India in the very early Parts of History. They followed the Muslim Conquerors and traders and started their missionary work of Propagating Islam among the Indian masses. In the beginning these Sufi Saints had their individual identities and were not organized into various Sufi orders. They were responsible for converting a large number of Indian non-Muslims to Islam.
Mappillas of the South Coast were reverted to Islam by the disciples of Mālik bin Dinār (d. 744), Dudwalas and Pinjaras of Gujrat by Al-Hallāj (d. 921), Labbes of Trichinopoly by Nithār Shāh (d. 1039), Memons of Kuchh by Yūsuf al- dīn-Sindi, the Da udpotas of Sind and Baluchistan by the Qaramite missionaries of Sind, the Bohras of Gujrat by Ismā‘īlī missionaries like Nūr Saudagar. The tomb of Imām Naṣīruddīn at Jullundur bears the year of his death as 945 C.E. Similarity a tomb of another Sufi named at Khadar reported to be existing in Dacca. Al-Khadar died in 951 C.E., In 975 C.E. Abu Išḥāq of Gazrūn appointed Ṣaif ud-dīn Gazrūnī (962-1007), a young boy of seventeen year as his Khalīfah and asked him to go to India for the spread of his own creed. He came to Ismā‘īlī Kingdom of Multan and settled at Uch. He remained there till his death in 1007 C.E. Another Sufi was Sayyid Ismā‘īl, who belonged to a noble Sayyid family of Bukhara. He reached India about the year 1005 C.E. and settled at Lahore under Hindu rule. Shāh Sultān Rūmī reached India in the Second half of the eleventh century, and settled in Bengal with his religious preceptor Sayyid Shāh Surkh in the year 445 A.H/ 1053 C.E. (and Old Persian document, executed in the year 1082. A.H./1671 C.E. has revealed the name of Shāh Sultān Rūmī.) this Sufi Saint with his wonderful miraculous power, baffled the Raja on his plots, who afterwards was obligated to accept Islam and dedicate the whole village to the revered memory of the Sufi Saint and his future spiritual successors. Another important early Sufi Saint was Shaykh ‘Alī bin ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī commonly known as Dātā Ganj Bakhsh Lahori, the celebrated author of Kashful Mahjūb, who, after visiting many Muslim counties reached India in the latter part of his life and settled at Lahore where he died in 465 A.H/1072 C.E. Al-Hujwīrī is reported to have converted Raia Raju a Hindu general of the Ghazanawids to Islam. Yūsuf Gardezī worked in Multan and died there in 1152. C.E. some other early Sufis in India were, Mīr Ḥusayn Zanjārī, Aḥmad Tokhata Lahori (d. 1205 C.E.), Ya‘qūb Ṣadar Dīwān Lahori (d. 1208 C.E.), and ‘Aẓīzuddīn Makkī Lahori (d. 1215 C.E.), Sayyid Aḥmad Iliyās Lakhi Dātā or Sakhī Sarwar of Multan, died in 1181 C.E. at Shahkot near Multan, Bābā Ādam Shahīd reached India and settled in Bengal in the reign of Raja Balla Sena, with whom he fought for the cause of Islam and courted martyrdom in 1119 C.E. He was buried in a village ‘Abdullah Pur in Bikrampur, Dacca. 22

The early Sufi Saints who came to India and permanently settled here had lived with the common people and propagated the laws of Islam. It is largely due to
their missionary zeal that Islam in the early centuries in India had flourished with great success.

It is true to say that since 13th century C.E. Sufis started organizing themselves into various orders like Chishtiyyah, Suhrawardiyyah, Qādiriyah and Naqshbandiyyah etc. a brief history of the said orders is discussed below:

In India Sufi Saints were regarded as responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people; and considered them entrusted with spiritual government, parallel to the political government exercised by the sultans and their Amirs. The two dominant Sufi Silsilas (orders) under the sultanate were the Chishti and the Suhrawardī, both of these declined during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Two other orders raised in prominence during the Mughal period, the Naqshbandī and Qādirī.

The Sufis claim that their doctrines are derived solely from the Qur’ān and the Traditions, but a closer examination of Sufi thought reveals that several extraneous influences have also been probably at work in its development.23

This led to a chequered pattern of relationships between the Sufis and the Sultans and made the former suspect under the Khaljīs. Matters came to a head under the Tughluqs when Muḥammad Ibn- Tughluq humiliated and dispersed the Chishti Sufis. Under the Sultanate there was also considerable rivalry between the ‘Ulamā and the Sufis, focussed most often on the question of listening to music (Sama). The attitude of the former changed in the seventeenth century when there was a reconciliation of the religious law (shari‘ah) and the mystic path (Tariqah) the traditionist, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Ḥaq Dihlawī, had been initiated into several mystic orders; and Mullah Nizamuddīn, the compiler of the famous Nizāmiyyah syllabus, had for his preceptor, ‘Abdur Razzāq of Bansa, a mystic who was inferior to him in scholarship.24

The Four Main Sufi Orders

Of all Sufi orders only four, viz. the Chishtiyyah, the Qādiriyyah, the Suhrawardiyya and the Naqshbandiyya, established in India as orders of sufficient importance.25

Chishtiyyah Order: Some Chishtīs trace their origin to Ḥasan al-Basrī. Actually the order derives its name from Chisht, a village near Herat where the founder of the order, Khwāja Abu-Iṣḥāq resided for some time in the twelfth century. It was
introduced into India by Khwāja Mu‘īnuddīn Sanjarī (d.1236), who was a disciple of Khwāja ‘Uthmān Harwanī and is claimed to have met the founders of the Qādirī, the Kubrawī and the Suhrwardī orders during his extensive wanderings. He arrived in India shortly before the conquests of Muḥammad Ibn-Sam Ghuri and chose Ajmer, in the very heart of war-like Hindu Rajput territory, as the location for his hospice. On the whole he was tolerated there, but it is probable that his missionary activity flourished only after the Muslim conquest. Two other Chishtī centres were established by his disciples; at Delhi by Khwāja Qutubuddīn Bakhtiyar Kākī (d.1236) and at Nagor by Ḥamīduddīn. The former was closer to Islamic culture in general, while the latter adopted itself to some extent to rural Hindu ways of life, including vegetarianism. Another centre, with an austere ascetic discipline, was establish at Ajodhan by Kākī’s disciple, Farīuddīn, hagiographically known as Ganj-i- Shakar (1175-1265 C.E.) One of his disciples, ‘Alī Ibn-Aḥmad Ṣabir, founded the Sābiriyyah Sub-Order.26

The Chishtī order believed in the doctrine of ontological monism (Wahdat al-Wujud) which explains the influence on it of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s almost pantheistic ideas. Its mystical practices were the same as those of other orders, and included liturgy (Dhikr), regulation of the breath, which was probably an Indian influence, concentrated séance (Murāqaba) and an Indian practice, namely, secluded worship (Chilla) for forty days.27

**Suhrwardiyah Order:** The Suhrwardiyah order was founded by Shaykh Najībuddīn-‘Abd-al-Qāhir Suhrwardī (d.1169), and developed by his nephew, Shihībuddīn Suhrwardī (d.1234), in Iraq. A number of his disciples took refuge in India from disturbed conditions in Persia and Iraq, and one of them, an Indian, Bahāuddīn Zakariyya, established the order in Multan in the thirteenth century. Another, Jalāluddīn Tabrīzī introduced the order in Bengal.

The Uch branch of the Suhrwardī order was organized by Sayyid Jalāluddīn Bukhārī, generally known as Makhdīm-i-Jahāniyan, who combined other-worldliness and good relations with the Tughluq Sultans.28

The Indian Suhrwardīs were staunch Hanafis and stressed on the importance of ritual prayers.29
Qādiriyyah Order: This order, the most widespread in the subcontinent in modern times, was found in Iraq by a Ḥanbalī mystic, Shaykh ʿAbd-al-Qādir al-Jilānī (1077-1166 C.E). It was first introduced into India by Muḥammad Ghawth, who established a hospice at Uch in 1482. The Qādirīs were generally tolerant of the non-Muslims, and this attitude must have been one of the formative influences on the syncretistic thinking of Dārā Shikōh. The order suffered a temporary eclipse under Aurangzeb, but it remained on the whole the most popular. Indian Muslims hold its founder, Shaykh al-Jilānī al-Baghdādī, in great esteem and, because of his tomb, regard Baghdad as one of their holy cities. The order adheres strictly to the tenets of Sharīʿah.30

Naqshbandiyya Order: The Naqshbandī is the most outstanding of the Sufi Orders in India. It originated in Central Asia and was at the beginning influenced by the certain Mahayana Buddhist features although it was a Sunni movement aiming at the integration of external ritual with inner spirituality. Its foundation is attributed to Khwāja ʿĀbdul Khāliq Gajdwānī. It was developed by Bahāuddīn. Apocryphally it traced its discipline through Abū Yazīd Bīstāmī to the first orthodox Caliph, Ḥaḍrat Abū-Bakr (R.A.). The Naqshbandī received the patronage of Bābur, which may have helped the establishment of the order in India by Muḥammad Bāqī Billah (1563-1603) and fully developed by the great Indian Naqshbandī mystic, Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, in the seventeenth century.31

In the fourteenth century India it can be found that the Chishtiyyah order was represented by its branches under the name of Nizāmiyyah and Sābiriyyah, and both these sub-orders had a number of saintly men known for their spirituality and piety. Yet, of a fact, the century belonged to the Shattāriyyah order which could be deemed to have taken charge of the spirituality realm from the Chishtīyāhs and won over the whole Country.32

This was the religious and spiritual atmosphere prevailing in the World of Islam, particularly in India, where mystic guides belonging to different Sufi orders and with varying levels of spiritual attainments had established their own centers of spiritual guidance for the people. The commonality as well as the elite which were deeply religious usually attached themselves to one or the other of these teachers of spiritual truth.33
Beginning of the Propagation of Islam in the Southern Coasts of India by Arab Traders

It is true to say that, the propagation of Islam in the Indian sub-continent, started along the South-Indian coasts, through Arab traders in early *Hijrah* years. Later, it was propagated in Sind during the conquests by Muslim Arabs.

Islam made a considerable impact on the social life of the Arabs. Trade relations between Arabs and natives of South-Indian coasts existed since centuries before Islam. Arab families and communities lived on these coasts and practiced trade between Arab countries and India.\(^{34}\)

The Arabs of those regions, after having entered in Islam, and their intellectual, social and economic conditions have also been changed, started paying great attention to the religious aspects of Islam.\(^{35}\) In the 5\(^{th}\) century *Hijrah*, it became easy to educate Muslims and bring large number of non-Muslims into the fold of Islam. Thus, the service rendered by these Arab traders and Arab communities should be viewed as one of the greatest boon to those who were blessed by the light of Islam.\(^{36}\)

The Spread of Islam in South India

All through this period the north was the leader in culture, for there all the scriptures were written, and most of the heterodox faiths, Buddhism and Jainism, philosophical schools and sects arose. But after the eighth century a change occurred; the north lost its leadership and the initiative passed to the south. It was there in the south that Islam first came into contact with Hinduism and leavened the growing mass of Hindu thought.\(^{37}\)

The first advent of Islam in south India dates as far back as the eighth century, when a band of refugees, to whom the *Mappillas* trace their descent, came from ‘Iraq’ and settled in the century. The trade in spices, ivory, gems, etc. between India and Europe, which for many hundred years was conducted by the Arabs and Persians, caused a continual stream of Muhammadan influence to flow in upon the west coast of southern India. Along with the things and constant influx of foreigners, there resulted a mixed population, half Hindu and half Arab or Persian, in the trading centres along the coast. Very friendly relations appear to have existed between these Muslim traders and the Hindu rulers, who extended to
them their protection and patronage in consideration of the increased commercial activity and consequent prosperity of the country, and no obstacles were placed in the way of proselytising.  

It was during this period of strenuous activity that the foundations of later religious development in the south were laid. The Siva and Vaisnava saints combined to wean the people from their allegiance to Buddhism and Jainism to worship Siva and Vishnu. They sought to attain their aim by making an appeal to the happiness of dwelling in the presence of god and of seeking of his grace. Their poems were all in the language of the people, and in this as in other matters they were indebted deeply to the religions which they attempted to supplant. For they took over from Buddhism its ‘devotionalism’ its sense of the transitoriness of the world, its conceptions of human worthlessness, its suppression of desires and asceticism as also its rituals, the worship of idols and lingams, temples, pilgrimages, fasts and monastic rules and its idea of the spiritual equality of all castes; from Jainism they took its ethical tone and its respect for animal life.

The distance which the Indian mind has travelled from the sober moderate, contemplative emotionalism of the north and the fervent ardour and explosive passion of the religion of Bhakti, of the south, is great.

It is necessary to repeat that most of the elements in the southern Schools of devotion and philosophy, taken singly, were derived from ancient systems; but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to the Muslim faith and therefore make the arguments for Islamic influence probable. The parallels between the Indian systems developed in the south by Sankara and his successors and the schools of Muslim theology and mysticism are startling in their similitudes. Both systems of thought appear to have undergone an evolution which ran on similar lines. The Indian mind starting with suit and the Muslim with the Qur’ān, both enjoining a religion of action, passed the stage of rationalisation to devotional and emotional religion.

The traditionally account of the introduction of Islam into Malabar, as given by historians of the sixteenth century, represents the first missionaries to have been a party of pilgrims on their way to visit the foot-prints of Prophet Ādam in Ceylon; on their arrival at Kranganore the Raja sent for them and the
leader of the party, Shaykh Sharaf b Malik, and his nephew, Mālik bin Ḥabīb, took the opportunity of expounding to him the faith of Islam and the mission of Prophet, (peace be upon him) “and God caused the truth of the Prophet’s teaching to enter into the king’s heart and he believed therein; and his heart became filled with love for the Prophet’s Companions [and told them to] come back to him again on their return from their Pilgrimage to Adam’s foot-print.”

Muslims in southern India, ascribe their conversion to the preaching of missionaries whose tombs are held in veneration by them to the present day. The most famous of these was Sayyid Nithār Shāh (A.D.969-1039) who after many wanderings in Arabia, Persia and northern India, settled down in Trichinopoly, where he spent the remaining years of his life in prayer and works of charity, and converted a large number of Hindus to the faith of Islam; his tomb is much resorted to as a place of Pilgrimage and the Muslims renamed Trichinopoly as Nitharnagar, after the name of their Sufi Saint. Sayyid Ibrāhīm Shahīd (said to have been born about the middle of the twelfth century), whose tomb is at Ervadi, was a militant hero who led an expedition into the Pandyan kingdom, occupied the country for about twelve years, but was at length slain; his son’s life was, however, spread in consideration of the beneficent rule of his father, and a grant of land given to him, which his descendants enjoy till the present day. The latest of these Sufi Saints, Shāh al-Ḥamīd (1532-1600), who was born at Manipur in northern India, and spent most of his life in visiting the holy shrines of Islam and in missionary tours chiefly throughout southern India; he finally settled in Nagore, where the descendants of his adopted son are still in charge of his tomb.

It was most probably from Malabar that Islam crossed over to the Laccadive and Maldives islands, the population of which is now entirely Muslim. The inhabitants of these islands owed their conversion to the Arab and Persian merchants, who established themselves in the country, intermarrying with the natives, and thus smoothing the way for the work of active proselytising. The date of conversion of the first Muslim Sultan of the Maldives Islands, Aḥmad Shanurazah, has been conjectured to have occurred about A.D. 1200, but is very possible that the Muslim merchants had introduced their religion into the Island as much undoubtedly have been a gradual one.
Certain other characteristics of south Indian thought from the ninth century onwards, however, strongly point to Islamic influence. There are the increasing emphasis on monotheism, emotional worship, self-surrender (prapatti) and adoration of the teacher (guru bhakti) and in addition to them laxity in the rigours of the caste system, and indifference to mere ritual words.45

Introduction of Islam into the neighbouring Laccadive Islands is attributed to an Arab preacher; known to the islanders by the name of Mumba Mulyaka; his tomb is still shown at and Roth and as the present Qāḍī of that place claims to be twenty-six in Descent from him, he probably reached these islands sometime in the twelfth century.46

The appearance of new ideas and the emphasizing of certain old ones in southern India from the ninth to the fourteenth century are rather peculiar. Such things did not happen in the north, for all, the early medieval reformers belonged to the south. If one of the reasons was not the influence of Islam, steadily and increasingly exerted during this very period and in this very region till it was suddenly eliminated by the advent of the Europeans, it would be difficult to account for the phenomenon, still more so considering that the reforming shears were applied to the very parts anathematised by Islam, and that the new acquisitions were the very features which most prominently marked that religion.47
Reference


9  Muhammad Umar, *Islam in Northern India (During the 18th Century)*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher PVT.LTD. 1993, p.1.


18  Ibid., p. 11.
19  John A Subhan, Sufism its Saints and Shrines, Cosmo publication for Genesis publishing PVT.LTD. Ansari road Daryaganj, New Delhi. 2011, p. 119.
20  Ibid., p. 119.
21  Ibid., p. 120.
22  Dr. Muhammad Ismail, Sufi Movement and Sufi Literature in India during the 17th century, Published by Dept. of Islamic Studies A.M.U., Aligarh, 2008, pp. 23, 24, 25. : Dr.Muhammad Ismail, Hagiology of Sufi Saints and the Spread of Islam in South Asia, Jnanada Prakashan (P&D) Ansari road, Daryaganj, New Delhi, ed. 2010, p. 66-67.
26  Dr. Muhammad Ismail, Op. cit., p. 82.
27  Ibid., p. 38.
29  Ibid., p. 40.
30  Ibid., p. 42. ; Dr. Muhammad Ismail, Op. cit., p. 27.
33  Ibid., p. 24.
36  Ibid., p. 8.
40  Ibid., p. 84.
41  Ibid., p. 87.
42  Ibid., p. 88.
44  Ibid., pp. 267