CHAPTER VII

BHAKTI CULT AND SUFISM

Bhakti Cult

The Bhakti cult was the cultural assimilation in the society of India. The doctrine included peaceful, monotheistic and non sectarian movements. The saints evolved themselves in harmonious adjustment of the diverse people and religions. They discovered the path of universal truth. This noble message of universal religion or love and brotherhood of man was imparted in Medieval India by both the Hindu and Muslim saints. Akbar and Dara Shikoh kept alive this doctrine by the saints of the age and was continued till a new stimulus was given by Raj Ram Mohan Roy in the first of nineteenth century in India.1*

The medieval Bhakti movement attended its zenith in the fifteenth century a.d. by the lines and teachings of shining saints of the period, and was continued in sixteenth century also. The integrative approach

1*. Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, Thoughts on Trends of Cultural Contacts in Medieval India, p. 95.
of Kabir, the mysticism of Nanak and the devotional ecstasies of Chaitnya electrified the spiritual atmosphere in India.

According to Westcott (Kabir and Kabir Panth) Kabir is usually regarded the earliest teacher to mingle Islam and Hinduism.1* Kabir attempted his best to rectify the misunderstanding between Hindus and Muslims. In course of time he became the saint of Hindus rather than of the Muslims. It was due to this only because Hinduism was having simple doctrines. He found that the spiritualism may be easily expressed by adopting Hinduism and also in propogating it.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) a great religious leader did his best to break the barriers that separated Hindus from Muslims.2* Nanak preached unity of God. He rejected polytheism and condemned superstitions and formalised both the religions Hinduism and Islam in one 3*

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1*. Dr. Hidayat Ullah, Hindu Muslim Unity, 1977, p.11
2*. Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, Thoughts and Trends and Cultural Contacts in Medieval India, p. 127.
Bhakti movements paved its way in the Punjab where there was a great hold of Islam. They were in belief that nothing is real except God. The movement supplemented the doctrine of transformation or rebirth into the theory of Karma. 1*

Chaitanya paved a new wave of Bhakti Cult better known as Vaishnavism, in sixteenth century in Bengal. 2*

Dadu Dayal or Dadu (1544-1603) of Rajasthan was the founder of 'Parbrahma Sampraday'. He preached the same message of the Universal religion. He emphasised on Sufi methods of spiritual discipline. He also rejected polytheism, the theory of 'avtar' and preached all men are alike. 3*

Dadu of Rajasthan, Tukaram (1598-1649) the greatest Marathi poet and Chaitanya in Bengal represented the aspect of Bhakti Cult. 4*

Rajjab preached to know the Universal truth. He said that religions might be different but they

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2*. R.C. Majumdar, History of Medieval Bengal, p. 206.
4*. S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, p. 129.
all lead to the same truth, and the truth has no religion.¹

The exponent of Rama Bhakti Cult. was Tulsidas (1532-1623), the contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir. He was the follower of Ramanand. He expounded highest expression of love and devotion to God and quenched the thirst of wear world.²

The Krishna Bhakti Cult was founded by Vallabha-charya (1479-1531). Mira Bai (1498-1546) was ardent exponent of Krishna Cult in North India. She gave devotional literature to the world.³

Bhakti Cult got impetus in Bengal by Chaitanya and his prominent disciples. The Muslims had no knowledge of Persian and Arabic, caused the prevention of propagation of Islam. On the other side the saints used local language and enriched Bengali, literature.


Their preachings and expressions were also underslash of the local people.

SUFISM

There were far reaching effects of Hinduism on Muslim since the Arab conquests. They were in surprise to see richness of knowledge, philosophical ideas and sublimity of Hindus. They found that monotheism -God is one, was all ready prevailing in India since the ancient time and well known to Hindu saints and philosophers. Sufi influence is very much found in the literature and religious life of Sind. Actually Sufism started from Sind. Here Sufism got her literary and religious life.

Sufism took place in India. The doctrines of Sufism have resemblance with the Vedanta. So is regarded that both Bhakti Cult and Sufism had common origin in India.

2*. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, Medieval India, p. 68-69.
3*. S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India,p.16.
4*. Ibid, p. 16.
The main features of Sufism are Pacificism, the theory of peaceful settlements of dispute, contentment and non-violence, which are mainly the principles of Buddhism. These principles were fully and freely adopted by Sufis of India.\(^1\)

According to Habibullah that Sufism was the result of Indian Vedantism. Sufis created a harmony between the philosophical ideas of Islam and Hinduism. The ideas of Broad humanism and simplicity attracted many Muslims\(^2\).

Sufis adopted the philosophical ideas from Indian principles. They adopted the 'Nirvana' of Buddhism as their social idea of 'Fana' (the liberation from existence). The 'Analhaque' (I'm the truth) of Mansur is derived from the Vedantic 'Soham' (I'm that), and the 'Paspanfas' of Sufis is adopted (from Yogic exercise of breathing. The Hindu 'Japa' is borrowed by the Sufis as the 'Zikr'. The 'Tasbik' is taken from Buddhist 'Mala'.\(^3\).

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2*. Habibullah, Foundation of Muslim Rule in India, p. 305.

According to R.C. Zachner (Hindu Muslim Mysticism) 'Sufism is Vedant in Muslim dress. Some fundamental tenets of Sufism about Absolute or God, philosophic views regarding soul, idea of Universalhood or Unity were derived from Vedanta of Shankara.1*

Sufism was influenced by the mystic tradition of Vaishnavism. Sufis preached the relation between God and man or beloved and lover or master and servant, was totally a Hindu concept. A sufi of sixteenth century Shaik Abdul Sahid Washid Bilgram (1510-1608) compiled a Persian dictionary showing the relevance of the symbolic poetry of Vaishnava mysticism to Islam. The idea of pacificism and non-violence peculiar to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism were also adopted by the Sufis.2*

Muslims of India adopted the Brahmanic tendency of giving priority to title holders and claiming to be of a descent status, as they were surrounded by the Hindu environment. Originally any Muslim can join

any mystic order without having a descendent of the chief Sufi order. H. Surawardi said (Introduction of Arbery Hist. of Sufism) that these founders were either descendents from the Prophet or one of the immediate successors and relatives. 1*

Muslim saints believed in super natural practices like walking on water, flying in air etc. which were popular in Hatha Yogic traditions. The Prophet never allowed such physical culturists. This regarded as an influence of Indian practices. 2*

Some Hindu social customs (bidat) were penetrated into the life of Muslims which were unknown to outside India. Pilgrimage to shrines and saints the 'urs' or yearly prayers at their tombs, making offerings of food and sweets and partaking of these (tabarak), taking vows at the end and burning flames (chirag) over the tombs and shrine saints are Indian innovations. According to Faber (Islam to-day) has said- 'These are a result of the influence of Hindu environment which has also resulted in veneration for the Muslim

1*. Ibid, p. 139.

saints, gradually merging into such phases as are hardly distinguishable from the saint worship of Hindus and the antimistic phases of pagan primitive religious life.  

Sufi followed the practices included 'salat' (prayer), fasting and asceticism. Asctic practices and head-down prayer or pranayam (restraint of breath, pass-i-anfas) were borrowed from 'natha yoga' by Chistis. 'Zikra' (remembering God or reciting His name) was associated with vaishnava recitals of the 'Name' which included song and dance leading to ecstasy (hal).  

'Sama' was another feature of Sufism which was adopted by specially by the Chistis and Qadiris, in which the Qoran and Hadis were recited with music and dance. This had a great resemblance with Hindu devotional songs 'Kirtan'.  

Vedantic type of Suffism in Islam was introduced, like 'sama' a particular type of devotional dance,

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1*. Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, op. cit. p. 139-140.
2*. R.C. Majumdar, M.W. Mirza, Mughal Empire, p. 665.
resembled with Hindu 'Kirtan'. In the medieval period when the Sufis was proceeding in the advance stage the Sufi doctrines were influenced by the Indian system especially the 'Vedant Sara'.

Sufism was passing through the stage from theosophy to pantheism (Universal God), is a purely Hindu influence. The merger could be possible by the Sufis as they accepted pantheism in their creed.

Actually Sufism was a faith of intellectually advanced authors and mystics who felt emotional enjoyment and became free from bigotry. So it is called that the root of Sufism is in Vedanta of Hindu.

Some orthodox Sufis preached that there was no wrong in conversion from one religion to another. They

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4*. M.L. Ghagi, Medieval India Cultural and Thought, p. 223.

5*. T.P. Hughes, Notes on Mughhammadanism, 1875, p. 227.
also propogated the philosophical idea that differences of religion, country and sect had no hinderance in relationship with human being. This ideology was fully influenced from the Vedanta. They also opposed rituals and principles of all the religions and it helped in communal harmony. The Sufis collected the good points of all the religions and preached them. They also accepted the saints of other religions.  

Sufis preached the principles of pantheism had begun to lead a life like Indian Sadhus, Buddhist monks. They adopted the Buddhist view of life. Belief in the Unity of God and the growth of indigenous monotheistic faith prevailed all over the land with the preaching of Hindu and Sufi saints.

Sufism made its place in Islam voluntarily. There was no force from outside the religion. Philosophical ideas like mysticism theosophy—a system of philosophy professing to attain inimitable knowledge of

1*. Hiralal, The Cultural Heritage of India, p. 536.
liberation and is liberated. 1*

Sufis introduced many ideas to Islam other than a form of mysticism and ritual. The dispersion of rosary (Subha) among Muslims was the contribution of Sufis. This instrument of devotion was borrowed from Hindus. 2* They always wore the rosaries of Tulsi. So Hindu and Muslims alike could join this fraternity.

The 'dervish' or mendicant of Sufis are called in India as 'fakir' or poorman. 3* When a 'Murshid' wanted to be a 'faqir', he had to adopt some practices. First of all he had to arrange a feast or religion assembly in which about forty to fifty 'Fauqirs' were invited. Flowers, sandwood, sweets, hemp (Ganja and Bhang), dry tobacco (Subha) for chewing and tobacco mixed with treacle for smoking (Guraku) were distributed among the invitees. For becoming a 'faqir' he had to shave the hairs of body. He had to wear the shroud (Kafani), the sleeveless shirt (alfa), the rosary

1*. Ibid, 221.
3*. D.S. Margoliouth, Mohammadanism, 1926. p. 213.
doors were open for medicants and wanderers who received shelter there.\textsuperscript{1*}

Some Muslim 'faquirs' used ganja, bhang, opium, wine and other liquors which were prohibited in Islam\textsuperscript{2*} 'Dervisha's Orders were formed in imitation of the Hindu and Buddhist orders.\textsuperscript{3*}

The concept of 'pir-i-muridi' is closely related to Hindu 'Guru-chela' relation. Pir or Shaikh had a great importance in the life of disciple as he led to the ultimate Reality, as in Hindu Guru or 'acharya' has in social and religious life. During 16th and 17th century majority of religious minded Muslims in India had a pir of some Sufi order, because they wanted salvation as Hindu got it under the guidance of his spiritual Guru. 'Ba-pir was used by Muslims of India as a proof of respecting a religious consciousness.\textsuperscript{4*}

Most of the 'faquirs' like Hindu 'Jogis' carried

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\item \textsuperscript{1*} Abdul Karim, Social History of the Muslim in Bengal Down to A.D., 1538-1959, p. 134.
\item \textsuperscript{2*} Martin, Eastern India, ii, p. 108-110.
\item \textsuperscript{3*} W. Crooke, Things Indian, p. 203.
\item \textsuperscript{4*} R.C. Majumdar, Mughal Empire, p. 665.
\end{itemize}
a piece of iron (chhari), a wooden club (sonta), an iron prong (Zatar-takya), sometimes put wood under their arm pits to support them while sitting, a back scratcher (pushtkhar), like an artificial hand made of some metal with a handle, a bag of lamb skin (himacha), a wallet (Kachhol), a fan (Pankha).  

Some people of lower class of Muslim society accepted the idea of the religious saints of Hindus., though it was outside the fold of Islam- One group of these sects was called 'vairagis'.

Living saints were frequently seen by Indian Muslims of the Punjab. They had a belief that these saints might fulfil their desires and rescue from sufferings. The tombs of saints were built and Indian Muslims used to see the tombs to pay respect to them, though it was against the Islam. It reminds us the worship of relics, even the Muslims were famous as an

1*. W. Crooke, Islam in India, p. 294.
3*. M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslim, p. 10.
inconclastic sect. Indian Muslims got more pleasure in building a halo round their heros. Thus Hindu religious customs were adopted and practised by Muslims of India. So Hindu and Muslims had a great respect for saints and sometimes it was difficult to know whether such places were of Muslim shrines or Hindu temples.

The dargahs of the Sufi were regarded as pious buildings on earth, where the people attained their wishes. Most of the dargahs of Sufi in Bengal were erected near the sacred buildings of Hindus - Shiva temple, Buddhist monstyr so to get the recognition like Hindu saints. The main feature of Indian Islam was to pay reverence for pirs or saints and even their graves. It was purely a Hindu practice. The growth of the cult of 'Satya-pir (True Saint) was prevailed in Muslims of Bengal without the use of any image.


3*. Abdul Karim, Social History of the Muslim in Bengal Down to A.D. 1538, 1959, p. 134-137.

4*. S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, p. 131.

The Sufis sang ecstatic songs in Hindi and fell into trances. Sufis loved music as they found the food and support of the soul in it. They believed that the love with God could be achieved through music. Akbar encouraged the art of music so the music created super relation within the hearts of devotees of Sufism. The saints were good musicians. They played on the madoline (tambura) and a kind of guitar (Sitar, Sarangi) and used to dance. Rapturous songs of Hindus were sung by the Sufis and they fell into trances.

Sufism spread in India like any thing during the period of Akbar, where Hindus and Muslims made a close relation and union. This could be possible only due to his liberal views.

Dara Shikoh was a great follower of Sufism. He adopted the Yogic practices and doctrines of Hindu saints. He had a deep knowledge of Hindu religion.

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1. A Social History of Islamic India Mohmad Yasin, p.91.
3. A Social History of Islamic India, Mohmad Yasin p. 91.
Shaikh Salim Chisti, Shaikh Aziz Chisti, Kwaza Billa (1563-1673) were the famous Sufis of Akbar's time Kwaja MOhd. Masur, Shaikh Abdur Rahim, Shaikh abdul Latif of Decca were the saints of Chisti sect at the time of Aurangzeb. Prince Dara Shikoh was the follower of Kadmi Sect of Sufism

Muslim saints were Shah Shaikh Muhibullah, Mir Sulaiman, Shaikh Muhim Fani, Baba Lalis for whom Dara became the follower in 1653. It is said that a scholar of Yoga and Vedanta Kavindracharya Sarawat made such a powerful appeal in Darbar i Am that not only Dara but even Shah Jahan were influenced by his speech and moved to tears. Mahakaviraj and Panditraj Jagannath Mishra a Hindu court poet of Shahjahan wrote panegyrics in praise of Dara Shikoh. The emperor rewarded the poet with silver of his weight.

Other hindu saints and scholars Panchraj of Banaras, Phatan Mishra, Kavi Hari Ram, Haranath (entitled Mahapatra by Shahjahan), Banwali Das (Vali)

1*. Yusuf Hussain, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture. p.54.
Persian and Sanskrit Munshi of Dara were patronized by Mughal Emperor.¹*

Eminent Sufis were Moinuddin Chisti (1634-35), Mia Mir of Lahore (1550-1636), Mulla Shah Muhammad Badakshi (died in 1651).

Mystical theosophy became dominant in the Muslims of India by the time of Akbar. It was popularised by the musicians, scholars and poets. Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi and Dara's theosophy were greatly related to these practices.²*

The liberal and eclectic trends of Akbar's Sulhi-i-Kul and Din-i-Ilahi affected the orthodox Muslims. The mystic doctrine was supported and to be identified with God-. Aurangzeb also followed this doctrine and tried to reform Indian Sufism.³*

The Crown Prince Dara Shikoh was called the 'Princely Sufi' in India's cultural history and famous as a promoter syncretic.⁴*

3*. R.C. Majumdar, Mughal Emperor, p. 671-672.
pantheism (tauhid) was found only in Vedanta. 1* Dara was so much influenced by Sufism and Hindu culture that he presented the stone railing to Keshav Rai Temple at Mathura. It was a positive proof of Dara's bold catholic idealism and testifying that faith lies hidden beneath the idol. 2* Only Dara believed that the inheritor Akbar's Empire must pursue Akbar's policy and idealism. 3* He mixed with Hindu ascetics and scholars because he came into contact with them as they were patronized by him. He accepted them as the liberal influence of the age. He even learnt Hindi and wrote verses in it. He also composed a 'prasasti' in honour of Nrisimha Saraswati' of Banaras. All these reasons Hindu regarded him a re-incarnation of spirit of Akbar. 4*

Baba Lal a Great Hindu Saint was the preceptor of Dara Shikoh, the brother of the emperor of

1*. Thought on Trends of Cultural Contacts in Medieval India, Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, 145.
3*. Ibid, 147.
4*. Ibid, 151.
Nizamuddin Auliya was one of the Greatest Sufis of Chisti order in India.

The 'Malang' or 'robust' resembles in many ways with the Hindu Gosain ascetics. They were the followers of Jamanjati of Zinda Shah Madar and from a branch of Madariya. Like Hindu saints, they wandered through deserts and mountains and visited many great saints. They used to meditate by lighting of fire (dhuni) and rubbing ashes on their bodies like Hindu saints.

Some saints did not like the slaughtering of animals and preached the non-violence and the cult of Ahimsa. It was continued during the Mughal period in India.

It is also be seen from this direction that Bhakti Movement of India influenced Indian Sufism. Now the Indian Sufis believed that idolatory was another way

1*. Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindu (i), 347 ff.
3*. Khaliq Ahmad Nizam, India During the Thirteenth Century, p. 18.
of worshipping God.¹*

Actually Sufis were the custodian of Islam in India. They preached the teachings of Prophet in a true sense. In this way Sufism got a place in Islamic India.²*

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