CHAPTER IV

HINDU-MUSLIM CULTURAL RELATIONS AND ITS EFFECTS ON INDO-PERSIAN LITERATURE

Culture is a continuous and growing process for the whole land of acquiring elements, as it is handed down from one generation to the next and spreading to new groups and peoples. The history of culture is, in real sense, the history of mankind. For hundred of thousand of years, culture is some sort of a form which has been continuously transmitted. Out of this form, some elements have been lost, others have been changed, few ones of them retained and new ones have been added. But culture as a whole has gone for ever. "It is therefore, "a symbolic, continuous, cumulative and progressive process," of the people. It resides in a group of human being called society. "If a certain society has or wants to have political unity as well as central, it is called a Nation." With common cultural factors like language, race, religion, history - the people become more stronger in forming their nation.

Culture is a complementary to trade and therefore, the commercial relationship between countries generally provide

1. Hervill and Eldraged: Culture and Society, P. 42
2. Hussain, S. Abid : The National Culture of India, p. 4
opportunities for a greater mutual understanding and appreciation between different countries. It also helps towards a common goal in course of time, as it being guided by a common interest. This common goal can not be achieved fully till the countries are not brought closer through cultural and intellectual association. "The beginning of the trade intercourse between India and the other Asian and European countries go back to very ancient times." This trade in course of time, helped in the development of better understanding and exchanging of ideas and cultural thoughts etc between the inhabitants and the traders.

The great forward strides of civilization have been initiated by stimulating impacts of contrasting cultures and obviously and as said earlier, every nation is a amalgam of various and varied elements and in this respect, India is no exception. She has achieved a great deal in her assimilation of cultural richness which she derived from other countries including Persian plateau and its eastern marches. As a matter of fact, there have been constant and creative cultural exchanges between these two countries from the remotest past and the significance in one can not be properly understood without referring to the other.

It is true that new contacts are sure to summon a major response, waking up fresh energies for the realization

3. Tara Chand: *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 29
of great results on the part of both the nations, thus resulting in the truth of "Capacities are complementary, aptitudes are mutually corrective, contrasts are medicated through a common understanding, the ideal of one nation finds its fulfilment with the aid of the technique of another."

The mutual influences of their languages, religions and cultures etc have the far reaching consequences. Although religion is a dividing force among people yet, on the level of positive religion, there are considerable differences which tend to create perpetual conflict. "Behind the rampart of social exclusiveness, the forces of adjustment and amalgamation were at work and the fusion of the Hindus and Muslims both in the realm of thought and that of action had been slowly gaining ground."

But the heart of India which supplies the life blood to Muslims as well as Hindus, has been so nurtured on the breath of mind and vision of mystical traditions that, religious antagonism leading to war, which was common phenomenon in Europe in the middle ages, was rare in Indian history. Here "Culture and civilization continued to live on and the changes expected were gradual and well high imperceptible." Even in the last thousand years when two religions, so entirely different as Hinduism and Islamism

4. Yasin, M. : A Social History of Islamic India, p. 79
5. Sherwani, H.K. : Cultural Trends in Medieval India, p.v
were brought together on the soil of India, her saints and Sufis who have played a very decisive role and succeeded in bringing the gulf between the two great religions.\textsuperscript{6} The Sufis adopted many practices like extreme ascetic discipline, celibacy and vegetarianism from the Hindu yogis. These Sufis also had many Hindus as their disciples. They had every reason to live in peace and amity and promote their common interest. They created an atmosphere of not mere toleration but of harmony so that while Hindu and Muslim princes were struggling for power, the common people of both the religions lived in harmony which continued more or less to the end of last century.

Although the influence of the Muslims have happened much earlier periods, (but) after the end of first millenium only their existence could be felt, more so because, they came and stayed here for more than eight hundred years.

Living side by side for centuries together, the Hindu and the Muslim communities had adopted each other's ideas and customs.\textsuperscript{8} Therefore, it is quite natural that, whenever two different types of civilization came in contact that one must exercise its influence on the other. \textsuperscript{7} The Muslims introduced

\textsuperscript{6} Raghuvanshi, V.P.S. : \textit{Indian Society in the 18th Century}, p. 131
\textsuperscript{7} Hussain, S. Abid : \textit{The National Culture of India}, p. 9
\textsuperscript{8} Article published in Statesman, November 17, 1910.
into India a new religion, a new polity, a new government, a new organisation, a new code of etiquette, a new formula of social structure, a new system of philosophy and a new literature. And it is natural under such circumstances that, Hindu religion experienced new ideas and new outlook. It stood patiently before the onrush of the militant forces of Islam without losing its assimilation power in the least and as soon as the storm had subsided, it embraced within its fold the followers of Islam and cast its influence over them, thus helped in making the Indian culture. But the Muslims, woven with the intricate pattern of Indian life, they have yet maintained their individuality and contributed to the symphony of Indian life and surprisingly, they retained a distinct timbre that can be clearly recognised and keeping this distinctiveness of their own, they present a phenomenon which has few parallels elsewhere.

India is the 'Sangam' of almost all the foreign races and cultures that entered her at different times. It helped in broadening her faith and social structure which seldom happens with people of other nation. All the various elements in Hindu or ancient Indian culture were harmonised in an all-embracing whole. This is the special characteristics

9. Beames, John: Outline of Indian Philosophy, p. 56
10. Journal of Indian History: Vol. VIII, 1929, p. 328
12. Ibid
of Indian civilization. The fact of different races living side by side within the same country and gradually approximating to each other's culture and adopting the same language, makes no narrow nationalism and that is why racialism was out of place in ancient India." The Muslims wherever they went, abled to assimilate the land into the main stream of Islamic culture. A.R. Mallick has rightly observed, "Just as other great conquering races of the world were effected by those whom they subdued, so the Muslims of India were greatly influenced by the conquered Hindus. In manners and customs, in their outlook on life and even in matters of belief, these influence are clearly visible even today." In the successive Muslim attacks, people in small group who stayed back in India were the subject to the pervasive influence of Hinduism. In this respect we should keep this matter in mind that, except the original invaders of Sindh to India, most of the Muslim conquerors were not Arabs but Turks or Turko-Afghan people. "Rightly or wrongly the Arabs were convinced of their superiority of their own culture" and therefore, it is a matter of history that, wherever the Arabs took the Islamic culture there was a process of virtual cultural conquest by them and it left the conquered nation to follow

13. Atreya, B. and others: Indian Culture, pp. 51-52
15. Mallick, A.R.: British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal, p. 3
16. Indo-Iranica: op cit., p. 2
the culture of the conquerors. But it was not so with India. The Turko-Afghans who in successive waves conquered India, took a different policy. They were at first content to preserve for themselves the fragments of the Perso-Arab culture which they had inherited from the Arabs but did not try to impose this Perso-Arab culture on the people of this land nor did they try to enrich its already riched culture. One reason for this may be that they were perhaps not in a position to attempt a cultural synthesis," for, the Iranian-Arab culture, which the Turko-Afghan followed, was comparatively a new acquisition to this land which had not entered fully to the texture of their life and being.

The mutual influence between the two great communities continued all through the period of Muslim rule in India, so much so that, Islam experienced a major change in the indigenous situation and this experience is "manifested in certain rites and customs which had imperceptibly grown out of long contact with Hinduism but which were often at variance with the spirit of the Quran." The change is attributed to the great simplicity of Islam, for a country like India, "where an idolatrous and allegorical religion appealing to the senses and imagination rather than to the mind and heart, was prevalent." But the

truth is that, once there was contact between Perso-Turks and the Hindus of India, first on the battle field and then in the bazars of cities, the people could not be impregnated by each other in their varied culture and their ideals, and as a historical consequence of the Muslims' introduction of new cultural trends in India during their long span of rule, the influence of their language and culture is evident in every walk of life in food, dress, furniture and other day to day necessities. "The local Gods whom men sought after in times of troubles and sickness, were too near and dear to the innermost heart of the Hindu. converts to be abolished without substitutes." Remarking on the changing outlook of the Muslims under the Indian environment, Broughton says, "It is notorious indeed that, the Mohammedans of India have deviated so widely from the institutions of their forefathers and have adopted so many of the customs and prejudices of the Hindoos, that they form almost a distinct class from their brethren in other parts of the world."

Since the earliest Aryan settlement, the advent of post-Islamic Iranian culture in India has been the greatest and the most fruitful event in the long and eventful history of the land. It was the happy blend of Indo-Iranian elements

20. Beames, John: Outline of Indian Philosophy, p. 56
21. Malick, A.R.: British policy and the Muslims in Bengal, p. 4
22. Broughton: Letters from a Maratha Camp during the year 1809, West Minister, MDC CXS II
in arts, sciences, architecture, army and administration, crafts and customs that gave rise in Medieval India to one of the most glorious civilization the world had ever seen and the fact that Muslims came to India not in one solid and compact block but in dribbles that were spread through centuries, has helped further the process of assimilation between the two different strands as both the countries served as a common ground of cultural activities which have further helped to mould their lives in the social, intellectual and religious spheres. It is interesting to note that, the countries to the west of India came in contact with Indian life and letters from very early time. In India itself Sanskrit and allied literature were maintained in continuous Indian ancient records (and) outside India the Persian were the first to take interest in this literature.

There are sufficient evidences to suggest that the people of India who lived together without antipathy or bitterness and with a separate religious loyalties, could work on a cross communal work without much hinderance. The reasons are not far to seek. It can not be denied that the vast majority of Muslims many of whom were originally converts, came to live with the Hindus peacefully and merged with them.

23. Saikia, Dr. M.K.: Assam-Muslim relations and its Cultural Significance, p. 31
25. Bailey, H.W.: The Contents of Indian and Iranian Studies, p. 6
by economic fusion and inter-marriage. There are also ample evidence to suggest that, Hindu feelings and practices went right to the heart of the Muslims in their day to day life. In the village, many Muslims retained their Hindu traditions and social forms. The Kamalias of Gujarat professed Islam but worshipped a Hindu Goddess, Baharhaji and served as musicians in the temple. This integration between the Hindus and Muslims was also evident at the Khanqahs of the Sufis.

"As Institutions of cultural adaptation, the Khanqahs provided a means of incorporating Hindu religion, customs and beliefs into the electric fold with an Islamic colouring."

In the South-Western regions of India, the Muslims had an active social life and "their contributions as a tradesman and sea-fareas were highly appreciated by the native people. There existed a peaceful and friendly relationship between the people of the two communities and contrary to many of the writings which have come down to us, there was a good deal of social and administrative cooperation between them. Sisakar, the Hindu minister of Raja Dahar was appointed the chief Minister by Muhammad bin Qasim and Kaksa, the cousin of the same Raja was the most respected and the most influential person in the Islamic State of Sindh." In many of the

27. Elliot and Dowson: Vol. I, pp. 202-203
South Indian Hindu states, the Muslims were treated with respect and were given all opportunities to work and to improve their own trades. As Masu'di writes, "Of all the kings of Sind and Hind, there is no one who pays greater respect to the Musalmans than the Bathara. In this kingdom Islam is honoured and protected." Batadhuri, the historian writes that, "when the local Hindu chiefs Sindan in Sindh rose against the Muslim ruler of the city and destroyed his power, they did no harm to the Muslim population, did not destroy the mosque and left the community free to perform their daily worship."

The fact that "Muslims had common religious experiences and were concerned to preserve their religious symbols was not enough to make their interest wholly separate and distinct from other communities. Even the zealotry of religious revivalists could not halt the continuous process of the cultural and social integration in the countryside, whatever may be the truth in ascertain that the descendants of foreign Muslim conquerors even after a domicile of centuries in India retain the extra-Indian direction of their hearts and they form a distinct nation separate from the rest of the Indian population, a diapassionate study of the Muslims reveals that

28. Elliot and Dowson: The History of India as told by its own Historians, Vol. I, pp24
29. Mazumdar, R.C.: History and Culture of Indian People, Vol. IV, p. 126
30. Hassan, M.: Nationalism and Communal Politics in Islamic Culture in India, p. 308
they became Indianized in this subcontinent which is evident from their day to day life. The Muslims regarded Hindustan as their homeland (watan) and were unwilling to cross the Hindukush Range or the Helmand river, beyond which lay Turan and Iran, where as Kabul was as good as Lahore to them.  

The medieval period of the Hindu-Muslim relation is not always full of contradiction and chaotic. It has nicely been projected by historians and chroniclers and show that although there were instances of conflict and confrontation the whole picture is not as bad as so often reflected. The fact is born out by the whole history of Muslim rule in India where, except in the time of later Mughals, there were no communal riots on the mass scale which may be ascribed to the mounting reaction of the 17th century. Barring a few cases of bigotry and fanaticism, vengeance and individual incendiarism, the relation between the Hindus and the Muslims was generally marked by good-will and mutual tolerance. The historical writings of some of the historians reveal that the beginnings of the Hindu-Muslim acquaintances were characterised by respect, sympathy and cooperation. In spite of the jearing elements of political dissention and strife and in spite of the corrosive influence of religious antagonism, if we study

31. Yasin, M.: A Social History of Islamic India, p. 77
32. Tabtabai, G.H. Khan: Siyarul-Mutakherin, pp. 172-174
the prevailing conditions we will find that the matrimonial alliances of the Royal family, social equality, the uniformity of law and usages and the division of posts and powers among the nobles of both the communities were dominant factors which were conductive to the growth of common language, culture and interest.

"The first communities of Muslim tradesmen who had settled in Western coasts of the sub-continent were highly respected by the native people and enjoyed full freedom to practice and even preach their own religion." The conversion of Raja Charaman Perumal, king of Malabar (A.H.125-A.H.211/A.D.742-A.D.826) and his migration to Mecca is sufficed to say that Islam spreaded into the Indian lands which the natives accepted as a passing phase and their attitude towards it in those early times show their tolerance and co-feelings for the new religion and its people. The relationship was based on mutual understanding and the friendship was well cemented due to trust. The situation was congenial in the subsequent ages from the time of the reign of Ghaznavids, the Afghans, the Muslim kings of the Deccan and the Mughal rulers. There are instances where Muslim rulers are found to be harsher towards the people of their own community than the people of

33. Faruki, Z.: Aurangzeb and his Times, p. 568
34. Tara Chand: The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, pp. 33-35
the Hindu community. "Sultan Mahmud's dealings with Hindu Rajas were not harsher than his expeditions against Muslim states of Khorasam, Ray and Sindh and throughout the medieval period, fights among the Hindu Rajas were as numerous as those amongst the Muslim Sultans," and there were occasions when Hindu Generals led the Muslim troops against Hindu Rajas and Muslim rulers. At the time of peace or war, assistances are sought or given by one Hindu Raja to another Muslim ruler or vice-versa. It justifies the significants of their amity. There are numerous other examples to show this bond of friendship, mutual trust and helpfulness. A Bengali document dated A.H.1145/A.D.1732 which marks the victory of the Sahajiya cult over the orthodox Vaisnava cult, has got a few Muslim signatories as its witness and "it is really worthy of notice that even in matters of social and religious changes, the opinions and testimony of the Muhammadans were sought and obtained by the Hindu brethren." When we compare the large number of works composed by Muslim writers in praise of the Hindu God and Goddesses and on Hindu music during the period of Muslim rule in India, we can come to the conclusion that the Vaisnava and orthodox Hindu notions and thoughts had deeply influenced the inner strata of Muslim society, specially in Bengal. In considering the wars between the Hindu Rajas and

35. Mujtabai,F.: Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Cultural Relations, p. 132
Mughal Emperors, one should keep in view the actualities of the circumstances whether the rising of the Rajputs and the Marathas could be justified simply on the ground of the foreign character of the Mughal rule is an important question. It is true that there were occasional flares between the people of the two communities which were caused chiefly due to their desire or stubbornness over territorial gains and sometimes due to the interest or the rulers and influential persons. "To justify their extravaganzas and to obtain the people's sympathy and support, the Sultans and the Rajas were eager to give religious colouring to their political activities and there were court-chronicles and court-poets who readily explained their patrons' campaign as holy wars and depicted their rivals in the darkest colour." It is not surprising, therefore, that very often the jealous devotees give a very distorted picture of the whole matter as has been shown in books like Caitanya-Caritamrita and Caitanya-Bhagavata which give a very conflicting picture between the Hindus and the Muslims. Yet, in certain other writings there are hints and indications where instances of more cordial relations and mutual respect among the people of the two communities are found. One such example is a popular Bengali

38. Faruki, Z.: Aurangzeb and his Times, p. XII
religious compositions Raya-Mangla. An interesting episode
is the fight between Daksina Raya (the tiger God) and the
Ghazi which is ultimately stopped by the personal intervention
of a God who appears on the scene in a body half of which is
that of Krishna and half that of a Paygambare (Muslim
divinity). This fusion was possible due to the free and
unprejudice intercourse between the common people of both
the religions. Even during the reign of Aurangzeb there are
ample examples and illustrations to show this assimilations
and understanding. It is natural that they could live in peace
and amity and found no difficulty in promoting their common
interest. For example, the land owners of both the religions
had common interest and habits of cooperation and not
surprisingly they gave precedence to their class interest over
their communal identity in order to preserve their dominance
in the rural areas. The literary activities like Musha'ira
or poetical symposium which is an important institution
popularised by the Muslims in India, were frequently convened
which, in course of time, became almost a valuable asset to
the progression of poetry in India. It has a great cultural
value and moral effect. As Sir Abdul Qadir has put it, "this
institution though not enjoying the vogue which it did in the
days gone by, is still fairly popular and often bring together
peoples of different classes and communities who manage to
forget their differences for the time being in their admiration for a common literature." By the middle of the eighteenth century, the process of assimilation reached its culminating point. "The Muslim offered Puja at Hindu temples as the Hindus offered Shinri at Muhammādān mosques." This fusion of ideas and customs had long ago led to the evaluation of a common God Satyapir, worshipped by Hindu and Muslim alike.

The system of growth among the Hindus and the Muslims for about nine centuries was due to its contact, assimilation and synthesis. To disassociate the two communities of their age-long common culture is nothing but wastage of efforts. "Even in such cases, there was often an attempt to overlook the period of common life and to reorient the old forms in the light of new factors introduced by the Western impact but with little success. The recreation of the past is itself influenced by all that has happened in between India's secular democratic state, is a recognition of this fact. "The role of Indian Muslims in the set-up is to help in this process by bringing to our common heritage, the power of synthesis and assimilation which their fore-fathers exhibited throughout the days of their supremacy."

41. Sen, Ūr. S.C.: History of Bengali Language and Literature, p. 793
44. Ibid
The Hindu-Muslim relationship was even more liberal in the Deccan than in the north. The relationship was one of understanding and tolerance which resulted into making an assimilated culture of its own. As several Muslim rulers of the Deccan belonged to converted Hindu parents, or had married Hindu wives and as a result, there were many Muslim kings, princes and noble men who had Hindu mothers or Hindu background. The Nizam Shahi kings patronised Hindu culture and honoured Hindu customs and laws. The founder of the Bahmani kingdom ascended the throne with the efforts of his Brahmin friend Gangu and when he became the king, out of gratitude and love for him, the king not only made him his Wazir but adopted his name Gangu as the nickname of the Royal dynasty. During the entire period of the Bahmani rules, the Brahmins and other Hindus had a great share in the administration of the state. The five Muslim kingdoms which were built on the ruins of the Bahmani Sultanate, also continued this liberal policy. They were patrons of the local languages and some of them were good Marathi and Urdu poets. Urdu came to the Deccan as the lingua-franca in which the Muslim rulers and their Hindu and Muslim companions from the North conversed with

45. Mujtabai, F.: Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Cultural Relations, p. 135

46. Ibid
one another. It was in the Deccan that it grew to be a literary language serving as an intellectual bridge between the local people and the migrant Hindus as well as Muslims from the north. Such cordial relationship between the king and subjects were also experienced in Vijaynagar, Golkonda where in spite of their occasional meetings in the battlefield, they could live with sharing on many fronts for a common object. Shivaji in the height of his power, used to show respect to Muslim saints and their sacred places. "A few years after his coronation in A.H.1085/A.D.1674, when he was proceeding to Hyderabad to sign a treaty with the Qutb-Shahi Sultan, he sought the blessings of the Muslim saint Baba Yaqut and the Hindu sage Mauni Bawa."

Long before the Hindu became reconciled to the Muslim rulers, their relations with the common Muslims had considerably improved. When they found that the Muslims had made India their home, that they were practically free from racial prejudices and their religious bigotry and feeling of superiority as conquerors was gradually receding in the background, they began to relax their hostile attitudes towards them. "They found their ideals similar to that of Vedantic philosophy, were naturally attracted by the Sufis. But the

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47. Hussain, S.A.: The National Culture of India, p. 96
The greatest attraction for the lower castes of Hindus was in the social organisation of the Islam which was founded in the basis of equality and fraternity.\(^49\) Besides, quite a large number of Hindus embraced Islam and even those who did not, were now better disposed towards the Muslims.\(^50\) The Hindu converts to Islam were at first ostracized by their own people but gradually came to be tolerated and served as a connecting link between their brothers in blood and their brethren in faiths.\(^50\)

The generality of the common Hindu people and their relations with the ruling power became, in course of time, fairly good, though not very close. The Muslim rulers maintained an order, ruled gently and gave religious and cultural freedom to their Hindu subjects. They had changed civil and criminal law and introduced some provisions of the Islamic law. But in India, it was nothing new that ruler should enforce their own law on their subjects professing another religion. Both the Hindus and Buddhist Rajas had done it. Of course interference with the Dharma Sastra in the field of religious and personal law would have been intolerable to the Hindus. But it was avoided by the Delhi Sultans most scrupulously.\(^49\) On the contrary, they were

\(^{49}\) Hussain, S.A.: The National Culture of India, p. 91

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
considerate enough to appoint Pandits in the central as well as provisional courts to help in deciding cases of Hindu personal law as well as those in which concerned the religious life of the Hindus."

The six centuries rule of the Mughals resulted into the contribution of two very important elements into the growth of human civilization in India. They are- the Indo-Muslim art and Indo-Persian literature. Although some of the Muslim rulers appeared to be illiterate or half-educated, who cared more for the wild joy of the hunting and the frenzied glory of the war, who devastated fertile plains and burnt rich cities, blinded their relatives and crushed their enemies, yet, " it stands in strange and almost in coherent contrasts to the remarkable fact that, these very rulers were, with few exceptions, great lovers of beauty both in marble and in verse." They liked to live in exquisite buildings, wanted their victories in love and war to be sung by the best writers of their age and " during the intervals of their arduous work and drinking bouts, they loved to hear sweet Persian lyrics and Urdu Ghazals....... and we must be grateful to them for the splendid heritage of art and literature which they have left for us." It was in

51. Hussain, S.A.: The National Culture of India, p. 91
53. The Calcutta Review: April, 1935, p. 17
Shah Jahan's period that the study of Hindu religion and lore received a great impetus through cultural activities of Prince Dara Shikuh who translated the Bhagawat Gita into Persian.

During the medieval period of India, Persian which was not the mother-tongue of either of the Muslims or the Hindus, was jealously learnt by the people of both the religions and vied with each other to learn this language of culture, so much so that, the Persian literature produced in India in almost all the branches of literature, could boast of a honoured position so far its quality and quantity is concerned. "Persian was saturated so much in the rising languages of the country (India) that it contributed thousands of words to the vocabulary not merely Hindi or Urdu but also of Bengali, Marathi, Assamese, Gujarati etc and even now the attempt to eradicate these from our languages has not met with any success." It may be mentioned here that during the Mughal rule in India, the Muslims of South India took to the Perso-Arabic characters for the Malayalam languages besides their native script. If we look at the linguistic trends of medieval India, there is no branch of Persian literature which was not being represented by it.

54. Indo-Iranica: Vol.XII, No. 4, 1960, p. 6
55. Sherwani, H.K.: Cultural trends in Medieval India, p. 86
56. Goratt, G.T.: The Legacy of India, p. 71
in India. The main reason for it was due to the Muslim advent in India and their taking up Persian as the court language. 

"Muslim rulers in the North who employed Persian as the language of administration and culture and Arabic as the language of religion and philosophy and along with came a number of terms or words relating to administration, law, revenue and politics of Perso-Arabic origin." Apart from the Muslim patronage of Persian language, the Hindu contribution to almost all the branches of Persian literature indicate the impact of the language on the Hindu mind and imagination and confirms the fact that India was the second home of Persian language and literature during the Muslim rule in India. Briefly, the Northern India reflected the Muslim impact on administration and culture and the South showed the influence of commerce and religion and obviously, these terms came in gradually to be incorporated in the languages of India.

Persian language was a familiar tongue in the provinces of Punjab and Delhi long before the advent of the Ghaznavid. When the later Ghaznavid shifted their capital permanently from Ghazni to Lahore and brought with them literary lustre, brilliance and glory of Sultan Mahmud's court to India, Lahore

became the el-Dorado of Persian learning and culture. Due to its advantageous position during the whole Muslim period, Persian was learnt by all those who wanted to excel in the service or wanted to attract the attention of the ruling monarchs through their literary compositions. This led to the learning of the language by the Hindus also. They excelled in almost all the branches of the language. The Persian language "held a dominant place in Indian life for over eight hundred years."

It was called the 'French of India' and since it was used as the language of the masses for administration and general purpose of day to day affairs, it bound to bring an overall effect on the life and the people. It became the cultural plane between the Hindu and the Muslim during the whole medieval period. It is therefore no surprising that, so many "Indo-Muslim Chronicles, farrams, sanads, grants, documents, inscriptions, epigraphic and numismatic records are written in Persian."

The Hindus cultivated a great interest and appreciation for the Muslim learning and culture. The Hindus who were endowed with a special aptitude for adaptation in matters intellectual, took very eagerly to Persian literature, specially to Persian poetry. Due to its peculiar charms, these people distinguished

59. Gorekar, N.S.: Glimpse of Urdu Literature, p. 70
60. Indo-Iranica: Vol. IX, No. 4, 1956, p. 59
themselves in that field quite as much as they have done in our own times. It was largely through the medium of Persian prose and poetry, which in their turn had been immensely influenced by the poets and the sacred literature treasured in the Arabic language, that the educated Hindus of those times imbibed and assimilated the ethical thought of Islam. Many of the writings of the Hindus are full of Islamic ideas and philosophy which are the sure result of their being influenced by Islamic thoughts and ideas. It must be noted that Persian was studied by Hindus and Muslims alike without the aid of any grammar for there had not yet been evolved any grammatical system by the time of Amir Khushrau of Delhi, the herbinger of the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture." A great majority of them enriched the language with Indian vocabulary, homely metaphors and imageries drawn from the Hindu-Muslim beliefs.

With the Muslim rule in Bengal, the Persian influence began to be appreciably felt in the Hindu society and in the Bengali language as well which is more cultural than religious. The Persian culture had pervaded not only the Muslim but also the Hindus who acquired the Persian language and adopted Persian manners and customs. The educated enlightened Hindu

families regarded education incomplete and ineffectual without at least some knowledge of Persian. The thorough knowledge of Persian was prerequisite to the raising of the status of a person in society. "One of the most outstanding features of the Eighteenth century Bengal was the predominance of Persian culture and education in the social life of this land (where) the Hindus could recite and compose Persian verses without much facility and elegance as any Muslim of the day and it continued to do till it was ousted from the court by Lord William Bentick in A.D. 1883." "

Persian became more fluently used and widely studied when the Hindus started learning it and started composing both prose and poetical works. It came to be used as a medium of expression and language of the nobility. Many Indian vocabularies found a place in their literary compositions. Bengali words like Malik (Malik), Kanungo (Qanungu), Sirkar (Sarkar) or Maharastrian names like Waknis (Waqay'i Nawis), Kagde (Kaghzi), Nakhwa (Na-Khuda) or Punjabi names like Sardar (Sar-dar), Hazara (Hazari), Kashmiri names like Saraf (Saraf), Gujarati names like Munshi, Zaveri (Jauhari) and similar such names etc are some of the few examples of Persian vocables which are used in Indian languages in its corrupt forms.

64. Indo-Iranica: Vol. XXI, No. 1, 1968, p. 1
One of the remarkable features of the Hindu—Muslim cultural relation was the encouragement received by the scholars in the form of translation of Sanskrit or vernacular works into Persian. It must be admitted that the contacts with the natives in course of time affected the languages of India, first the spoken and then the written languages.

Among the Muslim monarchs there were some enlightened rulers who Indianised themselves and exhibited a keen desire to study and understand the cultural and intellectual attainments of the people of the land. These Sanskrit translations were done mostly with the help of Sanskrit scholars and Pandits. These works include among others the Mahabharata or the Hindu epic, the Ramayana or the story of Rama and his wife Sita, the Atharva Veda or the book of magical spells, the Upanisadas or a series of philosophical treatises, the Bhagavad Gita or the philosophical didactic poem, the Yoga-Vasistha or the moral and religious dialogue between the two rishis Vasistha and 67 Ramacandra, the Pancatantra or the book of best fables, the Rajatrangini or the domestic history of Kashmir and the Simhasanad Vatrimsat or the thirty-two tales of the lion-throne.

66. Indian P.E.N.: Vol. XXX, No. 12, p. 377
The works of Hindu scholars on different branches of learning like Lilavati, Tajik, Apar Dikha Banauti; works dealing with Hindu philosophy, astronomy, astrology like Tahillat by Mulla Chand Akbari, Zich-i-Shah Jahani by Mulla Farid, Zich-i-Ashki, Aksir-i-Saa'dat and Qistas by Kundanla' Ashki, Risala-i-Nujum by Khushwant Rai, Kashfu'il Daqiq by Sadasukh Kole, Jawahir-i-Falak, Jawahir-i-Idrak by Jawahir Singh etc have doubtlessly enriched the Persian learning. Besides all these, other works of importance such as those on medicine, music, mythological stories and heroic legends as well as Puranic works were rendered into Persian from about the end of the eight century to the beginning of the thirteenth century of the Hijra era.

In India, the first rendering of Sanskrit verses into Persian was made during the time of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni on whose praise Nanda, the Raja of Kalinjar had composed a few verses in A.H. 414/A.D. 1023. During the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, the official patronage of Sanskrit learning continued despite his theocratic policies and as such, he commissioned translators particularly of medical works into Persian from Sanskrit when he found 1300 rare Sanskrit works in a temple at Jawalamukh after the sack of Nagarkut in the

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69. All India Oriental Conference: Bhubaneswar, 1959, p. 78
70. Gordezi, A.H.: Kitab Zainul Akhbar, p. 80
Kangra valley in A.H.1326. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir (A.D.1420-A.D.1470) was a great patron of Sanskrit studies and had a number of Hindu books translated into both the Persian and the Kashmiri languages. "His concern for the feelings of his Hindu subjects was so great that throughout his kingdom he stopped the custom of slaughtering of cows and he himself refused to take beef." Sultan Hussain of Bengal (A.H.1493-A.D.1519) and his son Nusrat Shah (A.H.1519-A.H.1532) helped in the translation of Bengali Vaisnava literature. The Suri Sultans, Sher Shah, Islam Shah and 'Adil Shah gave equal rights and equal opportunities to their Hindu and Muslim subjects and under their rule the Hindu elements began to become prominent in state affairs. The Mughal period, specially the hey-days of Akbar will be remembered in the Indian history as the best period of Hindu-Muslim cultural understanding, assimilation and cultural exposition because, never in the history before so much efforts were made socially and culturally to bring closer the two great religious communities. "The greatest of Akbar Shah lies in his being the epitome of all the fine qualities that might be searched for, and found only partly, in some of his predecessors."

72. Badauni, A.Q.: Muntakhabu't-Tawarih, Tr.by S.A. Rankine, p. 249
73. Mujtabai, F.: Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Relations, p. 133
74. Ibid : p. 134
75. Ibid : p. 140
The effect of the Indo-Persian literature was complete when the Hindus took to poetry. The Hindu poets distinguished themselves in the matter of versification and held an unique position for themselves. It was largely through the medium of Persian (Prose and Poetry) which in their turn had been immensely influenced by the poets and the sacred literature treasured in the Arabic language, that the educated Hindus of these times imbibed and assimilated the ethical thought of Islam in their poetical works. It contained full of Islamic ideas and philosophy which is but the sure result of their being influenced by Islamic thought and ideas. In their style of writing, the Hindu poets and writers are found using words like سلسلة السامي، who in their writings. The use of words like همسر or همسر show that unless the name of the author is written or known, it becomes difficult to distinguish whether the writer is a Hindu or Muslim. Communal barriers were effaced by an intimate community of mind, feeling and interest which are well-reflected through their versified works. This fact is also borne out by such works as Safina-i-Khushgu, Safina-i-Hindi or Gul-i-Rana. There were many Hindu poets and

76. Bhagi, M.L.: Medieval India: Culture and Thought, pp. 398-399
77. Abdullah: p. 271
80. Faruqi, N.A., ed.: Gul-i-Rana, Delhi, 1969
writers who wrote in Persian and freely used Quranic passages, prophetic traditions and Sufi expressions in their works.

"The Rama-asvamedha of Makhanlal's Persian translation begins with these lines:


Poets like Manohar Tawsami alias Mirza Muhammad, Ram Narain Mauzun, Swami Bhupat Bairagi, Sital Das, Lala Hakim Chand to name a few Hindu poets in whose writings there are praises of Prophet Muhammad, the Imams and the families of the prophet Muhammad. Similarly, there were Muslim writers and scholars such as Faizi, Abu'l Fazal, Nizam-uddin Panipat, Mir Abu'l Qasim Findiriski, Dara Sikuh etc who engaged themselves in translating Sanskrit works, writing about the beliefs and practices of the Hindus and putting Hindu religion and philosophical ideas in Islamic terminologies. They tried to show the closeness of the ideals and spiritual values,

81. Mujtabai, F.: Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Relations, p. 117
82. Makhanlal: Rama-Asvamedha, Lithographed in 1872, p. 42
83. Mujtabai, F.: op. cit., p. 120
Besides poetry, the scholars of both the religions devoted themselves to the compilation of Persian Lexicons, Epistles, Memoir writings etc. The dictionary compiled in India exceeded than those produced in Iran. The critical dictionaries compiled by Hindu scholars excelled in quality than with some contemporary dictionaries written by Muslims. Undoubtedly the Lexicons compiled by Hindu scholars reveal their critical acumen, scholarly research, vast learning and depth of knowledge. Works like Miratu'l Istilah of Anand Ram Mukhlis which is based on original research is a fine example pf Lexicon of Hindu scholar. Bahar-i-'Azam by Tek Chand Bahar or Mustalahat-ush-Shu'ara of Warasta are but some of the best Persian Lexicons produced in India by Hindu scholars.

It is evident from the above discussion that the long six centuries of Mughal rule brought Persian as the via media for a cultural assimilation and its long suzerainty bound to impress all. Persian as a Language of literature entered into the thoughts and minds of the masses. The literature produced

84. Mujtabai,F.: Aspects of Hindu-Muslim Cultural Relations, p. 125
85. Hekmat,A.A.: Glimpse of Persian Literature, p. 43
86. Indo-Iran: Vol.IX, No.2, 1958, p. 6
during its long journey in the Indian soil created an atmosphere favorable to a composite culture and good will based on unity in diversity. The close association of Hindu-Muslim has produced a new culture which incorporated ingredients of the both and presented a certain unity and balanced harmony. This harmonious culture is reflected in the literature produced by them throughout the period. Thus, the whole Mughal period will be reckoned in history as a period which brought the Hindu-Muslim relation closer and saw so many Hindu scholars excelling in different fields of Persian literature in India, intermixing Hindu ideas and thoughts with the Muslims— thus making an ever lasting contributions of Indo-Persian literature, narrowing down the differences of approach to the basic philosophy of life, causing a greater synthesis and last but not the least, helped in making the great Indian Culture.