CHAPTER I

A short historical, social and religious background of the age of Hazrat Amir Khusrau.

Before we start to assess the importance of Amir Khusrau's life and works, it is desirable that we should evaluate the importance of his age both historically and socially. The all-embracing personality of Amir Khusrau appeared on the scene of Indian History that was a sort of bridge between the past and the present, of those days. On various accounts, India was passing through political, social and economical changes. New thoughts and new ways of life and religious convictions were coming to surface.

Mutual rivalry, court intrigues and wranglings of heart had kept the ruling monarchs uneasy. There was a very little distance between the throne and the grave. With the spread of unrest and its arrest depended the fate of the ruling kings. Whenever ease and luxury made the rulers roll on cusion

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bed, innocent people were to face the horrible scene of massacre.

The North-West frontier was a hunting ground for the blood thirsty Mongols, who came like a storm and spread holocaust and pillage in the vicinity of the Punjab and Delhi. They plundered the regions of the Mawati and uprooted their settlement. Finding no ways out the peaceful Mawaties made good of their losses by making in roads towards Delhi. Thus conception of centralisation and decentralisation of the central power of Delhi was regularly at stake. The struggle for power was the rule of the day.

The Sultan of Delhi was trying to bring more and more area under his control. But the native rulers, the Nawabs and the Rajas were asserting whole heartedly for their independence. The religious Ulama were passively obedient and loyal to the Central Government. The saints and the religious precepters were busy in elevating the spiritual, ethical and
and human values of life. And thereby they ruled over the hearts of the masses. The Muslim usurers of Multan were in no way better than those of the Hindus. The fluctuation of prices in the commodity was at the wish of the capitalist and hoarders; adultration and the practice of short weight were common. Alauddin Khilji's measure to control prices were directed to that end.

The immigrants of Turkey who served in the court and army, found themselves somewhat isolated in an alien land. They had only two alternatives: either they should identify themselves wholly with the Indian culture and absorb themselves in the main stream or, in the fit of their pride and egoism, they should remain aloof from the main stream and call themselves Shirazi, Samarquandi and Bukhari, and thus confine themselves to their own environments.

A person was valued on the basis of his birth at the time when Khusrau lived. The famous historian Barani and generally the Ulamas of that
time have frequently attributed all the virtues to the high born people and every vice to the low borns. Khusrau did not believe in this philosophy. He believed in the social equality of men. While the Ulamas, to please the rulers of the time, danced to their tunes, Khusrau says in his verses that man is to be judged on the basis of his devotion to and the performance of his duties. He had high regards for the artisans and manual labourers who earned their bread with the sweat of their brows. According to Khusrau, any person was noble if he was sincere and faithful to his profession, whatever his religion might be.

Petty labourers and shopkeepers after their whole days toil enjoy sound sleep at night, but those who are in service of a king or noble pass their lives standing on feet and still they call it a glorious job. It is strange if you call it happiness, says Khusrau. Khawja Nizamuddin Aulia, the spiritual guide of Amir Khusrau, taught him to love those who work hard for lawful living, and to condemn those who pass their lives in idleness.
The age in which Khusrau lived was the age when the concept of "Sharif" and "Razil" (high born and low born) prevailed on the basis of family background. The Islamic teaching that the noblest is he who does the noblest deed was being ignored. The society was divided into four classes --- (1) Civil servants (2) Traders (3) Craftsmen (4) Peasants. People married only in their own classes, and did not protest against this Un-Islamic notions. Even the Ulamas were silent spectators of the situation. Khusrau openly criticised the Ulamas for their hypocrisy, vanity and conceit. In the eyes of Khusrau if the intrinsic virtue were to decide social honour, the commoners were thousand times better than the Ulamas of those days. The Muslims who were immigrants to India had a separate standard of judging the man's position in the society. A man was noble if he came from outside India. A converted Muslim or one of Indian parentage was looked upon as an inferior Muslim. They did not prevent the Indians to embrace Islam but did not like to have social relation with them. It is recorded in history that Balban dismissed...
some able royal servants when he came to know that 
they came from Indian origin. The result was that 
many Muslims of Indian origin fabricated fictitious 
ancestry. That they had dynastical connection with 
highly prominent figures of Arabia, Iran and Central 
Asia. (1)

But Khusrau was never ashamed of the fact 
that he was born from an Indian mother. He was proud 
of India, his birth place and home land. He praised 
highly its land, flowers and language. The Indian 
languages he said surpassed Turkish and Persian in 
elegance rhyme and rhythm. He considered Hindwi to 
be his language and wished to speak in it eloquently.

(1) Prof. Mushirul Haque --- Artical in souvenir, 
National Amir Khusrau Society, Delhi, 1977, 
P. 217.
As he himself says:

I am an Indian Turk, can answer you in Hindawi;

I have no Egyptian suger to reply in Arabic.

Delhi at the time of Amir Khusrau was an expanding capital. Many villages were coming under the orbit of its urbanity. Political upheavals were slowly bringing in social changes in the society. The members of the court, the Ulamas, the high officials, the artisans, merchants and the sufies had great influence in the social life of that time. The courtiers and the high officials including the Ulamas had greater sway in comparison to other groups. The ruling

(1) Debacha-i-Ghurratul Kamal, MS. of Oriental
Public Lib. Patna, Catl. No.125, Fol 80b.
dynasties and their main supporters were Turks. Upto now they were after wars and plunders in which the rulers also were active partners. But with the growth of urban self conciousness, gradually the Turks began to show a sense of change. New trends for occupying the throne and power slowly began hatching.

After the foundation of Baghdad in 762 A.D. by the Abbaside Caliph Al Mansoor (754 to 775 A.D.), Turkish slaves found quarters inside the town. As much as three thousand slaves were brought from Samarquand to serve as guards in the palace and as army of the Caliph Mutasim (833 to 842). This was done with a view to balancing the Khurasanian army, but gradually the Turkish slaves became most powerful under the Abbaside Caliphate.

This should be noted that this class of slaves were distinct from the domestic ones. The institution of slavery as existed in the time of the holy Prophet and the early caliphs were different.

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from that of Turkish slave. The rise of Iranian
dynasties such as the Tahirides (821 to 873), The
Samanides (819 to 1005), the Safarides (867 to 1495)
gave the Turkish slave the status of troops. They
were loyal to their original masters alone. And though
the institution was hereditary and as such they had
to support the successors of their masters but they
did not extend their loyalty to their new master
always. Many masters had some shameful connection with
their young Turkish slaves, caught in war or brought
from slave merchants. This depraved taste destroyed
their standard of morality and damaged their loyalty.

But this is also a fact that many of them were brough-
t up like their own son. Talented slaves were raised
to the post of commanders and high officials. Slaves
were made cash collectors in different provinces
which tended to the growth of their power and finally
developed in them the sense of independence. Alptagin
who controled the Samanide forces in Khurasan, was
himself a slave. He made himself semiindependent in
Ghazna in (955-56). He became the founder of the
celebrated Ghaznavi dynasty which produced remarkable rulers like Subuktagin (977 to 997) and Sultan Mahmood (998 to 1030).\(^{(1)}\)

Political condition in India during the 13th and 14th century contributed a great deal towards reinforcing the Chishtia policy of aloofness from both the rulers and officials. Iltitmish a far sighted Sultan was conversant with the mistic tradition of Bukhara and Baghdad and from his early child-hood had been devoted to derveshes. In order to maintain the balance of power between the power of the Ulamas and the Turkish military oligarchy, he supported the sufies. The Chishtia saints believed that the sultanat was not a necessary evil. They followed the policy of Imam Ghazali who advised Muslims to obey whoever seized power as continuity of Government was indispensable for the preservation of law and order.

\(^{(1)}\) Dr. S.A.A.Rizvi --- Article in Souvenir, National Amir Khusrau Society, pp. 3-4.
The Sultans of Delhi at the time of Amir Khusrau were orthodox Sunni. The principle for the protection of Islam (Din-i-Panahi or Sunnism) is said to have been prescribed by Syed Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (D.632/1234-35). These principles are identical with those of Nizamul Mulk Tusi, recorded in his Syasat Namah which are as follows:

1. The rulers should promote Islamic law, customs and should be harsh towards infidels and polytheist.

2. Sins, debauchery and adultery should not be practised in Islamic town, and offenders should be punished ruthlessly. If the prostitutes do not refrain from this sin, they must be forced to practice this trade secretly.

3. The duty of enforcing Islamic law should be entrusted to pious and God fearing officers who are expert in Shariyat and Tariquat (The path of Sufism).
(4) Justice should be strictly dispensed with.\(^{(1)}\)

The Delhi Sultans found it very difficult to enforce these laws in a country where the majority were non-Muslims, and at times, whose economic and political help they needed. In enforcing these laws, the Sultans were to be harsh towards all non-Sunnies such as Ismailies, the Shias and the Hindus. Therefore, the repercussion of these theories on the part of the non Sunnies were far reaching.\(^{(2)}\)

But modern researches express doubt in regard to these theories. They say that it is difficult to decide whether the whole of these theories were enunciated by Syed Nuruddin Mubarak, or Barani has expressed his own sentiments by putting them in the mouth of the great Saharwardy saint. Whether it was said by the great Syed or Barani himself or partly mixed together, the fact remains that the persecution philosophy of such nature prevailed during

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\(^{(1)}\) Ziauddin Barani - Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi, Calcutta, 1860-62, pp. 41-44.

\(^{(2)}\) Isami - Fatuhus Salatin (edited by A.D.Usha), Madras, 1948, P.301.
the Saljuk Period and it was the foundation upon which the political and religious structure of the Turkish Society in India was built.

The Ismaili and the Shia groups who were in minority were forced to practise their religion secretly. But this was not, the case with the Hindu tributry Rajas. They were given higher status and as they were Zimmi (protected subjects) they paid Jizya. But the attitude of the orthodox towards them was hostile. Both Hindu and Muslim traders were forced to prostrate before the Sultan which was totally Un-Islamic. This custom was made compulsory law during the reign of Sultan Ghayasuddin Balban who is said to be the most arrogant and raceiest.

Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji (1290-1296) expressed his inability to inforce strict Islamic law in his own capital. The Hindus were in material prosperity; boldly practised idolatry and passed through the royal palace en-route to the Jamuna for bathing ceremonies.(1) Therefore, he was somewhat...

(1) Tarikh-i-Firoze Shahi, P.216.
tolerant towards the tone Muslims. The Hindus were not only protected but also awarded royal bannars, drums and stately horses. They held high posts, put on ornaments and brocade dresses. He could not disgrace the Hindu bankers such as the "Sahus" and the Potddars who gave huge amount as loans to the Governors of Balban's time, at heavy rate of interest. In 1281 Ghayasuddin Balban had to show some respect to Hindu Rajas at Bengal (Danujamadhua, Ariraja Dasrathas) in order to crush the rebellion by Tughril, the Turkish Governor of Lakhnauti.

Sultan Allauddin Khilji's former Indian slave, called Kafoor, caught at the port of Cambay in 1299, demolished the racial superiority of the Turks when he laid the expedition to Devagiri in 1388 and to other places afterwards in the South. In the same way during the reign of Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah (1316-1320) a powerful Hindu leader of Barwar tribe, named Hasan (Khusrau Khan) came to power and his achievements in the South were remarkable.
According to Barani Muslims in Delhi were divided into three categories:\(^1\):

1. Muslim supporters of Khusrau Khan who were not in his service.
2. Muslims who were either in employment or engaged in business.
3. Those who supported Ghazi Malik the Barwars, were recruited in the Turkish army during the time of Alauddin Khilji on account of their fearlessness in dangerous situation created by his campaign in the South. Many of them were not Muslims and were allowed to practice Hinduism. When the war between Ghazi Malik and Khusrau Khan started, Ghazi Malik came out victorious as a matter of chance, Amir Khusrau wrote Tughlaque Namah to commemorate the victory of Ghazi Malik as the new king and laid the foundation of Tughlaque Dynasty in India.

\(^1\) Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, pp. 142-143.
The sensual appetite of the upper class Turks continued as usual, and was fed only by both young boys and girls. They were edicted to wine also. Alauddin promulgated harsh regulations against drinking and debauchry but they were hardly obeyed.\(^{(1)}\)

According to Al-beruni there existed class distinction in India also. The Hindus had class distinction based on religion but the Muslim Turks were divided on social division based on wealth and status and position. Lahore and Delhi were planned and developed on Iranian pattern, separate quarters for different classes were provided of which Daulat Abad exhibited clear example. This was done by the order of Sultan Mohammad Bin Tughlaque (1325-1351). In Delhi newly converted Mongols were confined to separate Muhalla, though shops, mosques and administrative buildings were intermixed. The wealthy merchants were dependant on the Government and they ignored the racial setup of the first three upper classes. The poor Muslims were the neglected section of the society, they depended on petty merchants.\(^{(2)}\)

\(^{(1)}\) Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, pp. 196-201.

Sultan Alauddin Khilji's price control regulation proved beneficial to the urban community of Delhi. It was not a welfare scheme but Amir Khusrau praised the measures as a great assistance to the masses.

Outside the town of Delhi there were Khanquah scattered in a large numbers. The Khanquah had a significant effect on the lives of the people of Delhi. The spiritual heads of these Khanquahs ruled over the hearts of the people and at times served as a support to the ruling monarch. The earliest Khanquah in India was established at Uch by Shaikh Shafiuddin, nephew of Shaikh Abu Ishaque Gaziruni (D.426/-1035). Ibn Batuta says Shaikh Abu Ishaque was highly venerated by the people of India and China.\(^{(1)}\) Shaikh Abdul Haque Muhaddis Dehlawi says that Abu Ishaque appointed Shaikh Shafiuddin his Khalifa and ordered him to mount a camal and travel on upto the place where the camal finally haulted. The camal

hauled in the middle of a desert. There Shafluudin founded a town which is called Uch Sharif\(^1\)

The Chishtia and Saharwardia sufies established their Khanquah in India and introduced sober way of spiritual life; were not interested in the performance of supernatural feats or miracles. The most outstanding sufi in Delhi of Amir Khusrau's time was his spiritual head Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia (1238 to 1325). A section of itinerant sufies known as qualanders raised their heads at this very period. The most prominent qualander of Haidari branch settled in Delhi during the reign of Balban his name was Shaikh Abu Bakar Tusi Haidari. Abu Bakar Tusi it is said built a Khanquah after demolishing a temple on the sight of the bank of Jamuna. Where he organised Sama\(^2\) (dance to arouse ecstasy). Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia frequently visited the Khanquah of Shaikh Abu Bakar Tusi whose relation with his other contemporaries was not so cordial. Sufi Sidi Maula came as an

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(1) Shaikh Abdul Haque Muhaddis Dehlawi- Akhbarul Akhyar, Delhi, 1914, P.205.

(2) D.M. Macdonald- Emotional religion in Islam as effected by music and singing, Jr. R.A.S.Calcutta, pp 195 to 252.

Submitted by Shahnaz Begum
immigrant from upper region enroute to Delhi. He visited Baba Farid in 1265. Baba Farid finding him ambitious warned Sidi Maula to avoid the company of Maliks and Amirs as these were harmful for dervishes. But he paid no heed. He was mortally wounded by the disciples of Shaikh Abu Bakar Tusi during the reign of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji. The Chishtia order followed a golden rule of none involvement in politics and power struggles.

According to Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia the first lesson of sufism contained in this maxim: (whatever you do not like for yourself, do not wish it for others, i.e. wish for yourself what you wish for others). According to him prayers or organised rituals though important but are not enough by themselves. According to Khazainul Futuh, Nizamuddin Aulia maintained regular Langer Khana (almshouse) which was open to Hindus and Muslims alike. Islam was not a round of prayers and rituals but a highly ethical code. His contact with Yogies in Baba Farid's Jamat Khana had a lasting effect upon his mind.

(1) Amir Hasan Sijzi—Fawaidul Fuwad, Buland Shaheer, 1272, P. 10

Submitted by Shahnaz Begum
He inculcated sympathy with Hindus among his disciples\(^1\)

Nizamuddin Aulia liked poems of Amir Khusrau which were broadly based on humanitarian touch. This humanism, artistry, literary skill and aesthetic sensitivity Amir Khusrau did not learn from the court of the Sultans, rather he derived them from the Jamatkhana of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia. All these have found full expression in his great work "Nuh Sipher" which speaks highly of Hinduism and Hindustan itself. There are many glimpses in the Fuwaidul Fuwad that Nizamuddin Aulia never liked conversion by compulsion. He believed that only pious examples by practising the religion faithfully would result in conversion.\(^2\) The Shaikh of the Chishtia order encouraged people to indulge in trade and commerce for their livelihood. They also approved of agriculture and crafts. But they advocated

\(^1\) Amir Khusrau-- Khazainul Futuh, edited by W. Mirza, Calcutta, 1953, p.158.

\(^2\) Fuwaidul Fuwad -- pp. 66, 150, 196.
that, these professions were to be pursued honestly so that they may not interfere in their spiritual exercise. Both the Fuwaidul Fuwad and Khairul-Majalis (1) record interesting stories about these occupations.

Baba Farid's favourite son was a soldier in Balban's army. And scholars like Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan the disciples of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia were the notable members of the Government. On the whole, however, Shaikh Nizamuddin believed in none-involvement in politics and administration. He told Amir Hasan to illustrate this point how Khawja Hamid, a servant of Tughrul who later on became the governor of Lakhnauti resigned the service and became Baba Farid's disciple. (2) It seems that over all policy of Chishtia saints were opposed to Government service believing that it made people reckless, greedy, cruel and authoritarian. Moreover it made dependent


(2) Fuwaidul Fuwad —PP. 217-18.
on worldly authority which was contrary to sufi trust in God. That is why the Chishtia saints refused to accept land and grant either from rulers or their officers.

The Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia accepted enormous gifts given to him by Khusrau Khan Barwar, provided it was paid in cash. The Shaikh believed that the money belonging to the treasury should be spent on the community. This was his justification for accepting gifts from the prince Khizr Khan and from other Government officials. Their proceeds were immediately distributed among the needies. This ameliorated the miserable condition of the Muslim masses. Both Saharwardia and Chishtia order believed in Ghazali's concept of state but they differed in their attitude to duties of rulers and the administration. Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi of Saharwardia order cared more for the prosperity of the Sunnies life. Though people professing other faiths and sects were permitted to survive. But the Chishtia believed that the Government should strive for the prosperity of the
whole empire irrespective of caste and creed. To illustrate this point they recited the example of Hazrat Umar the second caliph of Islam in whose time no one was allowed to starve. Sultan Alauddin Khilji has no hesitation in admitting that his price control measure, inspite of harsh punishment, failed to make his officials honest.\(^{(1)}\) But according to Barani the influence of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia succeeded in improving the moral tone of Delhi Sultanat.\(^{(2)}\) The Chishtia saints believed that only the company of pious and ascetic Muslims persuaded others to accept Islam and neither the sword nor preaching served any purpose.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau also belonged to Chishtia order. He embraced all the teaching of his Shaikh. He implemented those teachings in his practical life. His poetry bears the reflection of his heart. In many places he boldly declared that he

\(^{(1)}\) Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi — P.297

\(^{(2)}\) Ibid, P.346.
was the torch bearer of his Shaikh. He even did not care for the criticism of orthodox Ulamas. For example he says:

In the preface of Ghurratul Kamal the poet along with his short biography had depicted a picture of his age. From the prefaces of his other Diwans also we get some informations regarding his contemporaries. His historical Masnavis are also great value & authentic source of our information about his time.