CHAPTER - FOUR
STATE AND RELIGION

The Muslim conquest of Persia had proved to be a turning point in Arabian political ideal. The view of the ancient and magnificent pageant of Persian imperialism overwhelmed the simple followers of Islam. The Sultans of Ghazna, whose influence on Indian polity became dominant, greedily copied the Persian pattern. And the Muslim rulers of India had a far larger scope for display. The Quranic outlook was changing fast. The creed of earthly power was established. Gone was the election of Caliphs, and bloodshed for the throne became too common. Drink, like the Nauroz festival, was imported into kingly rite. Power politics generally got the better of the divine principles. The ideal of Jihad was twisted for the purpose of aggression. In matters of State, religion had become a name and the name was used for secular ends.

Religion was not a direct motive of the Muslim conquest of India. Those who conquered it were not preachers of Islam. They were a martial people, who ravaged not only India but Muslim countries also. The Turkish Sultanate of Delhi, having begun as a military occupation, the Sultan had to appease his soldiers. It was also necessary to be at peace with the Ulama, who surrounded the throne and held the ear of the Sultan. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66) of the Slave dynasty was the first to
attempt the building up of a government based upon the welfare and goodwill of the people. He did not encourage fantastic renderings of the holy law, but drew a distinction between the two types of Ulama, religious and worldly. Rulers with learning, like Muhammad bin Tughluq, or with love of absolute power, like Alauddin Khalji, treated the Ulama with scant courtesy.

All the theologians were not reactionary. Some of them had inherited the tolerant spirit of the early Arabian sages. They frankly admonished rulers who sought to bend the humane laws of the Shariat to their personal caprice or avarice. The following incident recorded in the Tarikh-i-Daudi is instructive:

"Sultan Sikandar Dodi asked Malik-ul-Ulama, Miyan Abdullah, what to do with the Hindus at Karkhet. He inquired about the custom of previous kings. The Sultan replied that up to his time they had left the Hindus unmolested. The Malik-ul-Ulama then assured the Sultan that it would be very improper for him to destroy an ancient idol-temple, and that he ought not to forbid the accustomed rite of permitting their bathing in the tank, which they regarded as holy. When this conversation had lasted a short time, the Sultan placed his hand on his dagger and exclaimed: 'You side with the infidels, I shall first put an end to you and then massacre the infidels at Karkhet.' Miyan Abdullah calmly said: '......When you asked me, I gave you an answer in conformity with the precepts of the
holy Prophet. If you have no reverence for them, what is the use of inquiring?' Sikandar's wrath was slightly appeased, and he said: 'If you had permitted me to do this, many thousands of Muslims would have been placed in easy circumstances by it.' Miyan Abdullah said: 'I have said my say; you know what you intend doing'.

Likewise, the Sultans were not all of one mind on the issue of religious domination. There were exceptions amongst them, like the noble Miyan Abdullah referred to above. They did not subscribe to the view that attacking the religion of the Hindus would make their hold on India strong and stable. The promptings of religious exclusiveness and the ideals of a composite nationhood were often in conflict. Of the two motives, that of religion was on the whole in possession of the field; still the conception of rulership on a broader basis was rapidly gaining ground. In comparison with contemporary Europe, the Sultans of Delhi were positively more humane. A Sultan like Sikandar Lodi might take recourse to religious intolerance. But contemporary Europe was governing by means of the Inquisition, stifling all independent thinking with a brutality too horrible to think of to-day. There the Church and the State were in unholy alliance. Men and women and books showing the slightest signs of freedom of thought were burnt, beheaded and battered to death. In India, on the other hand, most of the Sultans tried to act in accordance with the principle of accommodating religions and interests with a view to knit

1. Tarikh-i-Daudi, pp. 29-30.
various people into a common national fabric, as was done by the Prophet
on his arrival at Madina. The success in this direction rose to its record
height in the reign of Akbar.

The Arab administrators in Sindh had left the people free to
practise their own religious beliefs. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna cared little
for propagating the faith of Islam. He was moved chiefly by military
ambition and love of money and mundane glory. One of his chief generals
was Tilak, a Hindu, whom he employed to suppress the rebellion of his
Muslim subjects.1 The founder of the Muslim empire in India, Muhammad
Ghori, made friends with the Raja of Jammu against Khusrau Malik, the
last of the Ghaznavids, of Lahore. It is curious also that he had his
coins stamped with a Hindu legend.

With the passing away of the Ghori Sultan and with the
establishment of the Turkish kingdom of Delhi, Muslim interests in India
were localised and the foreign touch vanished from the Sultanate. India
because the Sultans' whole concern. She became their motherland. By the
end of the 14th century, masses of Indian Muslims were settling down to
live with the Hindus in good neighbourliness, and both sides began to
work at bringing about an atmosphere of concord.

Consciously or sub-consciously, in response to the popular urge, the
nature of the Sultanate slowly underwent a great change. The invader and
conqueror was transformed into the benevolent protector and impartial

dispenser of justice. Sultan Balban gave to Prince Muhammed the martyr this
sage counsel that the State should be built securely on the following seven
pillars: the authority of the monarch, the reputation of the ruler, justice
to the subjects, solvency of the royal treasury, solvency of the
cultivators, general welfare of the people and competence of the royal
officials.¹ No wonder that this wise Sultan is mentioned in a Sanskrit
inscription. It lavishes abundant praise on Balban in high-flown Sanskrit.
His domination is said to stretch from the Bay of Bengal to Ghazna and to
extend down to Cape Comorin. The eulogy is sung in the loftiest strain of
classical exaggeration; "......He, the bewildering dust raised by the hoofs
of whose cavalry marching in front of his army, overthrew his enemies in
front..... even he, the lord of the seven sea-girt land, Sri Hammira
Ghiyasadina, the king and emperor, reigns supreme.

"When he issued forth on a military expedition, the Gaudas abdicated
their glory; the Andhras, through fear, besought the shelter of the caves;
the Keralas forsook their pleasures; the Karnatakas hid themselves in
defiles; the Maharastras gave up their places; the Gurjaras resigned their
vigour; the Latas dwarfed themselves into Kiratas.

"The earth now being supported by this sovereign, Shesha,
altogether forsaking his duty of supporting the weight of the globe, has
betaken himself to the great bed of Vishnu (the ocean), and Vishnu
himself, taking Lakshami on his breast, and relinquishing all thought of

¹. Elliot & Dowson,' Vol.II, p.132.
protection, sleeps in peace on the ocean of milk."

The growing harmony of Hindus and Muslims in India was disliked by the Muslims beyond the Himalayas. They considered their Indian co-religionists as having fallen from the pure Islamic standard. It was about this time that there was a retrograde movement in Central Asia. Doctors of Islamic Law began to misread the words of the Quran and of the holy Prophet. They began to talk of Jihad in a manner unknown to the glorious days of the past. The teaching of tolerance, that lay deep in the message of the holy Prophet, was purposely ignored. As a devout Muslim, Timur swallowed this new version of Islam. He had noticed the general toleration of Hinduism in India with disapproval. When he marched out on a Jihad, his very first attack was directed against the Muslim ruler of Delhi. It is full of deep significance that he spoke of Indian Muslim as "those who called themselves Muslims but had strayed from the Muslim fold." The opinion of Timur should be enough to bear out the truth that by his time the Muslims of India had already taken largely to Indian ways of life.

Of course, the sense of common nationalism had not yet arisen. The antagonism between the ruler and the ruled persisted some time and the Hindus had, now and then to suffer persecution for their faith. Yet, in spite of all unfavourable circumstances, the rulers of Muslim India did not take much time to realise that India alone belonged to them and they belonged to India. They were conscious of being the ruling community and, in order

to maintain the position, they reiterated on occasions the difference of religion. Yet, religion for the sake of religion was seldom an active factor. When religious difference was stressed, it was merely for political reasons.

RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE

We have noticed already Miyan Abdullah pleading before Sultan Sikandar Lodi for toleration of faith. Indeed, a spirit of toleration was in the air. Throughout the North there was gradually spreading an atmosphere of friendliness between man and man through the influence of the Sufis. The pure life and the mystic faith of the Darweshes touched the heart of emperors, nobles and country folk, all alike. Hence in contemporary paintings the Darwesh living in lonely caves was a favourite subject. Likewise, the Darwesh surrounded by fierce animals or the Darwesh dancing in joy of mystic communion was pained again and again by the inspired artists of the day.

Sultans and nobles were not seldom found straying far from the scenes of their pomp and power to the peaceful retreats of Faqirs and Sadhus and there humbly and devoutly listening to their counsels and maxims. The instance of Emperor Jahangir, though apparently beyond the

1. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi founded the Order of "dancing darweshes."
scope of our study, eloquently proves the point. Jahangir's frequent visits to the Hindu Yogi, Gosain Jadrup, are recorded in his autography. We are quoting below at length from his Memoirs to convey the vivid impression of what the saints were to the life of Hindustan in the middle ages. The emperor says in his Memoirs:

"I embarked in a boat and hastened to meet him (i.e. Gosain Jadrup), and at the close of the day I ran and enjoyed his society in the retirement of his cell. I heard many sublime words of religious duties, of knowledge of divine things. Without immoderate praise, he sets forth clearly the doctrines of wholesome Sufism, and one can find delight in his society." ¹

Again:

"In the foregoing pages, something has been written about Gosain Jadrup who lived as a hermit in Ujjain. At this time he changed his residence to Mathura, which is one of the greatest places of worship of the Hindus, and employed himself in the worship of the true God on the bank of the Jamuna." ²

Then again:

"On Monday, the 12th, my desire to see the Gosain Jadrup again increased and, hastening to his hut, without ceremony, I enjoyed his society. Sublime words were spoken between us. God Almighty has granted him an unusual grace, a lofty understanding, an exalted culture, and sharp

². Ibid., Vol.II, p.104.
intellectual powers, with a God-given knowledge and a heart free from the attachments of the world and all that is in it; he sits content in the corner of solitude and without wants. He has chosen of worldly goods half a gaz of old cotton (kirpas) like a woman's veil, and a piece of earthenware from which to drink water, and in winter and summer and the rainy season lives naked and with his head and feet bare. He has made a hole in which he can turn round with a hundred difficulties and tortures, with a passage such that a suckling could hardly be put through it.  

Already before the great Mughals, the country under the Sultans of Delhi was favourable to the growth of goodwill. A number of religious reformers appeared on the scene and contributed to the spiritual upliftment of the people at large. These great souls possessed certain distinctive characteristics in common. They were non-sectarian in the sense that they were not affiliated to, or at least were not leading separate religious sects of their own. They were free from the bondage of any particular creed and had no blind faith in any sacred scriptures; they attained illumination by individual exertion through freedom of thought and self-culture. They did not observe any rituals or ceremonies, nor followed any dogma, and most of them severely denounced idolatry. They condemned polytheism, believed in One God, and, what is more important, realised the unity of God invoked by various religious sects under different names, such as Allah, krishna and Ram etc. They believed in bhakti as the only means of

salvation and gave a very comprehensive interpretation and profoundly psychological analysis of the conception of bhakti. This may be said to be their chief and permanent contribution to the religious thoughts of India. With them bhakti meant single-minded, uninterrupted and extreme devotion to God without any selfish motive, growing gradually into an intense love. They preached bhakti through simple aphorisms, parables and maxims which brought home to even ordinary and uneducated persons the universal truths which were considered more valuable than sectarian doctrines or scriptural texts. As a rule they preached through vernaculars, for they wanted to uplift the masses. The same noble object led them to do away with the invidious distinctions of caste and bestow special care and attention upon the degraded and depressed classes.

The greatest of these great souls was Kabir who believed himself to be at once the child of Allah and Ram. Quite naturally to him, as he said," Mecca has verily become Kashi and Ram has become Rahim." He was steeped in Sufi lore, though he had his initiation from his Guru, the Brahman saint, Ramananda. Sheikh Taqi Suhrawardy and Sheikh Bhika Chishti were amongst his masters. His message to the two communities about the underlying unity of their faith and ideals was as vitally necessary in his own times as it is in ours. Kabir says:

"The difference among faiths is only due to difference in names; everywhere there is the yearning for the same God. Why do the Hindus and
Muslims quarrel for nothing? Keep at a distance all pride and vanity, insincerity and falsehood; consider others the same as yourself, let your heart be filled with love and devotion. Then alone will your struggle be successful."

Kabir's teachings offended both Hindu and Muslim priests, and they gave him bitter opposition. Finally, the aid of the State was sought to persecute the saint. Sikandar Lodi was convinced of the sincerity of the reformer, of his real solicitude for peace, and contrived to get him out of the clutches of the opposition by a temporary exile. Not long afterwards he returned to Benares, and now Hindus and Muslims, in large numbers, began to listen to his message.

Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to hills or forests in search of salvation; instead, he advised his followers to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders, while leading a noble, honest and dedicated life. He himself lived as a householder and did not take to spectacular asceticism. He married a girl, Loi, whom he picked up from the hermitage of a recluse living on the bank of the Ganges, and became the father of a son and a daughter, who were named Kamal and Kamali respectively. He did not forsake his profession, that of a weaver. He would work on the loom, while talking to his enquirers and followers. The loom gave him living and formed the background of his teaching, a teaching of the
simplest spiritual mechanism, and where an atmosphere of humble life prevailed.

The entry of Kabir into the fold of the bhakti movement proved most fruitful in bringing about reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims. With filial attachment to both the religious communities, Kabir was free from fanaticism. He rubbed shoulders with bhakti reformers as well as Sufi saints. Though intensely religious in outlook, he was not a slave of either Hinduism or Islam. He was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and boldly criticised the emphasis on external aspects of both the religions. He denounced the pundits and mullas alike, and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude. He raised his voice against the custom of sati and child marriage, the two evils commonly practised by the Hindus.

Kabir's contempt of convention and his strong belief that pure life alone has the supreme holy sanction are proved by his actions of which the last is perhaps the best example. At the approach of the end of his life he ceremoniously left Benares in favour of Maghar, a place in the neighbourhood, invested by superstition with extreme notoriety. People fear that one dying at this place is reborn as an ass, whereas death in Benares is rewarded with a passage to paradise. Kabir successfully attacked this myth. For, when he died, and while his devotees of both communities were wrangling over different methods of disposing of the body, lo! it was
revealed, on the withdrawal of the shroud over the corpse, that only a bunch of flowering lotus was there. The other and more significant fact is that both communities claimed him as their very own.

Kabir's teachings were in perfect harmony with the social and religious needs of the times; he identified himself completely with the concept of an integrated Indian society and won the hearts of millions. His dohas and popular sayings of revolutionary social import are widely known and have become a part and parcel of medieval cultural heritage.

About this time Guru Nanak was also preaching his mission of unity between the two communities. His conception of God's government was that "The Hindu and Muslim saints are the diwans in attendance upon the Preserver." Like Kabir, he too was largely influenced by Sufi saints and Sufic lore. Like Kabir again, he stood boldly against outward forms that were deadening the spiritual life of both peoples. He argues with the Hindu:

"Ganges water, firewood of the Karanta tree,
Eating rice in boiled milk,
O my soul! these are of no account,
Until thou art saturated with the True name."

To the Muslim he says:

"Make right conduct thy Kabah, truth thy spiritual guide, good works thy creed and thy prayer,
The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine honour, O Nanak."
Guru Nanak's teachings were in full conformity with all the positive tenents of the bhakti movement, with the additional credit that, like Kabir, he also advocated householder's life for his devotees; this revolutionary concept was taken by him to the logical conclusion when he emphasized that it was possible and also desirable for the men of God, on their way to the attainement of salvation, to live as honest bread-earners and householders, just as a lotus flower survives untainted in the midst of muddy water. He introduced community lunch (i.e. langer) as a practical step to eradicate the evils of caste discrimination and untouchability from among his followers.

Many other founders of new orders followed the same path leading to a common faith of love and devotion and the rejection of conventions. The sage, Dadu Dayal (d.1603), who is reported to have had an interview with Emperor Akbar, speaking of the One and indivisible God says:

"Thou art Ram and Rahim,
Thou art the beautiful malik (master),
Thy names are Keshava and Karim."

He says with deep persuasion:

"The two brothers are hands and feet, the two are the two ears, the two brothers are the two eyes — Hindus and Muslims."

Few of these medieval saints were high-brow philosophers. Chaitanya alone of them was a savant, but his greatness was the result of his impassioned
loved of God and not of his scholarship. Academic proficiency is seldom the gift that is required in an attempt at rejuvenating a nation. What is needed first and foremost is a creative mind, deep intuition and long vision. One who has done a vast deal of uplifting work in the middle ages gives the following account of himself:

"My caste is low, my actions are low, and even my profession is low, Says Raidas, yet the Lord has raised me high."

Not by application of intellect but by the concentration of love that the point of view of another can be visualised. As Iqbal says:

"The heart is a kind of inner intuition or insight, which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us in contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense perception." \(^1\)

The bhakti movement achieved its declared objectives to a considerable extent. It struck a serious blow at the predominance of the Brahman priesthood in the Hindu society; the ground lost by the Brahmans in Hindu religion could never be regained by them thereafter. The citadel of caste system could not be broken altogether, even then its evil effects were minimised by the development of harmonious relationships and free social intercourse between the high-caste and low-caste Hindus. The numerous social evils from which the Hindus suffered could not be eradicated completely, nevertheless, when thoroughly exposed and condemned, they tended to subside and take the hind seat in the moral

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1. Quoted by K.G. Saifyidain in Iqbal's Educational Philosophy, p., 108.
conscience of the people. The bhakti movement laid stress on the finer values of life and thereby improved the general moral tone of the society as a whole. The bhakti reformers and the Sufis, individually as well as collectively, helped in the creation of an atmosphere of brotherhood and fellow-feeling between the Hindus and Muslims.

So far we have concerned ourselves with the contributions of the bhakti reformers. It will be in the fitness of our study, if a brief mention is also made of the Sufi saints' contribution to the Indo-Muslim culture.

The mystical side of Islam is called Sufism or tasawwuf. It is variously defined by various writers. Some define it as the purification of thought; others as the acceptance of Truth and renunciation of everything other than God. All, however, agree that Sufism constitutes a system of doctrines and practices which aims at the direct communion of the self with Ultimate Reality (i.e. God). It is built on the principle that ordinary means of knowledge through observation, experimentation, verification and generalisation enable us to know what is only relative and not the Absolute. As God is Absolute, we can not know anything about His qualities except through intuition or revelation. Intuition gives man a simpler and more direct and more adequate knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

Sufism had its origin in the likes of the Prophet and his companions. The Prophet's devotion to and trust in God, his resignation to Divine Will, his piety, contentment, austerše mode of living and abhorence of wealth,
form the corner-stone of Sufism. It is a well-known fact that even at the close of his life, when he had practically dominated the whole of Arabia, the Prophet and the members of his family never had their fill at the meals, and never amassed wealth.

The advent of Sufis to the sub-continent dates back to the Arab conquest of Sindh. The Arabs were successfully contained in Sindh and Multan by the resistance put up by the Rajput chiefs of Northern, Central and Western India, individually and collectively, for more than three hundred years, but during this very period, the Sufis penetrated into different parts of the country unhindered.

The first great Sufi who came to India and settled at Lahore was Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganjbakhsh. He died in 1073 at Lahore, and his mausoleum has ever since remained a place of pilgrimage for all.

After the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate a stream of Sufis from different parts of Iran and Central Asia, began to immigrate to this sub-continent. They moved about in the robes and style of the Indian Sadhus and established their hermitages at a number of places. They set up their abode in the residential quarters or colonies of the low-castes on the periphery of the Hindu towns. Their main object was to persuade the downtrodden sections of the Hindu population to embrace Islam on merit. The Sultanate of Delhi was confined to only a part of the country for most of
the times, but the Sufis spread themselves throughout India and carried on peaceful propaganda of Islam.

The Sufis practised austerities and laid stress on complete surrender to the Will of God. They stood for self-purification and complete absorption in God, which could not be secured by self-endeavour. They felt that the purity of heart was far greater than rituals and ceremonials, and that it was the only way by which Truth could be realised. According to one version, a Sufi had to pass through ten stages of dedication to God, before he could attain communion with Him. These were: Taubah (or Repentance), Wara (or Abstinence), Zuhd (or Piety), Faqr (or Poverty), Sabr (or Patience), Shukr (or Gratitude), Khauf (or Fear), Raja (or Hope), Tawakkul (or Contentment) and Riza (or Submission to Divine Will).¹

Like the bhakti reformers, most of the Sufis renounced the materialistic pursuits of the world; this was called Tark-i-Dunya, which Prof. K.A. Nizami explains thus: "The general impression that Tark-i-Dunya meant adopting an hermit's attitude towards life and severing all earthly connections is not confirmed by contemporary mystic records. In fact, it was not the world as such which the mystics rejected but the materialistic approach towards life and its problems which they hated and despised. The more a man got involved in materialistic pursuits, the farther he drifted from the spiritual objectives."²

Some of the Sufi saints observed celibacy, while others married and

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lived as ordinary householders. They mostly depended on futuh or unasked for gifts, though some of them took up cultivation of waste land as the means of their livelihood. It was never their intention to create a class of parasites on the society. Usually the Sufis avoided government patronage; very few of them accepted government grants in land and money and lived in affluence.

The Sufis were divided into a number of Silsilas or Orders. Only two of these took deep roots in the Indian soil; these were the Chishti and Suhrawardy Orders. The Suhrawardy Silsila made its appearance first in Sindh and North-Western India, where its influence was considerable. The Chishti Order became most prominent throughout the length and breadth of India.

The Chishti Silsila was introduced into India by Khawaja Muinuddin. He was born in Sijistan in Cir.1141. Having lost his father in his childhood, he turned an ascetic and wandered about in the Muslim countries until he was initiated into the Chishti Order by Khwaja Usman at Nishapur. In the prime of his youth, Muinuddin came to Lahore, spent some time there at the mausoleum of Data Ganjbakhsh, and then shifted to Ajmer and set up his abode at the outskirts of the town for the propagation of Islam among the poor Hindus. The Khwaja's spiritual guide, Sheikh Osman Harooni, had once advised him thus: "When you have put on the garment of Darweshes, behave like them." "How, Sir", asked the obedient disciple,
"should I behave?" "Treat joy and grief alike; be patient in calamity, love the poor and despise the world", was the reply. "You should", added the master, "be liberal like the river, kind like the sun and humble like the earth. Unless you show generosity in poverty, satisfaction in hunger, joy in sorrow, and love to your enemy, you cannot be a Sufi." Sheikh Muinuddin acted faithfully on the advice of Hazrat Usman Harooni all his life, and at Ajmer he won hearts of the people around him by his selfless service and made many converts to Islam through peaceful means among the sturdy Rajputs. His mausoleum at Ajmer has since become an important centre of pilgrimage for Hindus and Muslims alike.

Sheikh Hamiduddin, one of the disciples of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, set up his hermitage in a mud-house in a village near Nagaur (Rajputana) and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam among the Rajputs. He married and lived on cultivation like an ordinary Indian villager. A vegetarian by food habit, he mixed freely with the Hindus and won their hearts and admiration by his virtuous living.

Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki, yet another disciple of khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, was an immigrant from Farghana, which, later on, became famous as the home land of Babur. He settled in Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish on the directive of Sheikh Muinuddin. He declined to accept royal patronage and preferred to live in poverty. He was so popular with the common people of Delhi that, when harassed by
the jealous Sheik-ul-Isam, Najmuddin Kubra, he applied to Sheikh Muinuddin Chishti for permission to leave the capital and consequently Sheikh Muinuddin himself came to Delhi to take him with himself to Ajmer, the entire populace of Delhi, including Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, followed him to a few stages and would not return until Sheikh Muinuddin agreed to leave him behind. This was the greatest miracle of Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki, and the secret of his greatness lay in the deep love he showed to all who came to his apparently humble hermitage in the outskirts of the capital.

Music, vocal and instrumental both, is considered to be of great spiritual value by the Chishti saints. Accordingly, they invited musicians and singers, Muslim and Hindu alike, to entertain the audience at their hermitages by the recitation of spiritual songs and hymns. It added to the cultural aspect of Sufism and attracted huge crowds of listeners even when they had no intention of embracing Islam. Sheikh Bakhtyar Kaki was very fond of spiritual music; once during the course of musical concert, he fell into a state of ecstasy and breathed his last (1235). He lies buried in a small mausoleum at Mehrauli in the vicinity of Qutb Minar.

Sheikh Baba Farid (1175-1265) of Ajodhan (modern Pak Patan in Pakistan) was a disciple of Sheikh Bakhtyar Kaki. He belonged to a royal family of Afghanistan.¹ His grandfather had migrated to Multan. Baba Farid led a householder's life. A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid

led a householder's life. A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid popularised the Chishti Order throughout the country. He mixed freely with the Hindu masses. His discourses and spiritual expositions went home to all the people, Hindu and Muslim alike. A fairly large number of his sayings have been incorporated in the Adi Granth of the Sikhs.  

Sheikh Farid's hermitage at Ajodhan was one of the great mystic centres of the age and all sorts of people — high and low, rich and poor — flocked to it to soothe their tired nerves in the cool, spiritual atmosphere that prevailed there.

Baba Farid produced a galaxy of Sufi preachers, who spread the message of Islam through mysticism in India and abroad. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1235-1325) was the most brilliant of his disciples who set up his headquarters at Ghiyaspur, now known by his own name near his shrine in Delhi. He laid stress on the element of love as a means of the realisation of God. The love of God implied, in his view, the love of humanity, and this ethical idea was strongly inculcated by him on the hearts of his disciples. His deep attachment to the idea of universal love is manifest from the following utterance: "O Muslims: I swear by God that He holds dear those who love Him for the sake of human-beings, and also those who love human beings for the sake of God. This is the only way to love and adore God." He gave an Islamic touch to the socio-cultural atmosphere of the capital and won the hearts of its inhabitants by his virtuous character.

1. Harnam Singh Shan, an outstanding scholar of Sikh Studies, has identified one hundred and sixty such couplets of Baba Farid, which have been translated into Hindi and English by him. Vide So Said Shaikh Farid, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1974.
and social service to the poor and the needy. Seven Sultans sat on the throne of Delhi one after another during his life-time, but he never visited the royal court, nor did he accept royal favour. Nevertheless, most of the Turkish ruling elite and scholars, including some members of the royalty, regarded him as their Pir, or spiritual teacher. He was popularly known as Mahbub-i-Ilahi by his followers.

Of his philosophy of life, on which he acted as long as he lived, Amir Khusrau records in his Afzal-ul-Fawaid: "My master, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, said that the holy Prophet has enjoined on us to forgive our subordinates seventy times a day."

Once a stranger, armed with a big knife, entered the room of Mahbub-i-Ilahi, but was caught by his attendants. The saint urged his men not to molest him, gave him some money and asked him to leave the place. He then said to his disciples: "A Sufi's possession is a common property, and his blood unretaliated."¹

Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's successor at the Chishti khangah at Delhi was Sheikh Nasiruddin Mahmud, popularly known as Chiragh-i-Dehli (1276-1356). Sheikh Nasiruddin continued with great zeal the mission of his master, showing people the way to God and bringing happiness to the hearts of men. All sorts of people — mystics, theologians, poets, administrators, peasants and traders — visited him and he inculcated in them in his own unassuming and quiet way, a respect for moral values and

¹. Afzal-ul-Fawaid (Urdu Translation), p.36.
a determination to face the ordeals of life bravely. His deep humanism made his heart bleed for the weak, the destitute and the down-trodden. Saiyid Jalaluddin Bokhari informs us that the Sheikh, while on his way to Thatta, met a leper who asked him for water. The Sheikh not only brought water for the leper but also drank in his bowl, while others looked with contempt at the leper and objected to the Sheikh's action.¹

Sheikh Nasiruddin never missed an opportunity of advising his visitors. When externalists scholars visited him, he explained to them the significance of mysticism and the value of mystic practice;² when mystics came to him, he brought home to them the necessity of following meticulously the laws of the Shariat.³ Once a jeweller came to his hermitage. The Sheikh advised him to be honest in his dealings.⁴ One day a peasant visited him and the Sheikh expressed appreciation of his vocation, but told him to combine a spirit of religious devotion with physical labour.⁵ A woman joined the discipleship of the Sheikh who told her in a message to perform prayers, and observe fast, and to deal with all men gently and politely.⁶

Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehli was a true replica of his master in his forgiveness. One day, when he was alone in his closet, absorbed in meditation, a vagabond assaulted him, inflicted on his body several cuts with his sword, and thinking him to be dead, ran away. He was, however, arrested and brought before the saint. The saint prevented his disciples

¹ Cited by Prof. K.A. Nizami in his Introduction to the Khair-ul-Majalis, pp.65-66.
² The Khair-ul-Majalis (edited by Prof. K.A. Nizami), pp.65; 210-11.
⁴ Ibid, pp.95-96.
⁵ Ibid, pp.156.
from punishing the culprit, offered him a purse and sent him away, saying to his followers: "I did not like to punish him and go against the tradition of my master. It is quite possible that while assaulting me his own hand might have been hurt." The saint died of the wound he had received at the hand of his assailant.

The Suhrawardy Silsila, founded by Sheikh Najibuddin Abdul Qahir, was the second most popular Order of the Sufis which flourished in North-Western India; its foundations on the Indian soil were laid by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan. Born near Multan in cir. 1182, Bahauddin spent many years of his youthful life in Central Asia, where he visited many important centres of Islamic learning. He was initiated into Sufism by Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardy at Baghdad. He carried on his missionary work at Multan for about a quarter of a century before his death in 1262, and rose to be the most prominent Muslim divine of his age in North-Western India.

Unlike the Chishti saints, the exponents of the Suhrawardy Order did not believe in excessive austerity: rather they constituted an influential and affluent Order of the Sufis. They lived comfortable family lives and felt no scruples in accepting costly presents and patronage from the Muslim aristocracy. They were thick with the ruling elite, amassed wealth and took active part in state politics.

After his death, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was succeeded by his
son, Sharafuddin Arif, to the saijadah (spiritual throne) of the Suhrawardy Order, while one of his disciples, Sayid Jalaluddin Sarkh Bokhri, set up his khanqah at Uchch. The Suhrawardy Silsilah was confined mostly to the upper strata of the Muslims.

IMPACT OF SUFISM ON INDIAN SOCIETY:

The Sufis acted as a great social force in moulding the character of medieval Indian society. They carried their teachings to the lowest ranks of the people and provided emotional revivalism. They comforted man when he had fallen low. They taught people disinterested virtue, purification of the soul and Divine love. They laid emphasis on the inward and not on the external side of things. It was due to this fact that their mode of training was more effective and they had a greater hold on the public than the scholastic theologians or formal jurists.

The Sufis added to the numerical strength of the Muslim population by encouraging conversions to Islam through peaceful and non-violent means. They played a great role in building the social and cultural life of the Muslims, and also set into motion the forces for their rapid Indianisation. They refined the ethical standards, built the moral character of the Muslim youth and helped them develop a healthy and rational attitude towards life. The Sufis played a significant part in the educational advancement of the society; their khanqahs became centres of knowledge and wisdom. The
The religious discourses of the Sufis helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the audience, while in some khanqahs religious formal education was also imparted; some of the Sufis themselves acted as teachers.

Sufism exercised a healthy influence in bringing about reconciliation between the Muslims and the Hindus, and its direct impact on the Hindu religious thought and social life was immense. The Sufi's motto was service to humanity at large, irrespective of caste and creed; they always showed kindness to persons professing other religions. This treatment attracted the latter and also created a sense of tolerance among the Muslims. There is a tradition of the Prophet in which he says: "God has laid so much stress on the rights of a neighbour that the latter almost holds the status of a relative." Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya often referred to this tradition and then added: "The right of a neighbour, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is that you should advance him a loan, when he required it, help him when he is in need, visit him when he is sick, comfort him when he is involved in trouble, and attend his funeral when he dies. He is not a true believer who annoys his neighbour." The sufistic definition of a half Muslim and a full Muslim is also interesting. According to the Sufi, "He is a half Muslim who is so pious that he acquires even the magical power to spread his carpet in mid-air to say his prayers, but a full Muslim is one who gets up early in the morning, says his prayers, goes about his daily work, earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, eats half
the bread and shares the other half with the needy and the poor. The sharing of the fruit of his labour after earning it in a righteous manner makes him a full Muslim.

This doctrine of Sulh-i-kul, or universal brotherhood had a great humanistic appeal behind it, which crossed all religious barriers. It developed fellow-feeling between the two communities and electrified the process of synthesis between the ancient culture of India and the one brought by the Muslims from Arabia, Iran and Central Asia.