CHAPTER - V
Contributions of Islam and Muslims to The Indian Culture.

This chapter discusses contributions made by Islam and Muslims to the Indian Culture in the Middle Ages as envisaged by Hindus. The ideas of the authors reveal the penetrating effects of Islam and its followers on the Hindu culture and religion. Although the authors unanimously agree with the contribution of Islam to Hindu culture, few have reservations in anticipating its influence on Hindu religion. The authors assert the emergence of a composite Indian culture borne by the amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The process of identification and promotion of this composite culture received its impetus from the freedom movement of India. Hence the authors of this era project the synthesis of both Hindu and Muslim in India. The contribution of Islam to India is conceded in several domains of society, polity and economy. In the realm of society the contribution of Islam is accepted in the loosening of the rigid caste system. Emergence of Nationalism or composite culture’s resistance to the colonial powers record a notable Muslim contribution. Muslims enriched economic life of Indian culture in medieval times. The Hindu authors have recorded many contributions. Nonetheless, the influence of Islam on Hindu religion has also vehemently been rejected by a few.
With such varying opinions the chapter records the ideas of scholars like Tarachand, M.N. Roy., B.N. Pande, I.Samanta, Vivekananda, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, Rama Shankar Srivastava, T.L. Vaswani, K.D. Bhargava and Kalika Ranjan Qanungo and J.Bimal Chaudhari.

Tarachand’s opinion about contribution of Islam to Hindu thought can be summarized by his statement:

“if in the development of the Hindu religions in the south, any foreign elements are found which make their appearance after the seventh century, and which cannot be accounted for by the natural development of Hinduism itself, they may with much probability be ascribed to the influence of Islam, provided, of course, they are not alien to its genius.”

(Tarachand 1976:34)

He opines that,

“The progress of religious thought in the south reveals a growing absorption of Muslim ideas, into Hindu Systems”

He explains:

“the philosophies of Sankara, of Rāmāniya and others had their roots in the systems of the past, their presentation was original, but in the case of the latter it appears probable that they did not grow up utterly regardless of the new currents of thought which then flowed in the country. But if in their case
it is only possible to give a judgement which must be largely
conjectural, the evidence leaves almost no doubt that the
Virsaiwas and the Siddhārs were largely influenced by
Islam”. (Tarachand 1946:129) He notes “Siddhārs were a
school of philosophical rhymists, who were Yogis as well as
medical men and alchemists. They were severely
monotheistic, they had no use for Vedas and Sāstras, or for
idolatrous practices, and they repudiated metempsychosis.
The hymns of the Siddhārs remind one of the
uncompromising severity of Islam. Their conceptions of God
and absorptions in Him are reminiscent of the teachings of
the Sufis, for both describe the ultimate reality as Light and
both give to Love a dominating position among universal
forces. In regard to alchemy especially they were the
disciples of the Muslims their attitude towards it was the
same as that of Dhul Nūn Misri and those who followed
him.”

He however discusses of the evolution of a distinct Indian Culture with
adequate support from Muslims. He notes:

“Indian culture was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely
Muslim. It was indeed a Hindu-Muslim culture. Not only did
Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu
science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered and the Muslim reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life”. (Tarachand 1946:137)

He asserts that,

“in the give and take of culture between Muslims and Indians it is difficult to assess accurately the share of each ........ the Muslims received many ideas from India and perhaps India received through Islam a reflection of its own contribution.......But the fact remains that a number of elements were absorbed into Hinduism through its direct contract with Islam and these elements were presented to India impressed with the Islamic mould”. (Tarachand 1946:111)

He deduces that

“from the 9th century onwards in South India certain characteristic point to Islamic influence. These are the increasing emphasis on monotheism, emotional worship, self surrender (prapatti) and adoration of the teacher (gurubhakti) and in addition to them laxity in the rigours of the caste system, and indifferences towards mere ritual.”

According to him after the fourteenth century onwards an attempt of approximation between Hindu and Muslim faith were made by both the sides. This synthesis had its effect on Hindu religion, art, literature and science which absorbed many Muslim elements In the field of literature it
was the effect of Muslims in India that indigenous literary medium like
the Urdu and the Hindi was established. In the field of science:

“Hindu astronomers took from the Muslims a number of
technical terms, the Muslim calculations of latitudes and
longitudes and various other items of the calendar (Zich) and
in horoscopy a whole branch which they called Tajik. Hindu
medicine borrowed from the Muslims the knowledge of
metallic acids and many processes in astro-chemistry and
arts.”

Of the many

“crafts and arts that the Muslim introduced in India, mention
may be made of the manufacture of paper, of enameling and
faience, many woven stuffs and damascening” Muslim
domination tended........to create a political uniformity
and a sense of larger allegiance.”

According to him the most vivid and picturesque contribution of Islam
can be seen in

“customs, in intimate details of domestic life, in music, in
the fashion of dress, in the ways of cooking, in the
ceremonial marriage, in the celebration of festivals and fairs,
and in the courtly institutions and etiquette of Marathi,
Rajput and Sikh princes.” (Tarachand 1946:141).

He deduces that Islam and Muslims caused a change in India. While in
the economic life of India this change was considerable, in the social and
political life, they were great. He acknowledges the Muslim contribution
in Bengal,
"When……. The Muslim conquest took place, it gave a definite check to Brahmanism, but encouraged the half-suppressed ancient cults, stimulated the movement of reform, and encouraged the growth of Bengali literature."

On the authority of Dinesh Chandra Sen he writes,

"the Muslim rulers of Bengal appointed scholars to translate the Rāmāyana and the Māhabhārata from Sanskrit into Bengali which they spoke and understood." (Tarachand 1946:214)

He asserts that,

"The strong belief of Islam in a personal God had to be counteracted in this country by forms of religion in which the personnel element of divinity predominated. So the Sākta and the Vaisnava religions flourished and the Saiva religion with the impersonal ideal and mysticism in which man rose to the level of his God in the Advaitvāda, was gradually thrown into the background, as the masses did not comprehend its speculative features." (Tarachand 1946:217)

Such instances of interaction of Hinduism and Islam gave rise to syncretic cults and practices. As,

"the Hindus offered sweets at Muslim shrines, consulted the Qurān as an oracle, kept its copies to ward off evil influences with similar acts."

According to the author it were the teachings of Islam that has influenced the movement started by Chaitanya. He quotes Rānāde. "the severity of the monotheistic creed of the Muhammadans was distinctly impressed upon the minds of
these prophets (Kabir, Nanak and others). The worshippers of Dattātraya or the incarnation of the Hindu Trinity, often clothed their God in the garb of a Muhammadan Faqir. The same influence was at work with greater effect on the popular mind in Mahārāṣṭra, where preachers, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans, were calling the people to identify Rāma and Rahīm and ensure their freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism and caste distinctions, and unite in common love of man and faith in God.” (Tarachand 1946:221)

The author suggests that,

“Hindu and Muslim elements coalesced to form a new type of architecture.” (Tarachand 1946:243)

He lists several temples and palaces built through the entire length and breadth of India that had an extremely strong influence of Muslim style of art and architecture. He asserts that,

“not only did this Hindu, Muslim style become dominant in the monumental art of India but it also acquired the same hold over all utilitarian architecture – houses, streets, landings and bathing places (ghāts).” (Tarachand 1946:257)

He opines that it were the Muslim rulers,

“that set the example of patronage of art and literature and the Hindu princes imitated them ……… the style created by the Hindu and Musalman artists of the Mughal court was copied with local variations by the court artists of Jaipur, Jammū, Chambā, Kāngdā, Lahore, Amritsar and distant
Tanjore; and a common style prevailed throughout India.”  
(Tarachand 1946:274)

M.N. Roy purports the Havell’s theory of Islam’s contribution to India.

He opines that,

“No great people, with a long history and old civilization, can ever succumb easily to a foreign invasion, unless the invaders command the sympathy and acquiescence, if not active support of the masses of conquered people.” (Roy 1958:81)

He notes that Muhammad Ibn Kasim conquered Sindh with the active assistance of the Jats and other agricultural communities oppressed by the Brahman rulers and followed the policy of the early Arab rulers, as

“he allowed them to repair their temples and to follow their own religion as before, placed the collection of revenue in their hands, and employed them in continuing the traditional system of local administration.” (Roy 1958:82)

For the evidence he quotes the work of an ardent admirer of ancient Hindu culture, Havell from his book, ‘Aryan Rule in India’—

“Those who did so (embraced Islam) acquired all the rights of a Mussalman citizen in the law courts, where the Qurān and not Aryan law and custom decided dispute in all cases. This method of proselytism was very effective among the lower castes of Hindus, specially among those who suffered from the severity of Brahmanical law with regard to the impure classes.”
He opines that when Islam emerged in India it had completed its role in other parts of the world. He remarks that,

“even in its days of degeneration and decay, Islam represented spiritual, ideological and social progress in relation to Hindu conservatism.” (Roy 1958:84)

He cites Havell’s work; who pointed out that,

“it was not the philosophy of Islam, but its sociological programme, which won so many converts for it in India.”

The author further argues that,

“If the sociological programme of Islam found support of the Indian masses it was because the philosophy behind that programme was better than the Hindu philosophy which had been responsible for the social chaos from which Islam showed a way out for the masses of the Indian people.”

He quotas from Havell that,

“the social programme of the Prophet ..... gave every two believer an equal spiritual status ..... made Islam a political and social synthesis and gave in imperial mission .... Islam was a rule of life sufficient for the happiness of average humanity content to take the world as it is .... Islam reached the zenith of its political strength at the critical period when the conflict between Buddhist philosophy and that of orthodox Brahminism was a potent cause of political dissension in northern India.”

Roy finds Islam to have promoted original unorthodoxy and irreligiosity through the Arab philosophers. He asserts that,
"the Mohammedan power was consolidated in India not so much by the velour of invader's arms as owing to the propagation of the Islamic faith and the progressive significance of Islamic laws." (Roy 1958:89)

He remarks that,

"the rise of reformers like kabir, Nanak, Tukaram, Chaitanya etc. who evidenced a popular revolt, against Brahmanical orthodoxy, was to a great extent promoted by the social efforts of Mohammedan conquest." (Roy 1958:90)

He posits

"the revolutionary idea of the common origin of all religions was conceived for the first time by the Arab thinkers."

He quotes Havell:

"the effect of the Mussalman political creed upon Hindu social life was two fold: It increased the vigour of the caste systems and aroused a revolt against it. The alluring prospect which it held out to the lower strata of Hindu society was as tempting as it was to the Beduins of the desert ..... (It) made the Sudra a free man and potentially a Lord of the Brahmans. Like the Renaissance of Europe, it stirred up the intellectual waters, produced many strong men, and some men of striking originality of genius. Like the Renaissance also, it was essentially a city cult; it made the nomads leave his tent and the Sudra abandon his village. It developed a type of humanity of full of joce de vivre..."

B.N. Pande defines the composite culture in India as a legacy of Islam, counted as Islam's most prominent contribution to Indian culture.
Muslims originated the roots of nationalism in India according to him at
the end of Mughal era. He notes,

"the universal surge of loyalty and devotion towards Bahadurshah, the symbol of political revolution conclusively showed, for the first time in history, that India had become politically self-conscious and that the foundations of Indian nationalism had been truly and deeply laid." (Pande 1987:56)

He quotes Cunningham to express the influence of Islam and consequently its contribution to Indian culture.

"The first result of the conflict (between Hinduism and Islam) was the institution, about the end of the fourteenth century of a comprehensive sect by Ramananda of Banaras. He seized upon the idea of man's equality before God, and admitted all class of people as his disciples." (Pande 1987:56)

He shares with Tarachand's opinion about the contribution of Muslim rule in the promotion of the indigenous languages of the land.

I. Samanta expresses Islam's contribution not just to Indian culture but to the world civilization. In his opinion,

"many of the views of western thinkers were experiences of much later time and ......Islam can be regarded as their predecessor." (Samanta 1988:152)

He notes,

"Islam made an appalling impression on the believers of other religions and which compelled them to think a new,
remodelled and modified their religious dogma.” (Samanta 1988:170)

In the field of political ideas and knowledge of working out a government, he notes:

“the idea of forming an empire on the basis of equality, fraternity and understanding on the basis of the thread of religion” is “the most singular contribution of Islam.” Hence, “Islam can be said to be predecessor of many modern progressive political ideas.”

Swami Vivekananda asserts that,

“There is scarcely any science or branch of art that is not sanctioned and held up for encouragement, directly on indirectly in the Koran, or in the many passages of the Hadis, the traditional sayings of Muhammad.” (Vivekananda 1994:V5,532)

He concedes

“Mohammadan conquest gave good things to Indian Culture.” (Vivekananda 1994:V3,271)

He explains that

“the Mohammadan conquest to India came as a salvation to the down trodden ..... to the poor.” (Vivekananda 1994:V3,294)

In his opinion it were Mohammadans who taught Indians

“to wear tailor-made clothes.” (Vivekananda 1994:V4,368)

He also justifies the influence of Hinduism upon Islam. He declares,
“Vedantic spirit of religious liberality has very much affected Mohammedanism.” (Vivekananda 1994:V5,310)

He disagrees with any contribution made by Hindu reformers in the Hindu thought in the first place, which consequently negates any trace of Islam’s influence. He notes that the energies of reformers like Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya or Nank

“was for the most part spent in checking the rapid conquest of Islam among the masses, and they had very little time left to give birth to new thoughts and aspiration.” (Vivekananda 1994:V6,165)

Nevertheless, he declares,

“for our motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam - Vedanta brain and Islam body - is the only hope.” (Vivekananda 1994:V6,416)

This declaration proves the influence of Islam on his mind.

M. K. Gandhi notes that,

“Islam’s distinctive contribution to India’s Culture is its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are normally within its fold.” (Gandhi 1970 :V40,58)

S. Radhakrishnan: In his opinion,

“the reform movements of Ramananda, Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak show the stimulus of Islam.” (Radhakrishnan 1963:18)

However, he notes that,
"the Indian form of Islam is moulded by Hindu beliefs and practices; Popular Islam show the influence of Hinduism."
(Radhakrishnan 1940:339)

T.L. Vaswani opines that.

"If Islam received from India, it also gave to her things of value and beauty." (Vaswani 1921:4)

He regards Guru Nanak and Sufi movement of Sind as the mutual reactions of Vedanta and Islam. He declares:

"the democratic creed and simplicity of Islam communicated to India a new impulse of life. Islam has been a nation building force in this country; and History salutes Akbar as the third of empire builders in a line of historical succession to Asoka and Chandra Gupta."

In the field of architecture he notes,

"Islam introduced an element of energy into Indian art and literature, and it made contributions to architecture. About fifteen new styles of architecture were introduced by Muslims in India and Central Asia." (Vaswani 1921:6)

He asserts that,

"Islam has given the world a religion without priests; Islam abolished infanticide in Arabia; Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence from drink; Islam emphasized the great qualities of faith, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice, Islam introduced a vigorous Puritanism into Asia and Europe, deprecating even dancing and card playing... because the torch-bearer of culture and civilization in Africa,
in China, in Central Asia, in Europe, in Persia, in India.”  
(Vaswani 1921:14)

In the field of education he notes that,

“at a time when Europe was in darkness, the Muslim scholars of Spain held high the torch of science and literature. They taught medicine and mathematics, chemistry and natural history, philosophy and fine arts.”

He deduces that,

“Islam has made several contributions to the thought and life of India. Islam has been one of the nationalizing forces in India. Islam has enriched the art and architecture, the poetry and philosophy of India.”  (Vaswani 1921:15)

He observes that,

“the reform movements of fifteenth and sixteenth century – the movements of Kabir, Nanak and Dadu – felt the influence of Islam.”  (Vaswani 1921:16)

In the field of art and architecture he notes:

“Muslim architecture has enriched Europe and Egypt and India with some of the noblest buildings; Muslim architecture has made a positive contribution to the spiritual and aesthetic stock of the human race.”  (Vaswani 1921:35)

K. D. Bhargava shares Samanta’s view of Islam’s contribution to India and the entire world. It was spirit of Islam according to him which,

“restored freedom to human intelligence by arts and letters and scholarship and gave freedom to the soul and conscience by strenuous effort after religions and democratic equality.”  
(Bhargava 1961:4)
He notes that Islam gave the world,

“a faith of sublime simplicity and directness.” (Bhargava 1961:3)

He asserts that

“the force generated by Muslim energy in various fields and branch of knowledge was so strong that it still continues to ignite, the spirit of Modern Europe, America and Young Asia,” (Bhargava 1961:125)

It was due to the presence of Muslims in India that,

“at a time when superstition had interposed a veil between the human soul and God, and freedom of conscience had not yet been established, India took the lead in the progressive evolution of the human spirit which marked her off from the rest of mankind.” (Bhargava 1961:186)

He asserts that,

“Muslim rulers were animated by a feeling for cultural and religious progress which found its fullest expression in the great centers of learning in Persia, Samarkand, Delhi, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova and Granada,”

He notes that,

“Muslim cultural emphasized the power over the outer world which the positive sciences, and the human science, such as history, geography and ethnology communicate.” (Bhargava 1961:187)

He deduces that,

“Islam in India transformed Indian society and culture in a way which is hardly recognizable at the present day.”
He describes that,

“Islam assimilated the modes and traditions, customs and conventions of practical administration which endured for centuries, and is the foundation of the present day Indian administration. It adapted the institutions current at the time to the needs of a changing world, and fortified and adorned their rule, build good laws, good arms, good friends ad good examples,” (Bhargava 1961:188)

He declares that,

“the Muslims achieved for India the transition from the ancient to the modern world.”

Moreover,

“the spirit commemorated by Muslim historians and scientists in the spirit of modern thought. Muslim culture gave laws to medieval India in language, literature, fine arts, poetry, historiography and administration without Muslim Culture; it is improbable that India would have taken the place of the proud pre-eminence. She held in Asia in the seventeenth century.” (Bhargava 1961:189)

In his opinion it was Islam, which

“transferred India’s spiritual energy to the sphere of material development and administration vigour.”

He praises the Mughal rule in India and notes that,

“the Mughal’s noblest contribution was the stability, security and unity which they gave to India at a time when Europe was undergoing the horrors of the thirty year’s war and
religious toleration was non-existent except in the Dutch Republic.” (Bhargava 1961:200)

He asserts that the greatest contribution of Mughal rule in India was the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture. He notes,

“on the manners, etiquette, food and dress of India the Mughals produced a deep impression ..............Indian painting has been deeply influenced by Mughal painters. The literature of Hindutava viz. northern India, is derived largely from the Classical period of the Mughals, while the influence of Mughal architecture has been profound.” (Bhargava 1961:203).

Kalika Ranjan Qanungo strongly opposes Dr. Tarachand’s idea that the monotheism of Islam influenced Shankaracharyya’s philosophy in the eighth century. He asserts that there can be no historical evidence for this hypothesis. He notes.

“Al-Beruni who came to India three hundred years after Shankra dared not hint at such a preposterous proposition. Within the fold of Islam any doctrine approaching the Vaidantika formula of So’ham [I am He] did not grow up till four centuries later with Mansur bin Hallaj who paid for his ana’l haq [I am the Truth] on the stake. Abul Fazl in the sixteenth century did not throw any such hint about Shankara’s philosophical thought. Where is the evidence that Shankara had the opportunity of contacting any Muslim for such an inspiration” (Qanungo 1968:VIII)
He gives the social, political, economical conditions of pre-Islamic Arabia which was devoid of any superior qualities. Contrary to Tarachand’s opinion, he notes that how pre-Islamic Arabia needed

“a super-man to give the Arabs a national religion, which alone could create a national state and a national culture for the Arabs.” (Qanungo 1968:1)

Similarly, the seventh century India was in need of an incarnation. He argues that by this time Brahmanism had regained its hold on the country, however Buddhism was not dead. He notes that

“the mass of people could not be weaned to the Brahanical fold till the leaders of Buddhist philosophy were encountered in their own field, worsted in religious disputes by the establishment of the superiority of Hindu philosophy, and the justification of popular polytheism and idolatry as a stage in the path of realization of the ultimate Truth-Brahma.”

Hence he opines,

“There appeared great Shankarcharya to do the needful in India for the preservation of and consolidation of Dharma.” (Qanungo 1968:16)

On the emergence of Islam in various sciences he notes,

“No nation in the world so empty handed as the Arabs in their career of civilization. The Muslims at the birth of Islam did not know how to lay brick upon brick; and they were destined to close their race in civilization by building Alhambra and the Taj. The Arabs had even no words in their vocabulary for Arithmetic (ilm-ul-hisab altakt, a literal
translation of Sans. Patiganita), for Geometry (al-Hindasa derived from Hind perhaps), for the science of Music (al-Musiqi from Greek) and for philosophy (al-Falsafa from Greek). They borrowed extensively from their more civilized neighbors, improved on their borrowed assets, and by the dint of their wonderful genius built up their own sciences within two hundred years that threw into the shade of the contemporary cultures of the Byzantine empire and of Iran and Hindustan.” (Qanungo 1968:20)

He opines that,

“Islam gave as terrible a shaking to the decaying and out of date polity of the East and a part of the West for five centuries though it failed to establish itself like the French Revolution as an international and universal cultural entity.” (Qanungo 1968:22).

He disagrees with Havell’s opinion that the early Muslim invaders of India were half-starved, fierce and barbarous fighters only, who could hardly claim a civilization superior to that of India. He argues that,

“The Muslim invaders were not all barbarians without a civilization and culture of their own like the Sakas and Hunas of Ancient India. They were then heirs to the glories of Abbasid civilization, which was in some respects mature and more advanced on the material side than the out of date and decaying Indian civilization.” (Qanungo 1968:23)

He selectively accepts the influence of Islam on Indian religions. He regards it sheer fanaticism to hold that society and religion in India
remained unaffected by Islam or that Islam and Indian culture remained distinct. He notes that,

“In comparison with Brahmanism, Islam was modern in certain respects; and yet the Brahmanical society at first failed to strengthen itself by assimilating what was best in Islam.”

He furthers notes that,

“on account of the difference in diet, ways of life and intolerant superiority complex, Islam could not be affiliated to Indian confederation of creeds within the broad fold of Hinduism. So Islam and Hinduism met only on the border land of unorthodox popular cults out of the ghost of Buddhism.” (Qanungo 1968:25)

He opines that Buddhist Jats of Sindh and non Brahmanical classes of Bengal, helped Muslim conquerors but nevertheless, they were not ready to give up their own religion. However, he notes of a few lower classes of Hindus in Bengal, who accepted Islam due to economic prosperity and some even by influence of magnetic personality and piety of Muslim saints. Hence, he notes that Islam was

“instrumental in the rise of unorthodox sects within the fold of Hinduism.” (Qanungo 1968:26)

He gives the evidence of old Bengali poems, named Sunya Purana. He opposes the idea that reformers from Sri Shankaracharya down to Raja Ram Mohan Roy were indebted to Islam for inspiration. He comments that,

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“Any objective study of Indian civilization and culture through the ages leads only to the conclusion that Islam did not seriously disturb the continuity of Indian culture on ethical and spiritual side, though the Muslim civilization enriched to some extent the material phase of Indian civilization during the middle ages.” (Qanungo 1968:27)

He argues that,

“Well, India had her own traditions of Monotheism, Pantheism, Dualism and other speculative theories many hundred years before the birth of Islam...it is idle to speculate any influence of Islam on Shankaracharya’s monotheism which with its maya is the very antithesis of the Semitic monotheism.”

Similarly, he argues that Maharashtra, Chola, Andhra, Kerala and Orissa were superficially scratched politically by Muslim conquest but they retained their culture civilization. He refutes any influence of Islam on the teachings of Shri Chaitanya. He notes that there is no evidence of his contact with Islam and he came from Bengal where Jayadeva had

“sowed the seeds of Neo-Vaishnavism before the advent of Islam.” (Qanungo 1968:29)

He also negates any influence of Islam on the decline of Hindu Caste system. He argues that evidence for this view is given by the rise of Vaishnava sect in Bengal. He however claims that,

“these owed their rise to the persistently lingering influences of Tantric Buddhism assuming semi-Brahmanical garb under changed conditions.”
Similarly he gives the example of Manabhava sect, which is very close to Islam in its ideas and belief yet the influence of Islam on it cannot be ascertained. However, he refutes his own argument and notes that in the backdrop of such idea,

"the Brahmans of Bengal had become alert, and prevented the old popular cults from straying into the fold of Islam by a liberal recognition of these unorthodox cult and by making religious life more picturesque for them by the introduction of Vratas and Parvanas, and by throwing open their services to these classes as priests and preceptors with the object of consolidating their spiritual and social hegemony."

(Qanungo 1968:32)

He finds the influence of Islam in the teachings of Kabir., Guru Nanak, Swami Pran Nath, The guru of Maharaja Chhatrasal Bundela, initially known as founder of the Dhami sect of Bundelkhand and also Akbar who with his din-i-Ilahi promoted a mixture of composite Hindu-Muslim culture. His arguments for according the influence of Islam on Dhami sects are its teachings. He recognized Muhammad in line with Mahadva and Krishna called as Achhar (Akshara) i.e. those who meet with self-extinction. Whereas Achharatit (beyond destruction, the Eternal) knowing no death, no increase on decrease, and having no name, expressible by the alphabet of human knowledge, however, he overlooks this sect vehemence against Muslim rule while forming his opinion. In the case of other reformers his treatment differs.
He argues that,

"In this long fight between orthodoxy and liberalism, between cultural forces of Islam and Hinduism the victory has been on the whole on the side of orthodox Brahmanism which refused to renovate its house when the tempest of evolutionary Islam was blowing over the land, carrying havoc and destruction to the old order of things." (Qanungo 1968:43)

He cites the examples of Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the nineteenth century, who demonstrated that orthodox Indian culture, was neither inferior to, nor incompatible with any culture, old and new.

He notes that,

"the influence of Islam on the medieval Indian literature and the modern Indian languages has been deep and far reaching." (Qanungo 1968:44)

He traces the historical roots of Muslim patronage of Bengali language. They assigned the place of honour to it, translated the mythical and mystic love epics of Sanskrit, Hindi and Persian languages. He notes,

"on the whole the influence of Islam on the development of Bengal literature was direct and penetrative." (Qanungo 1968:46)

Further, he notes that,

"the Muslim influence on the growth of Hindi language and literature has been almost as great as that on Bengali, though at present there is a tendency to minimize it by some Hindi scholars".
He notes that,

"the Hindi literature during the Middle Ages was not an exclusive possession of the Hindus. It flourished under the patronage of Muslims and was also enriched by their literary efforts." (Qanungo 1968:48)

In the south according to author,

"the Muslim influence as a whole was neither destructive nor constructive. Its only contribution was a lingua franca between the Muslims and the Hindus, between the North and the south." (Qanungo 1968:65)

He notes,

"one great service which Islam rendered to Sanskrit learning was to conserve much of its treasure by translating into Arabic under the Abbasids and into Persian in India. The Muslims not only conserved but also propagated Indian learning abroad by their beneficent literary activities, which had started at the Dar-ul-Hikmat of Caliphs Mansur, Harun and Mamun at Baghdad." (Qanungo 1968:68)

He further notes that,

"Muslim astrology deeply influenced India, and new offshoots of Hindu astrology came into existence under the influence of Islam." (Qanungo 1968:70) besides enriching Indian astronomy".

He asserts that Muslims had considerable influence on Indian music and he lists several musicians from Middle ages and the Mughal courts. He notes that,
“Muslim supplied a fresh stimulus, a more correct taste, a better sense of proportion, in the field of architecture.” (Qanungo 1968:75)

Moreover, he finds that

“under the influence of Islam Indian painting lost its spirituality and idealism and gained in its approach to life and reality.” (Qanungo 1968:76)

He asserts that,

“the most abiding influence of Islam on the Indian people was that it made the vast inert mass of India politically conscious at the close of the Mughal Empire.” (Qanungo 1968:80)

He reminds that,

“to underestimate the beneficent influences is a moral sin, but to make exaggerated claims from a false sense of communal prestige and on the basis of challengeable facts is a mere travesty of History.”

J. Bimal Chandra, presents a detailed study of the contributions of Muslim rulers in the field of Sanskrit learning. He examines the original manuscripts in MS or Mss forms of the Sanskrit poetry where the Poets eulogize the Muslim rulers for their patronage and advancement.

He presents the following list of poets along with their patrons.

2. Akbariya – Kālidāsa (Govinda Bhatta); court-poet of Akbar.
4. Amrtadatta, court-poet of Shahabuddin
5. Pundarīka Vithala, court-poet of Burhan Khan.
7. Vamśidhara Miśra, court - poet of Shah Jahan and great favourite of the Queen.
8. Caturbhuja, patronized by Shayasta Khan.
9. Lakṣmīpati, of the court of Muhammad Shah.

He note,

“many Muslim rulers of India, Chieftains as well as Emperors, contributed to the spread of Sanskrit language in the following main ways:
1. by liberally patronizing many scholars in various branches of Sanskrit literature such as poetry, astronomy, philosophy, etc.
2. by composing themselves works in Arabic and Persian on Sanskritic learning and culture
3. by composing themselves Sanskrit verses, etc.,
4. by translating themselves various Sanskrit works into Arabic, Persian and Vernacular.
5. by making great Sanskrit scholars translate well-known Sanskrit works into Arabic, Persian and Bengali.” (Chandhari 1942:91).

He asserts that India in the Mediaeval ages had

“the fusion of Mahomedan and Hindu Culture and Civilization.” (Cahudhari 1942: vii).

He complains that,
"the fact that many of the Moslem rulers of India liberally patronized Sanskritic Culture and learning is not generally known." (Cahudhari 1942: 1)

He opines that,

"many Moslem helped the spread of the Hindu Culture and Civilization by honoring their rites and rituals, by patronizing and contributing to Sanskritic Literature – so, on the other hand, many Hindu devotees and scholars, too, were the torch-bearers of Islamic Culture and Civilization, by preaching the innermost truth of Islam, paying homage to the Prophet and Moslem saints, by observing many Moslem practices and by patronizing and contributing to Persian and Urdu literature." (Cahudhari 1942: vii).

**Reflections :-**

All the authors unanimously highlight the role of Islam and Muslims in giving shape to Indian culture. Islam’s influence in the various fields of sciences in medieval ages and its heritage to the world is acknowledged by all the authors. The contributions of Muslims in the field of arts, language, literature, poetry, music, historiography are also unanimously acknowledge by them. The efforts of Muslims in the enrichment of Indian architecture and also its material life are praised upon by all of these authors. The Hindu mores and customs of dress, food, social etiquettes, festivals were all influenced by Muslims and also vice-versa.
The composite culture of India actually shaped by the efforts of both the Hindus and Muslims. Muslim’s share in this legacy of India’s composite culture has been appraised by all the writers.

The encounters of two distinct cultures result in orientations of either indifference or sympathy or sometimes even hostility.

The role of Islam and Muslims in the making of Indian culture and civilization for an author is filtered through his orientation. Those with synthesis and sympathetic attitude found common grounds and those with indifference found it difficult to synthesize the two cultures.

Islam’s contribution to Hindu religion is assessed in different ways. Whereas Tarachand, Radhakrishnan, Roy, Pande and Samanta view Islam’s influence on the reformers of Hindu religion like Kabir, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramananda, and Tukaram etc. Vivekananda and Qanungo eliminate any such possibility. Vivekananda regards these Hindu reformers, as the guards of Hindu religion who put a check on the spread of Islam among Hindu classes hence were unable to contribute anything new to Hindu religion and thought. Qanungo finds in the teachings of these reformers influence of Buddhism. In his view Buddhism was the originator of many reformers in the Brahmanical system. However, according to his own example, Islam’s influence if not directly although indirectly can be ascertained. Hence depending on to which group an author belongs, he accepts or rejects influence of Islam in
such teachings as monotheism, equality, brotherhood, end of superstitions and end of priestly class etc.

In the polity, Islam’s distinct contribution has been accepted in the field of administration and unification of India, which consequently gave rise to nationalism. The Mughal court etiquettes were borrowed by Marathi, Rajput and Sikh princes and courts.

The genesis of a composite culture in India are found to be present even during Mughal period. Therefore, to assume that this phenomena began only with Freedom Movement would be false. Nonetheless, it is undisputed that process of identification and promotion of this culture received impetus from freedom struggle.

Tarachand’s assertion of Islam’s influence on philosophical School of Siddhars was of an intellectual kind. For speculation is not meant for the masses.

Roy suggests that every sociological programme is backed by a philosophy and he agrees at one place that Islam presented a better philosophy as compared to Hinduism. However, at other place he denies that higher social norms of Islam were backed by any philosophy, which appears to be a contradiction in his work.

Vivekananda rightly remarks that Bhakti movement did not contribute anything new to the Hindu thought but emerged to check the tide of Muslim propagation.
Qanungo exclusively mentions the influence of Islam on Bengal, but in reality the whole of North India was influenced by it. However, it is erroneous to suppose that cultures are assimilated on the basis of superiority or inferiority. It is a natural process of evolution of cultures. His evidence of the sufi idea I am He, lack clarity. The idea is only part of a philosophy which cannot be assumed as a Hindu or Muslim philosophy.