CHAPTER II
SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE UNDER THE MUSLIM RULE

I - Education and its Syllabi

II - Tasawwuf and its Philosophy

III - The Social Scenario
I. Education and its Syllabi:

The establishment of Muslim rule in India in the thirteenth century marked great and significant changes not only in the political sphere but also in the social and cultural life of the people. The contemporary sources of the Delhi Sultanate bears abundant evidence to prove that the Sultans were keenly interested in the promotion of learning. They established schools and Madrasas in large numbers and liberally patronized men of letters.¹

While there were universities in capital cities and Maktabs and Madarsas in smaller towns no village was without, and no mosque was without, a Maktab and a modest library. Mosques were not restricted to Ibadat or worship but were also used as lecture halls and places of imparting religious instructions. Khanqahs and shrines of Muslim saints, which were scattered all over, the country also played a similar and significant part in the dissemination of knowledge both spiritual and secular. This gives us an idea of the extent of education that was then imparted. Special importance was attached to the teaching of the Quran with meaning with a view to make students politically and socially responsible, religiously tolerant and morally strong.²

The development of the medieval educational curricula can be divided into three periods. In the first period that of the Sultanate and its successors states in

² S.M. Jafar, Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India, (Delhi, 1972), pp. 76-80.
the provinces. Until 1500 A.D. the subjects taught were theology, jurisprudence and its principles, exegesis, hadith, sufism, grammar, rhetoric and logic. The chief emphasis was on the study of the principles of jurisprudence and their applications.

The second period ranges from the reign of Sikandar Lodhi to the early period of the reign of Akbar from 1500 to 1575. This is the phase of the growing emphasis on the rational sciences, logic, Mathematics, Medicine and Astronomy.

The third phase begins with the age of Akbar. When there was even greater emphasis on rationalism, though, this process was reversed to some extent under Aurangzeb. Ethics seems to have been the chief area of concentration in this period.\(^3\)

With the advent of Delhi Sultanate education came to be organized there and there were two Madrasas under the Slave Sultans the *Muizziyyah* and the *Nasiriyyah*. As the Mongols overrun the heartlands of Islam scholars flocked into Delhi from Central Asia and Persia.

This tradition of learning continued under the Khiljis. Alauddin Khilji was himself uneducated and his neglect of education of his sons had disastrous consequences. Delhi continued to be a great centre of learning under the influence of Nizamuddin Awliya. Religious and mystical literature was much in demand. The main subjects taught were Tafsir, Hadith and Fiqh. Attention was also paid from this period onwards to the study of Graeco – Arab

---

medicine. Among the famous physicians of the Khilji age were Badruddin Dimeshqi and Jawayni Tibib.4

The first three rulers of the Tughluq Dynasty were themselves distinguished scholars. Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq learning was generally pietistic but that of his son Muhammad bin Tughluq was almost encyclopaedic and he had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. He was also well versed in the rational philosophical as well as theological science. Firoz Tughluq, under whom two great works of jurisprudence were compiled, was a theological scholar. He encouraged scholars to spread out in various parts of the Sultanate where they were to impart instructions to the people in general. He rebuilt several schools and constructed new ones. The biggest and the most important of them was Madrasah-i-Firozshahi. The last two rulers of the Sayyid Dynasty 1434-51 lived in Badaun. Under them Badaun became an educational and intellectual centre with a large number of schools. The reign of Sikandar Lodhi 1489-1517 is a landmark in the history of medieval Islam. An important feature of this period was his emphasis on rational sciences although the chief pre-occupation of muslim scholars were still, largely, the traditional sciences. He also established schools and invited scholars from other parts of the Muslim World.5

The Mughal Emperors were great patrons of learning and education. Their rule witnessed almost a renaissance in the field of ancient and medieval learning brought about by the scholars of all races and religions and the linguistic

4 Ibid., p.52
5 Ibid., p.53
communities who flourished hand in glove with one another and enjoyed royal patronage without any discrimination. They established educational institutions in different parts of the Empire where boys and girls both received education. The expenses of the students and the salaries of teachers were met from the endowments made to these institutions and the students were also provided with means of subsistence. Besides theology, jurisprudence and other Islamic subjects, secular sciences were also taught in the Madrasas. Humayun had founded a Madrasa at Delhi. Akbar also established colleges at Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, and other places. Akbar's educational policy was based on eclecticism and provided for the instructions of Hindus as well as Muslims. His policy was shaped by his minister Fath Ullah Shirazi, himself a scholar of rational sciences. Jahangir issued an edict stating that the property of a well to do person or rich traveller, who died without any successor, may be utilized for the building and repair of schools and colleges. Under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, a large number of schools and colleges were established. During their reigns, foundations of the great religious seminary of Farangi Mahall at Lucknow were laid and a school was inaugurated at Delhi. Madarsa-i-Rahimiyya founded by Abdur Rahim, Shah Waliullah’s father, efforts were also made to spread theological education among communities under the Hindu influence. There was great extension of education, particularly during the reign of

---

6 J L Mehta, *op cit* vol II p 15
7 K Ali, *op cit* p 303
8 Aziz Ahmad, *op cit* p 55
Aurangzeb but the content of education remained as it had been left by Fath-Ullah Shirazi in the days of Akbar.

The *Dars-i-Nizamiyyah* named after Mulla Nizamuddin of Farangi Mahall provided instructions in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, logic, scholasticism, tafsir, fiqh, Hadith and mathematics. This curriculum has been criticized for containing too many books on grammar and logic and in general for much emphasis on formal subjects and too little to useful secular subjects, like history and natural sciences or even religious subjects like Tafsir and Hadith. Education in Muslim India was not confined only to men. The princesses of the imperial household and the nobles were given tuition in their houses. Some of the distinguished ladies are Gulbadan Begum authoress of Humayun Namah, Humayun's niece Salima Sultan authoress of several Persian poems, as well as Nurjahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara and Zeban-Nisa.

Education in Modern Muslim India had been flowing in two streams the conservative stream, which had preserved the medieval traditions and much of the medieval syllabi. It fought a losing battle with the other streams i.e. of modern westernized education

The oldest of the conservative schools is that of Farangi Mahall at Lucknow founded in the late seventeenth century by Muhammad Sahalawi on a property allotted by Aurangzeb. One of its early teachers' Mulla Nizamuddin evolved a syllabus known after him as the dars-i-

---

Nizamiyya, which came to be taught in a majority of conservative schools. The syllabus included Arabic grammar, philosophy, mathematics, jurisprudence and its principles, scholasticism, tafsir, hadith and sufism. In this syllabus there was less emphasis on the traditional theological sciences as compared with medieval rationalism and mysticism and for this reason it was criticized by some orthodox ulama. These ulama, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, who had been deeply influenced by the teachings of Shah Waliullah's school, founded a more orthodox school *Dar al-Ulum* at Deoband in 1866. The founders of this school were strict Hanafis.

The second-generation teachers' of Deoband had as their head the illustrious Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan (1850-1921) under whose direction Deoband achieved an international reputation. It attracted students from all over the Subcontinent and from South Africa, Central Asia and Iran especially Afghanistan. Mahmud-al-Hasan also encouraged the establishment in the North-West Frontier areas of a large number of primary schools whose students for higher studies could join Deoband. He tried to bridge the gulf between Deoband and the modernist Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh through the exchange of scholars.

The third major theological school was *Nadwat-ul-Ulama* founded by a group of middle of the road scholars in 1894 at Lucknow. Its prime mover was Abdul Ghafur,

---

11 *Aziz Amad. op. cit.,* p 57
12 *Ibid.* p 58
Deputy collector in the British government service. The manifesto of Nadwat-ul-Ulama aimed at the advancement of theological studies. One of the offshoots of the Nadwat-ul-Ulama was the research and publication institute called Dar-al-Musannifin at Azamgarh, which made a valuable contribution towards the enlightenment of Islamic studies in India.  

Many minor theological schools were opened all over the Subcontinent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Similar schools came to be founded at Muradabad and Darbhanga. Other theological schools were also opened at Calcutta, Patna, Hyderabad and Madras. Shia theological schools were founded at Lucknow. A school for the preservation of Unani, actually Graeco-Arab medicine, was started at the close of the 19th century by Hakim Abdul Majid Khan in Delhi. The most outstanding of the semi-westernized school was the Delhi College founded in 1825 A.D. by the aid of East India Company. J.H. Taylor was appointed its principal with a staff of Maulwis. In 1828 English was introduced as one of the subjects of instruction. The remarkable feature of the Delhi College was that Urdu was its medium of instruction till 1835.

The pioneer of Modern Muslim education in India and of Muslim freethinking and modern Muslim politics was Sayyid Ahmad Khan. The educational programme he initiated in 1859 and pushed forward in subsequent years until his death in 1898 changed the intellectual, political and economic destiny of Indian Muslims and formed the

---

13 Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *Muslim Response to Western Education*. (Delhi, 1989)
14 Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.60.
main bridge of intellectual transition from medievalism to modernism. From the outset he realized the necessity of using English as the medium of instruction on the one hand and of developing Urdu on the other. In 1864 he founded a Scientific Society for the introduction of western sciences.\(^{15}\)

In 1869-70 Sayyid Ahmad Khan visited England and observed the educational system at Cambridge and Oxford Universities with a view of laying the foundations of an educational institution for Muslims, which might later develop into a university. In 1874 he finalized the scheme of his Muhammadan Anglo Oriental (M.A.O.) College at Aligarh. School classes were opened in 1875 and college classes in 1878. The college assumed a personality of its own as it grew and showed hardly any influence of the original Cambridge model. It was meant as its name suggests primarily for Muslims but was open also to Hindu and other non-Muslim students.

A number of other Muslim educational institutions developed during the late 19\(^{th}\) century and early 20\(^{th}\) century all over the Subcontinent. A religious welfare association, *Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam*, did pioneer work in the educational field in the North West and founded the Islamia College at Lahore and Peshawar as well as a number of intermediate colleges elsewhere. An Anglo Arabic College was developed in Delhi. One of the most remarkable experiments in modern Muslim education was

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, p.61
the foundation of the Usmania University at Hyderabad in 1917 with Urdu as the medium of instruction.  

II. Tasawwuf and its Philosophy

'Sufi' a word which means an ascetic. It has multiple theories of origins. The most common being one who wears 'suf' or woollen cloths. Sufism or tasawwuf is one of the sciences, which came into existence in Islam and was developed as an independent branch of Islamic learning during and after the Umayyad period. This word has not been used in the Quran and Hadith. The term Sufi came into common usage before the 2nd century of Hijra. Its origins and roots lie in holy Quran and the Prophetic period. There had appeared a group of selfless people who were practically retired from the busy worldly life and who had left all types of luxuries and enjoyment and concentrated themselves on the betterment of their spiritual upliftment and for pleasing the Supreme Being and prayed for protection from the atrocities and kept away from political activities in which people were involved. This group was later referred to as the sufis.

The verses of Quran, which describe this world as temporary, and fear of the day of judgment and devotion to Allah as the highest aim for humanity became their guiding principles. A famous German orientalist Goldziher is of the opinion that "exaggerated consciousness of sin and fear of divine punishment gave the first impulse to Muslim asceticism".

---

16 Syed Mahmood, op. cit.; See Aziz Ahmad, op. cit., pp.61-63
17 Muzaftaruddin Nadvi, Muslim Thought and its Sources. (Delhi, 1946), pp. 82-83.
In India the sufi phase played a very important role in popularizing Islam and attracting others to its fold especially in South India and later on in North India. Before reaching India Tasawwuf had reached the highest point of its development in the 12th century.

There had been four important Sufi orders namely Chishti, Suhrawardi, Qadri and Naqshbandi. Chishti and Suhrawardi sufi orders flourished during the Sultanate period and both of them declined during the 14th and 15th centuries. Two other orders namely Qadri and Naqshbandi rose to prominence during the Mughal period.18

The Chishti and Suhrawardi were the most powerful and popular sufi orders during the Sultanate period. They were introduced into India almost simultaneously with the Sultanate of Delhi. They spread out in the country, built up their organization and established themselves within a short span of time. The entire country from Multan to Lakhnauti and from Panipat to Deogir was studded with Khanqahs, Jamaat Khanahs and Zawiyahs.19

(i) THE CHISHTI ORDER

The Chishtis trace their origins to Hasan al-Basri. Actually the order derives its name from Chisht, a village near Herat where the founder of the order Khwaja Abu Ishaq resided for some time in the 12th century20. The Chishti order was introduced into India by Moinuddin Chishti born in Sijistan in 1141 A.D. When he was in his

---

18 Gurbachan Singh Talib, Baba Sheikh Farid, His Life and Teachings, (Patiala, 1973), p.21
20 Aziz Ahmad, op.cit., p.37, Gurbachan Singh Talib, op .cit., p.21
teens his father Sayyid Ghiyasuddin died leaving as legacy a grinding mill and an orchard. The sack of Sijistan at the hands of Ghuzz Turks turned his mind inwards and he developed strong mystic tendencies. He visited the seminaries of Samarqand and Bukhara and acquired religious learning from the eminent scholars of his age. He met Khwaja Uthman and joined the circles of his disciples and for the next twenty years he accompanied his mystic journeys. He travelled through many parts of the Muslim world then he turned towards India. He came to India before the invasion of Shihabuddin Ghori in 1190 and first proceeded to Lahore where he spent some time in meditation at the tomb of Shaykh Ali Hujwiri. He chose Ajmer as his centre and carried missionary activities from there. He visited Delhi twice during the reign of Iltutmish but kept himself away from the centre of political power and worked for a spiritual revolution in the country.

His firm faith in Wahdat-al-Wujud or Unity of Being provided the necessary ideological support to his mystic mission, which explains the influence on it of Ibn al-Arabi's almost pantheistic ideas. Its mystical practices were the same as those of other orders and included dhikr (remembrance) and regulation of the breath, which was probably an Indian influence, Muraqiba (contemplation), and secluded worship. The Chishti held assemblies devoted to spiritual music, wore coloured garments, preferably light almond. Some of his sayings revealed him

---

as a man of wide sympathies, catholic views and deep humanism.

He interpreted religion in terms of human service and exhorted his disciples "to develop river like generosity", sun like affection, and earth like hospitality. According to him, the highest form of devotion "to redress the misery of those in distress, to fulfill the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry. The Chishtis looked down upon possessions of private property as a negation of faith in God. The Chishtis rejected all worldly goods and material attractions. They believed in pacifism and non-violence and considered retaliation and revenge as laws of the animal world. They lived and work for a healthy social order free from all discriminations.

Their chief guidebook is "Awarif al-Ma'arif" of Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrarwari and the "Kashf al-Mahjub" al Hujwiri. These two books give a fairly accurate idea of the Chishti sufi ideology.\(^{23}\)

The chief Khalifah of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 633/1235) though he did not associate himself with the ruler in building the political institution of the Delhi Sultanate; he extended his moral support to the Sultan in the construction of public works and in cultural activities\(^{24}\). He died in the same year as his spiritual guide or pir. The mantle of Chishti leadership therefore fell on Kaki's chief disciple, Baba Farid Ganj Shankar, Baba Farid (b. 1175 A.D.) while

\(^{23}\) Saiyyad Athar Abbas Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India, (New Delhi, 1978), vol. I

\(^{24}\) K.A. Nizami, op. cit., p.189
advising his chief disciple shaykh Nizamuddin Aulia. He stressed that the main purpose in this path is the concentration of heart, which can be achieved only by abstention from the prohibited means of livelihood. King Balban showed great respect to Baba Farid (d. 1265). His chief disciple Shaykh Nizamuddin Aulia (1238-1325 A.D.) was born in Badaun. When he was twenty years old he became the disciple of Baba Farid. Shaykh Nizamuddin saw the reign of seven Sultans on the throne of Delhi but he never visited the court of any Sultan. His disciples spread to various parts of the Subcontinent. Of his disciples the chief successor was Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi (d.1356) who opposed the religious policy of Muhammad bin Tughluq which resulted in persecution of the Chishtis. The Chishti order however gained popularity in the time of Akbar.

(ii) THE SUHRAWARDIYYA ORDER

This tariqa may be regarded as going back to Diya al-Din Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi owing to his influence upon his nephew Shihab ul-din. The Suhrawardiyya order was founded by Shaykh Najibuddin Abd al-Qadir Suhrawardi in Iraq. He cut himself off from ordinary society in order to lead a life of seclusion and retreat. However the man regarded as the real founder of the order was Abu al-Najib's nephew Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (1144-1234), who received his early training in his uncle's ribat. Shihabuddin was born at a time when the fate of the whole Muslim world

---

25 Yusuf Husain, op. cit., p. 39
27 Aziz Ahmad, op. cit, p.39; See H.A. Rose, Religious History of Islam, (Delhi, 1989), p.66
was hanging in balance. It was during this period of insecurity and fear that these events must have influenced the mind of the Shaykh. Hence the note of pessimism often evident within his work "Awarif-al-Maarif". He expresses with a sad heart the decline in moral character of his contemporaries. He passed the major part of his life at Baghdad. He founded the school of mysticism, which is known as Suhrawardiiyya after him. His work "Awarif-al-Maarif" is a standard treatise on Tasawwuf extensively used in all sufi circles.

However he was no ascetic living withdrawn from the world. Though he passed periods in retreat but often was associated with the renowned sufis of the time. He was a great teaching Shaykh whose influence is known through his pupils as well as his work "Awarif al-Maarif" which has influenced almost every sufi to this day. Sufis from all over the world came to him for training and he himself made extended stays at Kanqahs in various towns including Damascus and Aleppo.

The founder of this order in India was Shaykh Bahauddin Zakaria. He was born in Multan in 1182 and received his education at Bukhara and Baghdad. He was a direct disciple of Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. The Suhrawardi order is one of the oldest to establish itself in North Western India. His master directed him to make Multan the centre of his activity. In those days Multan was the capital of Qabacha the rival of Ilutmish.²⁸ Bahauddin Zakaria maintained his hospice in Multan and established

²⁸ K.A. Nizami, op cit., p.189; See also, Murray T. Titus, Indian Islam, A Religious History of Islam in India, (New Delhi, 1979).
good relations with Iltutmish. Bahauddin Zakaria and his successors at Multan were universally respected and at the time of the Mongol invasion of Multan they became the spokesmen for the common people. They introduced a hereditary system of succession and were able to build up large properties.29

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakaria held independent views on many problems of religion and politics his ideology was different from that of his Chishti contemporaries he believed in living a normal balanced life, a life in which both the body and the spirit receive equal care. Neither he himself fasted perpetually nor did he recommend a life of starvation and self-mortification to those associated with him.30 Shaykh Bahauddin Zakaria mixed freely with the Sultans, took part in political affairs, amassed wealth and accepted good honours. He was, probably, the richest saint of medieval India. He was of the opinion that rebellion against a ruler, even if he be cruel and unjust towards his people, was not permitted.31 The nature and extent of his contact with the ruler may be gauged from the fact that he dedicated his work “Awarif-al-Maarif” to the caliph al-Nasir. This dedication of a mystic work to a ruler is unique in the annals of mysticism.32

The Suhrawardiyya order lays great emphasis on conformity to the Shar ‘ and it was Shaykh Bahauddin who gave it this orientation. Shaykh Bahauddin’s relations with the Chishti, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d’1235) and

29 Shiekh Muhammad Ikram, op. cit., p. 70.
30 K.A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 222.
31 Ibid., p. 226.
32 Ibid., p. 253.
Baba Farid (d/1265 A.D.) were most amicable. Bahauddin strongly discouraged sufis from seeking guidance from a number of different pirs, urging them to lay their heads on one rather than a number of thresholds. He laid great stress on performing Namaz. Like of all eminent sufis Shaykh Bahauddin emphasized that meditation and contemplation was the expulsion of everything from the heart except those connected with God and the company of people should be repulsed by constant Zikr repetition of God's beautiful names.

Shaykh Bahauddin died in 1263 and was succeeded by his son Shaykh Sadruddin and the latter by Shaykh Ruknuddin who appointed Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari Jahanian Jahangasht as his Khalifah. Sultan Muhammad Tughluq appointed him to the post of Shaykh al Islam. He had travelled widely and was a scholar with encyclopaedic knowledge. He is also known as Jami-al-ulum. He played an important role in the propagation of Islam in Sindh. His successors carried on his mission in Sindh and Gujarat.

Another mystic of this period, whom Firoz Tughluq held in high esteem, was Shaykh Shihabuddin Yahya Maneri who belonged to Firdausia order of Sufism, a branch of Suhrawardiyya order. The Shaykh was not only a practical guide but also an excellent exponent of theoretical side of mysticism. He attached equal importance to Shariat and Sufism and died in 1381.

---

33 Saiyyad Athar Abbas Rizvi, *op. cit.*, p.193.
34 M.A. Siddiqui, *op. cit.*, p.146.
35 Yusuf Husain, *op. cit.*, p.49.
It was due to these sufis that the Muslim society, after the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate was spiritually and morally consolidated. It was through these mystics that the distance between Hindu Bhakts and sufis was narrowed and the gulf between the ruler and the ruled was bridged to some extent.\(^{36}\)

(iii) THE QADRIYYA ORDER

The original founder of the Qadri order was Shaykh Abdul Qadir 'Jilani of Baghdad (1077-1166). It is one of the oldest of all the mystical orders. It was first introduced into India by Muhammad Ghawth who established a hospice at Uch in 1428. It was however established in India much later under the Mughals by Shah Ni‘matullah and Makhdum Muhammad Jilani. He settled in Uch, which was the centre of activities of the Suhrawardi order.\(^{37}\)

Other famous mystics of the Qadri order were Shaykh Daud Kirmani and Shaykh Maali Qadri of Lahore. Shaykh Daud’s hospice also carried on missionary work among the Hindus. Two great mystics of the seventeenth century, Mian Mir and Mulla Shah Qadri, brought fame to the order and since than it has been one of the popular orders in the Subcontinent. In India it rose to prominence in the early 17\(^{th}\) century with Muhammad Mir popularly known as Miyan Mir (d’1636) also the preceptor of Shah Jahan’s son Dara Shikoh and daughter Jahan Ara. Mian Mir was an ontological monist deeply under the influence of Ibn al-Arabi. Jahangir was greatly impressed by his piety and

\(^{36}\) Ibid, p.53  
\(^{37}\) Aziz Ahmad, op cit, p.42.
spiritual powers. Shah Jahan visited the Shaykh at his monastery and became one of his great admirers. His eldest son Dara Shikoh was devoutly attached to the Shaykh. After having acquired the exoteric knowledge of the Qadriyya order, Dara wrote Safinat al-Awliya and Sakinat al-Awliya, both being mystic biographies. His other works on mysticism are (1) Risala-i-Haqqnama (2) Majma al-Bahrain (3) Hasanat ul-Arifin. Though the prince knew the saint intimately and paid him frequent visits yet for some reason or other he became a disciple of Mulla Shah, one of Miyan Mir's vicegerents.38

Mulla Shah (d.1661) who originally came from Badakshan was a disciple successor of Mian Mir. He followed the footsteps of his spiritual preceptor. His belief in Wahdat-al-Wujud was even more pronounced than was Mian Mir's. He undertook strenuous and self-mortifying exercises – Shah Jahan met him in Kashmir and became his disciple and about the same time Dara Shikoh and princess Jahan Ara also became his disciples.39

The initiation of Ibn al-Arabi into the Qadriyya order had made all Qadriyyas staunch supporters of his controversial idea of Wahdat al-Wujud. It had also produced in them a great source of pride that such a famous sufi could be numbered among them.40 The Qadri's were generally tolerant of the non Muslims and this attitude must have been one of the formative influence on the syncretistic thinking of Dara Shikoh. The order suffered a

38 John A. Subhan, Sufism Saints and Shrines: An Introduction to the Study of Sufism with Special References to India, (Lucknow, 1938), pp. 270-271.
39 M.A. Siddiqui, op. cit., p. 150.
40 Saiyyad Athar Abbas Rizvi, op. cit., vol. II, p. 54.
temporary eclipse under Aurangzeb, but it remained on the whole the most popular.\footnote{Aziz Ahmad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 42}

(iv) THE NAQSHBANDI ORDER:

Naqshbandi sufi order is the most outstanding sufi order in India. It had originated in Central Asia and its founder's name was Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband.\footnote{H.A. Rose, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.} But it is said that its original founder was Ahmad Ata Yasavi. This sufi order traced its origin through Bayazid Bistami to the first Caliph Abu Bakr Siddique. This sufi order received the patronage of Babur. It was established by Muhammad Baqi Billah 1563-1603 who came to India during the period of Akbar.\footnote{Aziz Ahmad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 40; also M.P. Srivastava, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 132.}

Muhammad Baqi Billah lived in Delhi and attracted a large number of scholars and theologians. Prominent among them were Shaykh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi popularly known as Mujaddid Alf-i-thani who had been initiated by Baqi Billah into this order. Shah Waliullah the famous Muslim divine and scholar of the 18th century also belonged to this silsilah. For nearly two centuries the Naqshbandi order became the principal spiritual order in India because of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.

The basic philosophy of Wahdat al-Shuhud was given to the Muslims in India by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi which was his great contribution. Before him the philosophy of Wahdat al-Wujud as expounded by Ibn al-Arabi was the main sufistic doctrine among all sufi orders. He was
against the philosophy of Wahdat al-Wujud which he had rejected. He was of the opinion that it is wrong to say that everything is God because the doctrine negates all existence and it is in conflict with reason and religion. So it is wrong to say all is God. In its places it is more correct to say that all is from God. His opposition of Ibn al-Arabi's view of Wahdat al-Wujud which had a pantheistic resemblance with Vedanta and its pursuance further would lead to un-islamic ideas. This rejection was a great revolution in Indian sufism. His reaction against Akbar's tentative religion and syncretism earned him the Emperors disfavour but his reformist outlook won the support of the subsequent Mughal Emperors.

It was as a Prince that Aurangzeb established contacts with Khwaja Muhammad Masum son of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. In his three volumes of letters Wasilat-us Saadat, Durrat-ul Taj and Maktubat-i-Masumia, six letters addressed to Aurangzeb. Another son of Khwaja Masum, Muhammad Naqshband was also in close touch with Aurangzeb for many years. His collection of letters Wasilat-al-Qubul ilallah w'al-Rasul contains several letters addressed to the Emperor. Aurangzeb's religious thought was thus deeply influenced by the teachings of the Naqshbandi Saint and it found expression in his political activities too.

The Naqshbandi silsilah alone considered it not only permissible but imperative to establish contacts with the

---

44 K.A. Nizami, op. cit.
45 J.S. Trimingham, op. cit., p.95
46 K.A. Nizami, had given details of the letters addressed by Khwaja Muhammad Masum to Aurangzeb, 6, 122, 194, 220, 221, 227, op. cit., pp-171-173.
rulers and to attempt to influence their thoughts and policies. The Naqshbandis held that since the life of the rulers had deep impact on the life of the people, it was necessary to establish contacts with them and influence their thoughts and actions.\(^{47}\)

Apart from Sirhindi and his immediate followers, another important figure in Naqshbandi sufism is Mirza Mazhar Janī Jana the sufi poet of 18\(^{th}\) century who had a tolerant attitude towards Hinduism. He and his successor Shaykh Ghulam Ali attracted disciples from abroad. The most important among them was Khalid Kurdi who popularized this order onto the Ottoman Empire. This sufi order declined in India in the 19\(^{th}\) century but under the influence of Shah Waliullah and his followers this order again attracted important theologians like Shah Abdul Aziz and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, and later on in Bengal under Sufi Noor Muhammad and Maulana Karamat Ali Jaunpuri. This order had left long lasting influence on the social, religious and sufistic life of Bengal and Bihar.\(^{48}\)

(v) THE SHATTARI ORDER

The Shattari order derives its inspiration from Bayazid Bīstami. Its ultimate claim *ana-Wahdila Sharik* “I am one and have no companion” to express the perfect union of the saint with God, may have developed out of Bayazid’s exclamation *Subhāni* “Glory be to me”.\(^{49}\) This order is an offshoot of the Tayfuri Khanwada and is attributed to

---

\(^{47}\) Ibid p 158

\(^{48}\) Aziz Ahmad op cit pp 40-41

\(^{49}\) F A Qadir, Mughal Relations with Shattari Sufis. Abdul Fadl’s treatment of Shaykh Mohammad Ghauth Gwalior in *Islamic Culture* vol LXXII, No 2, (1999), p 63. See Annemarie Schimmel, *op cit* p 40
Shaykh Abdullah Shattari, a descendant of Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. The name Shattar literally means speed and is a term applied by the sufis to certain mystical practices. Abdullah was the first to receive the title Shattari on the completion of such practices. The screen.

Abdullah Shattari used to march with his disciples with drums playing and banners flying that was his way to call people to God. His wandering took him to Iran as well as to Bengal and he died in 1485 after rendering some spiritual assistance to Sultan Ghiyath al Din Khilji. The Shattari silsilah introduced in India by Shah Abdullah Shattari reached to its peak under Shaykh Bahlul and Sayyid Muhammad Ghauth. The Emperor Humayun held Shaykh Ghauth in very high esteem and he received his spiritual instruction from one of the leaders of this order.

In his book Miraj (ascension) he described his experiences in the path of spiritual progress making use of pantheistic expressions. Muhammad Ghawth was the author of several books which dealt for the most part with magic incantations and the methods of summoning the Jinn. The most notable of his writings are Jawahir-i-Khamsa and Awrad-I-Ghawthiyya. The saint died in 1562–63. A.D.

The sufi saints had an entirely different attitude towards the state and the Sultans but this attitude underwent change during the different periods of Indian history and in fact varied from order to order. The early

---

50 John A. Subhan, op cit., p.306.
51 Annemarie Schimmel, op cit., p.40.
Chishti saints Shaykh Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer and Shaykh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi and others believed in keeping away from the state, so they rejected government employment. But the other contemporary order of mystics, the Suhrawardi silsilah, considered such attitude as irrelevant and mixed with the rulers and bureaucracy and accepted government grants and honorific titles. The Naqshbandi silsilah stood for an entirely different approach towards the state and the rulers.\(^\text{53}\) During the Mughal rule the role of the sufis had changed because the Mughals founded an Empire by conquering most of the Indian Subcontinent, which made them powerful. They had many resources and did not require the spiritual power of sufis for their successes. Therefore the sufis did not contribute to Mughal victories as they did in the case of the Sultans of Delhi. The Mughal rulers paid homage to the sufis only to fulfil their wishes.\(^\text{54}\)

### III. The Social Scenario

The antecedents of the reformist movements in the Muslim society can be traced back to the Arab conquests of the Umayyad period. This period is marked by small settlements and the influence of Indian culture on the settlers. The Arab conquest initiated a remarkable phase of Indian history through a cultural interaction under the impact of Islam, which gained prominence with time.

Three centuries later with the advent of the Ghaznavids we see this impact on various fields such as

---


academics and administration. With the establishment of
the Turkish rule by the invasion of Mohammad of Ghor it
became deep rooted. The rise of Ghorids saw military
conflicts with the Ghaznavids. The death of Mahmud saw
the fall of Ghazna and the period of expeditions, which
followed, changed the face of Indian history. Nearly all of
Northern India was under Muslim rule at the time when
Qutbuddin Aibak, the nominee of Ghori, was appointed
ruler.

As we pass on to Ilutmish and further on with the
Slave Dynasty to Balban we see that the image of Islam
rested upon the treatment of rulers of their subjects. Along
with this the sufi influences played a positive role in
creating healthy relations between the people of different
faiths. Unfortunately we come across a very sad picture of
Islam under Khusro who desecrated Hindu Temples leading
to the rise of sentiments of hatred for the Khiljis who
followed them.

But as we come over to the Tughluqs (1320-1412) we
enter into an age of reforms, in which conscious efforts
were made for the welfare of the subjects. Even the barren
lands came under state management leading to prosperity.
The effects were so lasting that the invasion of Timur
during the reign of last Tughluq Sultan did not destroy the
prosperity which continued even during the Sayyid Dynasty
after which the rule passed on to the Lodhi Dynasty.

The most remarkable phase of Indian history in which
the social, political, and economic affairs gained stability
began with the end of the Lodhi dynasty in 1526 by Zahiruddin Babur the founder of the Mughal Dynasty.

The establishment of the Mughal Empire saw the reformist trends making their appearance in a manner unprecedented. With the beginning of the Mughal period is we reach the threshold of modern age.

The orthodox reactions grew up in the form of confrontations during Akbar’s time who had created a new religion as a matter of policy. His extremism in this regard is marked by policies such as permitting gambling and drinking and accommodating most visible forms of Hindu thoughts and practices like sun worship etc.

The intellectual bent of mind of Akbar was more advanced than his age and the creation of Ibadat Khana was the peak. The religious disputes held there divided the theologians to such an extent that their quarrels reached vulgarity. The Ulama both supported opposed Akbar but opposition was not brought under persecution which was evidence enough of his liberal attitude and temperament. The ethos of this age is also marked by the risk of Bhakti traditions which interpermeats the sufi spirit of the early periods.

Akbar’s permissive policy was subsequently modified by Jahangir who banned the manufacturing of wine and intoxicating drugs abolished all inhuman punishments like chopping, off of the nose or ears of the culprits. He administered exemplary justice of and practiced utmost tolerance towards people of other faiths. Like his father he believed in inter-faith understandings. His period is also
marked by the reformist movement of Mujaddid Alf-Thani Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. As the facts indicate, Jahangir was under the influence of his wife Nurjahan, who, it is said, was the virtual ruler.

Foreign influence in India from the west had already begun. The permission for trade by Jahangir, which had hidden, motives other than trade and commerce. This state of affairs continued under Shah Jahan who gave full latitude to the rise of Maratha power. Events, however took a very different turn under Aurangzeb who forcibly imposed Islamic Shariah leading to the revolt by Rajputs and Marathas, which ultimately led to the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

After the death of Aurangzeb came the fast decline and opportunities for Muslims went on shrinking as the British power rose. Under the military and political supremacy of the British, Mughal kings were reduced to mere figureheads and it was at such a time when the first organized reformist movement was initiated by Haji Shariatullah. He concentrated on the purification of Islam by purging it of polytheistic influences. This was probably a carryover of the influence of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi whose contributions will be dealt with in this work later on.

This movement was carried forward with great zeal by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, the originator of the Mujahidin movement, whose influence extended to Bengal.

New challenges came to the fore after 1857 when India came fully under the British rule. Thus began a new phase of reformist trends.
The most notable and organized Madrasa was the creation of Farangi Mahall (1695) at Lucknow and Madrasa Rahimiya, at Delhi by Fath Ullah Shirazi and Abdur Rahim, father of Shah Waliullah. The syllabus named as Dars-I-Nizamiyyah taught in these Madrasas included philosophy, logic, mathematics and scholasticism in the secular sciences and tafsir, hadith and Fiqh in the Islamic studies. The syllabus was rather overloaded and did not include natural sciences and history. These Madrasas represented the pattern of conservative education, which came in conflict with modern education introduced by the British in the 19th century. Schools at Deoband, and Nadwa at Lucknow disapproved of the movement of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan founder of the Madrasat ul-ulum and later MAO College which ultimately developed into a full fledged university.

Many more Madrasas sprang up in the course of time, and a semi-westernized school by the name of Delhi College too was created with the help of East India Company in Delhi.

As we see through the Muslim rule in India the ulama maintained good and even cordial relations with the Sultans. Akbar however curbed their influence under his well-defined policy and raised the status of those ulama who supported his policies and innovative ideas.

Islamic mysticism thrived in India under the spiritual leadership of sufis of the highest calibre. Hazrat Khwaja

---

*Dars-i-Nizamiyyah: a syllabus of religious education current in South Asia from the eighteenth century*
Moinuddin Chishti was in India before the invasion of Ghori and the Chishti order continued through the centuries. Sufis interpreted religion in terms of service to human kind and the Chishti sufis preferred to stay away from the power structure of Sultans.

The sufi philosophy to which the Chishti sufis subscribed was Wahdat al-Wujud a principle advanced by Mohiuddin Ibn al Arabi in the 13th century. All later Chishti sufis Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and others subscribed to it. Notable among others are Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlvi and Hazrat Salim Chishti.

Many branches of sufi orders continued to guide people in India and strived to protect human rights and raise the moral standards.

The philosophy of Chishti sufis came in conflict with the Naqshbandi School advancing the idea of Wahdat al-Shuhud. Its founder Hazrat Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was more inclined to formal aspects of religion and considered Wahdat al-Wujud as a thought, which opens up the doors for the inflow of Vedantic ideas.

The Chishti sufis refer to Hazrat Hasan al-Basri while the Naqshbandis turn to Hazrat Bayazid Bistami. Most authentic treatises on sufism include Awarif al-Maarif and Kashf al-Mahjub. The spiritual practices of sufis include dhikr and controlling of breath.

Another notable sufi order consists of the Suhrawardiyas who believed in close association with the Sultan and accumulation of wealth and properties this
tradition was laid down by its founder Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariya.

The other Qadriyya order is close to the Chishti order and takes to the spiritual leadership of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani. Notable sufis like Makhdum Mohammad Jilani Mian Mir and Mulla Shah Qadri represented the Qadriya order. The Mughal Emperor Jahangir held them in highest regard and held discussions with Mian Mir who submitted to Ibn-al-Arabi.

The attitude of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb was hostile towards the principle of Wahdat al-Wujud which was upheld by Dara Shikoh whom Aurangzeb killed brutally. Dara Shikoh was influenced by Mian Mir. His calibre as a sufi scholar is unique. His great writings include Sirr-e-Akbar which is the version of Upanishads. In fact the sharp differences of emphasis between Chishti and Naqshbandi orders led to conflicts which continue even today inspite of the fact that Shah Waliullah has reconciled the two great principles.

A minor sufi order known as Shattari echoes the ideas of Bayazid and represents a kind of God-intoxications which we find with Rabia Basri and which led to the execution of Hallaj. In India it was represented by Syed Mohammad Ghauth and Shah Abdullah Shattari.