The culture brought into India by the Arab, or the Turk, or later on by the Mughal, was not such as would seriously disturb the Hindu tradition. Neither was it of a kind that the Hindu would reject off-hand. Nor did it create any sudden break in the continuity of the history of the Indian people. The underlying motif of the two cultures, Islamic and Hindu, was much the same. The difference lay only in their technique. When, therefore, the two met on a common soil, the action and reaction between them broadened the basis of both and led to a unity of outlook and interests. The masses of the two communities began to feel the want of a new order of creative life, of cooperative effort for peaceful living. Their feeling found voice in the preaching of the great medieval saints. A saint is not involved in the battle of percentage. His less heroic work is to send finer waves into the hearts of men.

In the political world, large and powerful states arose. They had their periods of friendliness and times of warfare. Political exigencies alone determined their mutual relationship. But their ideal was high-pitched and their conduct was ever regulated by a generally common ethical code characteristic of the East.

The ancient Indian had always in mind the oneness of his great
country. But his conception of that unity was very far from that of a nation in the modern sense. It was based more on the unity of culture than on the identity of political interests. Likewise, the bond that held together the followers of the Prophet was not political. It was the unity of faith, unity in culture, inspired by a common religion. The ancient Indian, like his brother in Greece, did not consider that an empire was essentially to give whatever might be worth having in life. What he aimed at was the fulfilment of life for the individual and for the community from every point of view, economic, cultural and spiritual. That the city states of old Hellas achieved that end in spite of their small size does not admit of any doubt. It is the city states like Athens and Thebes that gave to the world the glorious Hellenic civilisation.

The same is true of India. The fact that the India of yore was split up into a number of kingdoms did not prevent the evolution of a truly unified culture that has survived down the ages — a culture that is as deep as it is many-sided. Temples and seats of learning scattered all over were and still are to a Hindu of any part of India equally sacred and equally his own. The devout Hindu was ever reminded of the oneness of the country as he daily worshipped its seven big rivers. The fellowship of the people was directly emphasized. In the Vedic times, the hymn they loved to chant was:

"Together wax ye, together speak ye, together know ye your minds."
"Let your resolve be one, let your hearts be of one accord.
Let your minds be united that your assembly may be happy." 1

Indo-Aryans visualised the need of States as an aid to the functioning of the spiritual purposes of life. Politics had its place in the scheme of practical life as a means to spiritual ends. With modern nations, politics is an end in itself, both as an intellectual pursuit and as a material goal. It owes allegiance only to economics, inasmuch as it evokes economic sanction, though, at the same time, the two are already engaged in a conflict, politics raising national walls and economics aiming at international contacts. The world is now moving through times when the problems of living have almost entirely eclipsed all other issues of life. Quite in the fitness of things, politics nowadays is tactical enough to unfurl off and on the economic flag. Yet there is a kind of fashionable thinking that tends towards making a fetish of economics. Likewise, in days gone by cultured people felt that they should over-emphasise spiritual obligations. The Upanishad warned such people that one would no doubt get into darkness by being materialistic, but heavier darkness would overtake him who might be given too much to spirituality. In its healthy days, Indian culture set bounds to other-worldly pre-occupation. It was not even gay idealism that was encouraged but a well-balanced order of knowledge and deed.

The unity that India looked to was that of a common mental outlook.

What India took care about was that she might be "a university of
culture", comprising many and diverse racial habits, linguistic orbits,
geographical bounds and local politics and interests. She was not only not
disturbed at her diversity of people but offered them opportunities for
their unfoldment, trusting in her genius that she would be able to knit
them together into a beautiful whole. She, therefore, little bothered
about the empire ideal of unification. Here was, on the contrary, the
ideal of human unity. To this end she set to developing an uncommon
consciousness of spiritual values, the efficacy of which was proved on all
occasions of impact against alien races. It was no wonder that the
presence of the Muslim in India before long roused the country to creative
thinking for a richer harmony of life. For we must remember that the
ultimate reaction of the Indo-Muslim encounter was the descent of a good
many messengers of love.

There were numerous autonomous states in the vast country. As long
as their internal mechanism worked well, it did not matter much to the
masses if the classes amused themselves from time to time in martial
sports. While Amirs and Rajas were involved in warfare, the masses,
Hindu and Muslim, under the lead of their Faqirs and Sadhus, were
pursuing the path of peace and contentment. Even a change of government
was not seriously felt beyond the narrow grove of court life; to the
subject in general it was really a matter of very little import. The history
of India has for its main spring of movement "not wars and emperors, but saints and scriptures." When any Indian state acquired hegemony over others, the home departments of the subordinate states were left untouched, leaving the people to do pretty much as they did before. It is the greed of modern humanity that is busy building big empires. It is the loss of the spiritual hold on mankind to which modern empires and imperialistic activities have to be traced. There is nothing sacrosanct about political nationalism. But obviously, it is a real necessity inasmuch as the want of it means insult to the personality of a people and injury to their manhood.

In India, however, the rise of empires was followed by the moral effect of widening the mental horizon of the people. The impact of larger events led to big action. For instance, it was possible for Buddhism to carve a triumphant career because there was the great Maurya Empire to back it up. The Gupta Empire stretched the vision of the people far and wide, and the panoramic presentation of India as one undivided country by Kalidas in his Meghadutam was thus a work of art born of the realities of living life. When, however, empires fell, following the laws of reaction, the vitality of the people was for the time being lowered. Disintegration of the empire meant also the degeneration of the people. The condition of the country on the decline of the Mughal empire is a glaring instance of the point. Yet, on the whole, Indian life did not

1. S. Radhakrishna’s article on Religion: A Plea for Sanity (Triveni, November, 1938).
wholly depend on the presence of an empire for either the general growth of unity or the unfolding of its human qualities. The evolution and spread of a real all-India culture was ever the main spring of Indian unity, and that culture was till but recently governed by the innate spirituality of the Indian people. Had there not been this fundamental unity, Indians would not have outlived the ruin of so many empires through the ages.

From what we have said in the two previous chapters, it is abundantly clear that the principles underlying the Hindu and the Islamic conceptions of society and state were very similar. The cultures of both the communities were largely spiritual. The process of unification was thus an easy and natural one. But when India came to stand face to face with an industrial civilisation, the circumstances wholly changed. Any attempt even at conciliation, not to speak of unification, became a very difficult task. The culture of India, mainly spiritual, and the aggressive culture of Europe, largely industrial, ranged against each other in contest. It led to most incongruous results and created an atmosphere of unreal politics, from which India has not found it easy to free herself. The old-time relationship between the Muslim and the Hindu was mostly an affair of the heart, while in the present industrial age the heart seldom plays a part at all. A spirit of barter, of contract, rules human affairs to-day.

Having tried to locate the foundation of Indian nationalism, let us now give a sketch of the general race relations obtaining in
India.

The Vedic people came to India at a time when a great civilisation was already a closed chapter. The remains of it, now known as the Indus Valley Civilisation, have been brought to view at two places — Mahenjo Daro and Harappa in Sindh and the Punjab. Some of these are shown in the Indian Museum — samples of Mahenjo Daro pottery, the Harappa collection of women's jewelleries, etc. In the Museum is also exhibited the Indus Valley method of preserving dead bodies. It was a well-known custom of the Babylonians, and of the Dravadians too. The story of embalming of King Dasratha's body in the Rayamana also bears on the point. Probably, the chief of those who are counted amongst the authors of this highly developed prehistoric civilisation are the Dravadians — a race related to the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, and Egyptians.

The Dravidians, the first foreign race in India, form the radical element of our present Tamils, Telegues, Malayalis etc., people who later in the historical period founded the powerful empires of the South — the Andhra, the Rashkuta and the Chera. The radical element of the present Bengalis, Gujaratis and Marathis is considered to be the Alpine race — a branch which was the second to have entered into India from beyond the Pamir plateau. The next to come were the Nordic Aryans — the people of the Vedas. They had to face the Dravidians (Munda Tribes) in possession of the country. Battles were fought and destruction followed.
The pre-Aryan peoples of India were not unblest by civilisation. They were sturdy fighters, too, and possessed impregnable excellent fortresses. It became verily an uphill task for the Aryans to overpower them. They sent up fervent prayers to their gods for aid in the work of annihilation. These prayers form a good part of the Vedas. But the enemies were far from being annihilated. Talks of truce were from time to time put forward from both sides, though on the whole the original inhabitants suffered defeat at many points. Besides, in the course of time, the brighter culture of the Aryans attracted a good many of the non-Aryans, who began to rally round the new-comers. Though the natives were made to serve as camp followers of the Aryans, they were gradually taken within the fold of Aryan society and Aryan polity. Yet it is equally true that while the conquered were being Aryanised, the conquerors, too, in their turn, were unmistakably Indianised, with the result that the Aryan civilisation of the new India grew up different from the Aryan civilisation elsewhere. Likewise, later on, Islamic civilisation in India developed along its own lines, different from the lines of evolution in Persia, Egypt, Morocco or Arabia.

It took centuries for the Aryans to set the new house in order. Meanwhile there went on a brisk exchange of ideas between the old and the new peoples. They adopted each other’s art, rituals and social forms, even gods. The pre-Dravidians, who form the substratum of the Indian
population, are supposed to have bequeathed to India the democratic institution of **Panchayat**. The Dravidians supplied the main stimulus to the growth of the caste system. The material representation of gods and the building of temples to them were also Dravidian practices that were adopted and assimilated by the Indo-Aryans whose earlier gods, primarily nature forces, were invoked at sacrificial altars. Large masses of pre-Aryans were converted into Aryanism and given the name of **Vratyas**. The holy Trinity of the Hindu pantheon, rendered famous by the Puranas, was the result of a gradual amalgamation of **Vedic** and **Vratya** gods.

There are many interesting stories in the **Puranas** which tell of contests between the gods of the different races. Krishna of the pre-Aryans was an enemy of Indra, the king of the Vedic gods. But Brahmans soon identified him with the great Vedic god Vishnu, with the result that in time he became the most noted of the Hindu gods. So much so that it was Krishna in whose mouth was put the immortal precepts of the **Gita**. The supreme god of the pre-Aryans, Shiva, fights the family of Prajapati the father of the Vedic gods. Shiva wins and is offered a suitable position in the Vedic pantheon, but he is ingeniously identified with the fierce god Rudra of the Vedas. The conception of the Mother Goddess is by no means Vedic and took shape in later Hinduism mainly through the contribution that the conquered made to the religion of the conquerors. This process of getting in new gods continued long after the Puranic age. In Bengal
under the Sultans, both Hindus and Muslims jointly borrowing upon the manifestation of the Supreme Spirit, evolved a household deity, called Satya Narayan or Satya Pir, who is popularly worshipped till to-day.

Probably as a result of the devastating war at Kurukshetra, narrated in the Mahabharata, the lines of the ancient Kshatriya kings were blotted out; also the higher Vedic types of Brahmanism were lulled into inactivity. The great doings of the period that followed were confined to making laws to maintain the frame of society. Such a measure was naturally dictated by the instincts of self-preservation. The major Codes of Manu and others were now compiled with a view to consolidate the society imperceptibly at its base. It is a characteristic Indian technique. It speaks volumes for the wisdom of these law-givers that under circumstances adverse in every way they saved the country from disruption by releasing social forces without worrying about political implements. When these implements were forged anew by the heroic founder of the Maurya Empire, the principles of government, by combining political and social values, were enunciated by the now famous Kautalya.  

Anyway, when the next formidable batch of foreign conquerors made their appearance, India had enough social vitality to cope successfully with the situation, even to absorb them outright. These new races, Scythians, Huns, Gurjars and others, came at different times in different groups. The Scythians began their inroads into India from the second

century B.C. In the first century A.D. the Kushans made their incursions. Their noteworthy Indian king was Kanishka, reigning over an empire covering the Northern India and stretching as far down as the Narbada. Ultimately, the Sakas were subdued by the Gupta emperors. The Guptas were a renowned dynasty of Hindu rulers during the historical period. Their reign is called the golden age of Hindu arts and literature. What is of political importance is that the Brahmans rose to power in society in this age. The most important reason for this was that the Brahmans posed as the champions of Hindu nationalism at the time. Buddhism was, on the other hand, considered to be anti-national owing to its association with the Saka Kings who had been on occasions very cruel towards the Hindus. Rightly or wrongly that was the feeling and the prejudice served as the political reason for the prevalent antipathy to Buddhism, which had ultimately to leave the country of its origin.

The Huns came to India in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though their last king, Mihirkula, was vanquished by king Yasodharma of Malwa, supported by the Gupta monarch of Magadha, the Huns managed to remain for some time in possession of sacred principalities in Malwa, Rajputana and the Punjab. Not long afterwards the original Hun kingdom on the Oxus was knocked down by the Turks.

All these invaders emerging out of Central Asia slowly but surely settled in India. By doing so, they enriched in a way its culture, adding
to their peculiar gifts of chivalry and art. In regard to religion, they
adopted the worship of Shiva and Vishnu. Like the pre-Aryans of the
past, these Huns and Sakas were in time admitted into the Hindu social
system and, in return, they served the cause of Brahmanism by becoming
zealous protagonists of neo-Hinduismand. This social synthesis was a great
performance on the part of the Brahman who invested the converts with
an ancient Rajput lineage. To-day they are the very kith and kin of the
other Hindus, and no one has the temerity to assert that they were once
aliens and enemies. To-day the Rajput is tacitly accepted as the
descendant of the ancient kings and warriors of the Epic period.

Yet as a matter of fact, he belongs to the same stock as the Muslim
rulers of India. The difference is that the Rajput was made a Hindu after
he had been to India, while the Turk had embraced Islam before he came
to India. Over the whole of Northern India and Gujarat and Bengal, the
Rajputs held sway. It devolved on them to rebuild the political frame of
India that lost its cohesion after the death of Harsha. In spite of their
love of independence, the Rajuts were strongly tribal in spirit and lacked
a national outlook in political sense. Their code of heroism, so noble in
every way, did not take into account the question of political unity. War
was to them not a means to a matter-of-fact political end but a joy of
life, not a grim reality but a rousing romance. Romance was the master
passion of their life. The vision of an empire did not rise clear before
them. Lacking this political instinct they could not as a whole hold out against the next invasion that burst upon India as a mighty avalanche. From beyond the Himalayas a vast flood of new life streamed onward as one impetuous torrent over Northern India and soon swept down the East and the South. This was the influx of the Turkish Muslims — a warlike race admitted but recently into the fold of Islam. Victorious they marched into the country. At first they came for booty. Later they settled down in the country as conquerors. Not long afterwards they began to love the land of their adoption, and in time became as staunch Indians as the Hindus themselves. Thus it was that India became the common home of Hindus and Muslims. A comparative study of the Memoirs of Babur and Jahangir makes this process abundantly clear.

From fashions and festivals down to the very preparation of food, in social or in household affairs, their habits were cast in moulds nearly alike. In the matter of dress too, the two styles continued to evolve a new costume, the Sherwani, the tight-fitting Pyjama and the turban, in which we can hardly detect any Arab or Central Asian influence. The court etiquette became uniform for both Mughal and Rajput. The keen-witted emperor, Babur, felt highly amused at this growing synthesis in modes and manners, and called it the Hindustani-Way — the way of the Hindu and the Muslim of Hindustan.

With the evolution of new social factors and common economic

1. Memoirs of Babur.
interests, the distinctions amongst the Hindu and Muslim masses gradually faded. The upper classes too did not ordinarily betray identity except by certain special insignia: for instance, the tilak of a Brahman or earings of a Kshatriya used to show that he was a Hindu. Festivities were also shared by both communities and frequently formed the informal meeting ground for them all. Holl festival was attended to by Padshahs and Nawabs. The Muslim festival of Shab-i-barat in its social aspect was very much like the Shivratri of the Hindus. The visiting of tombs of saints had behind it the influence of Hinu customs. While Islam in India led the masses of the Hindus to revolt against castes and other evils practices, it lost, in its turn, much of its ancient Arabian character.

Once the Muslims were established in the land, the memory of the first bloody struggles began to fade away. Conquerors and conquered drew nearer and nearer to one another, till they realised that they belonged to one great country. This sense of belonging to one country was in time given a common basis of spiritual reality. Political oneness reacted on the religious life of the people. The simple and basic elements of the two faiths were harmonised. Philosophic speculations and investigations were left for the very learned. From humbler quarters arose a body of poet saints who sang of faith, of peace and brotherhood in ardent language to humble folk of every faith all over this vast land. Alongside of these saints, the artists of the two communities put their hands
together in the task of widening life and creating new values to inspire it. Soon beauty blossomed forth in line and in colour, and in song and speech. New arts lighted up the whole land. All around, the pen, the brush, the chisel and the voice delivered the message of a larger and fuller cultural life for India. On the political plane, the work of remodelling was all but achieved by Akbar. But while giving due credit to the great emperor, we must not forget that the Turkish and Afghan Sultans of Delhi and the Provincial Muslim rulers had already done a great deal of the spadework before Akbar set his hand to it.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN OUTLYING PROVINCES

From what has been stated above, it may be thought that life in the imperial capital was splendid but darkness shrouded the outlying provinces. But this was not the case.

Let us take Jaunpur first. It was the great city nearest to Delhi. The culture of Jaunpur is alive in the minds of many to-day. It lives through the gift of Khayal to Indian music. The Jaunpuri style of Khayal is a thing of joy in our daily life throughout India. For this enchanting legacy we are indebted to Sultan Husain Sharqi (1458-79). Sultan Husain was a reputed patron of learning as well. His court was crowded with lights bigger than those that shone even at Delhi. All the first rate
Muslim savants of the East had gathered at Jaunpur. Qazi Shihabuddin Daultabadi, known as the "king of sages" adorned that court. Jaunpur was so educationally minded that even a lady, somewhere about the middle of the 15th century, made a huge endowment for education. This lady, a princess in rank, built a big Friday Mosque with a college and large residential quarters attached. Jaunpur was remarkable for its University, and acquired such a fine distinction as a city of elegance and culture that Emperor Shah Jahan in ardent admiration gave it the charming name of Shiraz-i-Hind, or the Shiraz of India.

In passing we may refer to Kashmir, another kingdom not far from Delhi. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) translated some Sanskrit works into Persian at least a hundred years before the vast translation department at Fathpur Sikri was created under the auspices of Emperor Akbar. He replaced the Jizya and pursued a policy of benevolent toleration in his hill kingdom.

In the South too, this spirit of goodwill was in operation. The Bahmani Sultans and Vijayanagar kings were constantly fighting with each other. At one time a signal victory was won by the Bahmani Sultan. Thereafter an agreement was reached by negotiation: "The ambassador of the defeated king of Vijayanagar, Krishna Ray, told Muhammad Shah Bahmani, that as the Bestower of kingdoms had conferred on him the government of the Deccan, it was probable that his successors and princes of the Carnatic might long remain neighbours; which made it advisable to avoid cruelty in war; and they proposed, therefore, that a treaty should be made not to slaughter in future
battles. 'Muhammad Shah was impressed, and took an oath that he would himself do it and would also bind his successors to keep to this line of conduct.'

But this was not by any means the only instance of an understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Deccan. The finance department in the Bahmani kingdom was throughout in the hands of Hindus. From the time of the second Sultan on, there was a standing corps of Hindu bodyguards round the person of the Sultan. Besides, as time passed, it became increasingly difficult to secure Muslim recruits to the army from far-off Muslim states. The Muslim nobles too had always their own axes to grind, and the Sultans found that they could not be relied upon in times of trouble. As a result of this the number of Hindu officers and men in the army daily increased. This was very much more so in the five States that arose after the fall of the Bahmani dynasty.

We read in the Persian annals the names of a good many Hindus who rose to very high positions in these States — the Brahmans as ministers and the Kshatriyas as chiefs in the army. Besides, a number of Sultans were connected with the Hindu community by lood in marriages. There are two notable instances. The Sultan of Ahmadnagar was a Brahman, Bhairava by name, who adopted Islam and kept on the surname of Behere. The first Sultan of Bijapur was the famous Babuji Khamum, a Brahman lady by birth. But apart from this, Sardars of Jadav, Nimbalkar, Chadge, More

1. Elliot & Dowson,
and other families were the props of the various armies of the Deccan. Madanna, Kamalsen, Yesu Pundit, Murar Rao are some of the better known ministers. The last general to make a stand for the Ahmadnagar Sultanate was Shahji Bhonsle, father of Shivaji.

But the contact between the Hindu and the Muslim in the Deccan was not merely political. The cultural aspects of it are equally important. In the five states, especially Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, the whole revenue department passed into Hindu hands and the village accounts were kept entirely in vernacular. In Bijapur a new composite language, a mixture of Persian and Kanarese grew up and the Sultan himself has left us a number of pretty poems written in that dialect.

A composite style of architecture, a blend of Hindu and Saracenic styles, also came into existence of which we can still see specimens all over the Deccan.

Not only this, but a long line of saints — prototypes of Nanak, Kabir and Chaitany of the North — arose in the South and preached to both Hindu and Muslim a simple religion based on bhakti, or love of God. Their teachings reached every nook and corner of the country and gave it a shaking such as it had never received before.

The presence of a powerful Hindu empire across the border largely influenced the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in the five Deccan Sultanates. In their mutual struggles, each Sultan sought the aid
of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and for that purpose preferred to employ their Hindu noblemen as ambassadors. This naturally increased the prestige of these nobles and the Sultans tried in various ways to keep them faithful and loyal. Even after the fall of Vijayanagar their cordial relations continued and in their struggles against the Mughals, the Sultans received powerful support from their Hindu Sardars. The Hindu Sardars never formed a faction by themselves, in any state. Generally speaking, they sided with the Deccani and Abyssinian Muslim nobles against the foreign Afghan nobles. So that there never was any communal division in the ranks either of officers or men in these States.

In Bengal too, as in other parts of Hindustan, Islamic culture was making itself felt. A new chapter of cultural growth opened with the 12th century. The literature as well as the religious rites of the Province were breathing a new life and were taking new forms. The idea of One God was no doubt always there in Hinduism, but it was covered by an overgrowth of rites and ceremonies. It now asserted itself again and gradually spread over the whole land, relaxing the rigidity of the caste system and stressing the superiority of a simple devotion over complicated ritualism.

The contact with Islam gradually awakened a sense of social equality and undermined the pride and prerogatives of the upper classes. The following lines from an old Bengali book of ballads, written by Ramai Pundit, faithfully voice their feelings:
"The caste distinction will slowly be broken — for behold! there is a Muslim in a Hindu family.

"Thou art, O Khoda, I know, superior to all others.

"How I wish to hear the Qur'an from thy lips!

"Niranjan transformed to Allah will confer blessings."

A large section of the masses were worshippers of Dharma — a relic of the fast decaying Buddhism. These worshippers were opposed by the Brahmins, who had risen to power under the Sen kings. Buddhism was openly persecuted. When Islam appeared, the Sat-dharmis (Buddhists) and followers of other popular faiths felt a great relief. They even enjoyed the discomfitures of orthodox Brahmanism under Islam. They fancied that the God of Hindus, Niranjan the Formless One — had come to the world as Khoda to punish Vedic Brahmins. Hindu and Muslim masses commenced to take interest in each other's religious observances. Outward signs of this interest manifested themselves. Hindus offered sweets at Muslim Dargahs. They drew so close that the need of a common worship was realised. Sultan Husain Shah of Gaur forged an agreeable combination of faiths. It was the cult of Satya-Pir.

The Brahmins and the aristocratic classes put their shoulders together to stem the tide of these new forces. Yet the crash of the old system came from a Brahman of Brahmins. He was no other than Sri

1. Dinesh Chandra Sen's History of Bengali Language and Literature.
Chaitanya. He threw overboard the whole paraphernalia of Brahmanic rituals and preached that the love of God was the be-all and end-all of man's existence.

Many of his disciples came from the lower classes of society, and some were from amongst the Muslims. Once, as the story goes, five Pathans prepared for an attack on Chaitanya. Their intention was to loot his belongings. But they were overpowered by the saintly purity of their victim and gave up their plan. They were in time converted and became devoted Vaisnavas, and one of them got the name of Ramdas. At a later period, Bengal produced several Muslim Vaisnava poets. A few of them may here be mentioned by name: Alawal, Ali Raza, Shah Akbar, Nasir Muhammad, Habib, Salbeg, Kabir, Sheikh Lal. Very interesting are the poems of Kanai and Shamser Ghazi. In their padas, or songs in praise of Vaisnava gods, they conveyed a true ring of devotion and reached a high degree of poetic excellence. Side by side with all this, we find the plays of Hasan-Hussain incorporated in the Hindu Gajan songs. Amongst the mystics of the well-known Boul sect, we find both Hindus and Muslims. The name of Lalan Shah is to-day equally dear to both communities.

Chaitanya passed through Gaur on his way to Brindaban. He halted for a few days at a village which since has become famous under the name Tamalatala. He sat at a place under a tamala tree on four sides of which were keli-kadamba trees. It was at this spot that the Sultan's ministers,
Rup and Sanatan, became Chaitanya's disciples. It was here, again, that Sultan Husain Shah (1493-1519) himself saw the saint.

Chaitanya sang the love of Hari. He sang and danced in joy. People felt that the earth under his feet blossomed with lilies as he danced. He gathered crowds as he danced. The Brahmans of Navadwip petitioned to the Qazi to stop him, but the popular government of the Sultan did not hinder him.

The cult of Chaitanya was in its form thoroughly Hindu, and it was based on the Hindu Shastras. Still it may be said to have been influenced by the Islamic idea of equality. With the fusion of ideals once started, the fusion of forms was not a long way off. Here and there began to spring up religious orders which were based on both faiths and both forms of worship. Such an order was that of the Kartabhajas. A Kartabhaja Hindu might not give up sacred thread; a Kartabhaja Muslim might not give up shaving the beard. Sometimes a Muslim became a Karta or teacher. The first teacher, Karta Baba, left twenty-two disciples known as Bats Faqirs.

The ideal of religious affinity took a more tangible and beautiful shape in the vision of Tukaram, the great saint of Maharashtra, adored alike by the people and the king. One verse of his says this of the love of God:

"Every sound that we hear is Hari's name, whatever words are or
have been uttered. Tuka says, we servants of Vishnu are fully fed with his love."

Another lays the same stress on the Islamic faith:

"My mind dwells, 0! friend, on my Lord (Sahib) who is the Maker, 0! friend, meditate (zikr) on Allah, who is in the guise of all, Says Tuka, the man who understands this becomes a Darwesh."

It is a curious fact that Bengali language and literature owe a very great deal to the patronage of the Sultans. Books on Puranic Hinduism were written in Sanskrit. Under Brahman supremacy, the mother tongue of the masses had no place in literature. It was the new-comers, who, not knowing Sanskrit, took up the cause of the masses. Most of the Sultans of Bengal spoke and understood Bengali. They got the Ramayana and the Mahabharata translated from Sanskrit into Bengali. Nasiruddin Boghra Khan of Gaur ordered the translation of the Mahabharata. The renowned Maithili poet Vidyapati has immortalised Boghra by dedicating to him one of his songs. The Sultan led the fashion and Hindu Rajas followed suit. Inspired by Muslim example, Raja Kans Narayan employed Kavi Krittivasa to translate the Ramayana. Maladhar Basu received orders from Sultan Husain Shah to translate the Bhagavata Purana. Under the patronage of Paragal Khan, a general of Husain Shah, Kavindra Parameswara translated a part of the Mahabharata. His son, Chhote Khan, governor of Chittagong, commissioned Srikarna Nandi to translate the Asvamedha Parva of the
Mahabharata.

A civilisation depends for its perfection more on the quality of mind which is brought to bear on the facts of life than on mere material achievements, more on how it behaves than on what it possesses. A refinement in human relations is the true test of culture. Viewed from this perspective, we have no reason to look down upon our legacy of the medieval period — a legacy that constitutes our principal hope for the future.