INTRODUCTION

The present theme of research is of great interest for the scholars of Medieval India. In the present scenario, this theme is also of great importance for the cultural aspects and national issues. The Mughal period was an epoch in Indian history. It represents the legacy of a cultural synthesis in India. The adherents of different religious communities, people of different castes and diverse cultures present at the Mughal court played a vital role in the formation of a composite culture in India. The most important part in this cultural development was played by the saints of the time.

The Mughal emperors being secular in their religious attitude maintained good relations with both sufi saints and non-sufi (Bhakti) saints of the time. The ‘Sant Sahitya’ or the literature of Indian saints particularly the sectarian works of ‘Pushtimarga’ and ‘Radha Vallabha’ sect produced during 16th century, have admired the liberal ideas of the Mughal rulers and nobles and appreciated them for maintaining goodwill and amity with their non-Muslim subjects. The literature of Pushtimarga like, ‘Chaurasi Vaishnuavon Ki Varta’ and ‘Do Sau Bawan Vaishnavon Ki Varta’ and ‘Bhaktamal’ etc. is very glaring as far as this aspect is concerned. During Mughal period all the sections of society practiced their religion without any restriction such a situation is reflected in the following lines as written by a 16th century writer.

“तिनके राज सबे सुख पावें ।
आप अपने धर्मन सब ध्यावें ॥
(In his Akbar’s realm all people are happy. All people follow their own religious. He has issued an order to all governors to permit the construction of temples which have turned into abodes of saints, thus connecting the hearts of people with the lord of the Universe.)

All the religious divines and recluses belonging to different non-Muslim religious sects, whether Bhakti saints, jogis, Sanyasis, bairagis, priests and heads of different religious institutions are treated as non sufi saints. They came into contact with the Mughal emperors and enjoyed their patronage.

It is said that Babur came into contact with Guru Nanak and was impressed by his spirituality and piety and asked him for his blessing.\footnote{Bagwat Mudit, Sri Rasik Ananyamal, ed. Lalita Prasad, Venu Prakashan, Brindaban, 1960, p.44.} Humayun, having liberal outlook, is said to have made a grant of 300 acres of land in Mirzapur, for the maintenance of Jangambari Math of Benaras.\footnote{M.A. Macanliff, The Sikh Religion low Price. Pub. Delhi, 1993, vol-I, p.p. 109-121.} The saints of Radha Vallabha sect were attached to Humayun and were admitted to imperial service.\footnote{C.f.S.R. Sharma, The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers, Delhi, 1988, p.10}

**Objective**

The objective of present research is to pursue a thorough study of the theme which will reveal the nature of the relations between the Mughal emperors and non-sufi saints. The project under study seeks to cover the changes that took place in society as a result of the influence

\footnote{Bagwat Mudit, Sri Rasik Ananyamal op. sit p22}
made by non-sufi saints on the Mughal ruling class. It seeks to measure the extent of the impact on the religious policy of the Mughal emperors and their attitude and contribution towards the formation of a composite culture in India.

**The Chapterisation of the thesis:**

It has been divided into five chapters. A separate chapter has been devoted to each Mughal emperor, i.e Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb; fifth chapter is devoted to the later Mughal emperors. There are a large number, *farman*, parwanas and Sanads, pertaining to the grants and patronage of all the Mughal emperors, to the different non-Muslim religious institutions and non-Muslim religious divines. These documents are the testimony of the tolerant religious outlook of all the Mughal emperors.

The first chapter relates to Akbar’s relations with Non-Sufi saints. Akbar attempted to assimilate every section of society at his court by adopting the policy of *Sulh-i-kul*. The cultural achievement of his reign were immense.

He maintained good relations with non-sufi saints of the time. Akbars relations with three Sikh Guru’s namely Amar Das, Ram Das and Arjan Deo were very cordial. He granted land to Guru Amardas and paid visits to Guru Arjan Deo. The saints of Pushti Marga or Vallabhacharya sect, were benefited to a large extent by Akbar’s patronage. Vithalnath, the head of Pushti Marga, received so many *farmans* and concession from Akbar, by his mother, and also by many other Mughal nobles. Akbar also came into contact with a large number saints who belonged to Pushtimarga, namely Surdas the saint
poet Khumbandas, Gangagawal, Bhagwandas, Nand Das the saint poet, Narain Das Lohana was in imperial service, Raja Prithvi Singh, saint poet, and Chaturbhuja Das Mishra, etc. Akbar also met Swami Hari Das of Sakhi Sampradaya. Akbar's nobles Man Singh, Birbal, Raja Todarmal and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Kahana also had good relations with the saints of pushtimarga. Surdas Madan Mohan a saint poet of Gaudiya Sampradaya was a revenue officer in imperial administration.

One of the most famous non-sufi saint of 16th century was Dadu Dayal. He visited Fatehpur Sikri to meet Akbar and had religious discourse with him. The jogis of Jakhbar of Punjab received liberal grant from all the Mughal emperors. The Mahants of Jakhbar Gaddi met Akbar and received many land grants. Various jain saints regularly stayed at Akbar’s court and won his confidence. They also took part in the discussion of Ibadat Khana. They received many grants and titles from him. Hiravijaya Suri, Bhanuchandra Upadhaya, Shantichandra, Vijayasena Suri, Nandvijaya etc. Akbar also visited Jadrup Gosain at Ujjain. Ganga Rishi, a saint of Kashmir visited Akbar’s court. The saints of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan and the temples belonging to this sect were greatly patronized by Akbar. The Goswamis related to different temples of Vrindavan received large number of imperial grants. Akbar’s nobles also granted lands to this sect.

The Parsi priests greatly influenced Akbar’s ideas. Dastur Mehrji Rana and his son Kaikubad were invited to the court and received land grants from Akbar. The Goswamis of Jangambari Math
of Benaras also enjoyed Akbar’s patronage and received so many grants. The Brahmans related to the sacred Pushkar Lake also received imperial grants. One of the saint Sant Das Gosain also received a piece of land from Akabar.

The Second Chapter is related to Jahangir’s relations with non-sufi saints. Jahangir having a cosmopolitan nature and having religious bent of mind was always curious, of having the company of religious divines. Jahangir’s relations with Sikh Guru Arjan Deo were dictated with political exigencies though he had cordial relations with his son Guru Hargobind. Jadrup Gosain, lived during his reign also. Jahangir paid many visits to Jadrup at Ujjain and Mathura and was very impressed by his piety and knowledge of Vedanta. So many jain saints stayed at Mughal court during Jahangir’s reign and received titles and grants of concession. The prominent jain saints at his court were, Siddhicahndra, Vijayadeva Suri, Vivekaharsha, Bhanuchandra etc. Chandar Nath, the Mahant of Jakhbar gaddi and other jogis of this sect received grants by Jahangir and his nobles, like Itmad ud daula.

The head of Jangambari Math, Arjun Jangam also attracted the attention of Jahangir from his princely days. They received many lands grants by the emperor. The Goswamis and temples of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan were immensely benefited by the imperial grants during Jahangir’s reign and enjoyed the support of Mughal administration in solving their disputes.

The Brahmans of Pushkar lake also received, the whole village as madad-i-maāš by Jahangir. The emperor also met Sanyasi Moti and had religious discourse with many other Jogis and Sanyasis.
The Third Chapter is related to Shahjahan and his relations with non-sufi saints. Shahjahan adopted the same policy of toleration towards different non-Muslim sects and did not attempt to reverse the policy of his father and grand father. His sons also had liberal religious outlook towards different non-Muslim sects. Prince Murad Bakhsh granted daily allowance for lighting to the temple of Mahakaleshwara at Ujjain. Prince Dara Shikoh, having a religious bent of mind, always enjoyed the company of different non-Muslim religious divines. Shahjahan, like his predecessors, patronized the saints of Pushthimarga and also protected their property rights by issuing farmans from time to time and Dara Shikoh is equally responsible in patronizing this sect. Girdhar, son of Vithal Rai received many land grants. The goswamis of Jangambari Math of Benaras also enjoyed imperial bounty during Shahjahan’s period. He issued many farmans to this Math including the farman protecting the property of Jangams from imperial encroachment. The Goswamis and priests of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan and Mathura were granted large tracts of land by Shahjahan and they enjoyed liberty for sounding time gong, by an imperial farman.

The emperor also took keen interest in the management of temple of this sect and frequently issued orders to support them. The jogis of Jakhbar also benefited by Shahjahan’s grants. Sikh Guru Hargobind, in the beginning had cordial relations with the emperor, but during later period, due to some misunderstanding he was engaged in constant armed struggle with him. Dara Shikoh during his flight after the defeat at Samugarh met Guru Har Rai and sought his
blessings. He also came into contact with a saint Baba Lal at Lahore and had long religious discourse with him.

**The fourth chapter** is related to Aurangzeb and his relations with non-sufi saints. He did not reverse the policy of his fore fathers, but retained the practice of patronizing different non-Muslim religious institutions and divines. the Jain literature of 17th century praised Aurangzeb for his religious toleration. The Goswamis of Jangambari Math at Benaras received large land grants by him. He at a time restored the property of Jangams by his orders. Aurangzeb’s relations with Mahant Anand Nath of Jakhbar, were very cordial. The Emperor used to write him letters and asked for medicines prepared by the latter. Aurangzeb, while he was in the Deccan, met a Bairagi Mangal Das and had religious discourse with him and granted many gifts and a farman fixing an annuity of Rs. 5. The jain saints, Bhim Vijaya Suri and Jina Chandra Suri met the emperor and received land grants. Bhagwant Das Gosain and Ramjivan Gosain of Benaras came into contact with Aurangzeb and received grants.

The priest Sudaman Brahman of Umanand temple of Gawhati in Assam also enjoyed imperial bounty and received land grants. The Mahant Balak Das Nirvani of Balaji temple at chitrakoot received grant by aurangzeb for the expenses of Puja and Bhog of Thakur Balaji. The jogis of the Maths of Malwa, Panth Bharti and other were also patronized by Aurangzeb. The emperor also granted daily allowances and charities to the priests of Mahakaleshwar Temple of Ujjain. There are many other Sanyasis, jogis and gaqirs such as Gharibnath, Kishan Das Bairagi, Purushutam and Pursuram Sanyasi
etc. The Goswamis and temples of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan and Mathura also enjoyed Aurangzeb’s patronage, who took keen interest in solving there disputes. His sons like Prince Azam also took interest in solving the disputes of this sect and restoring their property. When Aurangzeb ascended the throne, Har Rai was the Guru of the Sikhs. The emperor invited Har Rai to his court, but the Guru sent his son there. Guru Har Kishan also did not respond to Aurangzeb’s invitation. From the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur, relations between the Mughals and the Sikhs became hostile, and the last Guru, Gobind Sigh who converted the Sikhs in a military organisation, was in constant armed struggle with the Mughals. The Guru tried to have an interview with the emperor in the Deccan, but the later was died before the Guru could reach the Deccan.

**The fifth chapter** deals with later Mughals and their relations with non-sufi saints. During the time of Bahadur Shah I, Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Bahadur Bairagi, ravaged large part of the Punjab and fought many battles against the Mughals. He was captured with some of his followers during the time of Farrukhsiyar. Bahadur Shah I granted land to the Jakhbar jogis and also to the Goswamis of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan. Farrukh-siyar patronized Goswamis of Chaitanya sect, and also granted land to Tula Ram Bairagi in Arrah in Bihar. He also granted a village to Balnath faqir free of tax. Jahandar Shah also granted land to the Goswamis of Chaitanya sect.

Muhammad Shah also maintained good relations with non-sufi saints of his time. He was a man of cosmopolitan nature and having cultural tastes. The art of music during his time flourished to large
extent, and he patronized it. He abolished tax on pilgrims going to bath in Ganga. He issued a *farman* in the name of Mahanto Gosain, of Bengal and confirmed his priesthood. Muhammad Shah also patronized the Goswamis of Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan and from time to time issued orders to support them financially. He issued order even to solve their mutual disputes. The Jakhbar Jogi Mahant Hira Nath also came into contact with Muhammad Shah, he and his noble Zakariya Khan issued orders in favour of this Mahant. The Goswamis of Jangambari Math of Benaras also enjoyed Muhammad Shah’s support. There are large number of *parwanas* issued in support of different Sanyasis, Bairagis and Faqirs by Muhammad Shah, such as Deonath Sanyasi, Naranyan Nath Sanyasi, Gosain Badnath Faqir, Ramdas Faqir, Dharani Bharathi Faqir Sanyasi, Mehr Das Faqir Nanakshahi etc.

After Muhammad Shah, his son Ahmad Shah ascended the throne. He also had relations with non-Muslim divines. He patronized Shaheb Das Bairagi, Meeti Ram Faqir and other Brahams etc. Alamgir II also maintained relations with non-Muslim divines. He granted a village to Mahant Manoo Ram Faqir Nanakshahi.

Shah Alam II after proclaiming himself emperor, spent much part of his reign in exile. In those days of adversity, he patronized and granted financial support to a large number of Bairagis, Sanyasis, Faqirs, Goswamis etc. He issued *farman* in support of the Goswamis of Pushti Marga. He also granted land as *madad-i-maāsh* to a number of faqirs, Bairagis, such as Gosain Kewalnath, Gosain Badal Das Faqir, Kashi Dutt and Dewal Dutt Prohit, Bihari Das faqir, Gosain
Ramgir, Gosain Kirpa Ram, Nand Lal and Sita Ram Bairagi, Prem Das Bairagi, Ramchad Das Gosain Nanakshahi, Gosain Raghunath Das Bairagi, etc.

The Mughal rulers, by and large, maintained cordial relations with non-Muslim saint of this country. But it was not a new feature of the religious policy pursued by the rulers here. They had continued the legacy of their predecessors, the sultans of the Delhi. The following brief survey of this feature will be sufficient to illustrate this point.

Muhammad bin Qasim, when he occupied Sind in 712 A.D, declared the non-Muslim as *Mushabah ba Ahl-i-kitab* those resembling the people of the book and gave them the status of *Zimmis*, so that they enjoyed freedom of worship and status at with the Muslims.\(^5\)

This position given to non-Muslim was accepted by the majority of Muslim jurists and all the Sultans of Delhi. When sultan Shahabuddin Ghori annexed most of the parts of northern Indian, he continued to inscribe the figure of goddess ‘Lakhsami’ on his coins.\(^6\) Qutbuddin Aibek allowed the Rajput princes to rule over Delhi, Ajmer and Gwalior even after the conquest of those regions.\(^7\) During the reign of Jalaluddin Khalji, non-Muslims performed their religious rites without any restriction.\(^8\)

Non-Muslims were admitted to important posts in the administration. Brij Tan was *kotwal* of Delhi during Jalaluddin Khalji

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and Hatya Paik was also an important officer of his time.\textsuperscript{9} Thakur Pheor’s work on medieval temple architecture ‘\textit{Vastusara},’ written during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, do not make any reference of state interference in the construction of the temples.\textsuperscript{10} Malik Naik Akhur Beg a non-Muslim was an important officer and the commander of the right wing of Alauddin’s forces.\textsuperscript{11} An inscription found at Ladna (Jodhpur), states that Alauddin had appointed a non-Muslim ‘Sudharana’ as his treasurer.\textsuperscript{12} Alauddin’s stern dealings with \textit{Khuts, Muqqaddams} and Chaudharis were dictated by economic considerations. He also adopted a policy of compromise towards the rulers of the Deccan. When Rai Rama Deva of Deogir came to Delhi, Alauddin showered on him pearls and precious stones. He stayed at Delhi for six months. Alauddin presented to him one lakh gold tankas and conferred upon him the title of Rai Rayan and he also gave him the privilege to use coloured canopy. The district of Nausari in Gujarat was transferred to him as a gift.\textsuperscript{13}

Alauddin also paid respect to non-Muslim religious divines. It is clear from the Jain recordes that Alauddin invited Acharya Mahasen to his court and had religious discussion with him. It is also said that the leader of Digambara sect, Purna Chandra suri commanded respect at his court.\textsuperscript{14} The Jain records also praise, Alauddin’s governor of Gujarat, Alp Khan, for permitting the reconstruction of temples

\textsuperscript{10} V.S. Agarwal, A Note on Medieval Temple Architecture JUPHS, 1993.
\textsuperscript{11} Barani, op.cit. p.320.
\textsuperscript{12} Pandit Ram Karna, Ladna Inscription of Sudharana. The Journal of Indian History, 1936, p.183.
\textsuperscript{13} Mohammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, Trikh-i-Farishta, p.118.
\textsuperscript{14} K.M. Pannikar, A Survey of Indian History, 1936, p.131.
destroyed earlier. He also made a donation for a Jain temple. The non-Muslim traders were so rich and prosperous during Alauddin’s period, that they advanced money to the nobles.

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq patronized many Jain saints and scholars. Once a Jain monk Jaina Prabha Suri visited the court, where Sultan treated him with respect, made him to sit by his side and offered him many gifts, which he refused to accept. The Sultan impressed by him, issued a farman for the construction of a new rest house for the monk. Once the Sultan restored an image of Mahavira to Jina Prabha Suri, which was brought from Asinagar and kept in imperial store house at Delhi. He issued farman granting religious freedom to Jains. Similarly, according to Kalyan inscription of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq dated 1326 A.D. as Madhukeshwar temple and ‘Shivalinga’ was damaged during a rebellion, it was restored later on by the governor of Kalyan, Ahmad bin Ayaz, on the request of the trustees of the temple, with the orders that, ‘Since the worship in the temple is a religious duty of the petitioners, they should follow it.” The installation ceremony of the deity was performed with great rejoicing. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq also participated in the festival of Holi.
Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq also had good relations with the Jains. He honoured three eminent Jains namely Gunabhadra Suri, Munibhadra Suri and Mahendra Suri who was an astronomer and Mathematician.\(^{22}\)

Firoz Shah appointed Rajputs as his personal body guards and Rai Bhiru Bhatti, a relative of his mother was appointed the head of body guards.\(^{23}\) According to Badauni, Firoz Shah appointed a Brahman as a teacher in a Muslim College.\(^{24}\) The Sultan also appointed a special officer exclusively for the welfare of the non-Muslims, as is evidenced from a fragmentary Persian inscription discovered from Bihar Sharif.\(^{25}\) There is Sanskrit inscription found at Rajgir, Patna, of the period of Firoz Shah Tughluq dated V.S. 1412/1355 A.D., refers to the erection of a temple of Parsvanatha. It bears the name of Firoz Shah as, ‘Surtana Sahi Peroja.’ A similar inscription bearing the name of Firoz Shah, dated V.S1421 / 1364 A.D was found at Alwar in Rajputana. And another was found at Gaya, Bihar. It was dated V.S 1429/1373 A.D.\(^{26}\)

The Lodi Sultans also adopted a liberal policy towards non-Muslims. Sultan Bahlool Lodi had friendly relations with many Raja’s Viz-Rai Karna, Raja Kirti Singh and Man Singh of Gwalior.\(^{27}\) Bahlool Lodi also supported Bir Singh, in suppression of a Lodi Afghan.\(^{28}\) Similarly, during the reign of Sikander Lodi, Raja Man Singh Tomar

\(^{22}\) c.f. Agha Mehdi Husain, Tughluq Dynasty, p.323.
\(^{24}\) Abdul Qadir Badauni, Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh, vol-I, p.323.
\(^{26}\) Appendix to Epigraphia Indica, vols-19-23, Delhi, 1983, p.100.
\(^{27}\) c.f. A.B. Pandey, The first Afghan Empire in India, p.246.
\(^{28}\) Ibid – p.246.
occupied a high position in his Darbar.\textsuperscript{29} Sikandar Lodi is said to have granted maintenance land to a jain saint, Jain Buji near Malesar in Bikarner.

Vikramaditya, son of Raja Man Singh, was given a high rank in the court of Ibrahim Lodi and was so loyal to the Sultan, that he died fighting along with him in the battle of Panipat in 1526 A.D.\textsuperscript{30}

Sher Shah built Sarais on the highway at a distance of four miles and separate quarters were built for Hindus and Muslim, where they could get beds and cooked food, prepared by Brahman and Muslim cooks separately and they were provided food according to their caste rules.\textsuperscript{31} Once Sher Shah impressed by the honesty of Brahmana granted an entire village to him.\textsuperscript{32}

Under Islam Shah Sur, Hemu, a petty official gradually rose to the dignity of a high grandee,\textsuperscript{33} and as he had won many battles, Adil Shah Sur honoured him with the title of Raja Bikramajit.\textsuperscript{34} Islam Shah Sur also patronized a non-Muslim poet Surdas, who frequently visited his court.\textsuperscript{35}

**Development of Bhakti Movement in North India**

The origin of Bhakti goes back to the Vedas, and its teachings were also expounded in ‘\textit{Bhagawad Gita}.’ Bhakti or faithful devotion

\textsuperscript{29} c.f. K.S. Lal, Twilight of the Sultanante, p.193.
\textsuperscript{31} Elliot and Dawson, the History of India as told by Its own Historians, Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi, vol-IV, p.p.417-18.
\textsuperscript{34} Abdullah, Tarikh-i-Daudi, op.cit. p.196.
to personal god, was considered as the means of attaining the goal of human life i.e salvation.\(^{36}\) The earliest saints of Bhakti belonged to Tamil lands in South India, where the aspect of loving devotion to Shiva and Vishnu developed. These saints were the ardent devotees of Shiva and Vishnu known as Alvars (Vaisnava saints) and Adiyars (Saiva saints). They flourished between 7\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) centuries. These devotees of Siva and Vishun developed the cult of Bhakti.\(^ {37}\) Shankaracharya who hailed from south India during 9\(^{th}\) century A.D, preached the idea of Maya (illusion) and according to him, the separation of God and the phenomenal world was due to ignorance, that the world was merely a phenomenon and not reality. It evolved out of the principle of Maya (illusion). The human ego is identical with God and His individuality is Maya. His reality is Brahman. He emphasized on knowledge of God i.e Isvara. Shankara established a logical monistic system, which later on lost its egalitarian character and was taken over by Brahmanas who treated the system for rituals and ceremonials and imposed caste restrictions.\(^ {38}\)

It was the teacher of Ramaniya yamuna muni, who directed him to write a commentary on Brahma Sutras, to refute the theory of illusion or Maya and to establish the religion of Bhakti. Ramanuja was born during eleventh century near Madras.\(^ {39}\) He modified the situation and argued that the grace of God was more important than knowledge about him and according to him the path of Bhakti was open to all irrespective of caste. He enrolled disciples from all castes. He was the

\(^{37}\) Ibid – p.87.
\(^{38}\) Ibid – p.p.97-98.
\(^{39}\) Ibid – p.99.
founder of the sect, *Shri Sampradaya*. The aim of Ramanuja’s teaching was the refutation of Shankara’s absolute monism and Mayawad and the establishment of Bhakti within the philosophy of Vedanta.\(^{40}\) According to him the soul attains God by Bhakti. It first purifies itself by sacrifice and performance of duties and acquires concentration and meditation which lead to actual visualization of Bhakti.\(^{41}\)

Another famous Bhakti saint was Ramananda, who was considered as a bridge between the movement of north and south. He was born at prayag (Allahabad) and later on became the disciple of Raghavananda who was associated with *Sri Sampradya* of Ramanuja.\(^{42}\) The most significant contribution of Ramananda was to open the path of Bhakti to all, without caste distinction. He preached worship of Rama as an incarnation of Vishnu. He enrolled disciples from all castes, including the people of low caste. His famous disciples were Kabir, Ravidas, Pipa, Saina, Raidas and Sadhana etc.\(^{43}\)

The most important Bhakti saints of 15\(^{th}\) century were Kabir and Guru Nanak, they both were against caste distinctions, and unnecessary rituals and expounded the message of Hindi-Muslim unity.

Kabir was the son of a Brahman widow, born in Benaras during 15\(^{th}\) century. He was brought up by a Muslim weaver Niru. He became the disciple of Ramananda, and preached the unity of God through

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\(^{40}\) Ibid – p.100.
\(^{41}\) Ibid – p.102.
\(^{42}\) Ibid – p.144.
\(^{43}\) Ibid – p.145.
Bhakti, whom he calls by several names like such as Rama, Govind, Allah, Sain etc. Kabir strongly opposed and denounced idol worship, pilgrimages, rituals and bathing in holy rivers.\textsuperscript{44} He married and led a life of a house holder. Kabir tried to bridge the gulf between Hindus and Muslim and according to him all religions were different roads to the same goal.\textsuperscript{45} His followers were known as Kabir Panthis.\textsuperscript{46} The mission Kabir was to preach a religion of love which would unite all castes and creeds.\textsuperscript{47} Kabirs poems and sayings are collected in his \textit{Bijak}.

Guru Nanak was another great Bhakti saint of North India. He was born in 1469 in the village of Talwandi in Punjab.\textsuperscript{48} At the age of thirty seven years, he left his home and family for his first journey.\textsuperscript{49} He wandered all over India and neighbouring countries\textsuperscript{50} and during the span of his journey he preached his own ideas i.e the worship. He emphasized the unity of God. The mission of Nank, Tarachand remarks, was the unification of the Hindu and the Musalman and he realized that in order to heal the wounds of the society it was essential to end that conflict of religion.\textsuperscript{51} Guru Nanak was against the caste system and ritualism. He taught in the language of the people which was one of the reasons which determined the success of his mission.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{45} G.H. Westcott. Kabir and the Kabir Panth, Calcutta, 1953, p.36.
\textsuperscript{46} For Kabir Panth, See, Ibid, p.p.66-68.,
\textsuperscript{47} Tara Chand, Influence of Islam of Indian Culture, op.cit. p.165.
\textsuperscript{50} Var of Bhai Gurdas, Ibid – p.35.
\textsuperscript{51} Tarachand, op.cit p.168.
\textsuperscript{52} Yusuf Husain Khan, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1957, p.29
Another popular Bhakti saint of 16\textsuperscript{th} century was Dadu Dayal who lived at Naraina in Rajputana. The followers of Dadu were called Dadu panthis. Dadu in his teachings talked about the oneness of God. He disregarded religious and caste distinctions, and tried to bring different religions at one platform.\textsuperscript{53}

Other prominent saints of 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century were Maluk Das, Dadu’s disciple Sundardas etc. They all preached universal brotherhood. Another important saint of 17\textsuperscript{th} century was Baba Lal, with whom Dara Shikoh came into contact. He also preached for religious synthesis, and attempted to reconcile the followers of Islam and Hinduism.\textsuperscript{54} Pran Nath, the founder of Pranami sect, lived in the later part of 17\textsuperscript{th} century. His seat was at Panna. He was well versed in the sacred books of Islam. He attempted to propagate a faith which should combine the two religions. In his work ‘Qulzum Sharif,’ he brought together texts from the Quran and the Vedas and tried to show, that they are in compatible one of his work is called ‘Qayamat nama,’ in which he tried to reconcile Hindus and Muslims and said they have a common faith.\textsuperscript{55}

**Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti**

Sagun Bhakti relates to the worship of a deity with attributes i.e. the deity worshiped in some form like Rama Krishna, Radha etc. The saints propounded the sagun bhakti were Vallabhaacharya, Chatanaya, Mira Bai, etc.

\textsuperscript{54} Tara Chand, op.cit .p.196.
The Nirgun Bhakti relates to the worship of God without attributes i.e. the God worshiped as formless. The saints preached Nirgun Bhakti were Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dadu Dayal, Pran Nath etc.