CHAPTER III

ISLAM AS RELIGION - STATE AND HINDUISM

Hindu influence was having its place silently as the Muslims were surrounded from all sides with the inhabitants. Indian Muslims were people of land with beliefs and customs that had been deeply influenced by their fellow inhabitants of another faith.¹ But Muslims adopted Hindu customs in India for which official Islam says nothing.² Neo Muslims gave to Indian Islam an indigenous temper between the two religions easy and natural.

The wholeness of life, toleration and forbearance are the main features of Indian philosophy. Indian Muslims were influenced by these popular traditions of ancient India. Mughal emperors except Aurangzeb, adopted the policy of religious toleration, as they realised that the Laws of Divine Faith had no direct relation with the State administration. They believed

that all are equal before law and justice. So, they never dared to adopt the policy of fierce persecution and religious intolerance, as they had seen the consequences in the early Muslim State.

Now Mughals recognised non-Muslim subject as his own subject and realised that they also be protected in his State and they were allowed to have their own religion and social customs as full right of citizen.

The Mughals were also struggling for their existence and survival in India. They were in need of the guarantee of protection in India. They also wanted to be recognised by the Indians as their legal representatives of the State. For this there was no escape but to adopt the religious policy of toleration.

The first Mughal emperor Babur could be tolerant only after getting power in India. After ascending the throne, the administrator had to think for the Indian subjects, where non-Muslims were in majority. In his 'memoirs' there is no mention of destruction of Hindus.

Akbar also followed this policy and took steps for the synthesis of both the religions. Akbar realised that the stability of Mughal rule was possible only when ruling class became Indianised. The alien invaders
He also brought about the declaration of 'Mazhar' which gave him the power of interpreting of Quran. At the final stage Akbar declared a new faith Din-i-Ilahi to repress the bigotry of the Muslims.¹ He ordered, he would accept anything which would be for the welfare of the State, even if it was not allowed in the Quran. Akbar rose above the narrow mindedness and bigotism of his religion. He granted full liberty for the Hindus to adopt their religion. He constantly associated with the Hindus and even discussed with them on important issues of religion. He did not repeat the mistake which was done by his father, Humayun, by not accepting the Rakhi of the Rajput lady. He observed the Hindu festival of 'Raksha Bandhan' to make the friendly relations with the Hindus. He also marked 'tilak' on his forehead like a Hindu.

Worship of nature started in Mughal period. Akbar worshipped the Sun and sacred fire was used for religious purposes.² Since the Vedic period worship of nature and sacred fire was in practice in India.

The Mughals also adopted non-violence against

¹. V.A. Smith, Akbar the Great Mughal, Chap. VIII. p. 211-218.
². M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, p. 16.
Jihad, as now they thought that the problem of Hindu society might be solved by non-violence. Akbar stopped eating meat completely and ordered not to kill animals and even birds on some specific days. He stopped going for hunting and ordered the same to his subedars.

Akbar observed 'Jharokha Darshan' as Hindu Rajas did. After one year (Barsi) of death of his mother he cleaned his hair from head and mourned for her. Performing 'Pabos' laying prostrate, was started by Akbar. People kissed Akbar's feet, fully influenced by Hinduism which resembled the act as done before the Gods of Hindus.

Islam has always opposed priesthood but when Akbar declared himself Ghaji and Mazhar and became the head of Islam in India, it shows the Hindu influence of incarnation of religious personalities, like Budha, Mahaveer. Indian Muslims displayed honour to the saints and their toms in Mughal period.1* Akbar built the tomb of Mui-ud-Din Chisti and used to go to the tomb to pay the homage. Jahangir never forgot to go on foot to Akbar's tomb in Sikandra and took dust of his father's feet to his head.

It was significant that Hindus were also strong followers of his religion as the Muslims were staunch supporters of orthodoxy. Teachings of great saints—Ramanand, Guru Nanak and Chaitanya, curved the wrong ideology of different religions. Others were, Kabir Chisti and Dara Shikoh who tried to remove the differences of the two faiths—Hinduism and Islam. Actually steps for synthesis were started by Akbar the Great and he may be said to be one of the supreme architects of this movements of synthesis.¹

Free thinking and protest of Akbar curved the orthodoxy of Islam, as the prevailing circumstances forced to do that. He did not lose any opportunity of manifesting his sympathy towards the Hindu religion. Akbar’s constructive attitude enabled to secure a strong footing for the Mughal in India. He married with Hindu ladies to observe their religious performances closely. Distribution of gold and silver as charity was continued by Akbar on the occasion of 'Sankranti' day. He presented valuable things to the fourth Guru, Ramdas of the Sikh. Once he presented a golden Chatra

¹. Humayun Kabir, Islam in India, p. 582. op. cit.
to the Goddess of Jawalamukhi at Kangra. He placed orders to his Subedars and officials not to force anybody to accept Islam. He never molested any body due to his religious views.

It is to be remembered that at the time when Akbar became emperor he had no Kingdom, but at the time of his death there was a consolidated Kingdom, included Kashmir, Balochistan and Kabul. All that could be possible with the help of Hindus and Rajputs.

It is also remarkable that Tipu Sultan believed in Hindu ceremonies, as he invited the Brahmans to perform religious rites for his success in the battle. He never forgot to make an offering to the seven stars 'Sapt Rishi' of seven different kinds of grain, or an iron pan full of sesame oil, or a blue cap and coat and one black sheep and some money, according to Indian astrological point of view. 1*

Idea of monotheism was already in Hindu religion but it was depressed due to Islamic oppression. When Islam propogated the idea of Monotheism, the Sufis, who were both Hindus and Muslims, accepted the rich

1*. Muhibbul Hasan, History of Tipu Sultan, 1951, p. 373.
ideology and the Hindu system of theology.

Mirza Mazhar (1702-1781) a Sufi of Delhi expressed that Hinduism was one of the religions which like Christianity and Judaism, has been superceded by Islam. He declared the Vedas to be revealed and the great personalities mentioned in it to have been prophets. He even held that the prostration of Hindus before their idols was an expression of reverence and not an association of any Gods with the true God.\(^1\)

Punjabi Muslim money landers started taking interest like others of his class, even taking of interest is a bad sin according to Quran.\(^2\) Most of the Indian Muslims in the Punjab till 1865 disposed their deeds due to superstitions.\(^3\) The Meos and Minas of the Native states of Alwar and Bharatpur and purely Hindus names or tagged on Khan to a Hindu name.\(^4\) In the same way, Muslim priests performed the worship of idol in a Hindu Temple near Suratgarh in Rajasthan.

\(^1\). Humayun Kabir, Islam in India, p. 388. op. cit.
\(^2\). Abdur Razzaq Qureish, Mirza Mazhar, Jan-i-Janan Aur Unka Urdu Kalam, 1961, p. 120-121.
\(^3\). R. Levy, Sociology of Islam, p. 165.
\(^4\). M. Mujeeb, The Indian Islam, p. 10.
He accepted the offerings from the devotees.1

In the district of Purnea near north of the Ganges almost all the Muslims had a little shrine called 'Khuda-i-Ghar' or God's Home, where prayers were offered in the names of both Allah and Kali. Kalasthan could be seen in every village area.2 Muslim Patels and Mirdhas, Southwards from Delhi around Indore in Central India observed Hindu names, had Hindu dress, some of them recognised Bhavani and other Hindu deities.3 Hindu living was found in the Qasa of Thana, Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Hindu Gods were worshipped by Pijaras and they kept their idols in their houses.4 There was a temple in the sub-district of Chunval, forty miles to the North of Ahmadabad in the village of San Khanpur under Pattan where a niche was found and it was named after Bahuchara, one of the names of the Goddess Bhavani.5

1. Ibid, p. 19.
3. Ibid, p. 15.
Muslims of Bengal worshipped Hindu deities like 'Sitala' who controls small pox and Rakshya Kali who protects her votaries from cholera.* Even some Muslim women sacrificed milk and ghee to please the Hindu Goddess of small pox.**

Converted Muslims from Hindus in South India worshipped 'Narsimha', the lion incarnation of Vishnu, Mata the Mother Goddess and also believed in magics, spirits, and fairies.***

The changed outlook of the Mughal emperors regarding religion resulted stability in administration or in politics and victorious in military interventions but so many scholars, poets, musicians, painters, architects made the Mughal empire as strong as it could be and forgot the past atrocities done by the Muslim rulers in India. When the Mughal recognised the Hinduism in the State, it was a recognition of the power in India.

Prayers, fast, alms, pilgrimage and public worship were left optional to Indian Muslims in Akbar's period. The Era of the 'Hizra' and the Arabian month

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1* W. Crooke, Islam in India, p. 8.
were changed for solar year. Use of Arabic language was not so common. Arabian names (as Muhammad Ali etc.) were in disuse. Even the ordinary salutation 'Salim aleikum' was changed in 'Allahu Akbaru' (God is most great) to which the answer was given 'Jalla Jalaluhu' (May his brightness shrine fort). Akbar prohibited the Persian custom of prostration (or kissing the ground) before the King, which the Muslims regarded as a mark of respect and exclusively appreciated to the Deity.

Aurangzeb tried to abolish the non-Islamic mode of salutation, but he could hardly prevent the Muslims from courtesy greeting of Ram Ram to Hindu. 'Letter of Dariyakh (Afridi Chief of Khaiber to Harisinh Kangarawat Ataliq, "Biradriman az in Janib Ram Ram" Akhbarat, Jaipur Archive-Diggi Colin quoted in Yasin.

1*. Mountstuart, History of India, Elphinstone, 1889, p. 537-538.
2*. Ibid, 538.
3*. Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, Thoughts on Trends of Cultural Contacts in Medieval India, p. 60.