CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS POLICY

The great Mughals founded their Empire with sword. At each important victory, Babar raised towers of human skulls to become a 'Ghazi' as well as to strike terror in the minds of the conquered people. Fanaticism was the dominant characteristic of the age in which Babar lived. Babar was the child of his age and it was mere chimera to expect religious toleration from him. He had inherited his religious policy from the Lodies. "In order to conform strictly to the Muslim law he excluded Muslims from paying stamp duties, thus confining the tax to Hindus alone." He, thus, not only continued, but increased the distinction between his Hindu and Muslim subjects in the matter of their financial burdens. It was difficult for Babar and his son Humayun to rise above the circumstances of the age. They did not follow an enlightened and liberal religious policy towards the Hindus.

We do not get any reference in the contemporary Muslim or indigenous historical works which may throw some light on the religious policy of Babar, Humayun and Surs, with particular reference to the Panjab. From Babar's occupation of the Panjab till the reconquest of India by Humayun in 1556, the Panjab had been the cockpit of various upheavals and during this period the government were unstable and hence no attention could be paid by the rulers towards religion.

Akbar's reign forms the dividing line between the old and the new methods of government which he was to make so successful. It was
only from 1562 that Akbar was his own master consulting whomsoever he liked but shaping his religious policy mostly according to his own will. When his reign began, it gave no sign of the opening of a new era in the religious policy of the Great Mughals. Almost, his first act of state was to earn religious merit and the title of 'Ghazi' by striking at the disarmed and captive Hemu, his adversary at the Second Battle of Panipat. Akbar was not asked to whet his sword on Hemu because he was a rebel but because he was a Hindu. Akbar was a victorious soldier of Islam. Abdul Faiz asserts that the boy Akbar was wiser than his years and refused to strike a defenceless enemy. But most other writers agree on the fact that he struck at Hemu and earned the title of the Ghazi.

The popular attitude towards heretics and non-Muslims can be well understood from several incidents of Akbar's reign. In 1569-70, Mirza Muqim, son of Mirza Zu-ul-Nun, and Mir Yaqoob were executed at Lahore for their religious opinions. Feelings towards the Hindus could not be bridled. Abdul Nabi executed a Brahman for blasphemy on the complaint of a Qasi. Hussain Khan, the governor of the Panjab, who died in 1575-76, made his government famous by ordering that the Hindus should stick patches of different colours on their shoulders so that no Muslim might be put to the indignity of showing them honour by mistake. Nor did

1. o.III, Beveridge, P.42
2. o.II, Beveridge, P.42
3. Text, A. Yadgar, PP. 263-264
4. -.V, Beveridge, P.42
7. o.II, Burnell, P.463
8. W8, P.318
9. -Beale, P.708
10. o.I, ,PP. 403
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He allowed Hindus to saddle their horses but insisted that they should use patch saddles when riding. Prior to 1583 some Hindus had been converted to Islam forcibly.

When Kangra was invaded in 1532-33, even though Birbal accompanied the expedition as a joint commander, the Umbrella of the Goddess was riddled with arrows, two hundred cows were killed and Muslim soldiers threw their shoes full of blood at the walls and the doors of the temple.

Akbar had to defend the appointment of his Finance Minister Todar Mal, a Hindu, by reminding his Muslim critics that they were all utilizing the services of Hindu accountants in their own households. The later sublimity of Akbar's conception, and the catholicity of his temperament and ideals were moulded by various influences. In his anxiety to do away with religious discord in the Empire he made an attempt to bring about a synthesis of all the various religions known to him and styled it Tawhid-i-Illahi. He thought it undesirable, therefore, that a comparatively young religion like Islam should be considered to possess the monopoly of truth and continue as the religion of the State. He established in its place, a religion of his own choice known as the Din-i-Illahi.

Even in the case of Din-i-Illahi, it was Akbar's policy not to impose his religion by force upon his subjects. It was, therefore, confined to the court circle, and had just a few thousand followers in its fold. After the establishment of the Din-i-Illahi and on account of his spiritual awakening that Akbar followed the policy of religious

1. - - - - o . . . an
2. Ab Fa : Jn Din-i-Akhbar and Abdul Qadar Badauni in Muntakhab-i-Tawarih-Vol.II, P. 223, both agree on this point.
5. Akbar the Great-Mushal-V.A. Smith, P. 251-252
6. Akbar the Great-Mushal-V.A. Smith, P. 251-312
toleration towards his non-Muslim subjects. He removed all restrictions from the public religious worship of non-Muslims. A Christian church was allowed to be built at Lahore and Thatta. Akbar presented a golden Umbrella to the shrine of the fire goddess of Jawala Mukhi. It was but natural for a monarch who believed that there was truth in every religion and there was the same god everywhere, whether he be worshipped in a church, a mosque, a temple, or a synagogue, to treat all religions alike and to give the followers of every faith complete freedom of conscience and worship. Contrary to the practice which had existed since the advent of Islam in the country, Hindus were permitted to perform public worship and to preach their religion. Those Hindu men, women and children who were forcibly converted to Islam were allowed to go back to their ancestral religion, if they liked. "Being at this time seized with suspicions against some of the Mullah of Lahore, His Majesty ordered Qazi Sadr-ud-din, Lahori, a free thinker and other 'Mullahs' such as Abdul Shakur Quldar, Mullah Muhammad Massum, and others, to be banished from the city." Christians were further allowed to build churches and proselytise Hindus and Muslims to Christianity.

Jahangir's accession had raised the hopes of orthodox Muslim theologians for the restoration of Islam to the position which it had occupied before Akbar who had dis-established it as the state religion. They tried to convert the new Emperor to their views so as to persuade him to reverse the work of secularising the state that his great father had almost completed. The orthodox seemed to have greater faith in Jahangir than in Akbar. Jahangir maintained Christian service at Lahore, at the expense of the court and paid allowance to Christian Fathers. He imposed no restriction on the public celebration

1. Annual Report of the Jamat Mission for 1597 in Haqlan, P.77
2. Lahore Muhammad Latif, P.33
3. Nushubat-i-Mula-Ahmad Sirhindi, P.1, 2, 46
of religious festivals by Hindus and himself participated in some of these such as Basant, Raksha Bandhan and Dusshera. This was in vogue, of course, when he was at peace but when he made war on Hindus and Christians, these considerations were sometimes given up, as when Jahangir visited Kangra, he decided to celebrate the first Muslim occupation of this famous fort by desecrating the Hindu temple and glorified in it. The relations between the Hindus and Muslims in the time of Jahangir, on the whole, were however, cordial. This is evidenced from the fact that some of the Hindu shrines of Kangra and Muthra continued to attract a large number of Muslim pilgrims besides their Hindu votaries.

Jahangir, though usually liberal and tolerant towards all religions, at times sanctioned repressive measures against the Shi'ahs. Soon after Jahangir's accession, it was reported to him that Shaikh Ibrahim had been declared as a religious leader in the parganah of Lahore. He had gathered together a large number of Afghans as his followers. Jahangir ordered him to be brought before him; he was not able to satisfy the Emperor and was thereupon entrusted to Prince Parvez to be imprisoned in the fortress of Chunar. Qazi Murullah was put to death on account of his being a notable Shia writer. Some of the Muslim theologians complained to Jahangir against Shaikh Ahmed Sirhind, who had deputies and followers in every part of India, that some of his writings claimed to have risen to a status higher than those of the Caliphs. The Emperor thereupon called him from Sirhind and asked him to explain his position. The Sheikh was ultimately

1.  e  P.  -Text,PP,161-1
2.  - -  -Text, P.347

4. Nisaki-Jahangiri-Text, P.312
5. He was introduced to Akbar by Hakim Abul Fatah, and had a great reputation for learning. When Shaikh Munin Qasi of Lahore retired he was appointed his successor(Lahore-Muhammad Latif, P.43)
imprisoned in the fortress of Gwalior, but he was released sometime after and sent back to Sirhind with gifts.

A Christian Church was built at Lahore during Akbar's reign.

"Brahman and a Moor were converted at Lahore but in secret." Jahangir not only tolerated Christianity, but he also patronised it well. The Christian Fathers were paid from Rs. 3/- to Rs. 7/- daily; occasionally he would give them money for their services, and once at least to mitigate the distress of the poor Christians by a monthly grant of Rs. 50/-.

Shah Jahan gave the real start to the trend that came to its full growth with his son Aurangzeb. He was an orthodox Muslim. He endeavoured to give his court an Islamic atmosphere. He abolished Sijada (Adoration), discontinued the Hindu practice of Tuldan, the celebration of Hindu festivals at Lahore and important towns of the Panjab. Hijri era to the state calendar was restored. He began to celebrate at his court the Muslim festivals of the Id, Shab-i-Barat, Milad and Bara-Wafat in orthodox Muslim fashion. While his predecessors used to have 'Tika' sign on the forehead from the Hindu Rajas at the time of their succession, Shah Jahan delegated this duty to his Prime Minister. He reimposed the Pilgrim tax on Hindus.

It was decided that only Muslims were to be recruited to the public offices, but this order does not seem to have come into force. Even in the thirty five years of Shah Jahan's reign, out of a total number of one hundred and forty one Mansabdars of about 1,000 to 7, still fifty two were the Hindus. Raja Rajorup of Murpur was one of th In the revenue department besides the four provincial Divans ranking as commanders of one thousand or more, there were others occupying

1. sn rs,pp. 34
2. sn ed by Payne, p.34
3. - -Saq Mustad Khan, p.178
4. Son of Raja Jagat Singh of Murpur. (History of Shah Jahan-Saxena, pp.94,9)
less exalted positions yet discharging equally responsible duties. Rai Sabha Chand was the Dewan of Lahore. In the 12th year Rai Makand Dass was Divan-i-Tan and Dewan-i-Bauytat. He served for sometime as the officiating revenue Minister in the 12th Year. Rai Chander Khan was officer-in-charge of Dar-ul-Insha, the secretariat.

In spite of this the Emperor spared no effort to propagate and to establish the Islam in the Land of the Five Rivers. He ordered that the converted Muslim girls should be restored to their fathers and the Hindus who had married them must either pay heavy fines or become Muslims themselves. But it was discovered that his order had not completely stopped this system of conversion to Hinduism. Dalpat, a Hindu of Sirhind, had converted a Muslim girl, Zinab, given her the Hindu name Ganga, and brought up their children as Hindus. He had also converted one Muslim boy and six Muslim girls to Hinduism. Shah Jahan got exasperated at this persistence and defiance of his orders. To put a stop to this practice and warn all future transgressors against the law, Dalpat’s wife and children were taken away from him. He was sentenced to death by mutation with the option that he could save himself by becoming a Muslim. Dalpat did not submit and was cruelly put to death.

When the Sikh Guru Har Gobind took up his residence at Kiratpur District Noshiarpur, he succeeded in converting a large number of Muslims. Sometimes before 1645 “Not a Muslim was left between the Hill near Kiratpur and the frontiers of Tibet and Khotan. The Mughals conquered Kiratpur in 1648 and it is possible they might have made some

1. **V**ol.IA Muhammad Salhi Kambu-Text, P.304
2. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.279
3. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.28
4. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.510
5. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.64
6. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.345-57
7. **V**ol.II Abdul Hashid Lahori-Text, P.57
efforts in reconverting the people." If it was a fact it appears that the Emperor might not have noticed it or overlooked it.

During the days of famine in the Panjab in 1645-46 when people began to sell their children, Shah Jahan ordered that the sale price be paid by the State and the Muslim children be restored to their parents and Hindu children brought up as Muslims. "Towards the end of his reign, we actually find him restraining the religious zeal of Aurangzeb and over-riding him in many important matters. It must, however, be admitted that Akbar's ideal of a comprehensive state although, only partially, was gradually being lost sight of."

Here came about the anti-climax to the liberal trend of Akbar's times when Aurangzeb's accession completed the process of reaction. He was not satisfied with the doings of his father and restored Islam to its original position as the religion of the State and made a sustained effort to convert India into a Muslim country. First of all he discontinued all the Hindu festivals.

On April 9, 1669, it was reported to Aurangzeb that the Brahmins of Sindh, Multan and Banaras were using their temples as schools, which attracted students, Hindus and Muslims alike, from great distances. "Orders in accordance with the organisation of Islam were sent to the governors of all the provinces that they should destroy the schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the practices of the religion of the Kafirs."

In a small village in the Sarkar of Sirhind, a Sikh temple was demolished and converted into a mosque, the Imam was appointed there, who was subsequently killed by the Sikhs. Aurangzeb's relations with...
the Sikhs are dealt with under a separate chapter entitled, "The Sikhs and the Great Mughals".

Conversion to Islam was encouraged in diverse ways under Aurangzeb. The criminals who embraced Islam were acquitted, and high government posts were conferred upon the converts who were, besides, rewarded in many other ways. All kinds of pressure was exerted on the Hindu population in order to compel it to embrace Islam. The Islamic law of justice was tightened with a view to compel the non-Muslims to abandon their ancestral religion and embrace Islam. Thus under Aurangzeb the State became a vigorous missionary institution and utilized its power and resources for the propagation of Islam.

The policy of religious toleration introduced by Akbar in the sixteenth century was completely given up during the later half of the seventeenth century and a countrywide conversion drive was let loose with concentrated fury at selected points, with the result that the Mughal Empire was socially disrupted with a universal loss of sympathy on the part of Hindus. Disintegration and dismemberment had set in due to the relentless proselytizing zeal that Aurangzeb never ceased to evince till his death.