Synthesis and Syncretism between Islam and Hinduism in the Indian Subcontinent: an Analytical Study of the Religious Thought during the Sixteenth Century

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DECLARATION

I, <u>Munazza Batool</u>, Registration No. <u>67-FU/PhD/F06,</u> a student of PhD Usuluddin at IIUI do hereby solemnly declare that the thesis entitled "*Synthesis and Syncretism between Islam and Hinduism in the Indian Subcontinent: an Analytical Study of the Religious Thought during the Sixteenth Century*"submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Usuluddin is my original work, except where otherwise acknowledged in the thesis, and has not been submitted or published earlier and shall not be submitted by me in future for obtaining any degree from this or any other University.

MUNAZZA BATOOL

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إن الحمد لله ، نحمده و نستعينه و نستغفره و نعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ومن سيأت أعمالنا من يهد الله فلا مضل

له ومن يضلل فلا هادي له و نشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له و نشهد أن سيدنا محمداً عبده ورسوله

صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم.

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I thank *Allāh*ﷻ for His bounties and blessings, Who has created me and bestowed me with peace of heart and mind and has provided me a chance to be a learner and a researcher. I have a deep gratitude for my *Allāh*ﷻ for all He has bestowed upon me for it is due to His mercy and blessings that I am able to write these words, after completing my research. I also thank *Allāh*ﷻ for He has provided me a chance to learn in this university. I pray *Allāh*ﷻ to make this place a minarate of learning and khowledge for the whole world.

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Abstract

This analysis of the religious thought of the Indian subcontinent focuses upon the nature of earliest contacts between Islam and Hinduism and also discusses the early Hindu response and resistance to Islam and Muslims. These early contacts resulted in development of some theological and social issues within Hinduism; like the theological interpretation of destruction of age old deities and temples and defeat of Hindu rulers by the Muslim armies, issue of social interaction with the Muslims was a taboo for the Hindu society, likewise the development of monotheistic tendencies in the religious thought of Hindus. The Muslim theologians, intellectuals and Sufis interpreted, categorized and comprehended the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus in different ways. These interactions developed in much divergent ways over the centuries and there emerged a variety of ideological, theological, doctrinal and mystical tendencies as a result of these interactions. For an analysis of the nature of these tendencies the issue of religious freedom and conversion activity is discussed in detail.

The religious thought of sixteenth century Indian Subcontinent presents an array of different sects and movements that developed as a result of Hindu-Muslim interactions. Some of the sects and movements that emerged as a result of convergence of Hindu-Muslim thought during the sixteenth century were attempts at synthesis between both Islamic and Hindu beliefs and practices while majority of these sects and movements were syncretistic. Synthesis and syncretism are used as two analytical categories; synthesis is an attempt at putting together of common elements while syncretism is an attempt to combine ideas that are disparate and may even be contrary to one another such as the notions of polytheism and monotheism.

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INTRODUCTION

All praise is for Allah﷽. We praise Him and seek His assistance. We ask for His forgiveness and take refuge in Him from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. He whom *Allāh*﷽ guides will never be diverted yet whomever he sends astray will never find his way. I bear witness that there is no god but *Allāh*﷽, alone, He has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammadﷺ is His servant and messenger, may *Allāh*﷽'s blessings and peace be on him and his family and companions.

I have selected the topic "Synthesis and Syncretism between Islam and Hinduism in the Indian Subcontinent; an Analytical Study of the Religious Thought during the Sixteenth Century" for my PhD research. Synthesis or syncretism between religious ideas from different traditions is indeed a very interesting theme. It is also very interesting to discuss and highlight this theme in the context of Islam and Hinduism particularly. Before I can discuss the significance of this theme it is very important to define it in the context of my work.

In linguistics syncretism is the identity of distinct morphological forms of a word. This phenomenon is typical of fusional languages. The difference between Synthesis and Syncretism is basic one as it is defined by Oxford English Dictionary[1]. In synthesis, like syncretism, combining and unifying are also emphasized but in its wider philosophical use synthesis denotes the putting together of parts or elements, but syncretism is unification or merging of different parts or elements, there is nevertheless a difference in the status of elements within the resulting phenomena; synthesis is putting together while syncretism is like a chemical merging.

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[1] For further details: see the word 'syncretism' and 'syncretize' in J.A. Simpson and E.S.C Weiner, The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford:clarendon Press,2004) vol.xvii, p. 475

[2] Leopold, Anita Maria and Jensen, Jeppe Sinding.Syncretism in Religion (London: Routledge,2004)

[3] Bazurg bin Shaharyar.*Ajāiab al Hind* (Beirut: Silsilah Dāirat al Ma'ārif al Hindiyah)

[4] For further details see Dr.Hamidullah, Muhammad. *Muhammad Rasūullāh* (Karachi: Huzaifa

But when it is used in the field of religious studies it implies the combination or fusion of differing systems of belief. This is most evident in the areas of philosophy and religion, and usually results in a new teaching or belief system. Religious syncretism often takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the teachings are blended. The new heterogeneous religion then takes a shape of its own. Syncretism is the process by which elements of two or more religions are assimilated together resulting in a change in the fundamental tenets or nature of those religions. It is the union of two or more opposite beliefs, so that the resulting form is a new thing. When it is not a total fusion, but a combination of separate segments that remain identifiable entities it is known as Synthesis. [2]

In the field of religious studies syncretism refers to the mixing of different religious traditions whether as active, ongoing process or as historical fact. In the Indian Subcontinent, migration and large scale conversions were the events which led to the process of religious syncretism. But this synthesis and syncretism does not just happen because religions had cross over into one another. It occurred over a long period in social conditions characterized by incomplete conversions and sometimes directed by the interests of individuals. Whether this synthesis is a good or a bad thing for any religious tradition is a disputed matter. There can arise in situations of syncretism attempts to preserve the integrity by guarding against foreign influences. Same is the case with the religious activity during the sixteenth century Indian Subcontinent.

Religious interaction between Islam and Hinduism in the Indian subcontinent is an important theme both historically as well as current. Both religions have shared a long history in this land. The contacts between Islam and Hinduism go back to the early days of Islam. There are historical records which show that Islam came to the subcontinent in the life of Prophetﷺ.

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[2] Leopold, Anita Maria and Jensen, Jeppe Sinding.Syncretism in Religion (London: Routledge,2004)

Islam entered India via three routes geographically; Western Indian Coast at Arabian Ocean which was the center for trade. Islam was introduced here by travelers and traders before the Ummayid *fath*, North Western Indian coast Sindh through *fath* by Muhammad Bin Qasim round about 92 Hijrah/711C.E while through North Western land routs a few centuries later by Mahmūd Ghaznavi in 1030 C.E.

The earliest contacts between Isalm and the Subcontinent were established through sea trade. History of these geographical and commercial contacts goes back to pre-Islamic period. Thus we find that there were some Indian tribes which had settled in Arabia as a result of these commercial contacts before Islam. They were known among the Arabs at the time of advent of Prophet☼ as *al zitt* and *Al ahāmira* and *al bhāsira*. And when Prophet☼ started sending *da'wah* message to the whole Arabian Peninsula and even abroad, some of these Indians settled in Arabia also embraced Islam. Arab traders living in Indian lands and those carrying the trade also took the new message of Islam to these lands. Some historians have also mentioned that Prophet☼ sent a letter to the king of Malabar among the letters which were written to different rulers[3].

There are also local traditions which narrate that when the ruler of Malabar came to know about Prophet☼ and his *da'wah*, he himself traveled to Arabia to have a direct contact with the Prophet☼. His name is mentioned as Cheraman Perumal. Although historians have a difference of opinion about the time of his reign, but there is a consensus that the king named Cheraman Perumal had left for Madina and that he didn't reach at the time of Prophet☼ but he reached even after *khilāfah* of Abu Bakar☼ in the time of Umar☼ and embraced Islam[4]. There are also archeological records which attest all above traditions; graves, mosques and the coins which carry the names of the Muslims dating the first century of *hijrah* calendar.

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[3] Bazurg bin Shaharyar.*Ajāiab al Hind* (Beirut: Silsilah Dāirat al Ma'ārif al Hindiyah)

[4] For further details see Dr.Hamidullah, Muhammad. *Muhammad Rasūullāh* (Karachi: Huzaifa Publications, 1979), See also Zain al Din bin Abdul Azīz, *Tuhfat ul Mujāhidīn*. (Calicut: Islamic Trust Book)

This deep rooted interaction between Islam and Hinduism led to a variety of religious ideas, practices and movements. Islam and Hinduism were two different worldviews, Islam being the religion with a set of creeds and practices based on two principles *Quran and Sunnah*, while Hinduism being an amalgam of different beliefs and practices and even the belief in God in Hinduism was "Ishta Devata" the idea which says that devotees can chose the deity they like. Islam has the boundaries of creed, dogma or the belief while Hinduism got the geographical boundaries – India – and the social boundaries – caste-. But this contrast didn't result simply in confrontation and tension; rather there emerged multiple traditions out of mutual influences of Islam and Hinduism.

These long term relations resulted in wide range of synthetic religious phenomena like mystical interpretations, meditation practices and syncretistic movements. These interactions between Islam and Hinduism can be divided into three phases:

I. Early phase 800 – 1400 which can be characterized by era of contact and interface
II. While the second phase (1400 – 1700) is the face of convergence and confluence full of synthetic and syncretistic activities, religious fermentation, and composite developments resulted by early contacts.
III. From 17th C.E. up to modern times which can be easily seen as a phase of revival, separation and exclusiveness.

It is this religious synthesis and a large scale syncretistic activity which emerged especially in the second phase, which actually needs to be studied at different levels of religious thought in both Islam and Hinduism, like theological level, mystical level and at popular and cultural level. And this is what I have in mind while starting this research. This cross fertilization also led to a kind of debate and dialogue not only between the Hindus and Muslims but there emerged an intra religious dialogue involving the issues like: religious attitudes, food sharing and mutual contacts. There are different mutual

responses and attitudes of Muslim scholars, Sufis and those of Hindus which need a careful historical analysis.

Review of Literature:

As far as the previous researches are concerned, there are inexhaustible studies that cover the Hindu-Muslim interactions in fields of politics, society, culture, arts, literature and economics. The works that deal with the political history of Islam in India usually highlight the tension and confrontation that existed between the Muslims and Hindus, these works have different political motives and interests. Most of these works on the history of medieval India scarcely mention the religious dialogue and the creative relations of both communities. Among these we find the works like; Mill, James' *The History of British India* (Baldwin, Cradock and Joy,1817), also W. H. Moreland. *India at the Death of Akbar: An Economic Study.* (1924) and Elliot, Henry Miers and John Dowson's *The history of India, as told by its own historians: The Muhammadan period* (Cambridge University Press, 1966).

The works that deal with the social and cultural aspects highlight the influences and borrowings of both the communities in different fields of life. These include the works like S. M. Jaffar, *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India,* Delhi, first published sometime in 1930. The work provides a general account of state, administrative system, religion, education, architecture, gardening, painting, poetry, music, social life, religious influences and economic condition during the Muslim rule.

B.N. Pande. *Islam and Indian culture*, Patna: Khuda Bkhash Oriental Liberary, 1967. The work emphasizes the role of Islam and Muslim culture and history in the making of India. The work focuses on the cultural effervescence and fusion of different elements during the Islamic epoch. Thus for example the status of women in Arab and

Turkish cultures differed much from Hindu society, yet in India Muslims followed the Hindu customs regarding women more than the Arab and Turkish customs. Likewise Muslims in India adopted all the Indian ways and manners in dress, ornaments, social intercourse, and marriage ceremonies.

Muhammad Umer. *Hindustani Tehzeeb ka Musalmanon per Asar*,1975. The work provides a comprehensive survey of the effects of Indian culture on Muslim society. The works focuses on the customs, habits, superstition and beliefs touching specially upon those elements that demonstrate the effect of Indian culture and civilization on Muslims.

Ashok Kumar Shrivastava, *Hindu Society in the Sixteenth Century*, New Delhi, 1981. The work provides detailed information on the customs, ceremonies and social norms of the Hindu society during the period.

Irfan Habib, ed., *Akbar and his India*, New Delhi, 1997. Proceedings of a Seminar organized by the Dept of History, Aligarh Muslim University, in celebration of the 450th anniversary of Akbar's birth, and some documents and book reviews. This volume focuses on Akbar, his empire and environment, to present a picture of the polity and culture of India during the reign of Emperor Akbar.

Muhammad Umar. *Muslim Society in Northern India during the Eighteenth Century* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998) the work is concerned exclusively with Muslim society and culture in the eighteenth century India. The book was originally presented as doctoral thesis at the Aligarh Muslim University; it presents the composition and character of the Muslim community; the king and royal household; the Mughal nobility; social and cultural aspects of life of the nobility; rise of regional political powers and Delhi during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**.**

Andre Wink*. Al- Hind: the Making of the Indo-Islamic Worlds* in 3 volumes, The first volume analyzes the beginning of the Islamization process of the regions that the Arabs called 'al-Hind'. It highlights the commercial impact of expansion of Islam on "al-

Hind" from seventh to eleventh centuries, thus the work considers the dynamic change that occurred in the peripheral states of the Indian subcontinent was due to the flow of the resources and intensive raiding and trading activity, as well as social and political fluidity that resulted due to Islamic infiltration in these lands. The work further focuses on the shift of power that occurred with the massive transfers of wealth across multiple centers along the periphery of "al-Hind," and the role of these multiple centers in circulation of wealth in the Indian Ocean trade. This trade activity effected the continued economic, social, and cultural integration into wider and more complex patterns under the expansion of Islam.

The second volume deals principally with the Islamic conquest of the 11th-13th centuries. The book also provides an analysis of the newly emerging organizational forms of the Indo-Islamic state in these centuries, migration patterns which developed between the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, maritime developments in the Indian Ocean, and religious change..

The third volume "*Indo-Islamic Society; 14th- 15th Centuries*" of Andre Wink's *Al-Hind:The Making of the Indo-Islamic World* covers the history of Indo-Islamic world from the late Mongol invasions to the end of the medieval period and the beginnings of early modern times in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The main focus of the work is on the role of geography, and more specifically on the interplay of nomadic, settled and maritime societies. In doing so, it presents a picture of the world of India and the Indian Ocean on the eve of the Portuguese discovery of the searoute: a world without stable parameters, of pervasive geophysical change, instable urbanism, highly volatile and traveling elites of nomadic origin, far-flung merchant diasporas, and a famine- and disease-prone peasantry whose life was a gamble on the monsoon.

Besides the works that deal with the influence paradigm mainly there are detailed surveys of the religious and mystical thought that developed in the Indian subcontinent as a result of Hindu Muslim interactions:

Tara Chand. *Influence of Islam on Indian culture* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1946). This work is dealing with the Muslim influence on Indian culture and civilization, the author has given a survey of the Hindu religious thought showing that medieval Hinduism absorbed the Sufi concepts of monism, spiritual *guru* and egalitarianism. He tries to show decisively that this absorbtion paved the way for a religious reform within Hinduism. Thus he traces the origin of Bhakti movement to the Islamic origins. While doing so he has studied the biographies of Hindu reformers of the medieval period both from the South and the North.

He further establishes that the Bhakti movement originated in the South among the Tamil speaking saints whose poetry formed the basis of a devotional faith and that at the time of development of these ideas in the South the Islamic influence can be traced. Through a detailed discussion of the doctrine of monism or advaita (non-dualism) propounded by Sankaracharya he also shows the influence of Sufi views on his thought. In the latter section of his work he highlights the Islamic influences on Indian arts and architecture.

Yusuf Husain. *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (London: Asian Publishing House; 1962).The work is a collection of five essays covering different aspects of Hindu-Muslim interactions. The author has presented the significant features of the process of social change which was brought out in medieval India as a result of the Islamic impact. The work provides an assessment of Hindu-Muslim interactions on cultural, social and religious grounds.

The first two essays "*Islam and cult of Bhakti*" and "*Sufism in India*" provide a detailed discussion about the mystical tendencies of the medieval period. Third essay "*the educational system*" gives a vivid description of developments in the field of education and knowledge dissemination during the medieval period. The fourth essay "*the origin and growth of the Urdu language*" deals with the origin of Urdu language and its relation with the local languages and vernaculars as well as with the Persian and Arabi languages. The fifth essay "*social and economical conditions*" discusses in detail the cultural and economical milieu of the medieval period.

Aziz Ahmed. *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford Clarendon press, 1964) the author has given a survey of Islamic thought in India with an overview of some syncretistic sects and folk beliefs among Muslims in the subcontinent. The work is arranged in two parts, the first part examines the relations of the emergent Muslim polity in India with the larger Muslim world. While second part deals with issues of accommodation, syncretism, and opposition between `Muslim India' since the campaign of Muhammad bin Qasim in Sindh in 710 to the emergence of independent India and Pakistan in 1947.

Shaikh Muhammad Ikram. *Muslim Civilization in India*, a one volume version of his three volumes Urdu work *Āb e Kauthar*, *Rood e Kauthar* and *Mauj e Kauthar* the cultural, intellectual and religious history of Indian Muslims. The author has provided a detailed account of Islam in the Indian subcontinent starting from the early Islamic conquest and settelements till the nineteenth century. While doing so he has also discussed in detail the cultural, intellectual and mystical aspects of Muslim communtiry of the subcontinent. He also disses the religious policies of the Muslim rulers of different dynasties. Moreover the work also provides an estimate of the religious interactions between the followers of the both communities.

S. A. A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Agra, 1965. Focussing on the currents of mystical thought the

work analyses the teachings of early Chishtiyas, Suhrawardiyas, Firdausiyas and Shattariyas. It then discusses the impact of the Islamic millennium and the messianic movements on the body-politic of Islam in India, culminating with the Mahdawi movement in the realm of religion and the Sulh-i-Kul of Akbar the Great in the realm of politics and government. The study of Muslim revivalist movements in Northern India that emerged as a reaction to the pressure of the movements mentioned above is the principal objective of the present book. The work is studded with controversial judgments but the author's presentation of the vast source material on the subject interest among the independent and objective thinkers, in the Muslim religious movements of India. His other works on the religious thought; *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign,* New Delhi, 1975. The book derives mainly on accounts provided by Abul Fazl with significant new insights on the religious and cultural aspects of Akbars's period.

David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Ideas in Islamic South Asia,* New Delhi, 2002. Thirteen essays and Introduction cover a range of themes from the arts to Sufism to the state. This collection challenges the popular presumption that Muslims and Hindus are irreconcilably different groups, inevitably conflicting with each other. Invoking a new vocabulary that depicts a neglected substratum of Muslim-Hindu commonality, the contributors demonstrate how Indic and Islamicate world views overlap and often converge in the pre-modern history of South Asia.

First part covers the literary genres, architectural forms, and Identities. It includes five essays contributed by five different scholars: 1. *Alternate Structures of Authority: Satya Pir on the Frontiers of Bengal,* by Tony K. Stewart 2. *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Crossing the Boundaries in Indo-Muslim Romance,* by Christopher Shackle *3. Religious Vocabulary and Regional Identity: A Study of the Tamil Cirappuranam*, by Vasudha Narayanan 4. *Admiring the Works of Ancients: The Ellora Temples as Viewed by Indo-*

Muslim Authors by Carl W. Ernst 5. *Mapping Hindu-Muslim Identities through the Architecture of Shahjahanabad and Jaipur,* by Catherine B. Asher.

Second part covers Sufism, Biographies, and Religious Dissent it contains three essays: 1.*Indo-Persian Tazkiras as Memorative Communications,* by Marcia K. Hermansen and Bruce B. Lawrence 2. *The "Naqshbandi Reaction" Reconsidered,* by David W. Damrel 3. *Real Men and False Men at the Court of Akbar: The Majalis of Shaykh Mustafa Gujarati,* by Derryl N. MacLean.

While the third part talks about State, Patronage, and Political Order containing five essays: 1. *Sharia and Governance in Indo-Islamic Context,* by Muzaffar Alam. 2. *Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States,* by Richard M. Eaton. 3. *The Story of Prataparudra: Hindu Historiography on the Deccan Frontier,* by Cynthia Talbot 4. *Harihara, Bukka, and the Sultan: The Delhi Sultanate in the Political Imagination of Vijayanagara,* by Phillip B. Wagoner 5. *Maratha Patronage of Muslim Institutions in Burhanpur and Khandesh,* by Stewart Gordon

R. M. Eaton, *India's Islamic Traditions, 711–1750,* New Delhi, 2003. Anthology of old articles of some 17 historians, covering a wide range of themes. Spanning some twenty-five years of research and writing, the essays in this volume fall into two categories: historiography and Indo-Islamic civilization. The former deals with how historians structure and answer the questions they choose to ask of the past, the latter covers case studies of particular historical communities in India.

Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, ed., *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Culture,* New Delhi, 2003. The work is a collection of 11 essays, 5 by the editor himself. This collection of essays offers a comprehensive study of the impact of cultural life and intellectual thought on society in medieval India. It highlights the impact of interaction between Hindu and Islamic of culture under the Arab and Ghaznavid rulers, from where

it reached to Sind and Punjab resulting in socio-political changes in the whole subcontinent

In context of existing literature my present work may be considered as a specific reflection on Hindu Muslim interactions in the sphere of religious thought during the sixteenth century. In order to have an estimate of the confluence of both religions and their followers the present study highlights the manifold patterns of religious synthesis and syncretism between Islam and Hinduism which emerged during the sixteenth century in the Indian subcontinent.

Research Problem:

This research aims to highlight the synthetic and syncretistic movements and practices and the religious pluralism which emerged in the Indian Sub-Continent at the theological, mystical and popular level in both traditions, Islam and Hinduism during the 16th century. The purpose of study is to look for answers to these questions:

1: What is meant by synthesis and syncretism between two or more religions? And how it is important in the study of religions?

2: What were the modes of expansion of Islam and conversion activity and how it affected the process of religious synthesis and syncretism in the Subcontinent?

3: What were the theological attitudes of the mystics, jurists and scholars of the period under review i.e. exclusivist or inclusive or pluralistic and their significance for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent during and after the period under review?

4: What were the major customs, movements and religious manifestations of synthesis and syncretism between Islam and Hinduism during the period under review?

5: Can it be observed as a pluralistic phenomenon? What were the major religious trends, movements and the factors which led to this religious pluralism?

General Method:

In this research I have followed the historical and comparative method. I have collected the historical information from multiple sources without relying on specific view point. I have tried to analyze historical evidences, incidents, figures and movements critically and objectively and to draw comparisons between different sects and movements to highlight the synthetic and syncretistic elements in both traditions. The method which I have used in my work comprises the following:

a. Collection of historical data from multiple sources, mainly focusing on the sources of the period under study.
b. Cross examination of the historical evidences and analysis of various narratives of the same incidence to achieve a better understanding.
c. Analysis and interpretation of the historical details of the events, issues and movements.
d. Grouping, categorizing and comparing the various traits through finding out the similarity, connections and interactions.

Thesis structure:

This work is divided into six chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of Hindu- Muslim interactions. The first Chapter presents a socio-religious account of subcontinent before the advent of Islam. It also traces the early contacts between Muslims and Hindus and also provides some reflections about the Muslims penetration into subcontinent as traders, saints and travelers and an account of Muslims approaching the subcontinent as *Fathīn*.

In the second chapter I have tried to give an estimate of the confrontation and conflict between Islam and Hinduism. It discusses the early theological debate or dialogue between the followers of both traditions and highlights the social and cultural conflict which emerged during the period. It also highlights that the interaction between Islam and Hindu religious thought did provoke a criticism from within Hinduism as regards to some of its age old beliefs and practices like cast system, priesthood, widow burning and idol worship.

Third chapter deals with the issues of religious freedom and *da'wah*; it highlights the main discourses of Islamic thought which shaped the religious policies of Muslim rulers of the subcontinent during the period. It also deals with the process of conversion. An attempt has been made to explore the methods of *da'wah* and the patterns of conversion. The main aim of this chapter is to provide an estimate of *da'wah* activity and the scope of its success. The chapter also discusses the modern debate about the process of conversion and tests the theories of modern scholarship in this regard.

Chapter four tries to explore Muslim approaches and attitudes towards Hinduism and an effort has been made to see how the Muslim scholars, jurists and mystics perceived Hinduism as a religion? And what were the theological attitudes of the Muslims towards Hinduism? Here I have tried to show that there was a shift between the early perceptions and interpretations of the Muslim scholars where Hindus were seen as *dhimmī* and some later views where the Hindus were seen as *Kuffār* and polytheists. The chapter also highlights the Sufi attitudes and interpretations of Hinduism focusing mainly on the four popular Sufi orders; *Chishtiyah*, *Suhrwardiya*, *Naqshbandiyah* and *Qadriyah*.

Fifth chapter highlights synthetic and syncretistic elements in the religious thought of the Indian subcontinent during 16th C.E. Here I have tried to give a brief sketch of the synthetic and syncretistic practices, sects and movements among the Muslims. While the last chapter focuses on the synthetic and syncretistic aspects of the Hindu religious thought during the period, an effort has been made to highlight the

syncretistic movements and sects among the Hindus during the period. At the end I have compiled my conclusions which contain the findings and result of my work.

Key terms:

a) Synthesis and Syncretism:

"Syncretism" is a technical term in religious studies describing the combination of some elements of one religion with another from a different tradition. Syncretism seems a problematic term as it carries some negative and pejorative meanings.[5] One of the main objections to the use of the term 'syncretism' is that it focuses on the derivative nature of the sect so labeled and thus serves the theology and not the history for its being judgmental about the sect or the movement. The other objection is that it is back formation of the history and does not attempt to analyze the emergence of the particular sect or religion in its own historical environment and settings rather it labels that sect or movement as derivative.

The use of the word syncretism has become problematic because of its predominant negative connotation for many Christians in the past and present so the issue is not the meaning of the term itself but the onesided usage of the word[6]. One solution is to jettison the word altogether[7] because it is too ambiguous while the other suggestion is to resurrect and redefine the term. [8] Instead of using the term dogmatically as has mostly

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[5] For a detailed discussion about use of the term see: Irina, A. Levinskaya. *Syncretism the Term and Phenomenon*, in Tyndale Bulletin 44/1 (1993) p.117-128.

[6] Gideon Goosen *Syncretism and the Development of Doctrine,* Colloquium 32/2 (2000) p.137-150, *see also* Droogers, André. *Syncretism: The Problem of Definition*, *the Definition of the Problem*, in *Dialogue and Syncretism*. Jerald Gort, Hendrik Vroom, Rein Fernhout and Anton Wessels, eds. (Grand Rapids: 1989) p.7-25

[7] Peter Schineller. *Inculturation and Syncretism: What is the Real Issue*? International Bulletin of Missionary Research 16, no 2 (1992) p.50-53

[8] For discussion about the redefinition see; Robert Schreiter, *Defining Syncretism: An Interim Report. International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 17, no 2 (1993): 50-53. See also; Droogers, André, .*Syncretism and development,* p. 7-25.

been the case in the past, it can be used diagnostically, to elucidate the confused and the mixed patterns of the religious traditions thus described.[9]

Keeping in view all the above opinions I think it is better to use the term and define it in one's own framework because to abandon a term or a category is not the solution of the problem. On the other hand to abandon the word may also create an obstacle for understanding the religious and cultural developments and activities and may result in avoiding the core of the matter, namely, the relationship between different religious groups, societies and cultures. Moreover to abandon the term will result in a kind of barrier for an objective analysis of multiple religious phenomenons.

Another possible way is to keep the term and define or fix its meaning. Language develops and adopts new terms to express newer insights which may replace the old ones but at the same time a process of retaining some terms also continues. However, in the case of syncretism, a case can be made for a rehabilitation of its meaning by stressing its use as an analytical term. This is what I intend by use of this term in work that is to use it an analytical category.

Besides the term syncretism many other terms are also being used in the fields of cultural and social studies like; hybridist, collage, mélange, hotchpotch, montage, synergy, bricolage, creolization, mestizaje, mongrelization, transculturation, third cultures and so on but mostly these are used perhaps only as metaphors, others with claims to more analytical status, and others again with more regional or thematic strongholds. More often than not these are concerned with cultural form, cultural products and often relate to domains of fairly tangible cultural materials, such as language, music, art, ritual, or cuisine hence these are mostly open-ended, it seems that the use of these terms will turn more problematic than the words; synthesis and

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[9] John May, *Syncretism or Synthesis? An Anticipatory Sketch of Religious Change in the Pacific*, South-Pacific Journal of Mission Studies 1, no 4 (February 1991) 18-21.

syncretism. These two terms more specifically used in the domain of history of religions and more so in the analysis of the religious encounters and interactions.

I will also use these two terms after defining them in the context of my research to avoid further ambiguity in use of these terms. Moreover, the normative character of any term does not imply that the term itself cannot be used, much more important is the way or the sense in which it is used in a particular context. In the context of my research use of the term syncretism was unavoidable since I wanted to categorize the multiple sects, movements and thought waves which emerged as a result of the interaction between Islam and Hinduism and for doing so I needed a categorical framework for analyzing the variety of the religious sects, approaches and activities that emerged during our period. I have selected both terms synthesis and syncretism for the explanatory and analytical purpose and not for the sole purpose of branding or labeling a phenomenon to be syncretistic or synthetic. In the context of my work both the words synthesis and syncretism are used as means for describing the variety of religious phenomenon.

As regards the meaning of the word 'syncretism' it can be used referring both to the process and the end product. A religious belief and practice takes some time to enter into another s system or the world view. The time that this takes is the process of syncretism, a period in which the different religious interpretations contest each other, while the pattern in which these different beliefs and practices are merged appears as a new religious belief or practice is the end product.[10]

Syncretism, as I will use within the framework of my research is the coexistence of elements of diverse origins, to be more clear and direct I will be focusing on the syncretistic phenomenon, with its three forms; The first is the assimilation extension of one meaning to the point of the effective elimination of the other, The second is the fusion of the diverse elements such that while a single coherent pattern of meaning has

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[10] Droogers, *Syncretism , p.*20

been attained that pattern is so different from any of the patterns hitherto available that a new religion may be deemed to have emerged. The third is the drifting apart of the two meanings, in which case we may speak of dissolution.[11] It would be interesting to analyze these three forms of syncretism in the context of the encounter between Islam and Hinduism during the sixteenth century.

It should be noted that synthesis is simply to combine different preexisting ideas which are relevant somehow, while syncretism is an attempt to combine ideas that are disparate and may even be contrary to one another such as the notions of polytheism and monotheism. Therefore, synthesis can often result in an eventual unity of the combined ideas; the syncretistic grouping of ideas may not enjoy such coherence or aesthetic unity.

b) The Subcontinent:

Geographically speaking the subcontinent is made of the land mass between 8.N to36.N and 68.E to 98.E[12], bounded on the North by the world's largest mountain range; the chain of Himalayas which with its extensions to East and West, it divides India from the rest of Asia and the world while on the South by the sea. These barriers of mountain range and the sea were however at no time in the long history insuperable, and the travelers, settlers, traders and invaders have found their way either over the high and desolated passes of Himalayas or through the unfathomable ocean. The subcontinent can be divided into three major and two minor physiographic units. The three major units are; 1) The Himalayas or the extra peninsular area situated to the North. 2) The peninsula area to the South. 3) The vast Indus –Gang-Brahmaputra plain in the middle. While the two minor units are the coastal plains and the islands.[13]

More recently the term South Asia is being applied to the Indian subcontinent by many scholars and is regarded a neutral one to avoid the bias and political sensitivities

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[11] Michael Pye. *Syncretism and Ambiguity,* in Numen, Vol. 18, Fasc no 2 (Aug. 1971) p.83-93

[12] Phani, Dekha. *Geography; Economic and Regional* (Delhi: New Age, 2007) p.147

[13] Ibid, p.148

attached with the older term; the Indian subcontinent.   That can be useful in the recent approaches and present scenario and can serve as a positive term as suggested by recent scholarship[14] but as far as my theme and research is concerned it is not that much useful because it lacks the historical depth and is much irrelevant with the limit and scope of the topic as the alternative term South Asia is only four or five decades old. While the term India and the Subcontinent is preferable here because of its historical depth and significance.

C) On the term India and Indian:

The term India is a foreign impression for the land beyond river Indus; such was the use of this term by Persians, Greeks and later on by Arabs, to refer to this land. The term India owes its origin to the Persians who didn't reach beyond the Sindhu at the time of their conquest of Indian provinces[15]. The Persians pronounced *S* as *H*, and the name *Hindu* or *Hind* was derived from the word *Sindhu*, the great river in the North West part of this country. The Greeks who first heard of India from Persians called the river Indus and the people were called *Indoi* and the country *India* just as they ended the names of countries with *ia* e.g. Persia , Babylonia, Arabia, etc. Most interestingly even the land was known to the Chinese by the name of the river *Sindhu* with different Chinese pronunciations i.e. *Sheri-tu-ki*, *Hsien-tou*, *Hsien-tu*, *Kan-tu*, *Yin-tu* are probably the

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[14] Many recent works on the Indian subcontinent bear the title the South Asia for example:
Alison Arnold. *South Asia* (Garland publications, 2000) Sugata Bose, Aysha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History Culture Political Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2004), Jamal Malik. *Madrasa in South Asia Teaching Terror* (Routldge, 2008) *Islam in south Asia; A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000)

[15] Gandara, and Hindush as appear in the Achaemanid Inscriptions referring to the *Gandhara* usually denotes the region comprising the modern cities of Peshawar and Rawalpindi in Pakistan but it appears from early Persian inscriptions that it included the Kabul now in Afghanistan as well and *hindush* included the Western Punjab and Sindh. See for further discussion on the geographical boundaries of Persian rule in the Indian subcontinent; Rapson E. J. *Ancient India; from earliest times to first century AD* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011) p. 81-82, Mohammad Taqi Imanpour. *Bar rasi Jaigahi Sayasi Satraphai hakhamanashi dar dora e Dariush Bazurg ba takya bar Kataibah ha (*A Study of the Political position of Achaemenid Satrapies during the Reign of Darius the Great, based on Inscriptions) published in Iran History.61, no 5(Summer 2009) : 25-54;also M.A.Dandamaev. *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* (Netherlands: A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire (Netherlands: Brill, 1989) p.145

phonetic variations of the word *Sindhu*.[16] The Arabs also referred to the land as *Al-hind*, though the Arab geographers were more precise in their knowledge of this region as they differentiated between Sindh and *Hind*, and divided the *Al-hind* into three main geographical units, i.e. *Guzarat* (Gujarat the areas next to Sindh and Makran region*), Malabar or *Bilād filfil* and *Ma'bar* (the Southern coastal areas)[17]

The Indians themselves called their land *Bhartavarsha* the abode of *Bharta* a legendry Hero, son of king Dushyanta of *Mahabharta.*[18] The other term is *Jambudavipa* the country of Jambu tree. This according to the ancient Indian literature is one of the seven dvipas. As the world *bhauvana* consist of these seven dvipas or islands[19] which are *Jambu, Saka, Kusa, Kraunca, Salmala, Gomedha* and *Puskara*[20]. The *dvipas* stand for continents or territories; it signified all types of natural regions big or small and the *Jambudvipa* at the centre of all and the Mount Meru which is Pamir knot at the centre of *Jambudvipa.*[21]In the Buddhist literature the terms *Aryadesh*a, *Madhyadesha* and *Indravardhana* also appear beside the term *Jambudvipa*, which according to Pali Buddhist conception is one of the four *Mahadvipas* of the earth, as the earth is divided into four continents *Catur-dvipa* in the early Buddhist literature.[22] Likewise in Jain literature the term *Jambudvipa* is used for the continent and the term *Bhartavarsha* for a small part of *Jambudvipa.*[23]The dominant cosmographical conception of the Indian

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[16] See: Krishna Chandar Sagar. *Foreign Influence on Ancient India* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1992) p. 4-6

[17] See for Muslim geographical divisions of the area: Abu al Fida Ismael bin Ali*, Kitⱶb Taqw⌐m al Buldⱶn*. Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, William MacGuckin Slan, eds. (Paris: Imperial Press, 1840) P.352-353

[18] K.D. Bajpai (Ed.) *The Geographical Encyclopedia of Ancient and Medieval India* (Varanasi: Indic Acadamy)p. 61

[19] Amarnath Das. *India and Jambu Islands* (India:Vidya publishers Distributors, 1985) P. 76

[20] The names of these dvipas occur differently in different works another list is: Jambu dvipa, Plaksha dvipa, Salmali dvipa, Kusa dvipa, Krauncha dvipa, Saka dvipa and Pushkara dvipa. Thompson, Richard M. The Cosmology of Bhagvata Purana(New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2007) p. 24-26

[21]Dawarka Prasad, Misra. *Studies in Proto History of India* (New Delhi:OrientLongman*,*1971) p.8

[22] D.C Sircar. Studies in Geography of Ancient and Medieval India (New Delhi:Motilal Banarsidas,1990) P 17-19

[23] Krishna Chandra Sagar, *Forigen Influence*, p. 3

classical literature was the *Sapta-dvipa Vasumati*; the earth consisting of seven islands or continents. The earliest reference to this conception is found in Mahabhasya of patanjali[24]. And the term "*Bharta varsa*" or *Bharta* is one of the nine subdivision of the Jambu dvipa itself which are (1) *Bharta* in the South. While, (2) *Kimpurusha* (3) *Harivrsha* (4) *Ilavrita* (5) *Ramyaka* (6) *Hiranmaya* (7) *Uttarakuru*, each of these lying in the North; and (8) *Bhadrasva* and (9) *Ketumala* lie respectively to the east and West. Thus the term "*Bharta*" was used to refer to the country or the land inhabited by the descendents of King *Bharta*, while the term "*Jambu dvipa*" is used for the continent.[25]

d) Hinduism:

During the past decades many scholars have criticized the use of the term Hinduism on the ground that the term Hinduism is a colonial construct, and that it did not exist before the nineteenth century.[26] These scholars are of the view that there was nothing as a continuous and mono-geneous Hinduism prior to the British or the colonial use of the term in the nineteenth century. Scholars like Wilfred Cantwell Smith and many others advocated abandoning the term Hinduism as it is false conceptualization; his rejection of the term is perhaps based on his view that any statement about a religion is not valid

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[24] D.C.Sircar. *Studies in Geography*, p.17-19 see also Rama Prasad .(Trans) *The Yoga darsana of Patanjali with Sankhya Pravacana Commentry of Vyasa and the gloss of Vacaspati* Mitra (New Delhi: Logos Press,2005) P. 233

[25] John Muir. *Original Sanskrit text on the Origin and History of the People of India their religion and Institutions*, vol 1, (London: Turbner and Co,1868) P.495

[26] See Dalmia. *The Only Real Religion of the Hindus: Vaisnava Self-representation in the Late Nineteenth Century*, in Dalmia and Stietencron, *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995) pp. 176–210; Frykenberg, Robert. *The Emergence of Modern 'Hinduism' as a Concept and as an Institution: A Reappraisal with Special Reference to South Inda*, in Sontheimer and Kulke, *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Delhi: Manohar, 1989) pp. 29–49.; Fuller, Christopher J. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Hawley, John Stratton. *Naming Hinduism*, in *Wilson Quarterly* (summer, 1991) pp. 20–34; see also Larson, Gerald. *India's Agony over Religion* (Albany: State University Press, 1995) Oberoi, Harjot.S. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1994) p.16–17; Stietencron, Heinrich von. Hinduism: On the Proper Use of a Deceptive Term, in Sontheimer and Kulke. *Hinduism Reconsidered (*Delhi: Manohar, 1989) p.11–27; see also Stietencron, Heinrich von. *Religious Configurations in Pre-Muslim India and the Modern Concept of Hinduism*, in Dalmia and Stietencron (ed). Representing Hinduism, p.51–81

unless it is accepted by the believer of that religion, [27]the statement which also provides the base for contrary that the believers have not challenged the usage of the term themselves.

Another argument against the use of the word Hinduism based on the heterogeneous nature of the beliefs and practices which are labeled as Hinduism. It is argued that the use of the term Hinduism as a religion emerged due to the misunderstanding of the European scholars when they took over the term Hindu from the Persian sources as they failed to realize that the term Hindu was simply corresponding to the term Indian.[28]Besides the linguistic and historical objections to the term Hinduism a moral or social argument is also used against the usage of the term. It is argued that the concept of Hinduism as a single religious community has damaged the peace, security and unity of the Indian political system; hence the use of the term should be abandoned.[29]

Many scholars have questioned these claims directly, and have argued that the term Hinduism might be a later construction but an Indian classical religion theologically and devotionally based in ancient texts such as Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and six darsanas did exist much earlier which gradually acquired a sharp self conscious identity through its rivalry with Muslims between1200-1500 and was established long before the nineteenth century.[30]

Ironically the term has prevailed in all the recent discourses to the extant that the titles of the articles, books, chapters and volumes in which the arguments are stated against the use of the term Hinduism, all include or bear the title Hinduism. As a researcher I feel it necessary here to nuance the usage and understanding of the term in my work:

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[27] Wilfred Cantwell Smith. *Comparative Religion: Whither—and Why*? in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, ed.*The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* (Chicago:1959) p. 42

[28] Stietencron. *Hinduism*, p. 33

[29] Robert Eric Frykenberg, 'The emergence of Modern "Hinduism", p. 82-3

[30] David Lorenzen. Who Invented Hinduism? p. 630- 659

Firstly, while accepting the heterogeneous nature of the beliefs and practices which are labeled as Hinduism, I myself also feel that there existed a common or shared religious entity much earlier. It should be noted that this common religious identity was tied together through some core dogmas, scriptures, gods and goddesses. Thus the belief in *Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas* and some popular gods was prevalent in the subcontinent long before Islam and was standardized through categorizing those living in India into orthodox Astika and unorthodox Nastika systems[31].

Secondly, the presence of a common religious identity is palpable in the Muslim sources on the history, society, culture and geography of the Indian people especially during the period which I have selected for my research. Moreover, not only the Arabic and Persian sources written by the Muslims but also the literary sources produced in local and regional languages contain many such themes which reflect the presence of a Hindu religious tradition sharing a set of scriptures, beliefs and practices:

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

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[31] An account of the religious sects and groups which existed prior to advent of Islam is provided in the first chapter below.

Dipthongs

Doubled

(ARABIC)
(PERSIAN/URDU)
(TURKISH)

(ARABIC)
(PERSIAN/URDU)
(TURKISH)

Letter ء is transliterated as elevated comma (') and is not expressed when at the beginning.

Letter ع is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (').

ض as Arabic letter is transliterated as *d*, and as Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as z.

و as Arabic letter is transliterated as *w*, and as Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as *v*.

ته is transliterated as *ah* in pause form and as *at* in construct form.

Article ال is transliterated as *al-* (*'l-* in construct form) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter.

و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as *–o*.

Short vowel */* in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as *–i*.

Chapter One

Historical Background

1.1 Socio-religious account of the Indian subcontinent at the advent of Islam:

1.1.1 Sources:

Any research in the ancient history of Indian subcontinent can rely on variety of data scattered in the multiple sources which are not necessarily historical in nature. India has not produced chronological histories in ancient times and it was a later development, perhaps it was during the Islamic period that there emerged a literature which can be dealt as a chronological history. Modern scholarship has much debated over the issue that; whether Indians lacked the historical sense or there were other reasons for not writing their history? According to modern Western scholarship, Indians lacked historical sense as they didn't produce any historical work. While the Indian historiographers of modern times, have made strong case against such claims[32].

These scholars have made their arguments as following: Indians had their own historical sense and not the modern Western historical sense.[33]There are variety of texts,

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[32] It was suggested, particularly by western scholars that ancient Indians had no sense of writing history
In 1904, Vincent A Smith wrote "*Early History of India.*" It was the first systematic history of ancient India. In this book his approach to history was pro *British and he tried to justify* the British rule in India. The Indian historians who have tried to reject the colonial notions about Indian sense of history R.G. Bhandarker (1837–1925) and V.K. Rajwade (1869–1926) who reconstructed social and political history with the help of various sources. The contribution of P.V. Kane (1880–1972) is remarkable. He wrote a monumental work titled "*History of Dharmasastra*". D.R Bhandarkar (1875–1950), an epigraphist, published books on ancient Indian political institutions .H.C. Raychaudhuri (1892–1957) reconstructed the history of ancient India and while doing so criticized V.A. Smith at many points. A stronger element appears in the writings of R.C. Majumdar (1888–1980) who edited a multi-volume "*The History and Culture of Indian People*".

[33] See for example the argument by Romila Thaper in her essay '*Historical Consciousness in Early India,* in Bharati Ray, ed. *History of Indian Science, Philosophy, and Culture* (India:Pearson Education, 2009) vol14 part 4 see also Tej Ram Sharma. *Historiography; A History of Historical Writing* (New Delhi Concept Publishing Company, 2005) p. 18

records and inscriptions produced by Indians which provide information about India's past. Likewise there are historical works like court chronicles of different regions and dynasties as there are religious texts which preserved the names of teachers, dynasties and events of the past.

It is very important here to keep a balanced view between the two extremes. There is no doubt that India has produced many sciences and arts and there existed a variety of literature which can provide a glimpse into India's past. Yet it is also true that ancient India has not produced any chronological history of its past and produced no grand historian like those of other nations in the past like Thucydides[34], Herodotus[35], Tabari [36]or Ssu-ma-chin.[37] And one cannot easily reject the statement by al Berūni who is equally regarded by Western, Indian and Muslim scholarship as an authority on the Indian history when he complains about the carelessness of the Hindus about the historical order of the things. After discussing different regnal systems which were popular in different places he labels them as *mutasāhilūn*(relaxed) and *mutaghāfilūn*(ignorant) in the chronological succession of the kings, "and when they are asked to reproduce the historical information they are at a loss, not knowing what to say they take to the tale-telling".[38]

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[34] Thucidides, an Athenian, writer of the History of the Peloponnesian war, was born in Alimos between the year 460 and 455 B.C and died between 411 and 400B.C. For further details about life and works of Thucydides see: John Marincola. *Greek Historians* (Great Britain: Classical Association, d.n) p 61-104

[35] Herodotus (484 -425 B.C) the author of the book *The Histories*, he is regarded as the Father of history for he added the information about the social and geographical aspects of ancient times besides the history of wars and politics. Ibid p19-60

[36] Abu Jafar bin Muhammad bin Jurair al Tabari (224-310 AH) one of the earliest, most prominent and famous Persian historian writer of *Tarīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk.* Ibn e Shaba, *Tabqāt al Shāf'iah (*Berut: Dar al Nashr, 1407 AH)Vol.1, p.100

[37] Ssu Ma Chin an astronomer and historian of China, who was also an extensive traveler and the official historian in the court of Han emperor Han Wu Ti, for further details about the life and works of ssu Ma Chin see introduction of the book; William H. Nienhauser. *The Grand Scribe's Records: The Meoirs of Ancient China(*Indiana University Press,2010)

[38] Al Bir└ni. *Tahq┘q m┐ lil Hind* p.349

Another issue related to the historical information contained in the ancient sources is the complex nature of the time and space referred to in these ancient sources. As far as the time is concerned in most of these works reckoning of time is relative. These works do not refer to any universal or general era; rather these refer to the regnal years of the king or the figure to which they refer. It shows that no general or universal reckoning system was used and the events were mentioned in the king's regnal years. There are many examples in the ancient Indian epigraphy, here I quote one such to illustrate the vagueness of this reckoning style; Rock Edict III of King Asoka which reads: *dbadasa-vas-abhihisitena maya idam anapitam* (I have ordered this when 12 years have passed after my installation on the throne).[39] Same is the case with the names of places and cities which are very much different in different sources as usually the rulers used to change and replace the names of cities and towns. Thus we can find materials in relative geography or relative history but not in general or universal history.

As far as the early sources of the Indian history during the period right before the advent of Islam are concerned these are in plenty and belong to different categories: Indigenous works, archaeological data, the travelogues and contemporary works by Muslim scholars.

1.1.1.1 Indigenous works:

As mentioned earlier that there is hardly any earlier work by Indian writers which can be treated as a history in strict sense of the term. What we find are the religious and liturgical works which narrate historical occurrences and events. Such are the Epics and Puranas[40] where one can find the list of kings and their achievements. Beside these religious works Biographies or *Charitias* are very important texts for writing history. They were written by court poets in praise of their patron rulers. As there is a tendency

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[39] The text is quoted from: D.C. Sircar. *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi:Motilal Banarsidas,1996) p.232

[40] John Campbell, Oman. *Great Indian Epics:* The Stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata with Notes (New Delhi: Asian Educational services,1996)

among these writers to exaggerate the achievements of their patron monarchs one has to study these works with caution. These are some biographical accounts of few historical figures like: *Harshacharita* [41]by Banabhatta, *Vikramavikadevacharita* [42] by Bilahna, *Navasahsanikacharita*[43]by Padmagupta *Bhojaprabandha*[44]by Ballala, *PirthvirajaRaso*[45] by Chandbardai.

Beside these biographies two more sources are important for information about the socio-religious aspects of the history of Indian subcontinent and are different from other court chronicles and these are (i) Tilaka Manjiri by Dhanapala[46] and (ii) Rajatrangini[47] written by Kalhna during the twelfth century, both can be treated as historical works to some extent. These works deal mainly with the history of the region in which these were composed, the former dealing with the Malwa and the areas around it while the later with the history of Kashmir from the earliest time to the time of composition of work in the 12th century.

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[41] Harshacharita is an incomplete biography of king Harshavardhana of Thanesar and Kanauj, written during the seventeenth century by his court poet Banabhatta. Sreedharan, A.*A text book of Historiography* (Oriental Longman, 2004)P.321

[42] The biography of the king Vikramaditya IV of Chalukyan dynasty, there is another biography of the same figure by his son Somesvara III, the work is known as *Vikramankabhyudaya*.Ibid,p.438

[43] The work is also known as Panimala written about 1005 AD. Ibid, p.324

[44] *Bhojaprabandha* is a collection of literary anecdotes relating to King Bhoja of Dhar, written by Ballala during the 11th Century A.D. The work has been edited by Jagdishlal Shastri with Sanskrit commentary beside the Hindi and English translations and published by *Motilal Banarsidas, Varanasi*.

[45] Biography of the Chauhan ruler of Delhi, which narrates the struggle between Pirthvi raj and Muhammad of Ghour during the 12th century

[46] *Tilaka Manjiri* is a Sanskrit work which consists of 12,000 verses was written by a Jain scholar during the 10th century. Though the date of work is disputed but scholars generally agree that Dhanapala was attached to the court of Pramara kings and was contemporary of King Bhoja II for details see: Ganga Prasad Yadava. *Dhanapala and his Times* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company,1982)

[47] Rajatrangini is a long Sanskrit narrative poem of eight thousand metrical verses divided into eight cantos. The word Rajatrangini means the river of kings. The work is translated and published; Kalhana. *Rajatarangini: the saga of the kings of Kashmirr* Translated by Ranjit Sitaram Pandit (Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1968)

1.1.1.2 Archaeological data:

The archaeological data consists of coinage[48], inscriptions[49] and the monuments of antiquity.[50] These evidences can be regarded as early records of Indian history and do provide valuable information about the history of Indian subcontinent. These sources give a clearer insight into the culture and norms of the people than the literary works. Thanks to the archaeologists[51]of the last century for the excavations at different sites in India and Pakistan has revealed many unknown and ignored chapters of

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[48] Study of coinage or numismatics is also a credible source of past. There are many works which study this aspect of the Indian history like: C.J. Brown.*The coins of India* (Calcutta: Asian Educational services, 1922), also Alexander Cunningham. *Coins of Ancient India (* Asian Educational Services,1996); also Parmanand Gupta. *Geography from Ancient Indian Coins and Seals* (New Delhi: Mittal,1989); also K.D. Bajpai. *Indian Numismatic Studies* (Abhinav Publishers,2004)

[49] Study of inscription is known as epigraphy, there are many works on Indian epigraphy which throw light on different aspects of Indian history; D.C. Sircar. *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1996), Richard Salomon. *Indian Epigraphy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

[50] Both the fields of Epigraphy and Numismatics are generally included in archaeology, which is broader in its scope than the discipline of field archaeology, see for details: A. Gosh (Ed.). *An Encyclopedia of Indian Archaeology* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1989) vol.1, p .361-70, see also; F, R. Allchin. *The Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

[51] Among the early numismatic works in India we find M. A. W. de Schlegel 1828 his article '*Observations sur Quelques Medailles Bactriennes ET Indo-Schthiques*' in the November issue of the Journal Asiatique. Also James Prinsep whose contributions to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal were edited by Edward Thomas in two volumes and were published in1858 as; James Prinsep, *Essays on Indian Antiquities*, Historic, Numismatic, and Paleographic (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1971) likewise Alexander Cunningham who, in addition to his comprehensive *Archaeological Survey Reports (*1862-1884), published four volumes dedicated to ancient Indian numismatics. Cunningham first published a series of papers in the *Numismatic Chronicles* No 8 (1868), No 9 (1870), No 10 (1872), No12 (1873) which he then collected for a single publication as Alexander Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors in the East* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1969). Subsequent publications include: Alexander Cunningham*, Coins of Ancient India, from the Earliest Times Down to the Seventh Century A.D* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1963), Alexander Cunningham*, Later Indo-Scythians* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1962). Among other works we can mention: C. J. Rogers, Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum (Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1895); Percy Gardner, *The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1886), Percy Gardner, *The Types of Greek Coins: An Archaeological Essay* (Cambridge: University Press, 1883).E. J. Rapson, *Indian Coins* (Strassburg: K.J. Trèubner, 1897). Vincent Arthur Smith, *Coins of Ancient India*: Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972 [1906]). R. B. Whitehead, Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914. John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India* (London: British Museum, 1936).

the past. A variety of information lays open in front of a researcher today as a result of numismatic and epigraphic works done by different Institutes and Universities in India[52] and Pakistan during the last decades of the 20th century.

1.1.1.3 The travelogues:

The travelogues or the accounts of foreign visitors are another authentic source of the history of subcontinent. These travelogues supplement the short comings of Indigenous literature. The subcontinent was visited by many visitors from different lands, as ambassadors, travelers, pilgrims and seeker of religious knowledge from time to time; among these are the Persians, Greeks, Chinese, Arabs, Turks, Moroccan, Portuguese, and the British. They have left behind an account of the events they observed and experienced. When read together, these fragments provide valuable information about the religion, social classes and economic activities of the given period.

References to the Subcontinent also appear in the foreigners sources from very early period. Parts of the subcontinent are mentioned in the inscriptions of Darius among the areas conquered and annexed by him[53]. Likewise it appear s in the accounts of Greek

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[52] Some of the famous Indian archaeologists are; Dalip Kumar Chakrabarti, He is known for his studies on the early use of Iron in India and the archaeology of Eastern India. Swaraj Prakash Gupta (1931–2007) was a well-known Indian archaeologist and art historian. He authored a number of books including *Disposal of the Dead and Physical Types in Ancient India* (1971), *Tourism, Museums and Monuments* (1975), *Archaeology of Soviet Central Asia and the Indian Borderlands* in two volumes (1978), *The Roots of Indian Art* (1980)—the French edition of which was published in 1990 and Cultural Tourism in India (2002); Braj Basi Lal (born in 1921), Rakhal Das Dbandyopadhyay (12 April 1885 - 23 May 1930) also known as R. D. Banerji, was an Indian historian and a native Indian pioneer in the fields of Indian archaeology, epigraphy and paleography. He is mostly known as the discoverer of Mohenjo-Daro, the principal site of the Harappa culture. Prof. D. P. Agrawal is also well known Indian researcher in this field.

[53] Darius the Great, king of Persia [522-486 BCE] whose Inscription bear the names of the countries he had subjugated, in Naqsh e Rustam inscription it reads: Darius the King says: By the favor of Ahuramazda these are the countries which I seized outside of Persia; I ruled over them; they bore tribute to me; what was said to them by me, that they did; my law -- that held them firm; Media, Elam, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandara, Hindush, Amyrgian Scythians, Scythians with pointed caps, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Sardis, Ionia, Scythians who are across the sea. For detailed discussion about ancient Iranian records see: Pirnia Hasan. *Iran e Bastan (Iran: Matba e Majlis,1922);also* Mohammad Taqi Imanpour. *Bar rasi Jaigahi Sayasi*

historians from very early period. A Greek Ambassador called Megasthenes who visited the court of Chandragupta Maurya wrote his *Indicia* based on his first hand knowledge. Its original text is lost but parts of it have been preserved in fragments quoted by subsequent Greek writers[54].There are valuable accounts of the travelers from China. Of the Chinese travelers, mention may be made of Fa-hien[55] and Huien Tsiang. Both of them were Buddhists and came to this country mainly to visit the Buddhist shrines and to study Buddhism. Fa-hien who came to India in the fifth country AD describes the conditions in India in the age of Guptas whereas Huien Tsiang presentsa similar account of India in the seventh century during the time of king Harshavardhana. Huien Tsiang also describes in detail the glory of Nalanda University (Bihar) during his times. His account also provides an eye witness account of the decay of Buddhism.[56]

Likewise there are numerous works by Muslim travelers from different lands among these works one can mention *Ajāib al Hind* by a Persian sailor merchant Bazurg bin Shahryar and accounts of Ibn Batutah a Morrocon Muslim traveler and later on an ambassador on behalf of the Delhi Sultanate to China during the thirteenth century AD. Abdul Razzāq who visited India as Ambassador of Khurasan had also written an account

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*Satraphai hakhamanashi dar dora e Dariush Bazurg ba takya bar Kataibah ha (*A Study of the Political position of Achaemenid Satrapies during the Reign of Darius the Great, based on Inscriptions) published in Iran History.61, no 5(Summer 2009) : 25-54

[54] The earliest references of India are made by Herodotus and Ctesias. Then we have the accounts of Greeks who accompanied Alexander on his world conquest and reached till India e.g. Nearchus Onesicritus etc. Among later Greek authors who have written regarding India are Strabo, Justin, Arrian, Plutarch etc. The most important of the Greek records relate to the ambassadors who were posted to India and who have written things with personal observation. These include Greek ambassadors like Megasthenes (Indica), Deimachus, and Dionysius. For Greek sources on India see the series; J. W. McCrindle. *Ancient India* (Constable & Co: Westminster, d.n.)

[55] James Legge has translated and annotated the accounts of Fa-Hien see: James Legge. *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms, Being an account by The Chinese monk Fa-hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1993)

[56] Huien-Tsiang's accounts are also translated and published see: Shaman Hwui Li. *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang* (New Delhi: Asian educational services, 1998) there is another work by Kanai Lal Hazra in which the accounts of Chinese pilgrims are reproduced specially in the context of Indian Buddhism see Kanai Lal Hazra. *Buddhism in India as described by Chinese Pilgrims*(New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal publishers,1983)

of the 15th century. Another Important account is *Silsilatu Twarikh* by merchant Sulaiman. Likewise the Portuguese travelers who visited the subcontinent during the 15th and 16th century also highlight many aspects of socio-religious conditions of Indian subcontinent. A Turkish admiral Reis Alsaidi has also left a valuable record of his times, who visited the subcontinent during the reign of Akbar sixteenth century CE.

The search for India's past in the modern period started as a result of contributions and speculations of many of the British scholars. Though this search for India's past in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century started as a British colonial enterprise but it has resulted in voluminous works which consist of the study of inscriptions, archaeological excavations and translation of different historical and religious and literary works into modern languages. These accounts have various purposes and motifs and are not necessarily very scientific and objective in their nature. Yet these throw a very bright light on the various aspects of the history and culture of Indian subcontinent. While during the modern and recent period multitude of scholars and institutions from South Asia and abroad have involved in discovery and accumulation of very important materials for research and reconstruction of the history of the Indian subcontinent.

1.1.1.4 Contemporary works by Muslim scholars:

It is generally admitted that tradition of writing history was set up by Muslims in the subcontinent and it were Muslims who introduced history as a genre into the subcontinent[57]. These were Muslim scholars and chroniclers who had a keen interest in recording the events in the chronological order. There are various kinds of works by Muslim scholars which throw light on the Subcontinent from early days of Islam. There

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[57] See for example J.S Mehta in his introduction to his 3 volume work: *Advanced Study in the History of medieval India* (New Delhi: Sterling publisher, 1986)

are historical works, records and documents of each Muslim dynasty written for the courtly purposes as well as there are works with individual and scientific objectives. The most relevant among such are the early works like Chachnama which provide glimpses into the socio-cultural settings of time of Muhammad bin Qasim.

Beside these are the works of Muslim geographers, who wrote during ninth to fourteenth century. These works highlight different aspects of the history of the sub-continent and provide valuable information about the commerce, trade routes, commodities and inquiries about different places and distances. These accounts contain direct record of political and cultural conditions during the early period of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Istakhri [58](950CE) Ibn e Hawqal[59](975CE) Al Birūni[60](973-1048) Al Idrīsi[61](1154) have made valuable contribution in this regard, being geographically oriented they have provided a lot of information about the land ,its people, their customs and the religious practices The contribution of Al Birūni is very important both from geo-historical as well as socio-religious perspective. Al Birūni had the privilege of direct observer and he can be truly called the historian of the subcontinent during that period.

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[58] Abu Ishaq Al Istakhri, generally known as Istakhri because of his native city Istakhr in Iran, a famous geographer and traveler, he travelled extensively throughout the Muslim countries of his times. His work *Kitabal Masalik wal Mamalik* mentiones a lot many details about the subcontinent.

[59] Muhammad Abul Qasim Ibn Hawqal (d.367AH977CE) was born in Nisibis now Nusybin, in Turkey. An extensive traveler and geographer; his extant work is *kitāb al Masālik wal Mamālik* and *Sūrat al Ard*, He spent 30 years in traveling in remote parts of Asia and Africa. He also visited the Sindh and made a map of the country and discussed the geography and culture of the area. See for his biography; Kahala, Umar Raza. Moujam al Mualifin (Beirut: Dar Ihya al Turath) vol.11, p.5. The text of *Kitāb al-masālik* was published by M. J. de Goeje as *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, II (Leiden, 1873); and by J. H. Kramers (Leiden, 1938).

[60] Al- Birūnī, Abu al-Rayhan Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al Birūnī, a well known distinguished Muslim scholar who was well versed in different fields of knowledge i.e. Mathematics, Astronomy, Physical sciences, Natural Sciences, Geography, History and linguistics.

[61] Al Idrīsī, Abu Abdallāh Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdallāh Ibn Idrīs al-Qurtubi al-Hasani (1100-1165) was born in Ceuta, Spain. Al Idrīsī's book *Nuzhat al Mushtāq fi Ikhtirāq al Afāq* is a geographical encyclopedia containing detailed maps and information on European countries, Africa, and Asia. He later compiled a more comprehensive encyclopedia, titled *Rawd al Unnas wa Nuzhat al Nafs*. Kahala, Umar Raza. *Mu'jam al Mualifin,vol.11,p236*

Beside these are the encyclopedic works of Muslim historians and chroniclers like Utbi the author of the book *Tarikh e Yamini* and Al Mas'ūdi for his *Marūj al dhahab*. The other Muslim geographers and historians who have recorded the socio-religious conditions of the subcontinent were Abu al Fida[62], Al Humairi[63] and Al Ya'qūbi[64].

Muslims had direct contacts with the subcontinent from the early period. Already through the Indian sciences which had reached the Muslims via cultural and trade contacts some knowledge had been gained of Indian culture during the early Islamic period. Indian subcontinent was referred to as *mahbate Ādam* and as a place of wonders both material and spiritual.[65] The travelogues of early period mostly highlight such aspects of the Indian subcontinent. As far as the scientific and academic study of Indian culture and religions is concerned the contributions of Al Birūni in *Kitab Tahqīq ma li al Hind* is considered to be the pioneering one. His work provided the knowledge of Hinduism its sects and philosophies.[66] He was also responsible for the translation of the Patanjali Yoga into Arabic, and in fact inaugurated a tradition of contact with Hinduism. Just approximately 60 years after Al Birūni another Muslim theologian and more accurately a scholar of religions and denominations or *al Milal wa al Nihal* in the 12th century, Al Shahristani (c. 1076-1153) gives us precise descriptions about Indian traditions Though his was an indirect account and was not the first hand information like that of Al Birūni but his categorical hermeneutics of Indian religions is of much significance than usually considered. While dividing Indian religions on metaphysical

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[62] Abul Fida Ismael bin Ali, *Kitab Taqwīm al Buldān*. Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, William MacGuckin Slan (Paris: Imperial Press,1840)

[63] Muhammed Ibn Abdul Munim Al Humairi and his work is published *Arrawd Al Mi'tar bil Khabar Al Aqtar*, annotated by Dr Ihsan Abbas Nasser(Beirut 1980)

[64] Ahmad bin Ishaq Abu Yaqūb bin Ja'far bin Wahb al Yaqubi, Arab historian and geographer, author of a history of the world, *Tārīkh al Ya'qūbi* and a general geography, *Kitab al Buldān*.see Zarkali, Al A'lām, vol.1, p.95

[65] See: Muhiy-uddin Alwāi. *Al Da'wa al Islāmiyah wa Tatawaruhā fi Shibh al Qāra al Hindiyah* p-133

[66] For a summary of al Birūnī's views on Hinduism see A. Jeffery, 'Al Birūnī's Contribution to Comparative Religion', in *Al Birūnī Commemoration Volume(Calcutta, 1951)* pp.125-60; also S.H.Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines,* Chapter V.

grounds i.e. *Ashāb al Rūhāniyāt, 'Abadah al kawākib, 'Abadah al Asnām, Sābia, Brāhima, Ashābul Bidada, Ashābul Hayākil* and so on he made the Indian religious beliefs not only available but also intelligible to the Muslim elite of his times.[67]Thus he classifies the religions of India with the help of the models of the religions and sects which were well known to his Muslim readers in Arabian and Iranian world.

1.1.2   Geo-political scenario before Islam:

To revisit the socio-religious history of Indian sub continent before the advent of Islam it is necessary also to have a look on the geo-political map of India at that time. Muslims reached India through different geographical routes and for many different reasons and motives at different times in the history. The main geo-political units of India during the early days of Islam were namely Sindh, Afghanistan, Bengal, and Deccan and beside these there were many other small states and feudatories in the North and South.

The history of North from 6th century up to the Islamic period is the history of warfare between rival dynasties, which can be followed in some detail with the help of above mention sources. King Harsha was perhaps the most documented ruler of the North[68], who was ruling in the 7th century. He was a contemporary of the prophet Muhammadﷺ. Accounts of Chinese traveler Huin-Tsang and the court poet Banabhatta throw enough light on his time. Although the king Harsha controlled over the most part of North from Gujrat to Bengal, his empire was a feudal one and his main power was confined to Kanyakubja and Sthanesvara[69]. There were different feudatories under his empire and he controlled this extensive area by travelling from one unit to another, these different feudatories divided into small kingdoms soon after his death. There started warfare after king Harsha which continued for the next two centuries when the two strong dynasties the Pallas of Bengal and Behar and the Gurjara-Parthiharas of Kanyakubja

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[67] See his chapter on Indian religions in his work: *Al Milal wa al Nihal*

[68] A.L. Basham. *The wonder that was India* (Karachi: Royal Book Company,2004) p69-71

[69] These are the cities of Kanouj and Thanesar in modern India respectively.

divided the most of Northern India between them. And this is the time when we find the Muslim settlers in the South mostly Arabs of Hashemite clan who migrated due to Umayyad persecution[70] and in the North on the Indus border the successful Muslim expeditions led by Umayyad General Muhammad bin Qasim. These Gurjra-Parthiharas were the most powerful rulers in the subcontinent who somehow resisted and checked the further conquest of Arab Muslims during the next two centuries.

In Afghanistan there were two main powers before Islam the Bhatti Rajputs and a Buddhist dynasty ruling in two main parts of Afghanistan, namely Kabul and Zabul[71]. During the ninth century in the time of Nasr bin Ahmed Samani, [72]Ya'qub bin Laith[73] has controlled over the both parts by defeating the Brahman and Bhatti clans. Towards the end of the 10th century the Kabul was again ruled by Hindushahia dynasty[74] who were pushed by a Turk Muslim chieftain Alaptagin[75] and later by his son

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[70] Anne Marrie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian subcontinent* p-3

[71] The northern part called Kabul or Kabulistan was governed by a Buddhist dynasty while Zabul was the southern region of today's Afghanistan which was ruled by Bhatti rajputs see: Jaswant lal Mehta. *Advanced Study in the history of medieval India*. Vol. 1 , p.31

[72] Nasar bin Ahmad bin Asad Al Samani, who laid the foundation of Samanid dynasty (261-390 AH,873-1000 AD) in Transaxonia after his father Ahmed, who was an Abbasid governor of Farghana and after the death of his father Motamid Abbasi gave him the territories of Farghana,Samarqand, Bukhara and Ghazna. Saman was the name of his great grandfather who was an active worker of Abu Muslim Khurasani's movement which eventually laid the foundation of Abbasid rule. See: Khairuddīn Zarkali. *Al A'lam* (Beirut: Darul Ilm,2002) vol. 8, p-21

[73] Yaqub bin Leith was one of the Abbasid governors who took the control of many of the territories by fighting and defeating the chiefs of the territories of Balkh, Takharistan, Karman, Sajistan and Sindh and later he also took control over the Afghanistan. He laid the foundation of Safarid dynasty (254-298 AH, 868-910AD), after his death his brother Amar bin Leith took the charge for details see: Mahmood Shakir. *Al Tārikh al Isalmi,* vol. 6, p 82-83.

[74] Hindu Shahias, there were two Hindu Shahias dynasties rulling in the Kabul the former Hindu Shahias who were the Kashtaria or Turkish and the later Hindu Shahias the Brahman Al Birūnī. Tahqīq, p. 350-351., Eng. Trans. Edward Sachu. Indica.vol II, p. 13.

[75] Alaptagin was a slave of Samanid ruler Abdul Malik (946-61), He was entrusted by the ruler for the governorship of Khurasan, soon he extended and consolidated himself in Ghazni, and after him his slave Subuktagin took the charge and conquered the areas around. He defeated the Raja Jaipal and was given the title of Nasiruddin by the samanid ruler Nuh bin Mansur.see; Jūzjāni, Abu Umer, Minhāj al din Usman bin Sirāj al din. Edited by W Nasau Lees, Khadim Hussain and Abdul Hai (Calcutta: College press ,1864)p.5-7

Subuktagin[76], who defeated the Raja Jaypal of Bhatinda[77] and took from him the Lughman the modern Jalalabd district and their power shifted to Punjab and Pashawar which later on declined in the time of Mahmūd Ghaznavi.

In the South it was the Chalukya Dynasty which ruled the extensive territory of Deccan from the sixth century till the eighth century with their capital at Avanti present Badami and were succeeded by Rashtrakotas and again by second Chalukyas until 12th century. While Kashmir was an independent state and even during the time of King Harsha the most strong king of North, Rajputs of Kashmir did not subjugate to his power. During the eighth century Kashmir was ruled by Raja Lalitaditya[78] who had defeated the Turks and Tibetans. Likewise the Sindh was an independent state before Islam which was ruled by a Brahman clan[79].And after the Muslim conquest it continued its solidarity and identity under Arab rulers and their local feudatories far from the warfare of the other ruing clans of the North. The above details show that during the eighth up to tenth centuries there were four main powers beside the Arab rulers in Sindh and Multan region, and these were The Gurjara-Partiharas and Palas in North and the Chalukyas and after them the Rashtrakotas in the South.

1.1.3   Religious groups and sects:

An account of the religious activity before and during the early Islamic period is presented below. While doing so I will focus on 7th and 8th century CE and may in some cases use some early and some later accounts in order to asses, review and comprehend the religious phenomena of the given period. Because the history of

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[76] Abu Mansur Subuktagin, born about 331 AH (942-997) he was a slave of Alaptagin and his son in law. For historical details see Ibid,p.6

[77] Jaipal, of Hindu Shahiya dynasty (960-1002) see; Ibid

[78] Lalitaditya of Karkota dynasty, who ruled from AD724-760 see : Chandra Mauli Mani, *A Journey Through India's Past: Great Hindu Kings after Harsha Vardhana*(Northern Books Centre, 2009) p.25

[79] This dynasty was founded by a Brahman named Chach in the year 632, This Chach was the father of Raja Dahir and that is the reason that the most famous work on the early history of the Sindh by anonymous Muslim author *Fatah Nama e Sind o Hind* is known as *Chach Nama.*

religious ideas needs much different parameters than those of events and occurrences of wars and battlefields as the religious ideas and philosophies do not occur suddenly or in vacuums rather these are deep rooted and take long periods in developing.

The evidences about the religious conditions of Indian sub-continent at the time can be derived from the available sources indicated above. When read together these multiple sources show that Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism existed side by side with a variety of groups and sects within and outside these main traditions. There emerged a variety of new religious expressions ranging from pure theistic doctrines and mystical speculations to mere polytheistic and even fertility cults of mother goddesses. Along with the concept of One Supreme Lord there existed the concept of trinity as well as the concepts of pantheon and demi-gods and many other forms of deities connected with fertility cults also emerged. During the period under review we find that beside the greater sects of Shaivism Vaishnavism and Saktas there existed the lesser cults of the popular folk deities.

Buddhism was already in decline before Muslims entered the sub continent; accounts of the Chinese travelers bear an ample testimony to the fact. The Palla Kings of Bengal were the last among the Buddhist rulers of the Indian subcontinent. Brahmanism became popular during the period under review. There emerged variety of cults and denominations each with different set of deities, beliefs and customs. The Chinese accounts also preserve a valuable record of the beliefs and practices of the Indian sub continent during the 7th 8th century. Huien Tsang records disputes of different sects whom he calls as heretics [80]and mentions that there were 18 Buddhist sects among the Indian Buddhists. He also pointed to the fact that during the seventh century when he visited the country, there existed a kind of jealousy and rivalry between the Brahmans and Sramans the term which he uses for Buddhist monks. Likewise I-Tsang also

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[80] For example he mentions among heretics he disputed and refuted a Brahman of the Shun-si sect or the Lokayata School see: Samuel Beal. *The life of Hiuen-Tsiang* (London: Kegan Paul, 1911) p.75

mentions the differences between the Buddhists which existed when he visited the subcontinentsoon after Huin Tsiang.

Early Muslim accounts of the religions and sects of India point to variety of religious phenomena. The main issues discussed in connection with religion in India were the doctrine of transmigration of souls *tanasukh al-arwah*, idol worship, the caste system, and practices such as the extreme asceticism of the yogis, the burning of widows and details about the temples and other sacred places like the temple of Somnath and of Multan. According to Muslim accounts of Indian religions there existed numerous sects. Ibn e Khurdazbah has described that in India there are 42 religions. Likewise Al Idrīsī also mentions that there are 42 sects among Indians. Those which are mentioned by their names are Brahmana or Barahima, Sarmanas or Sumnaniya mostly used to refer to the Buddhist monks, Basvia who are the Vaisnavaites, Mahkaliya the Saivites and the beliefs which are described by them also point to the left handed cult. Like wise the Jhalukiniya, those who adore water, Aknatoriah those who worship fire and offer all the precious things to the fire.

An account of the Major Religious Sects during the period is provided here:

1.1.3.1. Popular Hindu sects:

During the 8th century there emerged different theistic sects in the Indian subcontinent. These theistic sects focused on a particular deity started worshipping him as a Supreme Lord. Most prominent among such were the Vaisnavaites, the Saivites and the Saktas. Both Vishnu and Siva were among the other deities of Vedic pantheon and were worshiped since a long period but during the eighth century these two and the Sakti as energy of Siva emerged as dominant gods of the time. The Votaries of these deities formed their own sectarian groups and adored their respective deities as their supreme lord; the sectaries of Vishnu were called Bhagvatas or Vaisanavas and those of Siva as Mahesvaras or Saivas.

1. Vaisnavaites:

Vishnu was one of the gods of *Rgveda* also known as Narayana in *Upanishad*. But it was in Mahabharta and Puranas that he appears as supreme god. There are many inscriptional references which show that the cult of Vishnu became popular throughout the land and was also patronized by the different dynasties ruling during the early mediaeval period. The Jodhpur inscription for instance by Gurjara Partihara of Gurjarat open with salutations to Vishnu *Om Namo Vishnu*[81]. Likewise the Kalchuri rulers of Tripuri, the Pramaras of Malva and the Sena rulers of Bengal were the advocates of Vishnu, Inscriptions of these rulers open with salutations to Vishnu and there are different names and titles of Vishnu and his worshippers which appear in these inscriptions and puranas [82] i.e. Upendra meaning brother of Indra[83], Vasudevaya , all prevailing lord and vasu deva stands for the son of vasudeva[84], Hari one who takes away sins also means the golden one,[85] Padmanabha having lotus in the navel from which originated the creation[86], Narayanah one who reposes in water or water is whose abode.[87]

The most important feature of the cult of *Vishnu* was the doctrine of incarnation or *Avatarvada* that the god *Vishnu* incarnated himself again and again to reward the virtuous or to punish the wicked. In *Purana* there are different numbers of the *avatars* of *Vishnu*. But the most popular and common among these *avatara* were the ten i.e. *Matsaya* the fish, *Kurma* the tortoise, *Varah* the boar, *Narasimha* the man-lion, *Vamana* the dwarf, *Parsurama*, Rama, Krisna, Buddha and Kalkin. There emerged again a variety

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[81] Misra, Vibhuti Bhushan. *Religious Beliefs and practices of North India during the early mediaeval period* (Leiden: E.J. Brill,1973) p.6

[82] There are thousand sacred names of Vishnu according to Vaishnavaites. The belief in many names of deity is very popular in Hinduism and is known as Sahasarnama I found the names of Vishnu with meaning elaborated by B.K Chaturvedi in his commentary of *Vishnu Purana* (Aadrash printers: Delhi, 2006) see also Vijaya Kumar *Thousands names of Vishnu (*New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2006)

[83] Ibid p.133

[84] Ibid p .150

[85] Ibid p. 20, see also Vijaya Kumar. *Thousand Names of Vishnu,* p.83

[86] Ibid p. 134

[87] Ibid P. 136

of practices and cults out of these avatara i.e. the cult of Rama, the cult of Krsna the cowherd or the worshippers of *Varah* or those of *Kurma* and so on.There are many copper plates inscriptions which show that the boar incarnation of *Vishnu* was much popular in the coastal regions of Western India. The Chalukyas of Gujarat were devotees of the boar incarnation and they used the sign of boar as an emblem of their dynasty.[88]

Vaishnavism had received a great impetus in South India because of the work of the two great teachers, Ramanuja [89](1017-1137 CE) and Madhva [90](1238-1317 CE), who preached the philosophies of *Vishishtadvaita* qualified monism and the *Dvaita* dualism, respectively. The followers of Ramanuja are known as the Shri-Vaishnavas, while the followers of the *Dvaita* tradition were known as Madhvas**.**[91]

According to Rajatrangini, Vaishnavaism was very popular in Kashmir, it records that how rulers patronized the cult of krisna and erected different temples throughout the Kashmir region. The archaeological remains from differen parts of country show the influence of Vaishnavaism. There are representations of Vishnu, *avatara* and other deities of Vaishnavaite pantheon in temples explored at different sites throughout the country such are the temple at Deogarh[92] probably assignable to sixth century, the Dasavatara and Kailasnatha temples at Ellora attributed to eighth century.[93] The Inscriptions from Gupta period also throw light on the area in which Vaishnava temples were built and where Vishnu was worshipped. These inscriptions show that in Nepal and

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[88] See Vibhuti Bhushan Misra, Religious Beliefs, p .6

[89] Ramanuja 1017-1137 AD, was born in a Brahman family at Kanchipuram. A twelfth century Vaishnavaites saint philosopher and an exponent of *advaita* system, his imprint was so strong on later Vaishnavite system that it was named after him *Ramanuja Darsanam* and Sri Vaishnavites. See john A. Grimes. A Dictionary of Indian Philosophy: Sanskrit Terms, P.254

[90] Madhva also called Madhvacharyya, also known as Vasudeva, is one of the well known theologians of Hinduism generally and of Vaishnavaism particularly. He is the founder of dvaita philosophy, for his life and teachings see; Dalal Rosahn, *Hinduism an Alphabatical*, p,227-228

[91] Anila Varghese, *Deities, Cults and Kings of Vijayanagra,* in *World Archeology*, vol. 36, no. 3 The Archaeology of Hinduism (Taylor and Francis: Sep, 2004) p.416-431.url http://www.jstor.org.

[92] District Jhansi U.P India

[93] D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Religious Life of Ancient and Medieval India*, P. 51

the upper reaches of Bias in the North, in Bengal in the east, in Kathiawad in the West, in the areas beyond Anhdra Pardesh in the South and in the Southern most parts of the subcontinent there were strong holds of Vaishnavaism. It seems that Vaishnavaism had emerged as a popular sect during the period.

2. Savaites:

Saivaism became the main cult throughout the South from the eighth to twelfth century CE. Inscription s discovered at different places and monuments of the period show the popularity of Siva cult. The members of the different dynasties of the Indian sub continent from sixth century onwards professed Siva and used the title of Pramamahesvara the devout worshipper of Mahesvara, Siva. The Caulukyas of Gujarat were devoutees of Siva; temples like Mulesvara and Triprusprasada were built and dedicated by these rulers. The Balera copper plats record that he worshipped Bhavanipati.Likewise the ruler Jayasimha Siddharaja (1094-1144 CE) and his successor Kumarapala both showed their patronage for Saivism though they had sympathies with Jainism as well. The Paramara rulers Vakapati II (974-995) and Bhoja I (1010-1055) and their successors were devout worshipper of Siva. Bhoja was an exponent of Saivaism, one of his works, the *Tattavaprakasa*[94] deals with Sivaism.

There are different titles of Siva by which the Pramara inscriptions invoke him i.e.Sambhu[95], Srikantha[96], Bhavnipati[97], Amaresvara,[98] Omkara,[99]Mahakala[100],.

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[94] Vibhuti Bhushan Misra, Religious Beliefs, p.8

[95] Shambu the giver of prosperity see; ibid p. 7

[96] Srikantha or Nilakanth is one of the names used for Siva meaning the one with beautiful throat which is based on the legend relating that Siva swallowed the poison that threatened to destroy the world. See Earnest Wilhelm. *Core Yogas*, p.147

[97] Bhavna; is one of the names of the consorts of Siva see; Dalal, Roshan.*Hinduism,*p.71

[98] Amaresvara; literally meaning the lord of immortals, is also the name used to refer to the Siva lingas.see Antonio Rigopoulos. *Dattatreya: the Immortal Guru, Yogin and Avatar: A study of the Transformative and Inclusive Character of Hindu Deity* (Sunny press, 1988) p.131

In Malva there were Siva *mathas*[101] which were the centers for development of Siva cult, popular among these were the centers at Madhumati in Malva, Nutana and Kandi kasrama in UjJaini[102]. The Chahamans were also the worshipper of Siva likewise Kalcuris were the worshipper of Siva. In Sindhthere were the Pasupata Saivites at the time of advent of Islam.[103]

There are many archaeological records which attest the popularity of Saivism in the different parts of the subcontinent befor the advent of Islam the Bhojesvara temple at Bhojapura, near the city of Bhopal, Nilakanthesvara Temple at Udaipura near Bhilsa and the Raj Kitas temple near Chakwal, Punjab in Pakistan were erected during the eighth to tenth century CE.

Among the Saiva sects, the Pashupata and Kapalika sects, who had been popular in earlier times, suffered a decline. The Kalamukha sect continued to be fairly widespread till the end of the fourteenth century, but afterwards it gave way in popularity to the reformist Virashaiva sect founded in the twelfth century.

3. Sakti and Tantra cults:

The Sakti or the female energy of any deity was worshipped throughout the long history of the religious activities in the Indian sub continent. However as an organized sect Saktism is closely linked with Saivism as the goddess or the Sakti is one of the many forms of the consort of Siva. From the sixth century onwards there emerged in all the three main traditions, different cults focusing on the female power of the respective deities. There are attempts to accommodate new goddesses as *devi* into early pantheons.

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[99] Omkara is the linguistic representation of god or to be more precise the word omkara denotes god in Sanskrit see Harvey P Alper, *Understanding Mantras* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas,1991) p.215

[100] Mahakala; literally meaning the great or eternal time, is one of the attributes of shiva. See B.R. Kishore. *Lord Shiva* (New Delhi: Diamond pocket Books Ltd) p.9

[101] Matha were the places for religious education in early medieval India, where the religious acharyas and siddhas expounded and taught their respective systems

[102] Vibhuti Bhushan Misra, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 14

[103] Derryl N Maclean. *Religion and society in Arab Sindh*(Netherlands: Brill, 1989) p.14-17

In Mahabharta for instance *devi* or Durga appears as a virgin goddess who is the killer of buffalo demon, delighting in the offerings of meat and wine. The practice of blood rites including those of human sacrifices is also present among such cults. Chinese traveler Huin-tsang has mentioned a situation in which he himself was caught as a victim to such a practice[104]. There are also archaeological findings which bear testimony to the practice of cannibalism[105].The Jain chronicle *Tilaka Manjiri* describes in details such practices i.e. skull wearing ascetics, those who drink blood and wine and use human skulls as a bowl for eating and drinking, they eat the dead bodies of human beings.[106]

These sects were present in all the major Indian religious traditions of the time. Both Buddhism and Jainism recognized the female deities beside the male Buddhas and Jinas. Though Jainism was not that much fertile for such ideas but it also didn't remain far from such activities, and there emerged some of sakta practices in Jaina fold as well, even the Sakti figures became popular in Jaina temple worship. For example the names and iconographic features of Ambika[107] leave no doubt in the Jain adaptation of Manasa who is known as Padmavati Padma. The cult of Ambhika which was popular in Bengal is attested by the images which are found all over Bengal and other parts of India[108]. Likewise the tantric elements also influenced the Buddhism of this period to the extant that it was transformed into a cultic sytem.   By the end of tenth century, The Buddhists, the Jainas, the Saivaites, the Vaisnavaites all developed there own tantric systems with their own selected deities and the number of these goddesses multiplied and with it grew the sects. Many of such goddesses belonged to different circles of Brahmanic pantheons

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[104] Samuel Beal, *The life of Huin Tsang,* p.86-89

[105] R. N. Nandi. Religious Institution and cults in the Deccan (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1973) p. 135-136

[106] Yadava, Ganga Prasad. *Dhanapala and his Times* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1982) p.165

[107] For more details about Jaina worship of goddesses see: Umakant Premanand Shah. Jaina-Rupa-Mandana, (Abhinav Publications, 1987) Vol. 1, p. 224-320.

[108] R. N. Nandi. *Religious Developments* in *North India* Published in Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya (Ed). *A social History of Ancient India (*India: Pearson Education, 2009) p .180

while many others belonged to tribal and aboriginal circles and even the goddesses of untouchables entered into tantric pantheons as Sakti.

Traces of the Sakti worship can be found from all parts of India. Though its great hold was in the areas of Bengal and Asam, the Himalayas were regarded as abode of Siva and his wife.In west as far as Baluchistan Parvati was worshipped by many. In central India in the areas of Rajputana Kali was worshipped as Vindhyacalavasini.[109]

In South Sakti was worshipped as Pampa. The worship of this goddess dates to at least the seventh century CE from when there is an epigraphical reference to 'Pampa'[110]. This local folk goddess came to be 'Sanskritized' in the pre-Vijayanagara period by marriage to Virupaksha a form of Siva. Marriage with Siva or one of his incarnations was the almost universal and favorite method in South India of absorbing local goddesses into the Brahmanical pantheon. As a result, Pampa came to be considered an incarnation of the goddess Parvati. The story of Pampa and Virupaksha follows the typical pattern of the Southern sthalapuranas (texts that recount the mythic origin and traditions of a sacred spot), the central element of which is the myth of *Devi's* marriage with the god Siva. The most important annual festivals in the Virupaksha temple to this day are the *Phalapuja* the betrothaland the *Kalyanotsava* the marriage festival. As a result of this process of Sanskritization the goddess became less important than the male deity. Indeed, literary and epigraphical evidence indicates that by the twelfth century CE Virupaksha had already emerged as the principal divinity.[111] Another Shaivite deity which was worshipped before was Bhairava[112].

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[109] For details about the rise and expansion of Sakta religious activities see: Narendra Nath Bhattacharyya. History of the Sakta Religion (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974)

[110] Fleet, *Sansikrit and Old Canarase Inscriptions*, 1877, p.85-8

[111] Anila,Verghese.*Religious Traditions at Vijayanagara*: *As Revealed Through its Monuments* (Delhi: Manohar, 1995) p.18

[112] Ibid

4. Saura sect:

There are many inscriptional references about the presence of Sun cult. A Mandasar inscription of 437CE registered a record of the construction of a temple dedicated to sun god, another inscription of 433CE mentions grant of repairing of a Sun temple[113]. Likewise in a copper plate grant by Harshavardhana he himself, his father Parabhakarvardhana and his grand father Adityavardhana and his great grand father Rajyavardhana all are mentioned as the devotees of sun god[114]. A large number of sun temples have been discovered in the Western India from Multan down to Kutch and Gujrat. The most important being the one at Gwalior which reveals the popularity of sun worship in the entire region.[115]

5. Ganapatya sect:

The earliest reference to this sect is found in *Mahabharta*, which refers to *Ganasvara* and *Vinakayas* as gods and their popularity. According to Yajnavalka Smirti the *Rudras* and Brahma raised the *Vinakayas* to the position of *Ganapati* and gave them the task of creating difficulties in the actions of man.[116] At Ellor two of the cave temples from the 8th century CE show *Ganapati* in association with other gods and goddesses. These images depict the gods with the head of elephant. In Siva temple at Bhumara from the Bundlekhand, two sculptures have been discovered which show Ganesa with his Sakti Devi. These are dated to the 4th-5th century. Another example is the stone sculpture from Bihar of 10th-11th century CE.[117]

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[113] R.g. Bhandarkar. *Vaisnavaism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services,1995)p.220
[114] Ibid. 221
[115] R. N. Nandi, *Religious Developments in North Indi,* p. 189
[116] Ibid
[117] Ibid p. 190

The Ganapatyas were a sect which considered Ganapati as Supreme Being, in no way inferior to Vedic gods like Indra, Varuna, Prajapati, Agni etc. or the puranic gods like Siva, Vishnu, Brahma or Devi.[118] Information about the sect of Ganapatya is available only in Anandatirtha's *Samkaradigvijaya* written in about 10th century this work points to the six sub-sects of Ganapatyas. They worshiped Ganapati in different forms and were thus known with different names these were *Mahaganapati, Haridraganapati, Dundirajaganapati, Ucchistaganapati, Navanitaganapati, Savarnaganapati* and *Santanaganapati. Mahaganapati* was worshiped along with its consorts Buddhi, Siddi or Laksami. In *Ucchistaganapati*, Ganapatyas adopted the esoteric saivite *vama marga*, the left hand Saiva form of worship. In this form Devi is also worshiped as Sakti. The worshipers of this form were called Herambas. They abrogated all obligatory rituals and distinctions of casts and were known for wine drinking and sexual excesses.

The most interesting aspect of the history of Ganapatya sect is that the Ganpatyas also produced religious, mythological and philosophical literature which aimed at uplifting the status of Ganesa in the Hindu pantheon. Thus they composed canonical texts their own *Ganesi srutis* and *smirtis*. These srutis included the *Ganesa Upanisad, Ganesapurvatapini Upanisad, Ganapatyatharvasirsa upanisad*. The smrti texts were (i) *Ganesa darsana* containing in imitation of the Brahmasutras; (ii) *Ganesagita* which is an adaptation of the Bhagvadgita, this *gita* forms part of *Ganesa purana* (iii) *Ganesa khanda* of the *Brahmavaivarta purana*; (iv) *Puranas*: the *Magadha puranas* and the *Ganesa purana*. The Ganapatya texts identified Ganapati with the highest Brahman. Their *Puranas* the *mudgala purana* and the *Ganesa purana* aimed at creating the mythology around Ganesa. In *madgala purana* the eight incarnations of *Ganesa* were mentioned while in *Ganesa purana* the number of the incarnations of *Ganesa* reached to fifty six[119].

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[118] Yuraj Krishan. Ganesa: Unraveling an Enigma, Hinduism and its Sources Series (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1999) p .72-73.
[119] Ibid

1.1.4 Jainism:

During the early medieval period Digambara Jainism was flowering in modern day Karnataka and in neighbouring Tamil Nadu state. The Digambaras gained the patronage of prominent monarchs of three major dynasties in the early medieval period; the Gangas in Karnataka (3rd–11th century); the Rashtrakutas, whose kingdom was just North of the Ganga realm (8th–12th century); and the Hoysalas in Karnataka (11th–14th century). Digambara monks were influential during the reign of the Ganga and the Hoysala dynasties. Their involvement in politics allowed Jainism to prosper in Karnataka and the Deccan. Epigraphical evidence record many grants in which kings and members of royal families endowed the Jain community for the construction of temples. Most famously, in the 10th century the Ganga general Chamundaraya oversaw the creation of a colossal statue of Bahubali (locally called Gommateshvara; son of Rishabhanatha, the first Tirthankara) at Shravana Belgola.

The Svetambaras in the North were less involved in the politics than their Southern counterparts. But they supported the accession of kings such as Vanaraja in the 8th century and Kumarapala, whose accession was masterminded by Hemacandra, the great Svetambara scholar and minister of state in the 12th century. The Svetambaras were no less productive than their Digambara contemporaries in the amount and variety of literature they produced during this period.

While Mahavira had rejected the claims of the caste system that privileged Brahman authority on the basis of innate purity, a formalized caste system nonetheless gradually appeared among the Digambara laity in the South. This hierarchy was depicted and sanctioned by Jinasena in his *Adipurana*, a legendary biography of the Tirthankara Rishabhanatha and his two sons Bahubali and Bharata. The hierarchy differed from the Hindu system in that the Kshatriyas were assigned a place of prominence over the Brahmans and in its connection of purity, at least theoretically, with a moral rather than a ritual source. This variation of hierarchy is also testified by the Muslim writers. For

example Ibn e Khurdazbeh and AlIdrisi both noted that a class known as Shakriyas who were their rulers and kings were noble than Brahmans[120]

In the period of their greatest influence (6th–late 12th century), Jain monks of both sects, perhaps influenced by intense lay patronage, turned from living as wandering ascetics to permanent residence in temples or monasteries. A legacy of this transformation is the contemporary Digambara practice of the *bhattaraka*, through which a cleric takes monastic initiation but, rather than assuming a life of naked ascetic wandering, becomes an orange-robed administrator and guardian of holy places and temples. Some medieval Jain writers saw this compromise with ancient scriptural requirements as both a cause of and evidence for the religion's inexorable decline. However, Jainism's marginalization in India can best be ascribed to other sociopolitical factors such as hold of Brahmanism and spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent.

Centuries old Digambara and Shavetambara amnay (traditions) branches were further divided into sects, sub-sects, ganas, gachchas, anvayas, sanghas as time rolled by. And the new practices came into existence introducing their own religious formalities, life-fashions, code of conduct, and to some extent the philosophical views i.e. Bhattaraka*, Chaityavasi, Taranpanth,* and *Sthanakvasi.* Digambara Jain sect prospered like anything in later mediaeval Malwa through the medium of the Bhattarakas. Mediaeval Bhattaraka tradition came to be divided into many brancehs.The Punnat sangha, the Mula sangha, remained very powerful in Malwa. The *Mula sangha, the Kundakundanvay, the Saraswati gachcha, the Balatkar gana* etc. became sufficiently popular and were considerably propagated. The Mathur sangha the Sena gana, the nandi sangha etc. also showed their existence [121]

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[120] Ibn e Khurdazbah. *Al masalik wa al Mumalik,* p.71 and Al Idrisi, *Nuzhatul Mushtaq fi Ikhtraq il Afaq* vol,1 p 96-97

[121] S.M. Pahedia (Trans) Jainism in Medieval India, P.9

The Svetambara tradition divided into more than hundred gachchas. The main and the most famous *gachchas* of Malwa were; the *Tapa gachcha*, the *Kharatara gachcha* and the like. We find evidences of the existence of a number of *gachchas* of the Svetambara sect in Malwa. The image inscriptions of Ratnasingh Suri, Jnansagar and Udalsagar of the *Tapa gachcha* and the *Brihat Tapa gachcha* are found in Malwa. The *Kharatara gachcha* of Malwa was just next to the Tapa gachcha. This was equally well propagated; its diffusion and extension was quite wide. The acharyas like Jinabhadra Suri, Jinachandra Suri, Jinasagar Suri, Jinaraj Suri and Jinakushal Suri, and Nayaysunder Upadhyaya, and Muni Merusunder of this *gachcha* belonged to Malwa. There emerged variety of practices in different territories,that is the reason that the Jain activities happening in Malwa were different from those happening in the nearby Gujarat and Rajasthan. [122]

1.1.5 Buddhism:

Buddhism was degenerating during the seventh to eighth century. In North it was losing its hold after King Harshvardhan whose patronage for Buddhism was noticed by Chinese travele Huin Tsiang. Buddhism was in decline in other parts of the subcontinent also though there were some areas with significant Buddhist presence like Sindh, Kalchuri, Bengal and Asam regions but it was no match to the progress of Brahmanism. The Pallas of Bengal had extended their patronage to Buddhism, but that did not effect the dominant position of Brahmanical religion within their domain, as the large number of inscriptions and images discovered from Bengal from the Palla period are Brahmanical and not the Buddhist.[123]

The decline of Buddhism was also due to division and fierce disputes within the Sangha. By the seventh century, Buddhism presented the scene of a house divided.

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[122] Ibid. p 10
[123] Vibhuti Bhushan Misra, *Religious Beliefs*, P. 138-139

Various sects of the Buddhists fought amongst themselves as bitterly as with non-Buddhists. Huin Tsiang points to such disputes many times in his itinerary[124].

From above details of the religious groups and sects prevailing in the subcontinent before the advent of Islam it can be inferred that there existed variety of beliefs and practices. While the Buddhism and Jainism were on decline, the old Vedic religion had change on the whole, the worship of Siva was the predominant belief in the Indian sub continent, likewise the cult of Sakti had influenced all sorts of religious denominations of the time to the extant that even among the followers of Buddhism and Jainism there emerged Sakti and Tantra practices beside Siva and Sakti one finds that Vishnu and its avatars were also held in popular esteem in different parts of the country. The religious scenario which emerges from the contemporary narratives like those of Huin-Tsiang and the court chroniclers of the period is that of a diffused nature. The kings mostly patronized all the prevailing cults by grants, erection of temples and images of different deities, and the priests and the lay followers were exclusive to some extant in their worship and devotion though their cults were some times amalgam of different tradtitions. The early Muslims interacted with a multicultural and a heterogeneous society, and as we will see in following chapters that the response was not uniform but multiform and it varied from simple conversion to conflict and resistance and some times to adaptation, synthesis and syncretism.

1.2. Early contacts between Muslims and Hindus:

Islam reached the subcontinent via three routes geographically; SouthWestern Indian Coast at Arabian Ocean which was the center for trade where Islam was introduced by travelers and traders before the Ummayid *fath*, the North Western Indian coast Sindh through *fath* by Muhammad Bin Qasim round about 91 Hijrah ans the North Western land routs through Mahmūd Ghaznavi.Historians have usually discussed the

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[124] Beal, Samuel. *The life and Teaching of Huin Tsang* (London: Kegan Paul, 1911)

later two, while the former is mostly neglected or there are very rare hints to it. But the former is the ancient one and the most influential. The contacts between Islam and Hinduism go back to the early days of Islam. There are historical records which show that Islam came to the subcontinent in the life of Prophet﷽. History of these geographical and commercial contacts is stretching back to pre-Islamic period. As there were some Indian tribes which settled in Arabia. They were known among the Arabs at the time of advent of Prophet ﷺ as *al zutt*[125] and *Al ahāmira*[126] *al asāwira*[127] and *Al siābaja*[128].

And when Prophet ﷺ started sending *da'wah* Message to the whole Arabian Peninsula and even abroad, some of these Indians settled in Arabia also embraced Islam. As there is a possibility that those Arab traders who were living in Indian lands or carrying their trade to these lands might have brought the new message of Islam to this part of the world from very early days of Islam. Likewise there are traditions which show that the Indians were well known in the time of the Prophet ﷺ among Arabs and that prophet himself knew and used many things *Indian* i.e the swords, the dress known as *kurta* and ginger and the Sindhi chicken.

There are also traditions of the prophet ﷺ which declare that India was the place where Adam at first descended. Likewise we find in the traditions of the prophet﷽ that he forbad many Indian practices and customs such as Chess and Tatoos and the belief in stars, which shows that Indian beliefs and practices were well known to Arabs at the time of prophet ﷺ [129]There is a tradition recorded by *Mustadrik al Hākim* in which it is

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[125] In the article of zut in *Lisān al 'Arab* it is defined as: Al zut are black people who belong to Sindh, and it is said that are an Indian tribe Jatt which is pronounced as alzut in Arabic see vol, 7. P. 308

[126] According to *Lisān al 'Arab* the *Ahāmira* were the foreigners from Sindh living in Basra.

[127] See: *Lisān al 'Arab*. Vol. 4 p. 388

[128] According *to Lisān al 'Arab* the *Siābaja* are dark skinned people of Sindh and Hind who accompany the ship sailors as gaurds against the pirates. See vol. 2, p. 294

[129] For details on the subject of the Prophet﷽ and use of Indian things see: Bilgrami, Ghulam Ali Azad. *Subhatul Marjān Fi Athār al Hindustan,* see also; Mubarakpuri, Qazi Athar. *Arab o Hinad Ahd e Risalat mei*

reported that once a king of India had sent a gift to the Prophet, it says that Abu Saʿīd al Khudrī narrated that once a king of India sent as a gift a jar of pickle to our prophet☷ with a piece of Ginger in it.[130]

Some historians have also mentioned that Prophet ☷ sent a letter to the king of Malabar among the letters which were written to different rulers[131].There are also local traditions which narrate that when the ruler of Malabar came to know about Prophet☷ and his Daʿwah, he himself traveled to Arabia to have a direct contact with the Prophet☷. His name is mentioned as Cheraman Perumal. Although historians have a difference of opinion about the time of his reign, but there is a consensus that the king named Cheraman Perumal has left for Madina and that he didn't reach at the time of Prophet☷ but he reached even after Khilafa of Abu Bakar☷ in the time of Umar☷ and embraced Islam.[132]

One account of early Islam in Malabar on the Southwestern coast is the *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad*,[133] an anonymous Arabic manuscript whose authenticity is disputed by contemporary historians but is very popular among the Muslims of the region. According to this account a Hindu king of Malabar, is said to have personally witnessed the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad's☷ splitting of the moon. Similarly, Tamil-speaking Muslims of the eastern coast claim that they too represent a community whose members embraced Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet☷.

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[130]*Mustadrak al Hākim*; *kitāb al Atʿimah* Vol.4, p. 150

[131] Bazurg bin Shahryar. *Ajāʿib al Hind, (Lieden: 1908)* p.118 See also Zain uddin bin Abdul Aziz. *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn.*

[132] Dr.Hamidullah. *Muhammad Rasoolullah*. P 106-107.

[133] Many works on the history of Islam in the subcontinent mention a manuscript which is also cited by numerous websites titled "Qissat Shakarwati Farmad" or "Qissat Shakruti Firmad" an unknown author It was translated in the Israel Oriental Studies journal by Dr Yohannan Friedmann in 1975 but has not been historically dated and also quoted by Dr Muhammad Hamidullah in his book "*Muhammad Rasulullah*, also Andre Wink and Annemarie Schimmel

According to local traditions, the King Cheraman Perumal is held to had left his kingdom and had gone to Makkah and accepted Islam and on his return passed away in Arabia. Some of his companions led by Malik bin Dinar returned to Kerala and built the first mosques across the state beginning with the Cheraman Malik Juma Masjid at Kodungalloor. The first reference to this story is found in the work of Portuguese writer Duarte Barbosa. But the more popular version of the story was recorded a few decades after him and is considered the oldest authentic source of this story is the book *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn*. [134]

According to *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn* there arrived in Kodungallur a party of Muslims led by a *shaikh* on their way to visit the footprint of our father Ādam in Ceylon. When the king heard about their arrival, he sent for them, entertained them, and treated them hospitably. The leader of the group, the *shaikh*, informed the king about Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam. They also talked about the miraculous incident of the splitting of the moon. Eventually he was convinced about the truth of the Prophet's mission. He heartily acknowledged him and the Prophet and asked the *shaikh* and his companions to call on him on their return journey and commanded the *shaikh* to keep this very confidential and not to let anyone in Malabar know about his secret intention.

Thus on their return from Ceylon, they came to the king who asked the *shaikh* to arrange, without anyone's knowledge, the ship and other things necessary for his journey with them. He divided his kingdom into several provinces and appointed governors for each province and wrote down the instructions for them. Then he sailed alongwith the party of the travellers till they reached Shuhr in Yemen, where the king stayed for several days with the *shaikh* and his people. As per the tradition another party

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[134] The *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn* is a book authored in 1580 A.D by Zainuddin Makhdoom II, the famed scholar and grandson of Zainuddin Makdhum I, the founder of the Ponnani dars, which for centuries was the main centre of learning for Muslims in the Malabar. It is very important book of history of Islam written by a Keralite in Arabic.

of travelers joined them. The King fell ill during his stay at Shahar and told the group of the travelers to not give up the idea of travelling to India even if he died of this illness, the dying King wrote a letter in Malayalam with details of his kingdom and the royal family members. He also instructed them not to disclose his illness to anybody in Malabar.

A few years later, the party whose names are also mentioned in the *Tuhfat* Sharaf bin Malik, Malik bin Dinar and Malik bin Habib, his wife Qamariyyah and their children and friends reached the coast of Kodungallur after several days of voyage. They handed the letter to the then ruler of that place, who gave those lands and estates for their use. Following this, they settled down and built a mosque there. Some of them moved to Kollam, Ezhimala, Barkur, Mangalore, Kasargode, Sreekandapuram, Dharmadam, Pantalayani, and Chaliyam and built mosques in these places. Later Malik bin Dinar and a few others set sail to Shahr al Muqalla and the rest settled in Kollam. In Shahr al Muqalla, he visited the tomb of the deceased king, and then travelled to Khurasan, where he eventually died. Malik bin Habib breathed his last at Kodungallur. *Shaikh* Zainuddin suggests that the whole incident itself might have occurred two hundred years after the Prophet's lifetime. He writes: "We do not have any clear evidence to say for sure which year this happened. The majority opinion is that it happened in 200 A.H. However the general impression with the Muslims in Malabar is that the aforesaid king's conversion to Islam took place during the time of Prophet.They believe that the king one night saw in person the splitting of the moon, following which he set out to meet the Prophet he died at Shahar al Muqalla on his way back to Malabar with a group of Muslims. After mentioning these details Zainun ud Din adds that 'there is but little truth in this' which shows that he is reluctant in accepting the time line and not the whole story. [135]

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[135] Shaykh Zainuddin. *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn Wa Akhbarul Burthuqāliyīn*, , Trans. Nainar (Calicut: Islamic BookTrust,2006)p.29–33

Other versions of the legend are mainly based on another work Keralolpathi, According to this narrative, the King is identified as Cheraman Perumal who had left his territory to meet the prophetﷺ and at Jeddah the Prophet ﷺ himself gave him a new name Tajuddin and the king later he married the sister of the king of Arabia and stayed at the port city for five years and on his way back passed away in Yemen. Another source for this story is a manuscript named *Tarīkh Zahūr al Islam fil Malibar* by Muhammad Ibn Malik, a third generation descendant of Habib Ibn Malik, one amongst the first group of Muslims to have landed in the Malabar as mentioned by Zain ud Din earlier[136]. If authentic, then going by its dates, this chronicle would be dated sometime during the 8th century. According to this work, the *Shaikh* who first met the King while on his way to Ceylon is named as Zahiruddin Ibn Taqiyuddin. This version also narrates that the king witnessed the event of moon being split, and that the king's meeting with the Prophet ﷺ happened at Jeddah on Thursday 27th Shawāl, six years before Hijrah (617 CE). Again this version also suggests the name Tajuddin and the place of death of the King is mentioned as Shahar Muqalla in Yemen and dated Monday Ist Muharram in the 1 A.H. (622 CE.) The book also gives a detailed account of the activities of Malik Ibn Dinar and his group, but some of the details i.e. dates, names of places do not seem plausible historically for instance the name Tajuddin is a latter practice and that in the time of Prophetﷺ use of such titles was not common.

Though one cannot find any details in the books of early Muslim scholars about such a story but it cannot be rejected altogether on this ground. As there is a possibility of its being well known and hence not recorded besides there are some hints scattered in the classical books for instance there is a tradition by the great medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyyah that a traveler reportedly saw an old building in India that was built the day the moon was split. This is narrated by his student Ibn Kathir also mentions in his historic

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[136] A handwritten manuscript copy of the original is still found in the Madayi mosque built which is considered to be built by Malik Ibn Dinar and is held in the possession of the descendants of Muhammad Ibn Malik. Many keralites and Indian Muslim websites show the image of this manuscript copy preserved in the mosque.

work *Al Bidāyah wa Nihāyah*, that people in India witnessed this event of the moon being split.[137] In one of his books he also mentions that many travelers reported seeing a temple in India built on the day the moon was split[138]. It is very interesting to note what he mentions about response of the people of Makkah towards the splitting of the moon that they said that this is magic of Ibn e Abi Kabshah and decided to ask the travelers about the incident and when they asked the travelers they attested the incident.[139]

There is another book which refers to the story that is the Tareekh-e-Ferishta, written in 1606 CE by Muhammad Qasim Ferishta for the King of Bejapur, Ali Adil Shah. There one finds two versions, in one of which he says that the King was discussing about Islam with the scholar who landed in Kodungallur and during the conversation which covered many areas, the King argued that if the moon split, it must have been recorded in the palace history books. He then asked his men to check if the palace records had any mention of such an event and they confirm to him that the event was recorded by the scribes during the lifetime of the Prophetﷺ. This convinces the King and he decides to accept Islam. Secretly he plans the trip to Mecca and meets his death on the way at Shahr Muqalla in Yemen. Feristha then also narrates the version which puts the timeline as during the Prophet'sﷺ lifetime and Frishta considers it authentic.[140]

The legend about the king's departure has many other versions also like the one attributed to the Travancore royal family, which claims lineage to the last of the Chera kings who had abandoned his kingdom. Beside these narrations and legends there are also some local traditions in Malabar which are linked with this king who left for makkah like the Onam celebrations for the expected return of Mahabali as the return of this king who

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[137] Ibn e Kathīr. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al Turath,1988) vol. 3, p.130

[138] Ibne Kathīr. *Shamāil al Rasūl* (Beirut: Dar al Marifa,d.n.m) p. 190

[139] Ibid e Kathīr. *Shamāil al Rasūl*, p. 188, see also Abu Nuʿīm. *Dalāil al Nabuwwah* (Haidarabad: Majlis Daira tul Maarif,1950) p.237, and Al Baihaqi *Dalāil al Nabuwwah* (Egypt: Matbaa al Ihram,1398AH) vol.2 p.266

[140] Qasim, Muhammad. *Tārīkh e Ferishta* , Vol. 2 .p 370

left for Mecca[141]. *Tuhfat al Mujāhidīn* also mentions rituals at a temple in Kodungalloor on a particular day each year, while the Zamorins had a symbolic ceremony followed till the 19th century related to the Perumal's sword being trusted to the new king who was to protect it till the Perumal who had went to Mecca returns by a Muslim woman during the ceremony of his ascension to the throne is an unambiguis reference to the historical incidence.[142] There are also archeological records which also bear the testimony to the peaceful penetration and settlements of Muslims in the Indian sub continent long before the foundation of Islamic rule here. Like graves, Mosques and the coins which carry the names of Local Muslim rulers dating the first century of hijra calendar.[143]

It can be concluded here that the story might be true, but the timeline might be different since there is no reason to reject the tradition that the last Chera king embraced Islam and went to Makkah, since it finds a place, not only in Muslim chronicles, but also in Hindu brahmanical chronicles like the Keralolpathi which need not be expected to concoct such a tale which is no way enhances the prestige or the interests of the Brahmins or Hindu population. [144]

Beside the Cheraman Perumal there were some other Indian kings and nobles who took initiatives for the direct knowledge of Islam and were reported to adapt Islam. Among these was a contemporary king of Umar bin Abdul Aziz who wrote to him and asked him to send a learned scholar of Islam to teach him the basics of Islam. Probably he was Vinyadit the Chalukya ruler of Deccan, who ruled during the 696-733CE.[145] Another such event is recorded by Bazurg bin Shahryar in his book about a ruler who

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[141] *The Perumal who went to Makkah and Thiruvonam* in Prabodhanam Issue 13, Volume 58, Sep 8 2001

[142] Fawcett. *Nairs,Malabar Coast, Social Life and Customs* (2001)p. 296

[143] Caldwell. *A History of Tinnevelly.*(Madras: Asian Educational Services,1982) p 288

[144] M.G.S.Narayanan. *Perumals of Kerala*, p.65

[145] See Khurshid Ahmad Afaq. *Tareekh e hind per nai Roshani*(Delhi: Jamia Press,n.d) p.5

asked the ruler of mansura to send someone who can write for him the tafseer of Quran in Hindi language[146]

1.3   Muslims as Traders, travelers Settlers and saints:

Muslims entered to the Southern seacoasts of the Indian sub-continent as traders where small Muslim communities were established at least by the early eighth century. These traders were sometimes patronized by local kings who welcomed diverse merchant communities as these added to to revenue. These coastal areas were for a long time trade centers for valuable commodities between China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, in addition to the spices, teak, and sandalwood locally produced there were gold, pearls and precious stones also being traded from these centers. In these Southern parts the Muslim populations grew through intermarriage, conversion, and commercial activities from the very early period.

These early contacts between Islam and Hinduism were of much commercial and cordial nature, as the Muslim traders had their interests vested in their trade in the subcontinent through the seaports, likewise the Hindu rulers had welcomed these traders and settlers and patronized them in their courts for the benefits, welfare and the taxes they received from these trading colonies. It was the case not only with Islam but the

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[146] Reported by both by Bazurg bin Shahryar in his; *Ajaib al Hind* p. 3-4., al Umri in his; *Masālika al Absār fī Mamālik al Amsār.*

Christian, Zoroastrian and Jewish[147] trading communities also were established in these areas and brought with them their religions to these areas.[148]

The presence of Muslim traders in the Western coasts of India during the eighth century is evidenced by a Muslim tomb dated to 788 near Calicut. Like wise a Tamil copper plate edict of 875 issued by the king of Madurai that granted the asylum to a group of Arab immigrants[149] indicates that Muslim traders had long penetrated the Coromondol coasts region. It seems that in the eighth century Muslim traders had already stated trading in maritime trade circuit between coastal India and China. There are recent archaeological findings i.e. shipwreck in the Indian ocean bearing a testimony to these early Indo- Arab trading relations. [150]

Arab domination of the trade routes of the Western Indian Ocean in the early centuries of the Christian era lead to the establishment of peaceful colonies of Arab traders at various points of the Indian Ocean littoral, notably in East Africa, Southeast

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[147] Many documents are found in a Geneza in Cairo which provide many details related to the multi religious trade established in the south Indian seaports, These documents are studied and published by S.D.Goitein.see; India traders of the middle Ages; Documents from the Cairo Geniza (Netherlands: Brill,1956)

[148] There are many studies highlighting the trade links and their religious and missionary influences in the Indian Ocean particularly, for details on spread of Christianity, Islam and other religions via trade routes see Susan Bayly *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society* (London: Cambridge press,2004*)*

[146] Alim, Takya Shoib. Arabic, Arawi and Persian in Sarandip and Tamil Nadu; A Study of the contributions of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu to Arabic, arwi, Persian and Urdu languages, literature and Education. p.16, see also Umari, Muhammad Yousaf.Arabic and Persian in Carnatka (Madras: 1974) p.52

[147] Michael Flecker *A Ninth-Century AD Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China* Source: World Archaeology, Vol. 32, No. 3, Shipwrecks (Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Feb., 2001), pp. 335-354

Asia and on the Malabar Coast. Arab merchants and sailors had settled peacefully, with the agreement or at least acquiescence of the local population. They socially interacted with the locals as they did intermarry with their womenfolk. As a result of these commercial and social contacts there emerged new ethnic and cultural groups known as the Swahili, the Mappila, the Islamicised Malay, and the Hui.

The Arab colony in Malabar predated the Islamic era by many centuries, as it was on their route to the Far East and it was natural for the Arabs to make Kerala coast their first and chief port of call, beside that it was also the source of pepper, the black gold, as well as of other valuable products. The local Hindus warmly accepted the Arabs as they accepted the merchants and sailors of other nationalities, and the Arabs in turn reciprocated the non-aggressive policy of Hindu rulers with peaceful cooperation. Thus there were many Arabs traders sailing back and forth between Arabia and Kerala at the time of the Prophet. [151]

In the Southern part of the subcontinent Islam reached from Hijaz to Malabar by way of the established maritime trade routes between Arabia and South India, and well before Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest of Sind in 711-13 A. D an Islamic community, founded on the descendants of these early Arab colonists, and their local families [152] had been established in Malabar the fact which was the pretext for the Muslim conquest of Sindh as indicated by Al Balādhurī. Islam prospered on the Malabar Coast in the first centuries of the Islamic era while the growing Muslim community came to dominate the sea borne trade of the region, which was supported in a way by Sankaran orthodoxy, with its strict taboos against all forms of maritime activity, amongst the Malabari Hindu population. As a result the Hindu and Muslim communities of the Malabar Coast would have become somewhat less distanced from each other in social terms after the seventh century CE, a development which must have given added impetus to the spread of Islam

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[151] R.*E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1976*), p. 41*

[152] As it appears from the details of Baladhuri in the pretext of the Muhammad bin Qasims conquest of Sindh

in the region. Many Muslim trade ports served as outlets for international trade in local and imported goods, which formed a major source of revenue for the rulers of these areas a fact which also assured the patronage of Islam and Muslims by them.[153]

Muslim communities of these areas continued in these sea trade networks late till even the early part of eighteenth century. The trade activity was not bound with the South Indian coast regions only, it had expanded through sea routs into a larger trade network abroad and especially with Arabia as there were more frequented markets of the trade goods in the regions of Yemen, Syria and Hajaz. These were known as "*Aswāq*" among such one finds mention of *Daumah al Jandal, Dabā, Shahar, Rabia, hadarmaut, Zu al majāz, Mushqar, Hajar, Akāz, Adān* and *San'ā*[154]

1.4   Muslims as Fathīn:

The earliest accounts of Muslim *fathīn* of subcontinent we find according to Al Baladhuri that in 15 A.H. Uthmān bin Abi al 'As al Thaqafī was appointed as governer by Umar﷜, Who sent two expeditions to the subcontinent one under the command of his brother Hakam bin alas towards Thana and Bharoch and the second under Mughira bin al As towards Thatha and Daybul.[155] Both expeditions were successful though he had not taken the consent of Umar﷜ and was addressed by him in these words;

"يا أخا ثقيف حملت دودا على عود, و إني أحلف بالله لو أصيبوا لأخذت من قومك مثلهم"[156]

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[153] The patronage and the prestige of Muslim communities of the coastal regions of the Indian sub continent is attested by almost all travelers and visitors of the early medieval period. See for instance: Mas'┴di. *Marūj uz Dhahab*, (Cairo: al Maktabah al Taufiqia, 2003) vol. 1, p. 200, see also; Yaqut. *Mo'jam ul Buldān*, (Beirut:Dar Sadir,1977)Vol. 5, p.407

[154] See for details about the commodities and trade in these places see al Azraqi, *Akhbar e* Makkah, (Dar al Undalas li al nashr wa al Tauzee, 1996)vol.2 p. 163

[155] See Albladhuri. *Futūh al Buldān*,p. 438

[156] Ibid

When Caliph Uthman�ﷺ appointed Abdullah bin Amir bin Kuraiz governer of Iraq he wrote to him to send someone to acquire the information about the conditions of India. He sent Hakim bin Jablah Abdi who gave the report to Uthmanﷺ in these words;

"ماؤها وشل وثمرها دقل ولصها بطل ان قل الجيش فيها ضاعوا وإن كثر جاعوا"[157]

On hearing this precise answer Uthmanﷺ asked him whether he is giving information or saying some verse. This reveals that the idea of reaching the subcontinent was present from the early time as there is continuity in the expeditions sent to this direction. As reported by Albladhuri in the time of Aliﷺ, in 39 AH Haris bin Marrah al Abdi after seeking permission from Aliﷺ went as a volunteer towards Hind and reached Qiqan in the Sindhthe land which comes next to Khurasan the areas now in Baluchistan. During the time of Ameer Muawiyaﷺ, (661-680) Abdullah bin Sawar alabdi was sent to the frontiers of Hind and he conqurerd Qiqan[158] while during the same period Abd al-Rahman Ibn Samura consolidated his rule in Zabul and reached Kabul, whose ruler was obliged to pay tribute to the Arabs. Abdur Rahman Ibn Samura dispatched a huge force in 652 CE and waged war against the ruler of Kabul and reduced the surrounding areas. Further, he also reached Bannu and Lahore in 44 AH 664 CE. A number of Muslim colonies were erected and some Arab settlers and traders permanently settled in these colonies.[159] After that, another person Mohlab Ibn Abi Safra entered Kabul and Zabul via Marv. At that time, the ruler of Kabul was called Kabul Shah.

In 63 A.H. Yazid Ibn Muawyiah sent Yazid Ibn Ziad to subdue the ruler of Kabul. But the ruler of Kabul defeated the Muslim army. Then another expedition was sent under Muslim Ibn Ziad, which consisted of the residents of Ghor and Badghis. He took

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[157] Ibid

[158] Ibid

[159] Frishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarikh-i-Frishta,* Urdu Tr. by Abdul Hai Khwaja (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons Pub,1974), p.80

Kabul Shah on a surprise attack and drove him from his capital. He appointed Khalid bin Abdullah[160] as its governor.

According to Al Buladhuri Hajjāj binYousuf Al Thaqafī using the pretext of a ship[161] seized by the local ruler, sent a series of expeditions, the first under the command of Ubaidullah bin Nabhan who was killed. The second expedition was under Badil bin Tahfah Albajlī which met the same fate while the third and the successful one was under the command of youthful Muhammad bin Qasim in 92 AH 712CE.He was supported by an overland army as well as by a second contingent arriving by sea.

A century later, the Muslims successfully invaded Zabul in 795 CE and went on to Kabul. In the subsequent eastern campaign under the Caliph Al Mamūn, (813-833) the Hindu ruler of Kabul was captured and converted to Islam. The Arabs succeeded in gaining a firm hold of the region only in 870 CE when the founder of the Saffarids dynasty of Seistan invaded Kabul through Balkh and Bamiyan. The remote area of Ghur, on the upper reaches of the river Farah, remained beyond the reach of the Muslims for many decades.

The situations remained the same until the rise of the Samanids in the ninth century CE. They extended their dominion over Transoxiana, Persia and the present day Afghanistan. The penetration of the Muslims in the neighboring territory alarmed the rulers of Kabul therefore; they shifted their capital from Kabul to Hund. Owing to the

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[160] Khalid bin Abdullah according to some, was descended from Khalid Bin Walid. When relieved from his duties he settled somewhere around Koh e Sulaiman. He also married his daughter to a Muslim Pakhtun. It is stated that the Suri and Lodhi tribes are the descendents of that Pukhtun and his Arab wife.

[161] According to Albladhuri the king of Isle of Yaqut (a name given to the Ceylon which according to Al Balꓤdhurꜱ was applied to the island because of the beauty of their women) , sent a present to Hajjaj Muslim Women who had born in his country, the orphans of merchants who had died there. The king thought it a mean to applaud him before Hajjaj, but the ship was attacked and taken by pirates (bawarij) belonging to meds of Debul. One of the women of Bani Yarbu exclaimed O Hajjaj .When this reached Hajjaj he replied I am there. He then sent an ambassador to Dahir to demand their release, but Dahir replied; they are pirates I have no authority on them. On receiving such a reply Hajjaj decided to attack on Debul.See; Al Balādhuri.*Futūh al Buldān* (Qairo: Matbaat al Mausuat,1319AH) p.441

weak position of the ruler of Kabul, Yaqub al Laith Safar, a strong ruler of the Safarid dynasty, raided Kabul and occupied it in 870 CE. He founded the city of Ghazni and destroyed a number of idols and a huge statute of a deity was sent to the Abbasid ruler. Yaqub took great interest in the propagation of Islam in the areas of present day Afghanistan. During his reign, Islam spread in the areas around Ghazni and Kabul. The rapid spread of Islam proved to be a cause in the downfall of the Hindu Shahi dynasty, which ruled over Kabul and the areas south of the Hindu Kush from sixth to eleventh century CE. During the Samanid dynasty, a large number of people converted to Islam from different religion i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism etc.

During the later half of the tenth century, new development took place in the North. In 960 CE, Alaptgin ousted Abu Bakr Lawaik, the ruler of Zabul and Kabul on behalf of the Samanid from Ghazni. Alaptgin was an able Samanid commander. The change of power in Ghazni forced Kabul Shah to shift his capital once again from Hund to Bathinda. According to *Tarikh e Farishta* Subaktagin ascended the throne of Ghazni in 977 CE. He started his conquests in the areas now in Pakistan and India in the year 367 A.H (986-87) CE.[162] At that time these areas were under Jaipala. Subaktagin won the support of a number of Pakhtun tribes against his Hindu rival. It is noteworthy that before this a large number of Muslim Pakhtuns were on the side of Hindushahis. Subuktagin was successful in annexing Peshawar, Lamghan and the territory up to River Kabul. Subaktagin made arrangement for the consolidation of the area. In *Tahqīq mā Hind,* Al-Birūni recorded that in the mountains to the West of India there lived various Pakhtun tribes, which extended up to the valley of Sindh. He distinguished these tribes as Hindus.[163]Therefore, it seems that in 1000 CE some of these tribes had not yet converted to Islam.

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[162] Frishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarīkh e Frishta,* p.104

[163] Al Birūni. Tahqīq mā lil Hind, p.265

In the year 392 A.H. (1001 CE) a battle was fought between Mahmūd of Ghazna and Raja Jaipal. Mahmūd of Ghazna defeated Raja Jaipal with his 10,000 strong force.[164] The fort of Waihind, Ohind, Und or Pahind[165] was also raided by Mahmūd. It was the capital of the Hindu Shahi rulers after they had shifted from Kabul during the early raids of Subuktagin.

In 395A.H.(1004 CE.) Mahmūd defeated Bajra, the ruler of Uch. He stayed there for some time, made arrangement for the permanent annexation of the area and the conversion of its inhabitants. On his way back from Uch Mahmūd was caught by flood in the river Indus. It was something difficult to cross the river with his soldiers and horses. In this hour of trial, Abul Fatah Daud, the successor of *Shaikh* Hamid Lodi in Multan, who was an ally with Jaipal attacked him and inflicted a considerable loss to Mahmūd's army. However, Mahmūd escaped to Ghazni. In 396A.H.(1005 CE.) Mahmūd marched against him. Despite Anandpal's help, Daud was arrested and taken to Ghazni. He died in imprisonment in the fort of Ghur. In 412 A.H (1021 CE) Mahmūd made an unsuccessful attempt to subdue, the fort of Loh Kot (Lokote) situated in Kashmir. On his way back, he invaded Lahore and occupied it from the son of Anandpal probably Trilochanpala. Thereafter, the city was entrusted to Ayaz, one of his ablest lieutenants, with the instruction that *sikka* should be struck with his sign and *khutbah* should be read in his name.[166]

Mahmūd fought the next battle against Anandpal somewhere near Peshawar or between Hund and Peshawar. In this battle the Hindus were defeated. A large number

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[164] Farishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarikh e Frishta*, p.104.

[165] This place has been discussed by different scholars due to its strategic importance. It was given different names but at present the place is called Hund. It is situated on the right bank of the river Indus. Modern researches identify it with a place about seventeen miles away from district Attock.
See Juzjani, *Tabaqat e Nasiri*, p.9, 415.

[166] Farishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarikh e Frishta*, p.110.

were perished and thousands of them were arrested. These non Muslim tribes who sided with the Hindu Shahi kings were probably those tribes who left Kabul with the Hindu Shahis and were settled in Hund. They supported them against the Muslims and rendered great services to their old Hindu masters. The Hindu Shahi kings of Kabul and Gandhara lost their dominance over the area completely at the time of Maḥmūd of Ghazna. While in the next two centuries Muslims held in power the heartlands of the Indian subcontinent, when Shehabuddin Ghori laid the foundation of Delhi Sultanate by subduing the Hindu rulers of the central parts of the subcontinent.

Religious transformation, revival and development in the subcontinent mostly depended on the official patronage from a strong dynasty. Likewise Islam spread not only among the conquered areas but also throughout the subcontinent as a result of the Muslim expansion earlier in Sindh and surrounding areas and later in Kabul, Gandhara, Lahore and Delhi. Another important reason was the tribal nature of the then Indian society, which made this part of the world a more fertile ground for the expansion of Islam as it led to the conversion of the whole tribe and community together once their peers decided to do so. Besides, they did not accept Islam in its doctrinal form rather they strictly followed their social traditions while adopted some principles of Islam. Whenever the two disagree in matter of details, traditions usually were to be preferred over Islam. Other factors which led to the spread of Islam in these areas were its concept of equality, rule of law, unity and the economic opportunities it provided to the new converts. In light of above mentioned details it can be inferred that Muslims reached the subcontinent as *Fātihīn* in the areas now included in Afghanistan and Pakistan first and later they annexed the other areas to their rule.

Chapter 2:

Early Indian response and resistance to Islam (9th-14thC.E)

2.1. Confrontation and conflict between Islam and Hinduism:

Muslim conquest of the Northern parts of the subcontinent created many grievances among the Hindu rulers of India, a fact which bears many historical evidences and also seems justified from the native point of view. The Muslim narratives mostly elaborated the incidences from Futuh point of view but sometimes these works also highlight the Hindu sentiments of the time and help the reader to understand and comprehend the mutual reactions and responses of both communities. Among such are the *Futūh al Buldān* of Al Buladhurī and *Chachnama*[167] in case of Sindh, *Tarikh e yamini* in case of Ghaznavid. There is no doubt that at the time of Islamic conquest of the subcontinent there was not any common platform to check the progress of Islamic armies but it is also true that there were many forceful attempts by the then strong Hindu rulers to resist the progress of Islam and Muslims.

Both the Hindu and Muslim historians indicated that Hindus had many grievances and they resisted against Muslims and their rule in the Indian subcontinent. Both sides continued struggling against each other for centuries, as the Hindus never accepted the *mlecchas* in their territories likewise the Muslim rulers never succeeded in ruling these areas of *Kuffār* without resistance.There are narratives of campaigns, risings and resistances in different parts of the subcontinent, which were to be checked somehow by the then Muslim rulers of this land. It seems that such occurrences have led to the general assumption that the Muslim rule in the subcontinent was that of force and cruelty and butchery[168]. While the facts reveal that the Muslim conquerors on the whole adopted an

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[167] Al Kufi, Muhammad Ali. *Chachnama.*Ed.,Nabi Bakhsh Baloach.(Sindh: Sindhi Adabi Broad)
[168] See for instance; Mehta, J.S. *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Sterling publisher, 1986)

assimilating policy towards Hindus to counter such resistance and that the Hindu rulers continued in their resistant activities. And soon after they were given their previously held territories to rule and to pay the revenues they rebelled and in cases of early conversion to Islam they reverted to their old faith and thus were checked and punished by the Muslims for their reversion. In the following pages I have tried to provide a quick overview of such resistance.

It is also very important to take into account the diversity of resistance. There existed many diverse peoples, states and religious groups in the subcontinent which can not be treated as a common Hindu resistance over such a long period.[169]Various Indian states resisted various Muslim raids, and made different agreements and treaties of their own with both Muslim and Indian states also. The resistance then can better be termed as Indian rather than Hindu though the religion of the majority of the people and rulers of these regions at that time was what is known as Hinduism today.

Early Arab Muslim states were always facing the severe resistance from the neighbouring Hindu rulers[170]as we have historical evidences which reveal the existence of such atmosphere. For instance we find that Al Baladhurī reports that an Arab ruler of the independent dynasty of Banu Mahan in Sandan[171] was killed by the local Hindu chiefs during a resistance[172], who afer killing the Muslim ruler Mahan bin Fadal bin Mahan, took the control of the territory, but he allowed his Muslim public to hold their prayers and Friday prayers in the mosques. Mas‘ūdi also recorded that the Muslim rulers of Multan were always in war with the Hindu confederacy of Kanauj[173].

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[169] It took six centuries from the time of first Muslim raids into subcontinent till the establishment of a strong Muslim empire in the Indian subcontinent.

[170] For a detail survey of the early Arab states see: Mubarakpuri, *Hindustan me Arbon ki hakumaten.*

[171] Sandan was perhaps a port city in Gujarat as it is discussed by Mubarakpuri. See Ibid

[172] Al Balādhuri. *Futūh ul Buldān*, p 433

[173]Al Mas‘ūdi. *Marūj ul Dhahab*. Vol.1, p-167

Likewise during the time of Subuktagin, Jaipal after entering in a treaty for peace later on repudiated from the conditions of peace. Who after defeat and enslavement burned himself according to Frishta, because the Hindus believed that if any Hindu ruler was defeated and enslaved by Muslims was not able to rule them, and this sin was atoned only by fire so Jaipal after he was released by Muslim prepared a pyre for himself and burnt himself into it.[174]Likewise Sukhpal known as Nawasa Shah, who was grandson of Jaipal and had earlier accepted Islam also revolted and reconverted to his ancient faith. Anandpal son of Jaipal also made an ally with the other Indian states and resisted against Mahmud Ghaznavi but was defeated and subdued.[175]

Later on this resistance continued thus we find that during the time of Muhammad Ghori, the Ghakars of Punjab and the non Muslim Pakhtuns of the Tirah valley revolted. Sultan himself came to Lahore and sent Qutb al Din Aibak against the rebellious tribes. They were subjugated and many of them were converted to Islam. We also find a legendary account of Hindu resistance against Ghori the *Pirthvi Raj Rasao* as per this accounts Pirthvi Raj Chauhan a Hindu ruler of Kanauj resisted severly against Muhammad Ghori and defeated him many times[176]. During the time of Mongol pressure Hindus regained power in Bengal and Orissa[177]

During the thirteenth century there were many cases of resistance on the Hindus part. In 1226C.E. Bartu a Hindu chief of Audh massacred 120,000 Muslims. A Hindu chief who defeated the Muslim army regarded himself as restorer of his land and reclaimed its original name Aryavarta by killing off the *mleccha*.[178] After Aibak's death the Rajputs resisted and recovered their rule in Gwalior and Jhansi.[179]During the time of

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[174] Frishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarikh e Frishta*, P .91

[175] Ibid

[176] Historicity of the text is much doubtable see for a criticism of this work; Sherani, Mahmud Khan. *Pirthvi Raj Rasa; Matalib o Tanqid o Tabsirah*.(Delhi: Anjuman Taraqi e Urdu,1943)

[177] M Habibullah in Majumdar(ed) *The struggle for empire.* P.131-135

[178] R.C.Majumdar, *Study of Indian History* JAS(Bombay :1957)p.150

[179] Juzjāni , *Tabaqāt e Nāsiri*, p. 519

Iltutmesh and Balban these resistance activities continued. These and many other cases of resistance during the Delhi sultanate reflect the attitudes of Hindu natives towards the foreign Muslims rulers.

Besides the resistances there were many cases of reversion and apostasy of Hindu generals who after their conversion to Islam were trusted with offices of high responsibility and had reverted to their ancient faith. Among these were the reversion of Khusrau Khan and of Harihara and Bukka. The reversion of Khusrau Khan in 1320C.E. can be taken as a symbolic resisting attitude of the Hindus during the period. According to contemporary sources i.e. *Tughlaq Nama*[180], *Tarikh e Firuz Shahi*[181] and *Futuh us salatin*[182], Khusrau Khan[183] was a privileged courtier of Qutb al Dīn Mubarak Khalji.

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[180] *Tughlaq Nāma* historical Masnavi of Amir Khusrau; describes the successful expedition of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq against the usurper Khusrau Khan and few other events about the early years of Tughlaq's reign.

[181] Written by Zia ud din Barani a contemporary of Amir Khusrau and a historian famous for his two works *Tārikh-i-Firoz Shāhi* and *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndari*, In *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi* he deals with eight kings from Balban to Firoz Tughlaq, starting from the point where Minhaj left, while *Fatāwa e Jahāndāri* deals with the political thought.

[182] *Futūh ul salātin* written by Abdul Malik Fakhr al Din Isami is a sociopolitical history which is written in poetic form and covers 350 years of the Muslim rule staring from Sultan Mahmud Gahznavi (999-1030) upto the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin tughlaq. Thus being the most comprehensive and complete history of the Muslims rule in the Indian sub continent written in poetic form which was also called Shah nama i Hind.

[183] The caste of Khusrau Khan has been the subject of controversy among the historians of medieval Indian history. Whereas the contemporary sources Barani and Amir Khusrau, describe him as a Parwari, one of the lowest castes of the Hindus, some modern historians have also considered that Khusrau Khan belonged to the Parwari caste; among these one can mention E. Thomas. *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (London: 1871) p. 184, Ishwari Prasad. *History of the Qaraunah Turks* (Allahabad: 1936) p.9 footnote, some of the Indian historians tend to regard him as belonging to a higher Hindu caste like S.H. Hodivala. *Studies in Indo-Muslim Hislory* (Bombay: 1939) p. 57, I, 369-71; R. C. Majumdar in *The Delhi Sultanate* (Bombay: 1960) p.44-5; S. R. Sharma, *Nasar-ud-din Khusrau Shah* in Potodar Commemoration Volume (Poona 1950) 70. K. S. Lal, *Nasir-ud-din Khusrau Shah* in Journal of Indian History No 23, p.169-80, see also A. I. Srivaslava, *Origin of Nasir-ud-din Khusrau Shah of Delhi* in Indian Historical Quarterly, No 30 (1954), 19-24.

Who murdered his soverign and lover[184] and his all the male children of the ruling house and seized the throne. He is condemned by all the contemporary historians for the murder and rape of the ruling house. Though he belonged to a very low caste Parwaris of Gujarat, which was regarded extremely filthy by caste Hindus but he was equally supported by Brahmans who conducted the rites of his ascension to the throne as a token of Hindu solidarity. Contemporary historians have recorded that how the idols were set on the pulpits of the mosques and copies of Quran were desecrated by the Hindus and that there was general rejoicing among Hindus that Delhi had once more come under Hindu rule[185].

Another narrative which can reflect the confronation and conflict is the story of the foundation of Vijayanagara. The story has it that five Hindu brothers Harrihara, bukka and others had been part of the Muslim army and who after their conversion to Islam reverted back to Hinduism, established their own kingdom in the South and made Vijayanagra their new capital and for expiation of their filth which they commited through their early contact with the Muslims, started establishing the *mathas* and patronized the learned Brahamans.There is a lot of debate as regard to the rligious identity of these Vijayanagara rulers that whether they reverted back to Hinduism or continued to practice Islam because they retained some patterns of the Muslim rulers like use of the tilte Sultan instead of Raja or Maharaj. Likewise the use of other such symbols that were used by Muslim rulers like Arabian horses, Muslim clothings and architecture, besides using these Islamic titles and the symbols they patronized the the Brahmans and Hindu orthodoxy.[186]

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[184] All the accounts agree that Mubarak Khalji was in love with Khusrau Khan and that he had given everything in the hands of his beloved courtier which made it easy for the later to revolt and to take control of every part of palace and Haram without much effort.

[185] For details of his apostasy see; Amir Khusrau, p. 24-35, Barani, *Tārikh e Feroz Shāhi*, p.408-12, Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tārikh e Mubārak Shāhi* (Calcutta 1931)p. 87, Isami, *Futūh al-salātin* (Madras 1948) p. 374-5.

[186] For an account of the Vijianagra kingdom see: Shastri, K.A. Niel. *Vijaynagar ke ahd me Nizam e Hakumat aur Samaji Zindagi* (New Delhi: Taraqi e Urdu Beauro, 1984)

2.2. Theological debate:

How the Indians on the whole and the Hindu Brahmans particularly had perceived and interpreted Islam and the Muslims as newcomer to their land is a very interesting issue. To address such an issue it is very important to find the Hindu side of narrative of the early Hindu Muslim contacts. We have a variety of sources which form the Muslim or the Futūh narrative of this early period (9th-14thC.E), but as for the Hindu theological views are concerned; there is a want of such data.

Beside the terms which were used to refer to the Muslims there were some theological issues related with these new comers which reflect the religious attitude of Hindus during the period of early Hindu Muslim contacts. To interact and to contact with the Muslims who were *mleccha* required some laws and regulations. There emerged a variety of legal issues based on such conditions i.e. interaction with *mleccha*, sexual relation or marriage with *mleccha*, eating with *mleccha*. *Devala Smirti* a Sanskrit work which was produced in Arab Sindh sometimes between 9th -10th C.E discussed such theological and legal issues which emerged due to the Muslim settlement in Sindh. The text mainly deals with the various procedures of re-purification caused by the contact with the forigners.The *Devala Smirti* opens with a question by the sages put to Devala who was a learned Brahman that how Brahbmanas and members of the other varnas when carried off by *mleccha* were to be purified and restored to caste. The treatment of the issue by Devala is very much revealing of the Hindu theological attitude towards the Muslims[187]

Verses 7-10 declare that when a *brahmana* is carried off by Mleeches and he eats or drinks forbidden food or drink or has sexual intercourse with women he should not

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[187] For these verses of Devala Smirti I have mainly relied on the work: Pandurang Vaman Kane, *History Of Dharmasastra; Ancient And Medieval, Religious and civil law* (Poona:Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, 1941)VOL. II Part 1 p. 389-391

have approached, he becomes purified by doing the penance of *Candrayana* and *Paraka*, that a *ksatriya* can purify himself by undergoing *Paraka* and *krcchrapada*, a *vaisya* by half of *paraka* and a *sudra* by the penance of *Paraka* for five days.[188]

As regard to *Paraka* according to Al Berūni is a fasting penance which continues for nine days he says that in *Paraka* one has to eat at noon for three days and next three days eats only at nights while next three days one has to refrain completely from eating [189]while in the view of Devala this penance is for five days so may be the *Paraka* of five days described by Devala is a specific one and is different from the one indicated by Al Beruni but the common thing is that it is a fasting observance. Likewise *Candrayana* is defined as series of fasting for one month according to Al Beruni it starts with fasting on full moon day and one has to eat one mouthful on next day and has to increase one morsel every day till the day of *Amavasya* or the day when moon disappears totally and then he has to decrease one morsel every day till he ends with all the fifteen morsels and eats nothing on the last day.[190]

The *Devala Smirti* elaborates the penances as regards to the defillment caused by *mleccha* and provides different solutions for different types of contacts and the filth or the impurity caused by such contacts. Devala suggests that when persons are forcibly made slaves by *mleccha*, candalas and robbers, or they compelled to do dirty acts, such as killing cows and other animals or sweeping the leavings of the food of *mleccha* or eating the leavings of the food of *mleccha* or partaking of the flesh of asses, camels and village pigs, or having intercourse with their women, or are forced to dine with them, then the penance for purifying a *dvijati* that has stayed for a month in this way is *Prajapatya*, for one who had consecrated Vedic fires and if one stayed in such condition for one month or less it is *Candrayana* or *Paraka*; for one who stays a year with *mleccha* in all such conditions it is both *Candrayana* and *Paraka*. But if a Sudra remained in such a condition

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[188] Ibid, Vol. 2 chapter 7 p 390
[189] See Al Birūni. *Tahqiq ma lilhind min maqulah*, p .481-482
[190] Ibid. p.481

for a month becomes pure by *krcchrapada*; a Sudra who stays a year should drink *yavaka* for half a month. The appropriate *prayascitta* should be determined by learned brahmanas when a person has stayed in the above circumstances among *mleccha* for over a year; in four years the person who stays in the above circumstances among *mleccha* is reduced to their condition and he himself becomes a *mleccha* and there is no *prayascitta*[191] for him. [192]

This certainly was another kind of prayascitta or expiation which was basedon the idea that after four years death is the only purifier for him. However in a later section of Smirti (53-55) Devala provides an exemption to the general rule by allowing one to be re-purified even if he remained in such conditions up to twenty years:

' One who was forcibly seized by *mleccha* for five, six or seven years or from ten to twenty years, is purified by undergoing two *Prajapatyas*. Beyond this there is no purification; these penances are meant only for him who has simply stayed among *mleccha*. He who had stayed with *mleccha* from seven to twenty years is purified by undergoing two *Candrayanas'*.[193]

These verses are apparently inconsistent with the verses cited above (17-22), but they most probably mean this that if a man only stayed among *mleccha* for 5 to 20 years, but has not done any of the forbidden things such as killing or consuming cows[194], then he can be taken back even after so many years. This would be an exception to the rule contained in verse 22.

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[191] Prayascitta means atonement or expiation
[192] P.V. Cane. Vol. 2 chapter 7 p 391
[193] P.V. Cane. Vol. 2 chapter 7 p 391
[194] Killing or consuming cows is one of the grave sins in Hinduism

Thus *Devala Smirti* approved that a Brahmana even though enslaved by *mleccha* could be restored to his original status. Under Sivaji[195] and the Peshwas[196] it appears that several persons that had been forcibly made Muslims were restored to caste after undergoing prayasccitta based on the rules provided by Devala. In modern times there is a movement among Hindus called *suddhi*[197] or *patitaparavartana*[198]. In a very few cases persons born in Western countries have been taken into the Hindu fold by the performance of vratyastoma[199] and other rites. But such instances are very rare and are not supported by the vast majority of Hindus.

There were also laid specific rules as related to re-purification of women folk, who happen to have direct contact with *mleccha* or become pregnant as a result of such contacts or have eaten forbidden dishes willingly or unwillingly would become purified by a krchhra santapana penance and by cleansing their Private parts with clarified butter. The penance mentioned here is performed by subsisting on five products of cow.[200]But the child born of such unions according to Devala must not be retained and the caste fellows should reject such children so that not to mix with pure cast. According to Devala the half *mleccha* foetus is treated as a Mleccha substance in the women body as a thorn once it was removed the women after due penances was re-admitted to caste status while the legal status of the child is impure mixed caste. But further mechanism for such children is not provided by Devala whether they could be purified or not and if they are fallen from their caste whose duty is to take care of them.

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[195] Shivaji 1627-1680 the founder of Marath empire Shivaji led a resistance against the Sultanate of Bijapur, and establish an independent Maratha kingdom in 1674 with Vedant Raigad as its capital, see; Chaurasia, Radhey Shyam. *History of Medieval India*(New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002) p.286-297

[196] Peshwas was title equalent to the modern concept of Minister the title was introduced by Shivaji during the growth of the Maratha Empire. Prior to 1749, they later became the hereditary administrators of the Marath Empire from 1749-1818 for the historical details see; Ibid. 298-305

[197] Suddhi means re-purification, reconversion

[198] purification or bringing back into the Hindu fold those who had fallen away from it

[199] Vratyastoma, a ceremonial vow adopted for conversion to Hinduism. Now days there are vow certificates available for new converts as well as for those who want to reconvert to Hinduism after they had adopted any other faith. See the certificate on the next page.

[200] P.V.Cane. Ibid, vol. 2 p.391

Muslim settlement in Sindh raised many theological questions related caste clarification and boundary maintenance. As a result the region of Sind itself became a half impure location due to the fact that a large number of' *mleccha* and *candalas* had made the region their home. According to the legendary sage Baudhyayana, inhabitants of Sindhu-Sauvira (both banks of the Indus) were of mixed origin sometimes refered as *candalas*, and hence those non-Sindhi Hindus who visited the area must perform the rite of *upanayana*[201] again on their return. According to Devala himself by going to Sindhu, Sauvira, Saurastra and the frontier provincess, Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, and Andhra, one deserves to be purified again.[202] To be in Sind for a Sindhi Hindu was, in many ways, to be in a situation of impurity because of being in contact with *candalas* and *mleccha*. The use of the term *Candala* for Muslim further clarifies the religious or the theological perception of the Hindus towards them and that they were considered unclean. As the smirts prohibit the higher cast from even touching the *Candalas* no matter if the touch was by cloth, water or wind so the Muslims were also considered by them extremely filthy.[203]

Beside the Hindu records Muslim historians also have noted that how the Hindus were concerned with the issue of ritual pollution caused by the imprisonment at the hands of Muslims. According to Chachnama the Arab Muslim were called *Chandalan, Gaw-Khawaran* by Hindus of Sindh[204].

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[201] Ram Chandra Prasad. The Upanayana: the Hindu ceremonies of the sacred thread (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1997)

[202] P.V. Cane, Ibid, vol. 2 p. 16

[203] They are counted among the Niravasita castes i.e. those who are so low in the caste system that if a vessel is used by them for eating their food from it, that vessel cannot be used by any one of the other castes even after the vessel is purified by fire. for details see ibid vol. 2, p .92

[204] See Chachnama, p.195,222

Vrātyastoma

व्रात्यस्तोम

விரத்தியாஸ்தோம

Purification Sacrament for Returning to the Eternal Faith

I, _____ ,

having voluntarily declared my acceptance of the principles of the Sanātana Dharma, including a firm belief in all-pervasive Divinity, Satchidānanda, and the Vedic revelations of *karma*, *dharma* and *punarjanma*, and having severed all non-Hindu religious affiliations, attachments and commitments, hereby humbly beg to re-enter the _____ sect of the Hindu religion through the traditional Vrātyastoma, the purificatory vow ceremony, also known as Śuddhi Śraddhā, and plead for gracious permission from the community to return to my cherished Hindu faith. I solemnly promise to live as an example for the next generation. Aum.

Signature of devotee: _____

It is Hereby Certified

that this devotee, born in _____ on _____ was duly given the *vrātyastoma* ceremony on the auspicious day of _____ at the Hindu temple known as _____, in accordance with the traditions of the world's most ancient faith and vowed before the Deity, the Mahādevas and the *devas* faithfulness to the Sanātana Dharma. Thus, this devotee has been eternally and immutably bound to the Hindu religion and is now again recognized as a member of this and all of our communities worldwide with full rights of access to all public Hindu temples, shrines and institutions throughout the world from this day onward.

WITNESSES:

_____
OFFICIATING PRIEST

_____
ASSISTANT PRIEST

_____
CITY & COUNTRY

From the book: Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswam.How *to become a Hindu: a guide for seekers and born Hindu*s. (USA: Himalayan Academy,2000)p. 166

Both Al Beruni and Almaqdasi recorded that when any Hindu prisoner was released by Muslims or he escaped and reached back to his homeland, Hindu society did not accept such a person rather he was considered defiled. Both observed that such a person was supposed to go through different processes of purification. To quote Almaqdasi here:

"All the hairs of his head and body are removed and then he has to eat dung, urine, butter and milk of cow for several days and after wards he is brought in front of cow and he prostrates to it."[205]

While Al Bīrūni informs about such rites that he had repeatedly been told that when Hindu slaves who were caught by Muslims and had lived in the Muslim countries after they had escaped and run to their country and religion, the Hindus held that they should fast by way of expiation, then they bury them in the dung, stale and milk of cows for a number of days, till they get into a state of fermentation. Then they drag them out of the dirt and give them the similar dirt to eat.[206] Here Al Birūni's description is very close to Devala and which points to the insular attitude of the Hindus that simple touch of Muslims resulted in state of uncleanliness and filth for them.

He further informs that the Brahmans having being asked about such procedures denied and maintained that there is no expiation for such individuals and that there is no possibility of his return to previous state. Al Birūni considered their position true of their nature pointing to the fact that if a Brahmans eats in the house of Sudra for sundry days; he is expelled from his caste and can never regain it.[207]

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[205] Muhammad bin Tāhir Al Maqdasi, *Al bad' wa al Tārikh,* vol 4, p. 11-12
[206] Al Birūni. *Tahqīq mā lil Hind*, p.475
[207] Ibid

Another important issue for Hindu theologians was destruction of the powerful gods of Hinduism and the Tirthankaras of Jainism by the Muslim armies, their images broken and battered, and their temples razed to the ground. And in answer to this theological issue they sought different interpretations. One of such theological texts is the *Ekalinga mahatmya* text considered to be part of the Vayupurana, relates the history of the Siva temple Ekalinga in Mewar.The text traces the history of the kings of the region and describes their intimate relationship with the temple and its main deity. It also describes the deeds of some of the holy men who were associated with the temple. The text also raises the question of the destruction of the temple and its images by Muslim attacks. In its responses it makes reference to two concepts of the puranas: 1) the concept of the four world-ages, in which the last world age or Kali Yuga is an age of depravity horror and desaster, and 2) the concept of a conflict between the gods and demons, in which the gods also suffer. In doing so the text interprets the possibility of the Muslim conquest of the subcontinent as a consequence of the wicked rulers. The text also raises a theological issue that in such bad times lavish and costly images are to be avoided and that the appropriate medium in which the gods may come to earth is in fact simple and humble stone.

According to the *Ekalinga mahatmya,* a text written in form of a dialogue between the sage Narada and the god Vayu during the twelfth century the Muslim conquest was seen as will of gods and Muslims were interpreted as agents of demons. Narada asks Vayu if the images of a God are in fact the God Himself, how it is that they could be destroyed by the attacks of the Muslims, burnt and thrown to the ground. Vayu responds to Narada's question by making several points. First he says that the *yavanas* are eager to destroy the divine images in much the same way as the demons took it into their heads to harm the gods.[208]Thus interpreting the Muslims as the agencies of demons, a

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[208] Phyllis Granoff. *Tales of Broken Limbs and Bleeding Wounds: Responses to Muslim Iconoclasm in Medieval India*". Article published in East and West, Vol. 41, No. 1/4 (December 1991), pp. 189-203

common attitude which Al Beruni also attested by reporting that the Muslims were declared by the Hindus as the devil breed[209].

We find that Muslims were considered to be the incarnations of the demons, while the Hindu kings who waged war against them and were fighting against them were considered to be the incarnation of the Hindu gods, whose function it is to descend to earth in human form and subdue the demons, thus winning one more round in the ongoing battle between the gods and the demons .Thus interpreting the Muslims and as demons made it possible for the hindus to address the crucial issue of the destruction of gods by the Muslim armies.

Another theological issue which emerged from destruction of idols by Muslims was that why did the gods do nothing either to stop the offenders or to punish them? As per the above mentioned text the gods did not curse the Muslims, who were already cursed by the weight of their own sin and must wander from hell to hell suffering terrible torments, only to be reborn in countless undesirable rebirths, one-eyed, hunch-backed, ugly, lame, blind, tormented by illnesses, poor, suffering many torments and so on. According to this interpretation the Muslims will be punished through the agency of their own deeds.

The next issue in front of the Hindu theologian was that when an image has been broken what the community is supposed to do. The most desirable solution as per the above mentioned work was that another idol or the image of god with all the appropriate auspicious marks and conforming to the normal rules should be made and duly consecrated and then gods should be summoned through variety of rituals to dwell within it. When this is done it should be worshipped. The *mahatmya* of Bhuvanesvara, the *Ekamrapurana*, also asserts that in the Kali Yuga the main linga and the temple are to be made of stone.[210]The reason which seems plausible for the usage of the stone or wood for

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[209] Al Biruni.*Tahqiq ma lil Hind* , P. 15
[210] Phyllis Granoff. *Tales of Broken Limbs*, p.202

the idols was perhaps to avoid its destruction at the hands of the invaders who might attack their idols for the sake of the riches and the precious materials from which these were made earlier.

The Muslim conquest of the Indian lands not only meant a change of rule for the Hindus, it also raised many theological issues for them and certainly the regulations for interaction with these new forigeners were the major concern besides another sensitive issue that the very power of their *devi* and *devata* was challenged. The destruction of their idols and temples during the war not only demanded an interpretation of these occurrences from the Hindu scholars as to how their powerful gods and goddesses could'nt help their own destruction by the outsiders and were demolished but also these events called for adapting some change in the materials for making the new idols.

A quick analysis of some theological works compiled during the period of Muslim conquest and settlements makes it clear that Hindus perceived Muslims as an alien, foreign hence unclean and source of filth as the touch or breathe of Muslims required a lot of expiations and other ritual procedures. Moreover the destruction of their temples and idols by Muslim forces raised many theological questions for the Hindu scholars at that time.They interpreted Muslim forces and their progress as signs of Kali yoga and considered Muslims as agencies of demons.

2.3. Social and cultural conflict:

From above mentioned religious and theological issues of the period under review it can be inferred here that after the conquest of the some part of the subcontinent adherents of different sets of beliefs and practices had to live sometimes as neighbors while other times as rulers and the ruled or simply as stakeholders in the conditions of war and peace. To get the picture of the social and cultural modes of interaction at the

social and cultural level one has to follow multiple narratives from different perspectives. It is very important again to have any direct or indirect access to the variety of sources to give any comprehensive account of social relation which existed between the two communities i.e. Muslim and the Indian or Hindu. Though this variety of sources is available but is covered by so many interpretations, theories and reservations that one finds it hard enough firstly to rely on these materials and secondly to analyze and comprehend these sources.

Early Indian sources refer to Muslims not describing them as Muslims rather there are different ethnic or geographical terms used to refer to the new outsiders. The Muslims are occasionally identified by ethnic references such as *Yavanas* (Greeks), *Turuskas* (turks) or *Tajikas* (Tajiks), or the geographical terms such as Parasika, Garjana but more usually as *meleccha*. As for as the above mentioned terms are concerned I will try to elaborate these below:

Mleccha; The term meant foreigners who could not talk properly, outcasts with no place in Indian society and inferiors with no respect for dharma.[211] While not common in the Muslim sources[212], the term *mleccha* was occasionally used in the Sanskrit inscriptions during the period to refer to the Arab Muslims. Nagabhata l, the Gurjara Pratihara, ruler, 'is said to have defeated a *mleccha* force, who were also called the destroyers of virtue. The reference here is clearly to the, extensive Arab raids made on North India during the government of al Junayd and his immediate successors.[213] The use of the term for the Arabs is also significant, referring broadly to any foreign group of people *mleccha* was the, usual epithet given to many nonIndian tribes who had invaded or filtered en masse into India, but more generally so to refer to the Muslims after their invasion and settlements in the country.

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[211] Keay, John. *India; A History* (New York: Grove press,2000) p.187-88

[212] Alberuni has mentioned the term *mleccha* while Chachnama mentions the term *candala* but other Muslim sources do not highlight such terms.

[213] Maclean, Derryl N. *Religion and society in Arab Sindh*, p.80

Yavana; The term *yavana* was originally used for Greeks and later for those coming from West Asia or the West generally. The Sanskrit word yavana is a back formation from the Parkrit *yona*, derived from the West Asian yauna, referring to the Greeks. Turks and Afghans are referred to as *yavana* in multiple inscriptions. This was an indication of their being from the West and therefore alien. It enabled them to be included later in the scheme of some events of past, as for example in one eighteenth century Marathi chronicle. These texts refer to the past as the rule of the *yavana*. Another text called the Ramalasastra contained the history of the *yavana*. This text was considered to be divine inspiration and was held that it was first recited by Siva to Parvati and then through Skanda, Narada and Bhrgu to Sukra, the last of whom told it to the *yavana*. It is Siva who sent Paighambar to earth and there were seven paighambar or wise men, starting with Adam.[214]. Since the *yavana* had the blessing of Siva, Pithor Raja Chauhana could not hold them back. The establishment of the Maratha kingdom also took place at the intervention of the deity[215].

In Tamil literature, the term *yavanar* was used to refer to foreigners coming in particular from the West. As such it included people from the North-West, who came over land, such as ´Sakas, Greek Bactrians and Kusanas, and Roman, Greek, Syrian and Arab traders, who came from across the sea. But later it was used to refer to the Arabs who were among the earliest traders visiting the towns along the coast of South India.

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[214] The term Paigambars or the prophet is here used to refer to the Islamic concept of prophethood as well as there is a syncretistic approach to accommodate or interpret the Islamic rule in the Indian subcontinent. The paigambars came to earth during the Kali-yuga. They started their own era based on the Hijri era and different from the earlier Indian samvat era. They renamed Hastinapur as Dilli and initiated Yavana rule. They are thus located in time and space and provided with links to the past in accordance with the earlier and established vamsavali tradition. The prime mover in this history is the deity Siva and this makes any other legitimation unnecessary. G.D. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (eds.), *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Delhi 1989) p. 136-138.

[215] See for details; N.G. Wagle, *Hindu-Muslim Interactions in Medieval Maharashtra*, in G.D. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (eds.), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, p. 51- 66.

And the term *Yavanar* is most probably the earliest descriptions of a man from the Arab world in the Tamil literature.[216]

    Turuska;[217] With a variant form *turushka* an ethnic term used to connote the Turks an ethnic group but later on it was transformed into a generic term and was used to refer to theMuslims as a whole. Another term *turuska* was originally a geographical and ethnic name. An interesting link is made with earlier Indian historical perceptions of central Asia, when Kalhana, in his twelfth century history of Kashmir, the Rajatarangini, used the term retrospectively. He refers to the Kusanas of the early centuries CE. as *turuskas*, and adds ironically, that even though they were *turuskas* these earlier kings were given to piety.[218] Here perhaps the points of contrast are the references in two twelfth century inscriptions to the *turuskas* as evil, *dustatturuska*, or to a woman installing an image in place of one broken by the *turuska*.[219] It seems that the term *turuska* was also used with some evil or bad meaning.The entry of the *turuska* on the North Indian scene is in many ways a continuation of the relations which had existed between the states of North-Western India and those across the borders. Kalhana writes disparagingly of the Kashmiri king Harsadeva ruling in the eleventh century who employed *turuska* forces during his campaigns against local rulers, even though the *turuska* were then invading the Punjab.

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[216] Zvelebil, K. "*The Yavanas in Old Tamil Literature*" p. 405. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 46: 261–271, (Netherland: KluwerAcadamic Publishers, 2003)

[217] A Sanskrit inscription dated Saka 1127 (1206) on a rock in Kamrup about two miles northeast of Gauhati city on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river in Assam commemorates the drowning in the river of invading Turkish troops under the command of Bakhtiyar Khilji on their return from an abortive campaign in Tibet. The text runs as follows: (In Saka 1127, on the thirteenth of the month of honey [i.e., the month of Chaitra]/upon arriving in Kamrupa, the Turks perished.) Quoted by; Siddiq, Mohammad Yusuf. "*An Eigraphical journey to an Eastern Islamic land*" Published in Muqarnas, Vol. 7 (1990), pp. 83-108

[218] Kalhana. *Rajatarangini*, (Eng,trans) I, p. 170; 8, p.3 412

[219] R.S.Avasthy and A. Ghosh, "*References to Muhammadans in Sanskrit Inscriptions in Northern India*" Journal of Indian History No 15 (1 935), p. 161-84

The activities of Harsadeva, demolishing and looting temples to overcome the fiscal crisis, led Kalhana to call him a *turuska*.[220]

Tajika; The Arabs are referred to as *tajikas* which suggests some complex link to an Arab identity in addition to their being maritime traders. The Rastrakuta kings of the ninth-tenth centuries had appointed a *tajikas* as governor of the Sanjan area of Thane District on the West coast, whose name is rendered as Madhumati, thought to be the Sanskrit for Mohammed since it was also rendered sometimes as Madhumada.[7] He conquered the chiefs of the neighbouring harbours for the Rastrakutas and placed his officers in charge of these areas. As governor, he granted a village to finance the building of a temple and the installation of an icon. Arab writers of this period refer to Arab officers employed by the Hindu Rajas for settlements or colonies of Arab traders, and in both cases they had to work closely with the existing administration.[8] The earliest occurrence of the term *tajikas* is in the Kavi plate from the Broach district Gujarat, the plate records a grant to lord Asramadeva and refers to Arabs as *tajikas* in the context of Sindh.

Parasika; The term was basically used to refer to the Persians or the inhabitants of Faris or Paris; later on it was generalized to refer to the Muslims irrespective of their origin.

Garjana; the term was derived from the place name Ghazni, it appeared in the context of Ghaznavid conquest, but was also used to refer to the Muslims on the whole.

These terms no doubt suggest that the Muslims were perceived and interpreted by the early Indian society as 'other'. Hindus discriminated against them as outcasts from their cast structured society and hence they were impure and unclean and regarded the touch or even their breath and scent of their food as pollution. Muslims and Hindus therefore lived

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[220] Kalhana. *Rajatarangini*, (Eng,trans) vol. 7, p.1095, 1149, vol 8, p.3346

in separate territories and cities and if in case they were to live in the same city they adopted living in segregation.

Al Beruni who was living in the time of these early Hindu-Muslim contacts and was himself experiencing the Hindu attitudes towards him and his co religionists informs us; 'All their fanatism is directed towards those who do not belong to them, against all foreigners. They call them Mleccha, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it intermarriage, or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby they think, they will be polluted.'[221]He further elaborates that 'They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two elements.[222]' By providing these details Al Beruni actually has attested what is discussed above in the Devala Smirticontext on the one hand and provided a glimpse of the cultural and social differences and prejudices on the other. He considers the Hindu prejudices added to the gulf between the both communities, i.e. Hindu and Muslim. He continues to comment on the social barriers between the two; 'they are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them even if he wished it or was inclined to their religion. This, too, renders any connection with them quite impossible, and constitutes the widest gulf between us and them.[223]'

He depicts the Hindu attitudes in a more picturesque style when he informs about the Hindu attitudes towards Muslims '…in all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress and our ways and customs, and to declare us to be devil's breed'[224]. All this shows that the possibility of any kind of social relations didn't exist in the early period. Hindus developed an insular attitude on the social level to save their purity and caste. There is no doubt that the

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[221] Al Birūni. *Tahqīq mā lil Hind*, p 14
[222] Ibid,p.15
[223] Ibid,14-15
[224] Ibid, p.15

Muslims rulers trusted them with political and administrative responsibilities and there was a great segment of the 'Hindu' elite in their courts but that couldn't remove the social barriers between the two communities at large.

The early contacts between Isalm and Hinduism not only raised the political resistance and legal and social issues, but these also had some theological and religious imprints. The advent of Islam in the subcontinent also resulted in a kind of religious criticism from within Hinduism. This reflected in the wave of self criticism by the Hindu saints and poets. In the following pages we will discuss the main features of this religious criticism and dissent which emerged from within Hinduism Inshal *Allāh*.

2.4. Religious criticism from within Hinduism:

There started from the eighth century onwards some new religious developments with an ethos of reform and criticism within Hinduism. The religious ideas preached by the reformers first in the South and afterwards in the North were a clear shift from the Brahmanistic orthodoxy as well as a rejection of the Jainism and Buddhism. The main concern of this reform was the faith and love to a personal God, rejection of ritualism and criticism of cast barriers. This reform and criticism was not initiated by any single reformer rather it was based on *Lokayata* or the popular sentiments in which the idea of an all powerful Supreme God who bestows his grace on all was the central one. The concept of a personal God was not new for the Indian thought, what was new was the rejection of institutionalism, priesthood, and the rigid sectarianism and caste distinctions. This reform was initiated by the *Vaisnava* and *Saivite* saints of the South respectively known as *Alvars* and *Adiyar*[225].These reformers conveyed their ideas in devotional songs, which became popular among the masses. This emotionalism marked a shift from the

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[225] Chand, Tara. *Influence of Islam*, p 87

early patterns of the religious thought prevailing in the Indian subcontinent, namely Brahmanistic ritulism, Buddhism and Jainism, where devotion to a personal God was not the essential or central aspect of religiosity.

Genarally it is held that the songs of the Vaisnava *Alvar* and Saiva *Adiyar* saints reflect a popular movement of protest against Brahmanism and the rigors of the caste system. This thesis is contested by Friedman Hardy who remarks[226] that the perception of the *Alvars* as representatives of the masses protesting against caste oppression is a "popular romantic myth" originating in hagiography written in later times which is based on the assumption of Brahman and non Brahman bhakti poets and thinkers. Under these conditions the non-brahmana *Alvars* came to be regarded as low-born or outcastes and the myth of the Alvar movement being a social and religious revolt against establishment was born. Hardy has based his argument on the language which was used by these poets he argues that the language which was used by the Alvars was Senthamil or the classical Tamil which can be easily differenciated from the common Tamil or the kodunthamil. While it can be argued that the language which was used by these Alvars was closer to the spoken Tamil of their time.[227]Moreover the language can not be made the sole criteria for the judgement of the process of social and religious reform and criticism. For a better understanding of any religious change it is very important to see the other socioreligious facts of the period. It is also very important to analyze the teachings of the bhakti poets and the thinkers before establishing a thesis regarding its position towards the established religious system.

To have a true appreciation of the devotionalism of these saint poets it is important to see their teaching in the context of their socioreligious background. There existed in the subcontinent different sets of beliefs and practices that culminated into various sects and groups from the very early period. For an estimate of this variety a

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[226] Friedhelm Hardy. *Viraha-bhakti;The Early History of Krsna Devotion in South India* (Delhi, 1983) p.25

[227] A.K. Ramanujan and Norman Cutler, "*From Classicism to Bhakti*" in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, edited by Bardwell, L. Smith (Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) p.192.

Buddhist commentary of the fourth century, Niddasa which is also a part of the Pali Buddhist canon informs that:

"The deity of the lay followers of Ajivikas is the Ajivikas, of those of the Nigganathas is the Nigganathas, of those of the Jatilas is the Jatilas, of those of the Parribhajakas is the Parribhajakas, of those of Avaruddhakas is the Avaruddhakas, and the deity of those who are devoted to an elephant, a horse, a cow, a dog, Vasudeva, Baladeva, Punnabhada, Manibhada, Aggi, Nagas, Supannas, Yakkkhas, Asuras, Gandhabbas, Maharaja,Canda, Suriya, India, Brahmadeva, Disa is the elephant, the horse, the cow, the dog, Vasudeva, Baladeva, Punnabhada, Manibhada.etc respectively."[228]

This passage clearly indicates that there already existed heterogeneous systems side by side, each with its own beliefs and practices long before they came into contact with Islam. Beside these belief systems there were also many philosophical systems which can be also divided into orthodox and heterodox or the Astikas and Nastihkas.[229] This diversity of thought and practice charged the atmosphere for religious and social change. It was this atmosphere of religious and philosophical disputes and debates which resulted in a wave of religious criticism starting from within the Hindu fold.

It is pertinent to mention here that though some of the Hindu texts like Bhagvad Gita had the concept of a personal God it was not the central theme of Indian religiousity. Both Jainism and Buddhism avoided the discussion of a Creator and Sustainer of the universe and shared an anti-theistic outlook with their stress on the *Karma* and *Samsara* which was also an essential principle of Brahmanistic Hinduism. Both the ideas are complementary in the sense that *Karma* is a natural law based on the maxim; as you sow,

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[228] Quoted by Ramakrishna Gopal, Bhandarkar in his work: *Vaisnavaism, Saivism and minor religious systems (*New Delhi, Asian Educational services,1995) p. 3

[229] Astika stands for six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy also called the six darsanas, which are Sanmkaya, Yoga, Purva and Utarva Mimasa, Nyaya and Vaiseska, all these schools regard veds as infallible ans authoritative. While nastikas are the heterodox philosophies such as Buddhist, Jainist and Ajivikas, see for the meanings. Narendranath Bhattcharyya. A Glossary of Indian Religious Terms and Concepts.(Delhi:Manohar,1990).p.26

so you reap, or the cause and effect law which determines an individual's position in this life as a result of his *Karma* in the previous life and this idea of rebirth is the notion of Samsara, hence each complementary to the other.

This law of *Karma* and *Samsara* had no room for an all merciful and all powerful God who will judge and will forgive or punish according to the deeds of an individual. This led to a mathematical understanding of one's merits and created an atmosphere of mechanical or automatic religiosity. This gave rise to a criticism from within and there started a new religious quest for a personal God. The scholars and saints from different parts of the subcontinent started preaching the idea of passionate love and devotion to a personal God. It seems quit plausible that this criticism was affected by the advent of Islam to the subcontinent. It is very important to look into the origin and historical developments of the idea of bhakti.

The Sanskrit word "Bhakti" is derived from the verb "bhaj", meaning broadly worship, devotion, attachment, faith, share, and partition,.[230] Generally the word "bhakti" is used in various forms all of which embrace the notion of belonging, being loyal and liking. The Sanskrit grammarian Panini used Bhakti to reveal this range of meaning in the fourth century BCE[231]. The term was fully established as a religious technical term in the older parts of Bhagvad Gita, and was subsequently used in the later period to denote the idea of devotion and adoration of a personal God   *Istadevata*. The idea of love for one personal God was very old in the Indian traditions. In the Vedic hymns dedicated to *Varuna* one finds the idea of love for one God.[232] Commonly it is held that the Vedic hymns contained the idea of devotion to One God and the scholars like Max Muller had

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[230] Theodor Benfey. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (New Delhi : Asian Educational Services, 1988) p .638

[231] Monier Williams. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas,2005) p.743

[232] See the article *Bhakti Marga* by George A Grierson in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* vol. 2,p. 539-551

highlighted such an idea in terms of Henotheism or Kathenotheism[233] to explain the Vedic belief in individual gods alternately regarded as the highest[234].

The issue of the origin of monotheistic Bhakti had been a controversial one among the historians of the Indian religious thought and there were varying answers attempted by them; 1) It developed from sun worship, 2) it developed from the henotheistic or kathenotheistic approach, 3) it was a foreign or non-aryan idea, 4) it emerged as a result of an influence of Christianity or later on Islam.

That it developed from sun worship the view of George A Grierson, who in adetail survey of Bhakti Marga has discussed the possibility of influence of Aryans and Christian influences for development of monotheistic belief in the the subcontinent with possibility of a marginal and later influence of Islam and rejecting the possibility of origination of such an idea in the land without foreign influences. Grierson very clearly states his position when he says:

"We have no literary evidence as to the train of reasoning by which this doctrine (i.e. the monotheistic bhakti- doctrine of the Bhagavata religion) was reached, but to me it appears more than probable that it was a development of the Sun-worship that was the common heritage of both branches of the Aryan people the Iranian and the Indian."

His relevant arguments may be summarised thus: (i) All the legends dealing with the origins of the Bhagavata religion are connected in some way or other with the sun. (ii) Some of the exponents, incarnations, or devotees of the cult are either descendants of the sun or connected with it. (iii) The Bhdgavata eschatology lays down that the liberated

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[233] Henotheism is an approach to divine where one seeks one God without denying the presence and truth of others, while in Kathenotheism there one seeks one god at one time while another in other situation and this is what is meant by the term litraly as well; one by one god. See; Bleeker, C.J. *Historia Religionum* (Netherlands: E.J.Brill, 1971) Vol.2, p.288

[234] Quoted by V.M. Apte, *The Vedic Age*, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. I, edited by R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalker (Bombay :Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1988) p.365

souls first of all pass through the sun on its way to the Bhagavat. (iv)The Bhagavat is identified with Vishnu, who was originally a sun-god.[235]

Another opinion is that it developed from the henotheistic or kathenotheistic Vedic ideas as it was held by Max Muller. It was a foreign or non-aryan idea is the contention of the authors like Banerjee that the religion of Bhakti grew outside of the pale of orthodox Brahmanism[236].Likewise Dines Chandra Sirkar says that the conception of devotion and grace was borrowed from non-aryan religious thought[237].

If one approaches the issue from Islamic perspective the source or origin of the monotheistic idea itself is not an issue at all since *Allāh Subhānahu wa Taʿālā* sent His messengers to every part of the world and there is no need of establishing the links with other nations if the idea of one God was found in India from an early date. What remains to be discussed is that whether Bhakti in its earlier historical stages was at all monotheistic is an extremely debatable question. The idea of the All-god and the One-god must, however, be distinguished. But there is no doubt that the Bhakti ideas can be traced back to remote antiquity and it is not necessary at all to make a connection for their origin or development, with sun-worship, Christianity, Judaism or Islam.

How far was this change linked to the advent of Islam? Scholars like Tara Chand[238] had shown decisively that the heterodox bhaktas owed a lot to Muslim Sufia, who mixed with the downtrodden, illiterate masses and shared food with those they were preaching. The poet saints shared many of the traits with those of the Sufia in this regard; thus the equality, sharing foods and giving them equal religious rights and previlegs.

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[235] See his article "Bhakti Marga" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* vol, 2 .p, 539-551
[236] Banerjee, Priyatosh. *Early Indian Religions*.(Delhi: Vikas Publications,1973) P. 60
[237] Sirkar, D.C. *Studies in the religious life of Ancient and Medieval India.*(Motilal Banarsidas: Delhi, 1971) p 12
[238] Tara Chand. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*

Though the Bhakti was started as a shift from the Brahmanical Hinduism but sooner it received the stamp of orthodoxy by identifying Vasudeva as the Worshipful One. This mutual recognition of Bhakti and Brahmanistic Hinduism was due to the recognition of the Brahmanical pantheon and caste system by the early Bhagvatas. And Bhagvataism was fully absorbed by the bramanical tradition from the 6th century onwards.This devotional Bhagvatism received royal patronage from the most powerful families of early medieval period, the Guptas. Beside devotionalism another important feature of Bhagvatism at this stage was the idea of *avataravad,* which emphasized the descent of God into visible material forms. This doctrine of avatara made the bhakti the most poular religion throughout the subcontinent and the epics Mahabharta and Ramayana beside the Bhagvadgita as the most popular religious literature.

Chapter 3:

Interaction between Islam and Hinduism (15-16thC.E)

3.1. Issue of religious freedom:

For an estimate of the nature of interaction between Islam and Hinduism during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries it is very important to seek the answer for the following question; to what extant people were allowed to practice their religion freely in the period under review? And for answer I will rely here mainly on the contemporary Persian sources. These can be divided in two main categories; 1) The earliest or the pre-Mughal Persian literary source and 2) The later or Mughal Persian sources.

Among the earliest or the pre-mughal Persian literary source of the history of India is Hasan Nizami's *Tāj al Maʿāsir*[239], which contains Ghorid as well as the early Turkish history of the period. Sadīd al din Muhammad Awafi's *Jawāmiʿal Hikāyāt wa Lawāmiʿal Rawāyāt*[240] is an important source for studying social history of early thirteenth century. *Tabaqāt e Nāsirī* by Abu Umar Minhāj al Din Uthmān bin Sirāj al Dīn, also known as Minhāj Sirāj Juzjani [241]. *Futuh al Salatin*[242] or the *Shah Nāmah e Hind* of Isāmi is definitely a source of much value.Likewise the Works of Ziauddin Barani, the

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[239]The English rendering of the *Tāj al Maʿāsir* is available in Elliot & Dowson's *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*.Vol. ii, (Aligarh, 1952). For its reference, see, Barani, *Tarikh e Firuz Shahi,* ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, (Calcutta, 1862) p. 14; A.B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad, 2nd ed. 1961) p. 9; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, (Delhi, 1959), p. x ; K.A. Nizami, *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, (Delhi, 1983) p. 69.

[240]The work of Awafi is mentioned by I.H. Siddiqui's *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Conditions in the Sultanate of Delhi*, (Delhi:Munshiram Monoharlal, 1992) pp. 1-43

[241] Juzjani, Abu Umer, Minahaj al din Usman bin Siraj al din Juzjani. Edited by W Nasau Lees, Khadim Hussain and Abdul Hai (Calcutta: College press ,1864)

[242] Abdul Malik Isāmi, *Futūh us Salātin*, ed. A.S. Usha (Madras, 1948)

Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi [243] , *Fatawa e Jahandari*[244] contain historical accounts of the period.. Likewise the *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi*[245] of Shams Sirāj Afīf (b1354), the *Futūhāt e Firoz Shāhi* [246] of Firoz Shah Tughluq, Yahya Bin Mubarak Sirhindi, *Tārikh e Mubara*kshāhi[247], Khondamir's *Khulāsat al Akhbar*[248]. These works can provide us the glimpses into the situation of reigioous freedom during the Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent.While among the later sources are *Akbar Nāmah*[249], *Muntakhab al Twārīkh*[250], *Tabaqāt e Akbari*[251] , *Tārikh e Shāhi*[252] of Ahmed yadgar, *Tārikh e Sindh*[253] and *Gulshan* e *Ibrāhīmi* [254]are helpful for the analysis of the situation during the period under review.

These Contemporary and court historians of the Islamic rule in the subcontinent categorically illustrate the nature of religious freedom. These records show that how the Hindus were not only given the right of religious freedom but also were employed in state service and this was a common policy of all of the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent from time of Muhammad bin Qāsim till the later Mughals. Thus we find that not only the Hindus were given the right of religious freedom but also were encouraged by the

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[243] Barani, Ziauddin. *Tārikhe FerozShāhi,* ed.Wallayat Hussain (Calcata:1890)

[244] Zia ud din Barani. *Fatāw e Jahāndāri*, Trans., Ed., Dr Afsar Saleem Khan, (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan,1972)

[245] Shams Siraj Afif. *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi*, ed Wilayat Hussain, Maulavi (Calcutta: Asiatic Society ,1890)

[246] Tughlaq, Firoz Shah. *Futūhāt e Firoz Shāhi*. Ed S.A, Rashid. (Aligarh,1954)and also by M.A Chaghtai with Urdu translation and notes(Poona:1941)

[247] Yahya Bin Mubarak Sirhindi.*Tarikh e Mubara*kshahi Edited by M Hidayat Hussain (Calcutta;1931)

[248]Extracts in; Elliot and Dowson. *History of India as Told by its own Historians*. Vol. 4, p. 141-147

[249] Abul Fazl. *Akbar Namah* (Lacknow: Nawal Kishore) Eng. Trans. Bevridge (London, 1921)2 vol.

[250] Badāyūni, Abdul Qadir. *Muntakhab al Tawārikh,* .Edited by Kabir ud din and W.N.Lees (Calcutta) 3 vols

[251] Nizam ud Din Ahmed Bakhshi, *Tabaqat e Akbari* in 3 vol

[252] Ahmad Yadgar. *Tārikh e Shāhi,* Trans. John Briggs (London); Urdu trans. Fida Ali Talib (Hyderabad,1932) 4 vol

[253] Masumi, Muhammad. *Tārikh e Sindh* or *Tārikh e Ma'sūmi* Edited by U.M Daudpota (Poona:1938)

[254] Frishtah, Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah. *Gulshan i Ibrāhimi* also known as *Tārikh e Frishtah* (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore,1865)

Muslim rulers to learn and to take part in the state service and even were given high positions. The attempt of integration of indigenous people, who were largly Hindus, was a common policy of the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent from the very early period. For instance Muhammad bin Qasim integrated the Brahmanas and all other privileged groups of the Sindh by assigning them the tasks of revenue collecting and other social activities which they used to do before Islamic conquest[255]. Moreover when he wrote to Hajjaj about the demand of Brahmans to restore and rebuild their temple he received from him an answer in black and white;

"….. That we do not have any other right on them except *Jizyahh* and when they have become *Dhimmī* we cannot interfere in their lives and properties. They are allowed to worship their God and you may not check any of them in their ways (of their worship and religion)."[256]

Likewise the Muslim rulers of Multan and Mansura and Sindan allowed their non-Muslim subjects to practice their religion freely.[257]Mahmūd Ghaznvi who is always criticized by the Indian and the Western historians for his hate for Hindus[258], had a contingent of Hindus in his Army and also Hindu Commander Tilak who rose to the status of his personal staff as well for his troops which shows that it was not for the hate of Mahmud Ghaznvi that one should blame rather the repudiation and treachery of the Hindu rulers was the cause of war and conflict. Moreover the conditions of war cannot be

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[255] For the details of the reliefs granted to the non-Muslim population of SindhSee; Chachnama p-291-300, also alberuni

[256] Chach Nama p 299

[257] Mubarakpuri, *Hindustan me Arbon ki Hakumaten*

[258] For the severest critics of Mahmud see A. L. Basham *The Wonder that was India*. (New Delhi: Picdor,2004)

generalized as he had not persecuted the Hindus during the peace or those who were his *Dhimmīs*.[259]

During the Delhi sultanate same pattern was adopted and the Hindus were treated as *Dhimmis* and were allowed to practice their religion. This religious freedom was not a specific measure in the subcontinent rather it was in continuity with the Islamic tradition of granting the ahl al dhimmah with the rights of religious freedom besides the other rights of citizenship in an Islamic state i.e. right of security and right of having justice and so on. The period of the Delhi sultanate was not monogamous, because there were different ruling houses and dynasties who ruled the subcontinent during the period between 12th to 15th centuries. But this ethnic variety of Muslim rulers did not mean that their understanding and attitude towards the non Muslims living in their state was entirely different from one ruler to the other rather there was a uniformity among all, and even those who did not recognize for Hindus the status of *ahl al dhimmah*[260] did not ban the religious freedom of Hindus which was perhaps due to the presence of an overwhelming majority of non-Muslims in this part of the Islamic world[261].

Thus we find the politicians like Fakhr e Mudabbir[262] and after him Zia ud Din Barani pleaded their rulers to take some specific measures in case of the Hindustan. For instance Barani's suggestions regarding specific measures for Hindus is in fact a reaction and a response to the rising Hindu influence and hold. Thus we read in his *Fatawa e jahandari* a century earlier that a Muslim king should not be contented with merely levying the *jizyah* and *Kharāj* from the Hindus, He should establish the supremacy of

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[259] Mahmūd actually had subdued Jaipal a Hindu Shaih monarch who agreed to pay the *jizyahh* but later repudiated and was persecuted by Mehmood along with other rulers of Thanesar, Kanouj, Kalinjra for their joint allie against Mehmood, for details see; Frishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tārikh e Frishta,*p.392-415

[260] Particularly Zia uddin Barani held the view relying on the Shafi rulings in this regard he also states that Mahmūd Ghaznvi was a shafite and he did'nt considered the Hindus to be ahl al dhimmah. See *his Fatawa Jahandari,* p.18

[261] For the view of Altutmesh and his minister see below

[262] For the views of Fakhr e Mudabbir see below

Islam by overthrowing infidelity and by slaughtering its leaders who in India are the Brahmans[263].

The emergence of regional states in the 15th and early 16th centuries provided fertile ground for cultural and religious confluence. From the mid of the 14th century onwards different Muslim and Hindu monarchs had established themselves independently of Delhi and had split into different regional kingdoms. The rise of the regional kingdoms also resulted in a deep rooted interaction between Muslim and Hindu culture. During the days of the sultanate, Delhi was the one major center of Islamic culture and religion but with the emergence of new capitals like Ahmadabad[264], Jaunpur[265], Gulbarga[266], Sonargaon[267], Gaur, Pandua[268], and other provincial capitals like Sindh[269] and Kashmir[270] the centers of religious and cultural activity were also increased. Delhi had a large number of influential immigrants, and the cultural traditions of the capital reflected mainly the Central Asian pattern while at the capitals of the new regional kingdoms, the cultural activities mostly integrated the indigenous traditions and

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[263] Ziia ud din Barani. *Fatawa e Jahandari,* b 118, p.165

[264] Ancient name of Ahmadabad was Karnavati; at the beginning of the fifteenth century an independent sultanate ruled by Muzaffarid dynasty was established in Gujarat and in 1411 Sultan Ahmed Shah renamed Karnavati Ahmedabad and established it as his capital; Kenneth Pietcher. *The Geography of India: sacred and Historical Places*(Britanica Educational Publishing, 2011) p.171

[265] It was founded by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 14th century. The name Jaunpur attributes its origin to the cousin of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, called Sultan Mohammad, whose real name was Jauna. Later around 1394 AD, Malik Sarvar - the governor of Jaunpur, established an independent Sharqi dynasty that ruled over Jaunpur for about a century. Sharqi rulers were great patrons of architecture and constructed many fine tombs, mosques, madarsas here, during their regime. Jaunpur was a renowned centre of Art and learning during medieval period. Om Gupta.*Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan and* Bangladesh(Delhi; Isha Books,2006) p.1108

[266] The City of Gulbarga was founded by the Bahmani Sultan Hasan Gangu in 1347 as his capital

[267] Its ancient name was *Suvarnagrama* from *which* the present version of the name *Sonargaon* 'golden village' (its literal meaning) emerged as the capital of an independent Sultanate in the eastern Bengal underFakhruddin Mubarik Shah (1338-1349) and his son Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah (1349-1352).

[268] Gaur and Pandua were the twin cities and remained capital for different dynasties from the ancient period, for a detailed history of these cities see; Ahmad, Salahuddin. Bangladesh; Past and Present.(New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing, 2004) p.60-62

[269] Sind remained capital for provincial administrators as well as for independent rulers.

[270] Kashmir remained for the most of the period an independent state

languages. Another important difference between the capital and the regional kingdoms was the fact that the diversity of political and religious affiliations guaranteed the religious freedom to the Muslims living in a Hindu ruled territory and vice versa.

During the sixteenth century the early Mughal rulers also provided their Hindu public with complete religious freedom and a high status in their courts to the extent that some sections of the Muslim notables felt that their status was being threatened and thought that their own religious freedom was at risk. Contemporary scholars and historians like Abdul Qadir Badāyūni [271] and Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi[272] raised their voices against such circumstances. Abdul Qadir Badāyūni in his history *Muntakhab al Tawārīkh* writes: "Hindustan is a wide place, where there is an open field for all licentiousness, and no one interferes with another's business, so that everyone can do just as he pleases".[273] It is also very interesting to read the following lines of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi in one of his letter for the analysis of the religious freedom of Hindus during the sixteenth century he wrote:

"Islam has become an alien and helpless to the extant that *Kuffār* openly redicule Islam and Muslims. The commandments of *kufr* are practiced openly while Muslims are forced to not to practice according to Isllamic law and are criticized and punished for practicing their faith."[274]

These historical sources also indicate that besides the enormous increase in the religious freedom, the Hindu elites began to influence the religious outlook of the Mughal court to a certain degree, not only did they enjoy the religious freedom they were allowed

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[271] Abdul Qadir Badāyūni was a contemporary historian of the Akbar's period. His work *Muntakhab al tawārikh* criticizes the religious policies of Emperor Akbar and highlights the different religious trends at his court.

[272] Ahmad al Faruqi Sirhindi (1564-1624) he is known as Mujaddid Alf Thani or the reviver of the second millennium, for his work in rejuvenating Islam and opposing the heterodoxies and perplexities of beliefs and practices through his criticism and reform

[273] Badāyūni, *Muntakhab al Tawārikh*,vol 2,p. 246

[274] Sirhindi, Sheikh Ahmad. *Maktūbāt*, Vol.1 letter no 65

equally to propagate their religious ideas publically. The emergence and growth of the synthetic and syncretistic efforts among the Muslims was in fact a result of such propagation. Different activities of the Hindus like risings and revolts and the emergence of various religious movements and sects during the period are a clear proof of the religious freedom which the Hindus enjoyed.

The issue of religious freedom under an Islamic state was much focused by Muslim scholars and politicians in the subcontinent. The Muslim rulers in the subcontinent resolved the issue of religious freedom for the non Muslim subjects who in their case were the Hindus in majority by a kind of consensus among all lines of Islamic thought from the very early period. There are different discourses of Islamic thought during the period under review which shaped the religious policies of Muslim rulers of the subcontinent and particularly their policy regarding the issue of religious freedom for the non-Muslim population.

I will divide the Islamic thought during the period under review into five main discourses which shaped the policy of the religious freedom during the Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent:

1) The *Sharī‘ah* discourse.
2) The *Jahāndāri* discourse.
3) The *Akhlāqi* discourse.
4) The *Sūfi* discourse.
5) The *Adab* discourse.

3.1.1 The *Sharī‘ah* discource:

The question of the rights and obligations of non-Muslims living in an Islamic state and espacially those who were not mentioned by their names in the *Qurān* and *Sunnah* was an important one for the Muslim rulers and theologians of the subcontinent.

In the other parts of the Islamic world, the non-Muslim groups at that time were mostlly Jews and Christians. The *Qurān* and *Sunnah* contain many references to these two communities and the relationship that the Muslim should evolve with them was categorically defined. These both communities were given the status of *ahl al dhimma*. But as regards the Indian religious traditions, there was no direct reference to these in *Qurān* or *Sunnah*. Muslim jurists had therefore to make their decisions based on the patterns adopted in other Islamic lands. The inhabitants of India were treated as *ahl al-dhimma* from the very early period from the time of Muhammad bin Qāsim.[275]

Throughout the Islamic rule in the subcontinent the guiding principle for the treatment of non Muslims was *Sharī'ah*; the rulings of *Qurān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophetﷺ. The *Sharī'ah* discourse includes the views and interpretations of the fuqaha regarding the concept of *Ahl al dhimmah* that encompasses the issue of religious freedom for different religious communities living under the Muslim state. Though the *Shafi'ah* and the *Hanabilah* insisted that only Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians may be included in the category of *ahl al-dhimma*[276], the *Malikiyah* and the *Hanafiyah* on the other hand agreed to include all non-Muslims even idolators or polytheists who were not Arabs or apostates[277]in the category of *ahl al-dhimma*. This view of the *Hanafi madhhab* enabled the Muslim rulers of the country to find legal justification for the policy of religious freedom and tolarence that they had adopted towards their non Muslim subjects.

The categorization of the Hindus among the *ahl al dhimmah* granted them the right of religious freedom according to the Shariah discourse in the Indian subcontinent. The same point of view was adopted by Muhammad bin Qasim earlier who had also accorded the status of *ahl al dhimmah* to the local Hindu and Buddhist population of

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[275] For the treatment of people of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim see *Chachnama*,p 291-300 also Al Balādhurī, *Futuhulbuldan*, P 290-293

[276] For a detailed discussion on the subject see the work; Zaydan, 'Abdul Karim. *Ahkam al Dhimmiyin wal Mustaminin* (Baghdad, 1963)p. 24-26

[277] See; Abu Yusuf bin Ibrahim,Qazi, *Kitāb al Kharāj*,p 139

Sindh[278]. Later on the Ghaznavids, Ghorids and all other Mulim rulers of the subcontinent adopted the same view.

Though the Muslim rulers from the time of Muhammad bin Qasim maintained that Hindus may be considered as *ahl al-dhimma*, some Muslim thinkers living in Indian subcontinent, such as Fakhr e Mudabbir and Ziya al Din Barani (1285-1357), demanded that some specific measures were to be adopted against them. According to Fakhr e Mudabbir the adornment (*zīnah*) the dress (*jāmah*) and the deportment (*nishāt*) of the dhimmī should be different from those of Muslims[279]. But at the same time he holds the view that non-Muslim were to be allowed to live separately and distinctly under an Islamic state. While the well known historian and political thinker Barani thought that:

"The Muslim king must not be content with the imposition of the *jizyah*; he must strive with all his courage to overthrow infidelity and slaughter its leaders, who in India are the Brahmans. But if a king is content merely to take *kharāj* and tribute from the Hindus, who are worshippers of idols and cowdung, and the Hindus are able with peace of mind to preserve the customs of infidelity, then of course infidelity will not be liquidated".[280]

The contemporary sources clearly show that these particular views of both Fakhr e Mudabbir and Barani were never put into practice which perhaps due of the hold of *Hanfi madhhab* in the subcontinent. Barani himself has indicated in his *Fatāwa e Jahāndāri* that according to *Shaf'ī madhhab* the Hindus were not entitled to the status of *ahl al dhimmah*[281].

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[278] Al Balādhurī,, *Futūh al Buldān*,p. 292-293
[279] Fakhr e Mudabbir, *Adab al Harb wa Shuja'a*. Ahmed Suhail Khawansari(ed), (Tehran: dnm)
[280] Barani, Zia ud Din, *Fataw e Jahandari*, P-165
[281] Ibid p.18

These rulings of *Sharī'ah* were part of the practice in general and there are stances when Muslim rulers wanted to adopt some strict policies towards their non-Muslim subjects but the Muslim scholars stopped them from doing so and protected the rights of *ahl al dhimmah*.Malik al Ulama Abdullah Ajodhani stopped Sikandar Lodhi from destruction of temple and sacred lake in Thanesar because it was againt the ruling of *Sharī'ah* [282]

The Muslim State as well as the Muslim community was subject to the *Sharī'ah*, which involved both doctrine and legal opinion. But it is very important to consider here that the rulers acted independently in matters of administration, and the laws of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* were not put into practice always. It was Islamic only in the sense that the ruler was Muslim. There were rulers who took their policies as a matter of personal disposition, and not as commended by the *Sharī'ah* of Islam. While there were also rulers who devoted themselves for the upholding of *Sharī'ah* for example, Barani says Balban (1266-1286), never sat down to a meal unless some *ulama* were present with whom he could discourse on religious matters. On the other hand we find Alau al Dīn Khilji (1296-1316) made his policies independently not taking in consideration the recommendations of the *Sharī'ah* and declared roundly that he would do as he thought fit, and not what was required by the *Sharī'ah*. During a dialogue with a learned theologian Qazi Mughith al Din on the issues of *Sharī'ah* after hearing his comments told him that"I do not know whether such commands are permitted or not by the *Sharī'ah*. I command what I consider to be of benefit to my country and what appears to me opportune under the circumstances."[283]

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[282] Ibid p. 216-217

[283] Frishtah, Muhammd Qāsim. *Tārikh e Frishtah*.vol 1 p 368-9

3.1.2 *Jahāndāri* discourse:

Apart from the Islamic rulings or *Sharī'ah* discourse in this regard Muslim rulers and politicians had laid down certain other principles of governance or the *Jahandari*. While doing so they were mindful of their strength in numbers and considered it more practical to accord the religious freedom to their non Muslim majority than to raise the religious and social violence by persecuting and forcing them to embrace Islam, which was both against Islamic principles and impractical as well. With the establishment of Delhi sultanate in 1206, the whole of the subcontinent was not subdued and Muslims had annexed Multan, the Punjab, Ajmer, Delhi and Kannauj so far while Benares, Bihar, Orissa, the Kakatiyas, Yadavas and Cholas of South India were still unsubdued.[284]With the exception of Western Punjab and Western Rajputana, the people living in the country were mainly Hindus.[285]

Even a century later we find Shams al Dīn Iltutmesh (r. 1210-1236) when persuaded by *Ulama* at his court to treat the Hindus as polytheists and not as ahl al dhimmah asked his learned Wazir Nizam al Mulk Junaidi to give a reply who pointed them to the fact that the Muslims, in terms of strength, were still like salt in a dish and were thus unable to wage an all out war either to force the infidels to accept Islam or to exterminate them all in case of their refusal[286]. So the Muslim rulers did not demand the non- Muslims living in the state to follow their religion by force as it is generally assumed but they were demanded to follow the *zavābet* or the rulings which were designed to regulate the state. The policy of religious freedom evolved from the Muslim ruler's *Jahāndāri* discourse and was backed by a clearly defined political and religious

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[284] Muhammad Basheer Ahmad. *The Administration of Justice in Medieval India*, p. 57.
[285] Al Biruni , *Tahqiq ma lil Hind*, P.465
[286] Barani, Zia uddin in his work *Naat e Muhammadi* as quoted by Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and politics in India during the thirteenth century,* (Delhi: idara e Adabiyat e Dehli,1974) p.315

ideology. Gradually this stance developed and became a basic principle of Islamic polity or *Jahāndāri* in the Indian subcontinent.

The Muslim rulers and their governors were not to interfere with the religious matters of their Hindu public and if some of them wanted or planned for such they were checked by the Ulama as it is recorded in *Tabaqāt e Akbari* that once Sikandar Lodhi when he was still a crown prince asked the *Ulama* regarding the temple and the lake in Thanesar that 'what if I destroy this center of infidels and polytheists' he was informed that it is not lawful in Islam.[287]

The other main principle of *Jahāndāri* was justice which not only meant the equality before the law but also the freedom of practicing one's faith. The Muslim and non-Muslim alike were entitled to the justice. A number of political treatises like *Adab al Harb, Zakhirat al Mulūk, Fatdwa e Jahāndāri* and *Ain e Akbari* highlight the responsibilities of the rulers towards their people. These political treatises focus on the motive of justice which sometimes was inscribed on coins also and that is: If there was no Sultan people would devour each other[288]. Akbar's ideologue Abu al Fazl prepared a working manual or *dastur al amal* for his officials with an advice to them to guard against the dangers of the violation of the principles of justice and equity and of non interference in matters of faith of the people. It is not difficult to know the extent to which this religious freedom worked if we look at the policies that were adopted by the Muslim rulers towards their non-Muslim subjects and feudatories.

Muhammad bin Tughluq established contacts with Hindu religious thinkers[289], made gifts of one thousand cows to their cow centers, visited their temples, issued a *farmān* for the construction of a new *basti upasraya* or rest house for monks and a *gow-*

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[287] Nizamuddin.*Tabaqat e Akbari*, vol.1,P.170

[288] Fakhr e Mudabbir, *Adāb ul Harb*,quoted by Nizami, Khaliq,p.110

[289] Isami. *Futūh al salātin*, P.515

math cow temple, celebrated Hindu festivals,[290]established in Awadha a colony known as *Saragdwari*[291]. Later on the Mughal emperors continued the policy of religious freedom of their predecessors. According to the document available in the State Library of Bhopal, Babur left the following will to Humayun:

"My son take note of the following: Do not harbor religious prejudice in your heart. You should dispense justice while taking note of the people's religious sensitivities, and rites. Avoid slaughtering cows in order that you could gain a place in the heart of natives. This will take you nearer to the people. Do not demolish or damage places of worship of any faith and dispense full justice to all to ensure peace in the country."[292]

3.1.3 *Akhlāqi* discourse:

Another important source for analyzing the religious freedom during the period under view is the *Akhlāqi* discourse. The *Akhlāqi* discourse consisted of the philosophy of ethics laid down for the rulers in general and the Muslim ruler in particular. . There were two main *Akhlāqi* texts which shaped the ethical outlook of the Muslim rule in the subcontinent Dawani's[293] *Akhlāq e Jalali*[294] and *Akhlāq e Nasiri*[295].Both the texts had an important place in the Muslim courts of the Indian subcontinent.The *Akhlāqi* discourse involved the discussion about perfect and ideal ways of ruling as compare to the imperfect ruling. The ideal and the perfect governance according to the *Akhlāqi* discourse is which can assure equal rights and opportunities for each class and individual.

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[290] Ibid

[291] Barani, *Fatāwa* ,P.485

[292] The original document is in Persian and is treasured in the Hamida Library at Bhopal, it was first published in 1936 in the'Twentieth Century' Allahabad by Mr .N.C.Mehta with its English translation.

[293] Jalal al-Din Muhammad ibn As'ad al-Dawani (or Dawwani) was born near Kazarun, southern Iran, in the village of Davan in AH 830 /AD1426

[294]Written by Jalal dl din ibn Asad al Dawani, *Lawami' al-Ishraq fi Makarim al- Akhlāq*

[295] Basically a translation of *Tahdhib al Akhlaq* of Ibne Maskawayah byNasir ud din Tusi.

Nasīruddin al Tūsi[296] wrote his ethical treatise *Akhlāq* e Nasiri in the Persian, it was basically a translation of an Arabic work '*Tahdhib al Akhlāq*' of Ibn e Miskawayh[297]. The *Akhlāqi* discourse of Tusi was practically oriented and pluralistic in nature as it dealt with the ethics of rulers and the rights of the subject irrespective of their religious affiliations. *Akhlāq e Jalali* which followed the *Akhlāq e Nasiri* became very popular in the Indian subcontinent. These texts served as selected readings or syllabus for the rulers and their courts. These *Akhlāqi* discourses stressed that the rule is sustained by equality and justice and declared the possibility of rule with infidelity and disbelieve but not with injustice[298].

The Muslim legacy of religious tolerance bore the impact of the tradition of Akhlaqi discourse in which it became binding on the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent to ensure the religious freedom to their subject not only in legalistic but also in the ethical sense . It was not simply that the Hindus enjoyed the freedom of belief under the Islamic rule; their treatment was much better as compare to their cotemporary religious minorities of the world and even than the *ahl al dhimmah* under other Muslim states. It was in light of this ethical discourse that the Hindus and believers of other faiths were free to propagate their religion and even to criticize Islam openly.

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[296] Nasiruddin Tusi was born in Tus, Khorasan in 597/1202. In his youth, about in 624/1227, he entered the service of Nasiruddin Abdu Rahman bin Abu Mansur (d. 655/1257), the Ismaili governor in Kohistan. During his long stay at Qain and other strongholds in Kohistan he was influenced by Ismailis and embraced their creed. The Mongol chief Halagu made him his trusted advisor, and built a great observatory for him at Maragha in Azerbaijan. He was a writer, an astoronomer, a philosopher, physician and a scientist too. He died in 672/1274.

[297] Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Miskawayh was born in Rayy around 320AH/932CE. According to Yaqut he died on 9 Safar, 421AH/1030CE. He is well known for his philosophy of ethics.

[298] Dawani, Jallaluddin. *Akhlaq e Jalali*,p276

3.1.4 The Sūfi discourse:

Beside the ethical literature a number of other traditions influenced the politico-religious climate in Muslim ruled subcontinent. There was for example, the powerful influence of the *Sūfi* discourse. While the Muslim *Sūfia* emphasized that true mystical experience was not possible outside the framework of the religious law, they also worked to promote the understanding and regard for the religious traditions of *Hind.*

From the very early period the Sufia and saint scholars had migrated to the subcontinent and the main aim of their settlement in this land was to work for *da'wah*. Although they were more religiously motivated group of Muslims but they preached in a more liberal manner. Their discourses about God and love of God and his creature resulted in a more sympathetic understanding of the beliefs of others.

The *Sūfi* concept of *wahdat al wujud*[299]was a key factor in shaping their attitude towards the religious traditions of India. The concept of *wahdat al wujud,* the expression like *Hama u-st*[300] and *sulh e kul*[301] promoted a pluralistic approach towards the religious traditions of India. These ideas of *Sūfia* promoted a culture of coexistence and tolerance between Muslims and Hindus.The *Sūfia* of the subcontinent by interacting and sharing with the Hindus provided model for the Muslim society to follow. We can find many examples of such interactions recorded in the *Sūfi* literature. Among the *Sufia* who allowed Hindu audience at their Khanqahs we find Fariduddin Mas'ūd Ganj Shakar and Sheykh Ahmad 'Abd al Haqq. Sheykh 'Abd al Quddūs was amongst the eminent *Sūfia*

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[299]The doctrine of *wahdat al wujud* is attributed to Ibn e Arabi, who was born at Murcia in Spain in 1156 and died in Damascus in1240. The doctrine canbe summarized in his own words "there is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He."

[300] The phrase mush common in the Sufi circles, but was first used by Abu Fazal as expression for the unity of religions.

[301] *Hama ust* is the pantheistic Sufi concept which means that all is God

associated with this *khanqah*. He explained Sufi beliefs based on *Wahdat al wujūd,* with the help of ideas and practices Gorakhnath.[302]

Abd al Wahid Bilgrami[303] (1510-1608) in his work *Haqā'eq e Hindi* tried to reconcile the Vaishnav symbols and the terms and ideas used in Hindu devotional songs with orthodox Muslim beliefs. According to Bilgrami, Krishna and other names used in such verses symbolized Prophet Muhammadﷺ, or the reality of human being in relation to the abstract notion of oneness of Divine essence. Gopis sometimes stood for angels, sometimes the human race and sometimes its reality in relation to the *wahdiyat* or the oneness of the Divine attributes. Braj and Gokul signified the different *Sūfi* notions of the world in the different contexts, while the Yamuna and the Ganga stood for the sea of wahdat, the ocean of *ma'rifat* or the river of hads and emkan.[304]

The *Sūfi* discourse presented a more inclusive approach to the religious beliefs and practices, asserting that 'every nation has its own direction and its own religion'[305]. It is also significant that such *Sūfi* expressions strengthened the feeling that God may be worshipped in numerous ways. This pluralistic attitude of the *Sūfia* influenced the religio-political outlook of Muslim society in the subcontinent and accommodated people of diverse beliefs and practices according them with complete religious freedom.

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[302] S.A.A. Rizvi. *History of Sufism in India* (Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1978) p. 335-40

[303] For Bilgrami's biography, see Mir Ghulam 'Ali Azad Bilgrâmi, *Ma'aser al Karam*, ed. Malauvi Abd ul-Haq, vol. II (*Hyderabad, 1913*)p. 247-8

[304] Rizvi, S..A.A, *Mulim Revivalist Movements during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* (Lukhnow,1965) p.61

[305] A saying attributed to Nizamuddin Aulia, "*Har Qawm e Rast Rahe, Dine wa Qibla Gahe*"

3.1.5 *Adab* discourse:

By the *Adabi* discourse of the period here I mean the Persian *Adab* produced in the subcontinent during the period under review. Persian as a language spoken by the Muslims had been reported from the 10th century onwards in Sindh, Multan and Punjab. During the next two centuries it gained more importance for three basic resonss; 1) it became the medium of the religious discourses as the religious scholars, mystics and the Ismaili preacher all used the Persian for the expression of their ideas. 2) The Muslim rulers from Ghaznavids to Mughals all adopted Persian for court 3) Muslim historians and chroniclers also adopted Persian for their works.

By the thirteenth century Persian had become a language of political, religious, educational and intellectual discourses of the Indian subcontinent. Amir Khusru in his preface to *Ghurratul kamal* informs that the Persian was used as a spoken language from the bank of river Indus up to the river Bakziyan. This Persian was Dari and that this spoken Persian was according to the one written[306].

The second half of the fifteenth century witnessed a symbolic increase in the importance of Persian language when Sikandar Lodhi encouraged Hindus to its learning[307]. Persian was throughout the period the main official language in which all official correspondence was carried on wherever the writ of the Sultan ran. The historical role of Persian in administrative matters of the state can be estimated by the fact that all the documents, *Farmāns*, inscriptions were mainly in Persian during the Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent. Persian literary traditions determined the style and spirit of the

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[306] Khusru, Amir. *Dibacha e Divān e Ghurratul Kamāl*, ed., Wayyed Wazir al Hasan Abidi (Lahore: Matba e Aliya,1975) p. 33

[307] Badāyūni *Muntakhab al Tawārikh*,Vol 1 p.323

official documents from *fath Namahs* to routine instructions to officers in far flung parts of the land. The first manual on political organization in the Indian subcontinent, *Adab-ul harb* was in Persian which was followed with series of official and historical works in the next centuries.

The Persian poetry of the period in particular had certain basic and important contribution in this regard. In the Persian discourses about Hinduism there was not only an appeal for religious freedom but more than that an admiration and praise of those who are Hindus. For instance Amir Khusraw Dihlawi[308]expressed his views on Indian religions in his *mathnawi, Nuh Siphir[309]* in which he pays glowing tribute to India and to the intellectual achievements of its inhabitants.

According to Amir Khusrow in the domain of religion, Hindus are not the only ones who have lost their way; many others have gone astray in the field of religion. Amir Khusrow maintains that the Hindu believes in the oneness and eternity of God and in his power to create and that He knows everything since eternity this in contradistinction to many other groups which persist in their false creeds. Therefore, the Hindu is, according to Khusrow, better than those who believe in the eternity of the world *dahriyya*, the dualists or *thanawiyya*, the Christians who attribute to God spirit and progeny, and the star worshippers, who acknowledge seven Gods. As for the things which the Brahmans worship, such as the sun, stones and various animals, they admit that these objects do not bear a likeness to God, but are rather a part of his creation. They worship them only because this is a part of the tradition transmitted to them from their ancestors.[310]

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[308] Abu al Hasan yamin ud Din Khusrow (1253-1325CE) better known as Amir Khusrow Dehlawi, whose ancestors hailed from Transoxiana A Sufi and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya, Amīr Khusrow was not only a notable poet but also a prolific and seminal musician. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian beside Hindavi for details of his biography see; Waheed Mirza. *Ameer Khusru; Swāneh Umri* (Book Home,2005)

[309] *Nuh Sipehr* is the Persian Masnavi of Amir Khusrow in which he basically talks about the love, knowledge, beauty and manners of Hindustan and Hindus.

[310] Delhawi, Amir Khusrow, *Nuh Sipehr,*ed. Muhammad Waheed Mirza (Calcutta,1950) *p.165*

This type of liberal approach was much popular in Persian discourse and was very influential among the Muslim elites and rulers of the period. Further, Persian poetry, which had integrated many things from pre-Islamic Persia and had been an important vehicle of liberalism in medieval Muslim literature of the subcontinent, helped to create and support the policies of religious freedom and to accommodate diverse religious traditions. The echoes of these messages is unmistakable in Persian Adabi discourse, where poets like Fayzi had the ambition of building "a new *Ka'ba*" out of the stones from the Sinai :

Biyā ka ruy be mehrābgah e now be nehim

Banā ye Ka'ba ye digar ze sang e Ṭūr nehim[311]

(Come, let us turn our face toward a new altar, let us takestones from the Sinai and build a new *Ka'ba*).

Thus we find that the Persian discourse not only called for the religious freedom but it went even further to the possibility of seeking the eternal and divine secrets from the master of the wine house and in the temple, instead of the mosque:

She'ār e mellat e Isalmiyan be gozar gar khwāhi

ke dar dayr e moghan ay'i va asrār e nehān bini[312]

(Give up the path of Muslims; come to the temple, to the master of the wine house so that you may see the Divine secrets).

In the Persian allegory the idol was used as the symbol of Divine beauty and idolatry represented the love of the Absolute, and significantly they emphasized that the Brahman should be held in high esteem because of his sincerity, devotion and faithfulness to the

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[311] Quoted by Abu Alfazl in *Ain e Akbari*,vol.1, p. 499
[312] Shirazi, Orfi. *Kolleyat*, ed. Javaheri Vajdi (Teheran; 1980) p .152

idol. To the poets like Fayzi it is a matter of privilege that his love for the idol led him to embrace the religion of the Brahman;

Shukr e khudā ke 'eshq e butān ast rahbar am

Bar mellat e Brahman o bar dīn e Azār am[313]

(Thank God, the love of the idols is my guide; I follow the religion of the Brahman and Azar.)

There is no difference between temple *dayr, bot-kada*, the wine-house *mey-khana*, the mosque and *Ka'ba* all are the same to 'Orfi when he says:

Cherāgh e Somnāt ast ātesh e Țūr

Bovad z ān har jehat rā nūr dar nūr [314]

(The lamp of Somnath is the same as the fire at the Sinai, Its light spreads everywhere)

In the Persian Adabi discourse even we find an attitude of ridicule towards the religious identities with poets like Taleb Amoli who called to transcend the difference of Sheykh and Brahman:

Na malamatgār e kufr am na ta'assobkash e dīn

Khandaha bar jadl e sheikh o barhamân dāram[315]

(I do not condemn Infidelity, nor am I a bigoted believer; I laugh at both, the Sheykh and the Brahman)

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[313] Quoted by Abu Alfazl in *Ain e Akbari*,vol.1, p. 499
[314] Ibid
[315] Țaleb Amoli, *Kolleyat e Taleb Amoli*, ed. Taheri Shehab, Tehran, 1967, p. 668.

Beside the Persian the period also witnessed emergence of a new language which absorbed different cultural and linguistic trends in it. This new language which latter on came to be known as Urdu also had to contribute new attitudes towards the issue of religious freedom in the centuries to come.

3.2 *Da'wah* and conversion process:

As a researcher in the history of religious thought of Indian subcontinent, it is very important to consider the fact that Islam prospered in this part of the world in number and depth While the spread of Islam in the subcontinent is a symbolic landmark in the history of Islamic *da'wah*, it is important again to see the whole process of *da'wah* and conversion in the historical perspective for a better understanding of nature of religious interactions during the period under consideration. In what follows I will discuss two basic questions:

a) Who conducted the work of Islamic *da'wah* and what were the patterns and methods adopted?

b) What was the nature of conversion in the Indian subcontinent?

3.2.1 Process of *da'wah:*

Who conducted the work of Islamic *da'wah* and what were the patterns and methods adopted? Answering this question about the history of Islam in the subcontinent is a very important. When I ask this question here actually I want to highlight such efforts on parts of those individuals and groups who were involved in *da'wah* activity and to analyze the whole process of *da'wah* in a historical manner. While doing so I will also try to highlight the methods and the patterns adopted by those who were conducting *da'wah*. This question becomes more important when we look at the demographical data of the Muslim population around the world as the sub continent is the place which contains the one third of the whole Muslim population. It is also very

important again to learn about such an activity which not only brought a religious message to a remote land but also brought a change in all the norms and practices of a vast land mass in those early times where the sources of communications were very hard and severe and the languages and cultures were entirely different.

Despite the above highlighted facts what we learn about *da'wah* activity in the subcontinent in all the contemporary sources is very meager as compare to the success of *da'wah* in this part of the world. All the courtly chroniclers do tell us about the courts of the kings about their manpower in all the fields of arts and sciences and their patronage for scholars of different fields. But scarcely will you come across the words like *da'wah*, *iblāgh* or *tablīgh* in all these sources. But this all do not imply that no efforts were made on the part of Muslim ruler. We learn from *Tabaqāt e Nāsiri*[316], *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi*[317] and others historical works about the construction of beautiful mosques, tombs, erection of memorial columns and in some cases patronage of the *madāris* and libraries by the Muslim rulers of different houses but nowhere it is mentioned that any institute or division was ever established for the work of Islamic *da'wah* during the centuries of Islamic rule.

One also cannot deny the fact that these ruling houses or dynasties were not on their part based on Islamic political or governing system as they never based their legitimacy to the rule on the Islamic system of Shura, they were never elected by people or selected by nobles, rather the norm was the survival of the fittest among the heirs of the deceased ruler.

If one relies on the written history of the period then one is bound to admit the fact that the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent during the period under review were busy in hostilities among themselves or on their frontiers. Scarcely one will come across the

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[316] Abu Umer, Minahaj al din Usman bin Siraj al din Jūzjāni. *Tabaqāt e Nāsiri* Edited by W Nasau Lees, Khadim Hussain and Abdul Hai (Calcutta:College press ,1864)

[317] Shams Siraj Afif. *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi* Edited by Wilayat Hussain (Calcutta :Baptist Press ,1890)

incidence of conversion at their hands but this did not mean that there was not any plan for the work for *da'wah* in front of these ruling houses. It is also a historical fact that they ruled the land in the name of Islam and with the passion of Islam and they were aware of their situation in a land where they were a ruling minority. They were also convinced of the truth of their religion and it is natural that they wanted to have people converted to their faith. In what follows I will discuss whether such efforts were made on their part and whether these efforts were influential or not.

Before going in further details it is important here to clarify that *da'wah* in Islam is not the same with other missionary religions like Buddhism or Christianity where there are missionaries as a specific group and lay followers as another group, contrary to it every Muslim has this responsibility and should contribute to the cause of *da'wah* in some way or the other. According to the saying of the Prophet; *ballighu anni wa lau ayah*[318]*,* the early Muslim rulers, soldiers, courtiers, traders, scholars and those who came with them or were local converts were supposed to be the torch bearers of *da'wah*. It was due to effort of these different groups in their own different capacities that Islam spread and prospered in the Indian subcontinent.

It is also useful to observe the hold of *Ulamā* and *Sūfiā* in the court, where the rulers usually followed their decisions in the religious matters. But the degree of following varied from ruler to ruler. It was normally expected that the king would not openly indulge in what was forbidden, that he would show respect to men of learning and desire their company, that he would attend the Friday prayer and occasionally visit a person of acknowledged spiritual eminence for religious and spiritual guidance. Munificence in gifts to the learned and the poor was regarded as particularly meritorious.[319]

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[318]*Sahih al Bukhari. Kitab al Anbia, Bab ma zukira an bani Israel.Hadith no.3421vol,2, p.393*

[319] *Tabaqat e Nasiri* and Frishtah provide with many such accounts of the Muslim rulers of the Indian subcontinent who patronized the learned and learning.

The Mughals patronized the holy men of the *Sūfi* orders and supported them in their *da'wah* activities. Babur initiated the patronage of the Central Asian Naqshbandi *Sūfi* order,[320] which soon expanded into India from their base in Kabul. Akbar was devout to Saleem Chishti from his early age, and he used to visit the shrine of Nizam al Din Chishti as a pilgrimage and the tomb of his father, Humayun, which had been built under Akbar's direction in the shadow of the saint's shrine. [321]

3.2.1.1 Nature of conversion (Theories):

The nature of conversion in the Indian subcontinent is a highly contested subject and scholars from different disciplines have attempted different theories to explain how Muslims became Muslims in the Indian subcontinent[322]. The conversion to Islam has gained much of the attention of the modern as well as recent scholarship. There are different theories, definitions and explanations for the conversion to Islam in the subcontinent. The conversion to Islam in the subcontinent is considered a laboratory for the study of different aspects of conversion.[323]In the following I will discuss the different theories attempted by the scholars and historians of the subcontinent and will try to see if these explanations of the conversion can be tested in the laboratory of history or not, and if not then what a plausible explanation can be?

1. **Coercive approach:**

The first and the oldest of these is the theory that Islam is a 'religion of the sword', which serves as a basic theme in the Western historiography of Islam.[324]. It was

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[320] Babur, *Babur Nama,* 2 vols, English translation by Annette S. Beveridge, The Memoirs of Babur (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989) p. 132.

[321] Badāyūni, *Muntakhab al Tawārikh,* vol.2, p. 174, see*,*

[322] P. Hardy. "*Modern European and Muslim Explanations of Conversion to Islam in "South Asia: A Preliminary Survey of the Literature on Explanations of conversion to Islam in South Asia*" p.177-206

[323] The expression of Bausani in his article; Can monotheism be taught?", *Numen,* X, December 1963,p 165

[324] Sir Henry Miers Elliot, *Appendix to The Arabs in Sind* ,Vol. Ill, Part 1 of the *History of India* (Cape Town, 1853), 1.W. W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (London: Brill,1881) vol.2, p.18. Murray

not only propagated by the colonial and the oriental scholarship but is a favorite approach of the Indian national historiography[325]. This approach has been criticized and rejected by modern scholars.[326] This proposition has its roots very deep in the past; as an explanation of expansion of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, it had always had its advocates.

A glance at the geographical distribution of Muslims in the subcontinent reveals a reverse situation of conversion to Islam. If conversion to Islam had ever been a result of military or political force, than the areas of heaviest conversion were supposed to be the areas exposed longest and most intensely to the Muslim rule, Yet the situation is opposite as the regions with the high scales of conversion such as eastern Bengal or Western Punjab lay on the fringes of the Muslim rule, whereas the heartland or the centers of that rule saw a much lower incidence of conversion.

The phenomena of conversion in Bengal challenged the sword and coercive approach much earlier as the first census report of Bengal by British officials[327] made them to conclude that majority of Bengali Muslims were local converts and that majority of these converts were not found within or around the centers of Muslim power. These demographical results forced the British official to admit the fact that the peaceful conversion might had the greater influence than the forcible conversion, and that the influence of forcible conversion cannot make very many converts. Other scholars refute the idea that Indian populations passively underwent conversion at the hands of

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Titus, *Indian Islam* (London: Oxford ,1930)p.31, H. G. Keene *History of India,* (Edinburg: John Grant, 1906) vol .2,p.48

[325] Majumdar, R.C. The History and Culture of Indian People (Bombay: Bhartia Vidhya Bhavan); Suniti Kumar Chatterji. *Language and literature of Modern India* (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers, 1963) p. 160-161, Vaidya. History of medieval Hindu India(Poona: Oriental Books,1921)

[326] R.M.Eaton. Rise of Islam and Bengal Frontier (California: University of California Press,1993) p. 113-132

[327] H. Beverley, *Report of the Census of Bengal, p.*132, 133, 134;see also Dr. James Wise, *"The Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal"*, *JASB,* LXIII, Part HI, 1,1894,61.

exogenous preachers and missionaries; and maintain that local populaces played an active part in accepting the new religion.[328]

2. **Political patronage approach**:

The second is the theory of 'political patronage this is the view that Indians of the medieval period converted to Islam in order to receive some favors from the ruling class i.e. relief from taxes, promotion in the bureaucracy and so forth.[329] The problem with this thesis is the same as above, as it may seem adequate in accounting for the motif of conversion in the political heartland, it cannot explain the massive conversions that took place along the political fringe, especially in the Punjab and Bengal. Moreover we do not find enough historical evidence to that such favors were always received by the converts, antithetically many converts to Islam remained deprived of not only the civil opportunities but they also remained deprived of the proper religious education.

3. **Egalitarian or the social liberation approach:**

The third theory is the proposition that Islam acted as a 'religion of social liberation': this is the view that the lower castes of Hinduism converted to Islam to escape Brahmanical oppression.

According to the theory Islam being the 'religion of social liberation' attracted the Indian masses. Elaborated by British ethnographers[330], Pakistani nationalists[331] and

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[328] See for instance; Joya Chatteijee in *India's Islamic Traditions: 711- 1750,*ed. Richard M. Eaton (New Delhi: Oxford U P, 2003), 14.

[329]The theory of political patronage is also largely considered by Western writers for instance see; Robert Orme, *Historical fragment of the Mughal Empire 1782,* 102 and W. H. Moreland, *Short history of India,* (London: Longman Green and co.,1936) *p.*192

[330] W. R. Cornish, *Report on the Census of the Madras Presidency, 1871 (*Madras, 1874) 109. W. Crooke, *The North-Westem Provinces of India, (*London, 1897, 260), Ja'far Sharif, *Islam in India: or Qanun-i Islam* , ed. W. Crooke(Oxford, 1921) p.4. Thomas Arnold. *The preaching of Islam,* (Westminster, 1896)

[331] Quraishi,Ishtiaq Hussain, The Muslim Community in indo-pakistan subcontinent (Islamabad: M Hanif raza publishers, 1977)

Indian Muslims[332], among many others, the substance of this theory is that the Hindu caste system and the rigid discrimination that the lowest castes were facing, led them to appreciate and embrace Islam. And because of Islamic principle of social equality, the Hindus of the lower castes converted to it en masse in order to escape Brahmanical oppression.

Some modern scholars like Richard M. Eaton regard this theory to be judgmental of Hindu religion[333]. According to him a careful reading of Persian primary sources suggests that in their presentation of Islam to Indians, Muslim intellectuals did not stress the Islamic ideal of social equality in contrast with Hindu caste inequalities, but rather Islamic monotheism as opposed to Hindu polytheism. Moreover, even if it were true that Islam had been presented as an ideology of social equality, there is abundant evidence that former Hindu communities failed upon conversion to improve their status in the social hierarchy and that, on the contrary, they simply carried over into Muslim society the same practice of birth-ascribed rank that they had in Hindu society[334].

4. **Accretion and reform approach**:

Eaton suggests another theory for the mass conversion. He takes conversion as a process whereby preliterate peoples on the ecological and political frontier of an expanded agrarian society became absorbed into the religious ideology of that society. Eaton divides this process into two sub-processes: one of accretion and the other of reform.[335]

Accretion Process: In the accretion aspect of conversion, people add new deities or superhuman agencies to their existing cosmological stock. *Allah, Khizir* or the swarms of *jinns*, for example, may either be grafted onto an already dense cosmological universe, or

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[332] Muhammad Mujeeb.*The Indian Muslims.*(Montreal:Macgill Press,1967)
[333] This is the view of Richard M Eaton, see *Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India*,
[334] Ibid
[335] Ibid.

identified, by name, with existing agencies. But in either case, the original cosmology is essentially retained. In terms of social organization, the accretion aspect of conversion entails no Muslim communal exclusiveness or even distinctiveness. During this process of conversion as it is expressed by Eaton; persons will identify themselves as Muslim in as much as they worship *Allāh*, for example, or refrain from eating *haram* two attributes that were understood by them as the defining features of Islam. But this by no means prevents them from participating in the propitiation of a local goddess to ward off smallpox or in joining village devotions to an avatar of Krishna[336] and in most cases they continued with their age old practices thus the accretion process was the first step in the gradual process of conversion to Islam.

Reform Process: While in the reform process, according to Eaton, the Islamic supernatural agencies were not only distinguished from the pre-existing cosmological concepts, but the latter were rejected as result of corrective or reforming attitude. This is accompanied by greater attention given to the central idea of Islamic theology the belief in Allah[337]. This implies a gradual conversion in which the converts start believing in Allah and transfer their attachment with the former pantheon towards Islamic belief. In reform driven conversion, the community perceives itself as socially distinct, and consciously acts upon that perception. The converts leave very gradually many of their earlier beliefs.

5. **Islam as an Urban religion:**

Annemarie Schimmel offers an interesting insight by pointing out that the Islam that spread in India was an urban, not rural phenomenon. In her view the major changes took place in the cities which the Muslims founded or enlarged, and it was here the Hindu workers and artisans were exposed to caste-free Islam and were in part attracted by the ideal of 'social oneness;' for the Islamic *Sharī'ah* gave them more possibilities for

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[336] Richard M. Eaton, *Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam,* p. 105-110.
[337] Ibid

development than the Hindu tradition. Islamization may be regarded in the beginning largely as a matter of social change in the urban centers, and only later did the rural areas begin to feel the impact of the new order.[338]

It is very interesting again that the reports of mass conversions recorded were by and large in the country side and not in the capitals.[339]So this theory can be tested as partial explanation of the conversion in the urban areas only.

6. The Sūfi intervention:

Other scholars and historians of Muslim origin maintain that Hindus converted to Islam because of the Sufi intervention.[340]In the 11th and 12th centuries, according to Alam, Sufi orders began to expand, encouraging and promoting many beliefs held in common by Hindus and Muslims. Many *Sūfia* had established their centres in the towns and cities of the subcontinent, through which they interacted with and preached to the non Muslims. Even among those Sufia who were puritanical in their attitude and uncompromising on questions of adherence to the *sharī'ah,* in purely juridical terms, there were examples of general charity and tolerance.[341]

3.2.1.2 Testing these theories through history:

The contemporary Muslim chronicles can help us to check the validity of the above mentioned thesis as explanations for conversion to Islam in the Indian subcontinent. The earliest cases of conversion to Islam in the subcontinent predate the

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[338] 16. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent. (*Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980)p. 10
[339] For instance the mass conversions of Afghan tribes and also of the khokhar tribes of salt range as reported by Al Utbi, Abu Nasr.*Tarikh e Yamini* (Lahore1300AH), p.224and *Tarikh e Frishtah*, p.228
[340] Muzaffir Alam. *The Languages of Political Islam: India1200-1800* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004)p,82
[341] Ibid.

Islamic expansion. And one such example is the conversion of a king of Malabar, Cheromon Perumal which has nothing to do with almost all of the above mentioned theories. Likewise some other Hindu rulers were reported to embrace Islam among these the ruler of Aseefan as reported by Al Balādhurī[342], the ruler Mahrūk bin Raik also called *al Ra* (the word *Ra* appear in all of Muslim sources perhaps against the Indian title *Raja* or *Rai*) who wrote to the Arab ruler of Mansura to send to him someone who can interpret for him verses of Quran in the Indian language, and had embraced Islam on his own part[343]. These conversions were no doubt a direct result of the truth of Islamic *da'wah*, and preachers were the traders and the travelers.

We also learn from the contemporary sources about the conversion of captives of war who after embracing Islam were set free. But such historical stances are few and do not suffice to make it a general rule for the nature of conversion to Islam. Thus we learn from *Tārīkh e Yamini* of Al 'Utbi that Sultan Mahmūd Ghaznavi had converted the captives and the subjugated tribes of Afghanitan and Salt range to Islam[344]. *Tārīkh e Frishtah* also narrates a story of conversion of Khokhar tribes to Islam after their subjugation[345]. He also gives a report of mass conversion of the different tribes reaching four hundred thousand in number. The story goes on to describe that a chief of Khokhar tribes was impressed by a Muslim captive of war, and expressed his desire to embrace Islam. He received much honor on this decision and was followed in this by his tribesmen. The case is very significant as the mass conversion took place on the bases of kinship and tribal ties. After this the mosques were constructed and the scholars were sent by Mahmūd Ghaznavi for the teaching of Islam.[346]

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[342] Al Balādhurī, *Futūh*, p. 446

[343] Bazurg bin Shahryar, *Ajāib*, P 4

[344]See *Tārīkh e yamini* p 244

[345] Muhammad Qasim, *Tārīkh e Farishta,* P 228

[346] Ibid

Likewise there are few more references to conversion of captives of war and the subjugated tribes during the period of Delhi Sultanate. But this does not imply that the Hindus were offered the choice of Islam or death to win the large scale of converts to Islam. Rather in the most of the cases the Hindu captives themselves chose conversion, in doing so they were forced not by the Muslims but by their own *dharma*. Their captivity at the hands of Muslims made them outcast and filthy and hence they were not able to join their families and society we have already dealt the views of Hindus in this regard in second chapter. It can be inferred here that as there was no possibility for these captives to retain their earlier status in the Hindu society, it also prompted them to adopt the new religion which could help them to attain high position in the society.

It is very important here to highlight that apart from few cases of conversion during the times of war, all other reports as we will see below are of conversion of individuals and masses as a result of the initiatives of settled Muslim colonies of saints and scholars, travelers and traders and the soldiers, who are commonly called by the titles like Sūfīā, Pīrs, *Shaikh*s, Ghāzis and Shahīds by the Muslims of the subcontinent.

In preceding chapters we have also seen that in the Southern parts of the subcontinent the conversions was the result of peaceful dialogue, social interactions and commercial contacts between the Muslims and the indigenous people. The Muslim colonies in the Southern parts of the subcontinent predated the Muslim conquest of these areas by centuries. Likewise Muslims reached in Sindh and from there to Kashmir before the Islamic conquest. We learn from *Chachnāmah* that Muhammad Alafi an Arab who had some grievences with Hajjaj had migrated along with five hundred Arab Muslims and had settled in Sindh during the reign of Dahir. Though after the defeat of Dahir, Muhammad bin Qāsim gave him amnesty and allowed him to stay there but later he left Sindh and settled in Kashmir, where he built mosques and he and his descendents were

assigned the place to live.[347] Though in the whole story there is no direct reference to the conversion but it is highly probable that this early settlement of the five hundred Muslims and their families had earned some converts to their faith, as later during the time of Mahmūd Ghaznavi there were Muslim traders living in the territory of Kashmir.[348]Moreover the Arab rule in the Sindh, Multan and Makran from the eighth to the eleventh century had to play its role in establishing the cultural and social contacts as well as working for the Da ' wah, though we do not posses any such direct reports of the conversion from this period. The areas of Multan and Debal emerged as the centers for Islamic knowledge and learning and produced a number of Muslim scholars[349].What we learn is that the non-Muslims were also among their subjects and that they enjoyed both peace and religious freedom[350] till the hold of Ismailis in Multan.[351]Later on Multan became the centre for the work of *da' wah* when the saints like Bahuddin Zakaria made it a centre for his activities.[352]

Likewise in Lahore a Muslim saint *Shaikh* Ismail is known to have been settled in Lahore before Ghaznavids, he was there for the purpose of preaching Islam and it is narrated about him that he used to deliver powerful sermons to the effect that he converted thousands of Hindus to Islam[353]. Likewise the historical reports of conversions in Bengal, Ajmer and Gujrat clearly indicate that the conversion took place as a result of the preaching of the Muslim saints.

In Gujarat the Muslim colonies also predated the Muslim rule. The earliest historical references to these Muslim settlements of Gujarat are found in the *Silsilah al*

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[347] Ma'sūmi,*Chachnamāh*, p.203

[348] Frishtah, *Tārīkh* p. 41

[349] There are many scholars of Hadith and other Islamic sciences with the *nisbah* of Sindi and Daybuli see; Al Hasani, Abdul Hai. *Awārif al Ma'ārif*, p.135-136

[350] Ibn e Hauqal , *Sūrat al Ard* (Lieden:1938)228-229 , Istakhri, *Al Masālik wa al Mamālik* (Lieden:1928) p.84

[351] Al Beruni. Tahqiq ma Lil Hind,p.88

[352] Muhammad Ikram, *Āb e kausar* (Lahore: Idara e thaqafat e Islamia,1984)P .330-331

[353] Rahman Ali. *Tadhkira e Ulamā e Hind*, P. 23

Tawārīkh, it informs us that the ruler of the territory Blahra is very kind towards Muslims[354], in *Ajā'ib al Hind* we learn the Muslims of Gujarat had their own head known as *hunarman* (probably it corresponds to the Persian word *hunarmand*)[355].The same information is provided by al Mas'ūdi, who informs us of the growing number of Muslims, but it is not clear whether the growth in number was due to the conversion or through migration and marriages. But the categorization of the Muslim community by Mas'ūdi clearly indicates that these communities were increasing day by day in number, for instance when he mentions the title al Biasira for those who were born in India he mentions that they were growing in numbers.[356]

A similar historical pattern is found in Bengal. While it is true that Persian biographies often depict early Sufi holy men of Bengal as pious warriors waging war against the infidel, such biographies were not contemporary with those Sufia. Take, for example, the case of *Shaikh* Jalal al Din Tabrizi (d. 1244–45), one of the earliest-known *Sūfiā*of Bengal. The earliest notice of him appears in the *Siyar al'ārifīn*, a compendium of *Sūfi* biographies compiled around 1530–36, three centuries after the *shaikh*'s lifetime. According to this account;

"When he went to Bengal," the account records, all the population there came to him and became his disciples. There he built a hospice and a public kitchen, and bought several gardens and lands as an endowment for the kitchen, these increased. There was also a port called Deva Mahal, where an infidel had built a temple at great cost. The *shaikh* destroyed that temple and in its place constructed a *Sufi* rest house. There, he made many infidels into Muslims. He also informs that the tomb was located at the very

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[354] Sulaiman Abu Zaid, *Silsilah* p .26-7

[355] Bazurg bin Shahryar, *Ajā'ib al Hind*,p. 144

[356] Mas'ūdi, *Marūj*, vol.2, p. 85-86.

site of that temple, and that this place had become very rich in its resources as the half the income of that port was dedicated to the upkeep of the public kitchen there.[357]

3.2.3 The patterns of Conversions to Islam:

One has to follow the traces of *da'wah* activity to get a glimpse of the social and historical situation and conditions during the period. Beside the historical works there are some other sources which can provide us an estimate of the *da'wah* activity even after centuries. These are the *Tazkiras* of the *Sūfiā* and the biographies of saint scholars and *Malfuzat* literature which can work as search light through the dark passes of history. These multiple references to *da'wah* activity in the *Sūfi* literature leave no doubt that *da'wah* process was related closely with the life and works of all sections of Muslim society but more so of *Sūfiā* and *Ulamā*. And the question remains with us not about the people who conducted this work but mainly the methods and patterns adopted by them for such an enterprise. In what follows I will try to give an estimate of the key patterns and methods of these early *da'wah* workers.

3.2.3.1 Muslim trade colonies:

As mentioned earlier that the Muslim traders had their settlements in the subcontinent prior to the Islamic conquest. The role of these settlements in the work of *da'wah* should not be ignored. As all of these settlements had at least a mosque and few learned Muslim dignitaries to cater their own needs. It was natural for these Muslims to preach about their faith among the people living around them. All of the early Muslim travelers mention the settlements of Muslims in different parts of the subcontinent; they also give an impression of rapid growth of the Muslim community[358]

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[357] Jamali.*Siyar al Ārifin* (Delhi: Matba Rizvi, 1893) p. 164-69

[358] Bazurg bin Shahryar, *Ajā'ib*.P 144, Mas'ūdi, *Marūj*, vol. 2, P .85-86.

These early settlement ware effective to the extent that they had won the favors of their non Muslim rulers and were allowed to practice religious and social freedom in their domains. These settlements had contributed to the cause of Islamic *da'wah* through their trade and commercial contacts as well as a result of Social interaction like marriages and daily living. These Muslim colonies laid the foundation stone of Islamic *da'wah* here in this part of the world.

3.2.3.2 Rulers:

In the historiography of Islamic *da'wah* in the Indian subcontinent, Muslim rulers are generally treated at two extremes, on the one hand it is projected that they converted the people by sword while at the other extreme is the view that they had nothing to do with the Islamic *da'wah*. But the history records such instances which reveal the middle between the two extremes. The Muslim rulers contributed to the cause of Islamic da'wah in threefold way;

1. By extending their territories and thus opening the new horizons for Islamic *da'wah*,

2. Formal invitation to embrace Islam to other rulers,

3. By patronizing the Muslim scholars and Sufia.

As for as the inintiative for *da'wah* is concerned we have many evidences to show that the Muslim rulers took intrest in *da'wah t*o state here few will suffice.We find Kufi points to the fact that various chiefs and nobles accepted Islam at the invitation of Muhammad bin Qasim.[359] The pious Ummayad Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz wrote to the governors and rulers of Sindh to embrace Islam.[360]Thus from the early period the work of *da'wah* through invitation was adopted as a method by Muslim rulers and not the sword or threat.

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[359] *Chachnāmah*, P.209
[360] Ibid

The Muslim rulers of the subcontinent depended for the work of *da'wah* on the learned Muslim scholars and saints known as *Shaikhs*, *Pirs* and *Sufia*. They granted them with the lands and patronized them and were themselves dependent on their guidance in the matter of religion. Ultimately these were the *Ulama* and *Sufia* who conducted the work of *da'wah*, no doubt but they were supported by the rulers through grants and patronization.

3.2.3.3 Saints and Sūfiā:

Following the invasion of India by Turkish warriors in the late 10th century, *Sūfiā* had arrived in India from various parts of the Middle East in the 12Ih century. *Sūfiā*, who had earned a name for going against the establishment, and whose spiritual orientation was in sharp contrast to the un-Islamic excesses of kings and sultans, nonetheless played a crucial role in the dissemination of Islam in India. It was in Bengal that they were most successful in connecting with the local inhabitants and should be credited of having converted the locals to Islam.

1. **Gradual teaching through discussion and accompany:**

The *Sūfiā* were aware of the fact that conversion should take place from the inside and those who wanted to convert should not take it as a matter of outer change, rather they stressed on the company of the righteous so that the change may reach the heart. Amir Hasan Sijzi, the compiler of Nizām al Dīn Auliyā's *malfuzāt*, records the following story;

"A disciple of the master's arrived and brought a Hindu friend with him. He introduced him by saying, "This is my brother". When he had greeted both of them the master asked that disciple. "And does this brother of yours have any inclination toward Islam?" "It is to this end" replied the disciple "that 1 have brought him to the master, that by the blessing of your gaze he might become a Muslim". The master became "You can talk to this

people as much as you want", he observed, "and no one's heart will be changed, but if you find the company of a righteous person, then it might be hoped that by the blessing of his company the other will become a Muslim.[361]

2. Feeding and healing:

The *Sūfiā* helped and fed the poor and needy without discrimination, it would not be wrong to call the *Sūfiā* as the welfare organization of the Muslim community in the Indian subcontinent, where great endowments were made by the rulers and the rich and all that was distributed among poor and needy. The *Tadhkiras* and *malfuzāt* are full of such records.

About Jalal al din Tabriz we read when he went to Bengal, majority of the population there came to him and became his disciples. There he built a hospice and a public kitchen, and bought several gardens and lands as an endowment for the public kitchen[362].

3. Miracle Competitions:

Another pattern of conversion found in Indian Sufi hagiography is the miracle ompetition between Sufia and Jogis, where the defeat of the *Jogi* is followed by his acceptance of Islam Sayyid Ashraf Jahângîr Simnan (d. 1428), a Sufi of the Chishi *silsilah* in Bengal, confronts a yogi on a land which the Hindu inhabited with his followers and which he refused to surrender to the *shiakh.* As a result a competition of supernatural powers between one of the disciples of the *Shaikh* the yogi took place. The story goes on to relate that after defeat, the Yogi embraced Islam along with his fellows who were five hundred in number [363]

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[361]Sijzi, Amir Hasan. *Fawaid al Fuad (Lahore:Sarajuddin and Sons,1966*, p.305-306
[362] Maulana Jamali, *Siyar al Arifin* (Delhi:Matba Rizvi, 1893)p .164-69
[363] *Latai f e Ashrafi*, p. 117.

For example, in *Siyar al Aqtāb,* a mid-seventeenth century *tadhkirah* written by an Allah Diya Chishti, gives an account of the saint Muin al Din chishti who converted a Jogi who had no equal in magic and sorcery in the whole of Hindustan and a group of his followers, when later was defeated by him in a contest of supernatural powers.

There is another contemporary account by the famous Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta who personally met Shah Jalal in 1345 in Bengal. Ibn Battuta spent three days as Shah Jalal's guest in his mountain cave near Sylhet town. According to him

'this *shaikh* was one of the great saints and one of the unique personalities. He had to his credit miracles *karāmat* well known to the public as well as great deeds, ….The inhabitants of these mountains had embraced Islam at his hands, and for this reason he stayed amidst them'.[364]

Though authenticity of these miracle competitions cannot be checked but these stories reveal the nature of another method or pattern of conversion in which miraculous works of *Sūfiā* influenced the common people and they embraced Islam. These types of conversions were perhaps another factor behind the syncretistic or synthetic approaches to religion.

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[364] Ibn e Batutah *Ajaib al Asfar*, Urdu translation by Maulvi Muhammd Hussain (Islamabad :National Institute for Hstorical Research, 1983), p.238-239

Chapter 4:

Muslim Hindu Interface

4.1. Theological attitudes:

How did the Muslims perceived, interpreted and interacted with the people who adhered to a variety of religious beliefs and practices branded today as "Hinduism"? What status did they accord to such religious beliefs and practices? And what were the theological standards and merits for such views and practices on their part? Answer to these issues will help to understand the theological attitudes of the Muslims towards Hindus. To find the answer to such questions, one is bound to look into political and administrative records of the early Muslim chroniclers, known as *Futuh* narratives. These narratives contain a lot of information about the theological or the religious attitudes of Muslims towards the adherents of other religions in different parts of the world which were annexed to their rule through war or treaty.

In case of Indian subcontinent, we find that the Hindus were treated as *'ahl al dhimmah'*[365] by Muslim rulers, in practice, which means that they were allowed to pay *jizyah* i.e. the tax for the protected non-Muslim population, and were allow to practice their own religions. The status of *ahl al dhimma* was equally accorded to all non-Muslims except the apostates. Here the point of view of the *Hanafiah* and the *Malikiah* is of particular importance because the Hanafi school of thought came to be the most dominent in the subcontinent. Both of the *Hanafiah* and the *Malikiah* treated the idolaters according

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[365] Ahl al dhimmah are the non Muslim citizens living under Islamic sovereignty. *Dhimma* is an Arabic word, which means safety, security, and contract. Hence, they are called *dhimmis* because they have agreed to a contract by *Allahh Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*, His Messenger, and the Islamic community, which grants them security. Thus a *dhimmi* is a non Muslim citizen of the Islamic state or a bearer of Islamic nationality. See the commentary on Al Sarakhi's *Al Siyar Al Kabir*, Volume 1, p. 140; Al Kasani's *Al Bada'i'*, Volume 5, p. 281 and Ibn Qudamah's *Al Mughni*, Volume 5, p. 516 and for contemporary Islamic discourse see *Awda*, Abdul Qadir, *Islamic Criminal Legislation*, Volume 1, p. 307; Zaydan, 'Abdul Karim, "*Ahkam al Dhimmiyyin Wa al Musta'minin Fi Dār Al-Islam*," pp. 49-51 and 63-66)

to their place of origin, which employed that *Jizyah* may not be accepted from Arab idolaters of the time; these must become Muslims or be killed but the idolaters who were not Arabs, they may be allowed to pay *jizyah* and, consequently, continue into their earlier religious beliefs and practices. Malik b. Anas is reported to have said that *jizyah* may be accepted from 'faithless Turks and Indians'[366] and that their status is similar to that of Zoroastrians. Abu Hanifa is reported to have adopted the same view.[367] This inclusion of Hindus and of the other idolaters in the category of *ahl al dhimma* constitutes the Muslims' theological concept of Hinduism from the early period.

Thus the local populations of Sindh were assimilated to the Islamic category of *ahl al dhimma*; protected people who were in principle to pay a special tax the *jizyah* but who would in return be exempted from military service and guaranteed safety. This was based on the earlier practice in the Muslims conquests of Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, who were all three understood to be the inheritors of the earlier revelations. Thus, after the initial destruction of selected places of worship regarded as symbols of the legitimacy of the defeated ruler, other temples were spared and the beliefs and rituals associated with these places were allowed to continue as before. On the basis of the *Chachnama*, it seems that few regulations were also made in accordance with the existing social structure, with Brahmins exempted from tax, and the Jats obliged to continue such practices as going barefooted and bareheaded, as they were supposed to do previously.[368]

Though the pattern of conquest was not the same in the case of Sindh where some areas were conquered by force while others were subdued by treaty but the theological status accorded to all was *ahl al dhimmah*. As it is noted by Al Balādhurī in the case of city of al Rur that the city was conquered by treaty with the condition that Muhammad

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[366] For the Maliki view see Abd al Karim Zaydan, *Ahkām al-Dhimmiyyin wa al-Musta'miniin* pp. 25-28 and Al Tabari, *Ikhtilāf al Fuqahā'*, ed. Schacht (Leiden, 1933) p. 200

[367] Al Tabari, *Ikhtilaf al Fuqahā,*p. 200; Abu Yusuf, *Kitāb al Kharāj* (Cairo, 1352) pp.128-129; al-Sarakhsi, *Sharh Kitāb al Siyar al Kabīr (*Cairo ,1957) vol. I, p.189; al Sarakhsi, *Kitabu'l Mabsūt,* (Beirut: Dar al Ma'rifah, 1978) v.10, p. 119

[368] *Chachnam*a, p 290

bin Qasim will not kill them nor enter their temple, and he said: "The *budh* i.e. temple will be considered similar to the churches of the Christians and Jews and the fire-temples of the Zoroastrians."[369]According to Chachnama the *jizyah* was imposed on those in al-Rur and a mosque was built there, same pattern was adopted by him with the people of Brahmanabad.[370] It is also evident from Chachnama that the status of *ahl al dhimma* was equally accorded to all those who accepted the treaty without any discrimination on the bases of the religious affiliations i.e. Hindu or Buddhist. Beside the payment of the *Jizyah*h Muhammad bin Qāsim further patronized the Brahmans by allowing the construction of new and repair of old temples and the application of special discriminatory regulations on certain groups as suggested by these Brahmans. [371]In doing so the Muslims followed precedents existing in other regions and also developed certain unique rules in case of Sind. The primary obligation of *ahl al dhimma* in Sindh was the payment of the *jizyah*, it was declared in the settlement at Brahmanabad;

"Muhammad bin Qāsim imposed a tax on the rest of the subjects according to the customs of the Prophetﷺ. Whoever accepted Islam was exempted from slavery and the *kharāj*. Whoever did not submit had *mal* imposed in three categories: the first and largest 'category, from each forty eight dirhams of silver; the intermediate category, twenty four dirhams; the lowest category, twelve dirhams. He ordered: "Go now, those who will become Muslims and accept Islam, their *mal* is exempted. Those wishing to retain their faith must pay the *jiziah* to follow their ancestral religion". [372]

Most interestingly the administration was left in the hands of local people, probably the leaders of dominant regional castes, who were to act under the supervision of a small number of Arab officers. Thus we find in Chach Nama that Kakah bin Kotak, the ruler of

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[369] See Al Balādhurī, *Futūh al Buldān*. P.444
[370] For details see *Chachnāma*, p .297-300
[371] Ibid, p .300-302
[372] Ibid, p .292-3

Budhiyah[373], was confirmed as the hereditary sub governor of the region in a ceremony which followed the Buddhist' (samani) customs' of his family[374]. Likewise another chief Mokah bin Wasayo[375], was given the administration of the regions of Bet[376] and Qissah. When Brahmanabad was conquered, Brahmins were given official appointments in rural regions which confirmed their positions as hereditary and were given the title of *Rana and Rai*.[377] Similarly, the actual collection of the *jizyah* was delegated to the local administrators of the previous dynasty. There was certain flexibility in the collection of the *jizyah*. It could be remitted in cash or kind and during the common hardship like famine or war *Jizyah* was reduced or even removed in some cases.

The Muslim dynasties of Sindh, Mansurah and Multan also continued the same pattern, and their non-Muslim population was treated by them as *ahl al dhimmah*[378]. Later we find that the Ghaznavid adopted a different approach towards the Hindus, they were treated as *Kuffār* polytheists by Mahmūd Ghaznavi. The historian of Ghaznavid period, the author of *Tārikh e Yamīnī*, highlight such motifs like; 'to erase the signs of idols'[379] 'all the houses of idols were ordered to be broken'.[380] According to *Tārikh e Yamīnī* the Hindus were treated as *Kuffār* and were to chose between Islam, death or

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[373] Budhiyah, was an ancient city in Sindhand was situated in the areas which are now the districts of Larkana and Jaikababad. See the notes of Nabi Bakhsh Baloch on *Chachnamh*. P 391 of the Urdu translation by Akhtar Rizvi, (Karachi:Sindhi Adab Board,1963)

[374] According to Chachnamah Kakah was a Buddhist and had decided to collaborate with the Muslim forces. The reson which *Chachnama* provides for his alliance with Islamic forces is that the learned Buddhist monks had foretold the victory of Muslim army. It also appears from details in Chachnamh that the Buddhist public had largely submitted to the Muslim forces and assured their loyalty towards the new conqurers. Their chiefs were honored by Muhammad bin Qasim according to the local writes. See page 166-69

[375] Mokah was son of Vasayo, who was a the ruler of the Bet and was a strong allya of Dahir but Mokah had joined Muhammad bin Qasim before the defeat of Dahir and had guided and supported the Muslim forces for details see *Chachnama*, p 187-199.

[376] Bet and Qissah, The coastal areas around Makran according to Dr Nabi Bakhsh Baloch, see page 466

[377] Ibid, p 300

[378] For the treatment of Hindus under these rulers see Athar Mubarakpuri. *Hindustan mei Arabonki hakumatein*(Sakkhar:Fikr o Nazar,1987)

[379] "*liyamhu ayat al asnam*" see the of expedition of Thanesr, *Tārikh e Yamīnī*,p 264

[380] Ibid p 308,241 in the context of Mahra, Qanouj and Kashmir

expulsion and slavery. One reason behind this clear shift can be the difference of the *Fuqahā* in this regard, as two schoolsthe *Hanafiyah* and *Malikiyah* out were agreed to accord such status to the Hindus. It seems that the religious policies of Mahmūd Ghaznavi were based on Shafi rulings in this regard as it is highlighted by a politician and historian of the Delhi sultanate Ziauddin Barani, who states that Mahmūd was a Shaf'i and according to Shafi accepting *Jizyah* from Hindus is not lawful[381]. From the Ghaznavid period onwards we find a dichotomy in the Muslim attitudes towards Hinduism. While the policies of Ghaznavids were based on Shafi rulings their successors both the Sultāns and Mughals treated Hindus as *ahl al dhimmah*, the practice which was necessarily due to their being *Ahanaf* by and large.

As regard to the early perception of Indian subcontinent, one finds from the early Islamic period the tendency to know about the conditions of the Indian subcontinent. According to al Balādhuri's reports, `Uthmān ibn `Affān�countasked `Abd Allah ibn `Amir ibn Kurayz to send a knowledgeable person to Hind's harbor and report on what he saw. Other reports mention that the idea of reaching Hind existed earlier, during `Umar ibn al-Khattāb﷐'s reign,[382] as well as there are tradition of the Prophet ﷺ where the good tidings were mentioned for those who will join the expedition of Al-hind.[383]

The Arab Indian interactions were deep rooted through commercial contacts long before the time of Prophet Muhammadﷺ, while the direct knowledge of Indian culture developed during the ninth and tenth centuries onwards after the Islamic political expansion in the Indian subcontinent. As a result of these expansions, Muslim scholars were enabled to collect variety of information regarding the people and their

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[381] The text reads "*Mahmūd Shāf'i al madhhab budeh, wa Jizyahh satadan az Hindwān dar madhab e Shāf'i jā'iz nist*" see; Ziauddin Barani. *Fatāw e jahāndāri*, P.18

[382] See: Al Balādhuri. *Futū al buldān, P. 438*

[383] Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 22449

عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ مَوْلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ عِصَابَتَانِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَحْرَزَهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ النَّارِ عِصَابَةٌ تَغْزُو الْهِنْدَ وَعِصَابَةٌ تَكُونُ مَعَ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

beliefs and customs in the subcontinent as well as they interacted with the Indian scientific materials in the fields of astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and medicine[384].

4.2 Muslim Intellectuals on Hinduism:

Several theological, political, and intellectual factors led early Muslim scholars to analyze different religions and religious sects. As far as the theological factor, there were many Qurānic verses highlighting other religious communities, especially the star worshipers *Sābiah*, Zoroastrians *al Majūsiyah*, and People of the Book *Ahl al Kitāb*[385], which led Muslim theologians and exegetes to elaborate on the existence, status, and position of these religions according to Islamic perspectives. Likewise to have a theological attitude towards the religions and the sects not mentioned in *Qurān* or *Sunnah* was also important politically when Muslim power began to expand throughout the different parts of the world. There emerged a crucial need to recognize and comprehend the religions and the sects prevailing in these lands for two obvious reasons: Firstly, for the status to be accorded to these different communities and secondly, for the dialogue and interaction with these communities. As a result there emerged a variety of contributions by early Muslim scholars which can help to analyze the early Muslim understanding of the other religions.

There emerged regional and cross-cultural studies that covered discussions of religious ideas and practices of the Indian subcontinent. These works included the contribution of early travelers and merchants like Buzurg bin Shahriyar *Kitabal Ajaib al Hind*, Abu Zayd Hasan al Sirafi's *Silsilah al Tawārikh*, many encyclopedic works like al Mas'ūdi *Marūj al Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al Jawāhir*, and Ibn al Nadīm's *Fihrist* and al

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[384]The Sanskrit work on Astronomy *khanda khadyaka* was translated by Al Farazi. Likewise four books on medicine were translated by an Indian monk which were; Carak, Canak, *Gharbhinirogachitiksa* and *Bhesajaprakaranam*, while Alberuni translated three works on Astrology and four on Astronomy. Dr M.L Roy Chaudhury provide with a list of more than forty works translated from Sanskrit into Arabic.see Indo-Iranica, vol.7. September, 1954

[385]*Al Qurān al Karīm, Surah al Baqara*,62   *Surah al Haj* 17

Maqdisi's *Kitab al Bad' e wa al Tārīkh* contain discussions about the Indian religions. Likewise in his *Tārīkh al Rusul wa al Mulūk*, al Tabari produced many traditions indicating that Ādam was cast down from Heaven to the land of Hind, especially at a mountain called Budh. Ādam left Hind after *Allāh* ordered him to perform a pilgrimage to Makkah. Accordingly, idolatry began when his descendants, the sons of Seth and Cain, worshiped their ancestors' bodies after their death. During Noah's time, the flood carried these objects of worship from Hind to Arab territory.[386]Through these and many other traditions Hind was actually perceived and understood to be a marvelous land where there many precious and valuable goods were found and many great people lived and a variety of beliefs and practices existed which were mostly polytheistic.

Other medieval Muslim travelers and geographers also contained Hind's religious account in their works. The geographer Ibn Khurdadhbah (d. 912) briefly reports the types of Indian castes and their forty two religious sects. In his *Al Masālik wa al Mamālik* he classifies these sects into three main groups: Those who believe in the Creator, the Glorious and Powerful; those who reject the Prophets and revelation and those who do not believe in all the above.[387]While Al Maqdasi classified the Indian religious philosophies and beliefs into ninety-nine divisions which can further be simplified into forty-two sects. Then he describes the monotheist Brahmans *al muwahhida min al barāhima* and further classifies them as those who believe in monotheism and prophet-hood and those who do not believe in prophet hood[388].

Early Muslim perception of the religion in India was not of a single homogeneous tradition known as Hinduism; rather they referred to the multiple religious sects or

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[386] Al Tabari, *Tārīkh al Rusul wa al Mulūk*, ed. De Goeje, vol. 1, p. 121; Ibn al Kalbi, *Kitab al-Asnām*, ed. Klinke Rosenberger, pp. 31-33; Ibn al Jawzi, *Talbīs Iblīs*, ed. al-Tiba'ah al-Muniriyya, n.d., pp. 51-52. For the tradition about Brahman worship in Mecca, see Firishtah, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2 pp. 604-6.

[387] Ibn e Khurdazbah. *Al masālik wa Almāmlik*, P 71

[388] Al Maqdasi, Mutahhar bin Tahir. *Kitab al Bad' e wa al Tārīkh* , vol.4 p. 9

madhāhib of India sometimes reaching to forty-two[389], and even to ninety nine[390]some of which were considered to be monotheistic but not prophetic while others were somehow prophetic but not monotheistic. Early Muslim usually used the term "Hindu" as a geographic and ethnic designation. Though in later period the term "Hindu" developed in the Indian literature of both Muslims and non-Muslims and became an umbrella term for the religious practices of all those who were indigenous and were not Muslims and who shared the belief in Vedas, *samsara* and caste system.

To comprehend the theological attitudes of the Muslims it is very important to understand the categorization of the religious beliefs of the Hindus by the early Muslim scholarship. They classified different beliefs held to be contrary with the Islamic principles of belief. Since the strict monotheism or *tauhid* is the fundamental concept of Islamic theology, the Muslims' theological attitude towards the religious traditions of the subcontinent based on the principle of *tauhid* was no doubt of a dissimilar nature and of totally otherness. As Islamic monotheism *tauhid* cannot reconcile with any form of pagan idol worship or the polytheistic beliefs, the Muslim scholars and theologians categorically illustrated the common Hindu folk as the polytheistic while appreciating the monotheistic Brahimah and they considered the Sumaniya or Buddhist tradition as Muatillah or agnostics[391].

The second important principle of Islamic belief was belief in prophecy. Here we find that the Muslim theologians on the one hand described the Barahima as those accepting reason and believing in one God but rejecting prophecy[392]. This position was unacceptable in Islam. They also compared Hindus with the Sabians for their belief in stars and spiritual beings. The terms like the Sumaniyya, the Barahima, and the Sabia[393]

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[389] Ibn e Khurdazbeh. *Al masālik wa Almāmlik,*, P. 71

[390] Al Maqdasi, Mutahhir bin Tahir. *Kitab al Bad' e wa al Tārīkh*, vol.4, p .9-10

[391] Ibid see p.10

[392]Ibid p 10,see also Ibn e Hazm, *Al Fisal fi al Milal* vol5,p. 137 Baqilani, *Al Tamheed* p. 98-99,105,107.Abdul Jabbar, *Al Mughni*, p.114,

[393] Ibn e Said Al Undlasi, *Tabaqat al Umam*,p.15

were used to categorize and to comprehend the difference of opinion and beliefs among Hindus. These terms were frequently used by the Muslim theologians and scholars in their discussions regarding the variety of religious beliefs of the Hindus.

Here we find the contribution of the Muslim scholars played an important role in shaping the early Muslim theological point of view regarding religious traditions of the Indian subcontinent. The Muslims did not consider the Hindus as mere polytheists but they were also aware about variety of the Hindu beliefs beside polytheism and highlighted the presence of monotheistic and pantheistic concepts as well. Consequently they were not treated like polytheists living in Muslim territory who were supposed to choose between the alternatives of conversion, departure, or death. The monotheistic tendencies among Hinduism were attributed to the Barahima who revered One God and were appreciated by Muslim scholars as *Muahhid*. Beside Al Birūni, who was a direct observer and field worker other scholars also described some of the sects and divisions of the Hindu religion in purely monotheistic terms[394]. Even we find among the Muslim scholars who prefered the monotheistic Hindu Brahmans to the adherents of the dualist religions and the Christians.[395]

In his *Kitāb al Hind*, Al Birūni provided an anthropological account of the North India during the time of Mahmud Ghaznavi's expansion. Al Birūni analyzed Hind's religious traditions closely, conducted field observation in certain Indian regions. Though Al Birūni did a non normative research on Hind's religious traditions, we can deduce his theological views from the comparisons and comments in his *Kitāb al Hind*. He argues that the Hindu idolatry was in fact a result of deviation from the truth and that they resemble in this with the Greeks. According to Al Birūni the classical Greeks also held their idols as mediators between themselves and the first cause and worshipped them

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[394] See for instance; Al Gardizi, *Zain al Akhbār*.Ed. 'Abd al-Hayy Habibi,ed (Teheran, 1348) An English translation of the chapter on India was published by V. Minorsky, Iranica, Teheran, 1964, pp. 200-215.
[395] Amir Khusraw, *Nuh Sipehr,* p.164

under the names of the stars and the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, he also explained that the Hindus honor their idols on account of those for whom they were erected, hence they did not honor the material of which these idols were made[396].

The theological attitude of Al Birūni towards the Indian religions was based upon the Islamic principle of *Inhirāf* or the deviation from the path. Likewise when he mentions the categories of the *khawāss* and the `*āmmah* among the Hindu believers, he judged them from the monotheistic point of view and declared that the *khawāss* or the elite were monotheistic in their belief while the '*āmmah* or the ignorant were deviated from it[397]. In another place while elaborating on the divisions of Hindu society from a theological point of view, he also recognizes that castes or colors are an important cultural aspect of Indians since these socio cultural classes determine the Hindus spiritual types and rights which is entirely different from the Islamic perspective considering all men as equal, except in piety *taqwa*.[398]

Al Shahrastani treats Hinduism in his *Kitab al Milal wa al Nihal* in the chapter of the *Ara al Hind*, which deals in six successive sections with six groups. These are the Sābi'ah, the Barāhimah, the three groups of *Ashāb Al Ruhāniyāt* or the proponents of spiritual beings, *Abadat Al Kawākib* star worshippers and *Abadat Al Asnām* idol worshippers, and finally the Indian philosophers. Where Al Birūni divides the Hindus into the educated and the uneducated, Al Shahrastani grades them according to degrees of idol worship[399].

Al Shahrastani used the category of *Sābia* in order to describe different levels or grades of Hindu thought and worship. The *Basnawiya* probably the Vaishnavaites and the *Bahudiayh*, which according to the description of Al Shahristani are likely to be the

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[396] Al Beruni. *Thaqiq*, p.58
[397] Ibid, p.15
[398] Ibid.p.49
[399] Abu al Karim, Al Shahristani. *Al Milal wa Al Nihal*,P. 231-245

Saivites are like the Sabian *Ashāb al Ruhāniyāt*, they venerate Vishnu and Siva as Spiritual Beings who were incarnated and brought laws without a scripture[400]and those adoring sun the *Diniktiyah* and the worshiper of *Chandrikiniayh* are to him like the Sabian starworshippers or the *abadat al kawākib*[401], while those who adore and prostrate themselves before man-made idols are the idolaters *Abadat al asnām*, like the pagan Arabs of the *Jāhiliyah*.[402] By categorizing the Hindus in three main categories and likening them with Sabia Al Shahristani makes it possible to understand and interact with them according to the pattern adopted with *Al Sābia*.

The major point at which Vishnu and Siva differ from the Muslim line of prophets, according to Al Shahristani, is their lack of a written scripture. According to Islamic point of view the revelation or the prophecy without a literary medium was highly suspectable of the deviation and loss of the true message. The he treats the Indian views about Vishnu and Siva equal to the Sabia's belief in *ruhainyat* or mediators. He compares the Hindu belief about Vishnu and Siva with the Muslim idea of prophecy and highlights the difference in this regard that the Hindus did not possess a written form of revelation like the People of the Book, and especially the Muslims. Likewise he treated the Hindu sects adoring *Aditya* the Sun and *Chandra* the Moon as analogous to the Sabian believers in stars. Shahrastani compared the sheer idol worshippers among Hindus with the pagan Arabs who worship the wooden forms they themselves have made; they have lost sight of the Lord of lords[403].

Many of the Indian Muslim scholars treated Hindus as *Ahl al kitāb*. This attitude can better be attributed to Prince Dara Shikoh and after him the Naqshbandi Sufi Mirza

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[400] Ibid p. 239-240
[401] The account of the star-worshipers see; Ibid p. 241-242
[402] Ibid p 243-245
[403] Ibid

Mazhar Jan e Janan[404]. Prince Dara Shikoh had a keen interest in study of Hinduism; he not only himself wrote on comparison between Islam and Hinduism but also commissioned a group of Hindu scribes for translation of some Sanskrit texts. Banwali Das, also known as Wali Ram (d. 1667–68), an accomplished poet and historian in Dara Shikoh's service, produced a Persian translation of *Prabhodacandrodaya*, a Vedantic theological allegory, this translation was entitled *Gulzar i ̧hal ya Tulū i Qamar i Marifat*,[405]. Another scholar in the service of Dara Shikoh, Chandarbhan Barahman (d. 1657-8), translated a Vedantic work of Sankara, the Atmavilasa, under the title *Nazuk khayalāt*[406].

Dara Shikoh himself supervised the Persian translation of fifty of the most important Indian scriptures, the Upanishads, under the title *Sirr-i Akbar*. He is also credited with a translation of the *Bhagavad Gıta*. Dara Shikoh's attitude towards the Hindu scriptures reveals a clear shift from the early Muslim scholars as he regarded their scriptures like the *Zabu*r, the *Injil,* and the *Qurān*. Dara Shikoh viewed the Upanishads as hermeneutically consistent with the *Qurānic* teachings, and that these scriptures also taught the divine unity. The major work of Dara Shikoh was a comparative study in Persian of the vocabulary of Hindu and Islamic mysticism, entitled *Majma al-bahrayn*.[407]

Due to the narrative nature of the early Islamic sources on Hinduism, the early Muslim studies of Hinduism have been overlooked or regarded as second-hand information on the subject[408]. Yet they not only approached and studied the Indian religion; they also used unique analytical terms and categories to portray Indian religious beliefs of the period. These categories and terms which were applied by them for

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[404] View of Mirza mazhar Jan e Janan will be discussed below in the context of Sufi attitudes towards Hinduism.

[405]*Gulzar i ̧Hāl ya Tulu' i Qamar i Ma'rifat, Prabodhachandrodaya*, Persian translation From Sanskrit by Banwali Das, ed. Tara Chand and Amir Hasan Abidi (Aligarh, 1967)

[406] Brahman, Chandarbhan. *Nāzuk khayālāt (*Lahore: 1901)

[407]Dara Shikoh. *Majma al Bahrayn*. Published and Translated

[408] Bruce, B. Lawrence. *Shahrastani on Indian Idol worship*, in *Studia Islamica*, No. 3 (1973), pp. 61–73.

interpreting and understanding the variety of Hindu beliefs and practices also reflect the theological attitudes of the early Muslim scholarship towards Hinduism. In light of the Muslim theological discourse about Hinduism it is very clear that they not only knew about the variety of Hindu concepts about God but also classified the Hindus according to their belief about God hence the categories like; deviation from True path, *Khawās* and ʿ*āmmah* and *Brāhimah* and *Sābiah* were used to highlight such differences. The main features of early Islamic discourse about Hinduism can be summarized as following

4.2.1 Heterogeneous Concepts about God:

In connection with the concept of God the variety of Hindu perceptions was noticed by all of early Muslim scholars and observers of Hinduism. According to them the Hindu beliefs about God was not homogeneous. Some believed in idols as representation or manifestation of God, while other believed in One God Who was beyond all likeness and unlikeness.[409] Though commonly the Hindu Brahmans were considered as those who reject prophecy and revelation through divine messengers in the form of human beings and, at the same time they were also considered the monotheistic group and used freely the expression like *muahhid* for the monotheistic Hindus. [410]

The view that among Hindus there were monotheistic believers was stressed by the Muslim scholars and writers form the very early period but at the same time they did also highlighted the presence of polytheistic approaches to Divine. Al Maqdasi while pointing to the variety of religious beliefs of the Hind in an exaggerated way mentions the existence of some nine hundred major and minor religious traditions, of which he states that only ninety nine were known to him. Some of these were monotheistic while others polytheistic and still others were atheistic according to his informants.[411]Al Shahristani also described beliefs and attitudes of Hindus about God varied from

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[409] Al Birūni. *Tahqiq mā lil Hind,* P. 13
[410] Mutahir bin tahir Al Maqdasi. *Al bad'e wa Al Tārikh*. Vol. 4,p10-11
[411] Ibid, vol 4, p 9-10

Monotheism to polytheism and even there were atheists among them.[412] Al Idrisi in his work also shared the same views;

"Indians have forty two sects, some believe in God and prophets; some believe in God and deny the prophets while there are those who deny God and prophets both. Some worship idols and consider it a source for the grace of God, they revere these by anointing it with oil and fats".[413]

4.2.2 Deviation from the True path (Inhirāf):

Muslim scholars used the Islamic concept of deviation from monotheism as a basic analytical key to understand the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. Thus the conclusion that the Hindus' original theological concept was monotheistic remained the key note in the early Muslim interpretation of Hinduism. The monotheistic tendencies of Hindus, highlighted by the Muslim scholars, helped to provide the common grounds between the believers of the two religions. The Muslim scholars sought to explain the reasons for such a deviation.

According to al Beruni People venerate religious symbols, statues, or temples long after they forget the original motive of the given symbol's creation. An earlier community builds a sculpture to honor and commemorate a specific person (e.g., the Buddha) and give him respect, and a later community transforms that tradition into a religious ritual.[414]

The idea of deviation from the truth echoes the Islamic perspective that every nation was given the true Divine message. The Muslim idea of deviation was a central theological attitude towards Hinduism, which also took for granted the presence of Divine revelation in case of the Hind's religious tradition.

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[412] Al Sharistani. *al Milal wa al Nihal*, P .444-447

[413] Al Idrisi, *Nuzhah al Mushtāq*. Vol 1, p 65

[414] Al Birūni. *Tahqiq mā lil Hind*, p 53

4.2.3   Anthropomorphism:

Anthropomorphism was another term or category used for the analysis of the religious beliefs of the Hindus. The early Muslim discourse about Hinduism not only highlighted the anthropomorphic tendencies but they went further to seek the reason for presence of such concepts. According to Al Birūni the Anthropomorphic belief about God can occur due to linguistic limitations, he explains it through an example of limits of linguistic expression that if an uneducated man hears that God comprehends the universe so that nothing is concealed from him, he will start thinking about ht eyesight of God, and in consequence he will describe to God thousand eyes. [415]The anthropomorphism was identified as a main reason for erection of the idols, according to the report contained in *Kitāb al Fahrist*; the idols were regarded by them the image of God.[416]Thus Muslim intellectuals related the idols and images with the idea of anthropomorphism or *tashbih*.

4.2.4   The concept of idol:

According to Islamic traditions, India was the first country in which idolatry was practiced and the ancient Arabian idols were of Indian origin. Indian idolatry began after Ādam﷿ descended following his expulsion from Paradise on an Indian mountain; after his death the sons of Sheth began to worship his body. Following this, a man from the sons of Cain offered to carve idols for his people so that they also would have an object of worship. He was the first man to do this. Later, in the time of Noah﷿, the waters of the deluge washed the idols away from the Indian mountain on which they were placed, and swept them from country to country until they finally landed on the Arabian coast near Jeddah. The legendary founder of Arabian idolatry, Amr bin Luhayy, was directed by a *jinn* to the place in which they were located. Amr bin Luhayy found the

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[415] For instance on page 15
[416] Ibn e Nadim, Muhammad bin Ishaq. *Al fahrist,*p. 486-7

idols and called upon all Arabs to worship them[417]. According to another tradition, reported by Firistah, the Brahmans of India used to travel to Mecca in pre-Islamic times in order to pay homage to the idols and considered the *Ka'aba* the best place of worship.[418] Muawiya� is reported to have sent golden idols, captured in Sicily, to India for sale; as these would find a ready market in that country[419].

These and many other traditions indicate that early Muslim theologians and scholars considered the Hindus as idolaters and polytheists. Al Birūni who conducted a field work in the subcontinent also considered that the idolatry was a major and more common mode of worship of Hindus. He further elaborated that it was more popular among the *'awām* or the commoners who need symbolic and iconographic representations of the Highest Being, various deities, and angels[420].

Likewise al Shahrastani after categorizing different sects and traditions of the Hindus reached the conclusion that all these different groups were idolaters in practice. The difference according to al Sharastani was in the way they perceived their idols; some considered them to be the actual deity, while others just see them as the representation of the Higher Being.[421]

For Persian authors like Sa'dı, the symbol of Hindus religions was an idol, as he showed in his picturesque account of the temple of Somnath in his most celebrated work *Bustan*, in which he explains through a story the worship and devotion of Hindus towards

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[417] Al Tabari, *Tārikh al Rusul wa al Mulūk*, vol. 1, p. 121; Ibn al Kalbi, *Kitāb al Asnām*, p. 31-33; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis*, ed. al-Tiba'ah al-Muniriyya, n.d., pp. 51-52. According to another tradition, 'Amr b. Luhayy brought the idols from al-Sham, where they were worshipped by the 'Amaliqa. See Ya'qubi, *Tārikh*, ed. Houtsma, p. 295; AlShahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, (London 1846) pp. 430-431.

[418] For the tradition about Brahman worship in Mecca, see Firishtah, Muhammad Qāsim *Tārikh* e Frishta, vol. 2., pp. 885

[419] Al Balādhuri, *Flutūh al-Buldān*, p. 235; Al Birūni, *Tahtqiq mā li 'l hind min maqula maqbula fi al 'aql aw marldhula,* Hyderabad (Deccan), 1958, p. 96; translation by E. Sachau, London 1910, vol. 1, p. 124. For Shar'i disapproval of this transaction, see al *Shaybani, Kitāb al Siyar al Kabir*, Cairo, 1960, p. 1051.

[420] Al Birūni.*Tahqiq ma lil Hind*, p 54

[421] Al Shahristani,*Al Mila*l, p. 243

idol and also describes in detail the interior of the temple and the idols contained in it and how he pretended to believe in the idol to observe the mystery of its moving hands and had embarrassed the priests. The story indicates that the idol was considered to be symbol of the Hindu religious tradition[422].

4.2.5 Sābiah:

The majority of Hindus according to Muslim sources were *Sabia* or the star worshipers. The category of *Sābiah* was used as an analytical tool by the Muslim theologians to describe such beliefs and practices which according to them were analogous to the star worshipers. Thus we find al Shahristani in his account of the *Ārā al Hind*, highlighted the presence of star worshipers among Hindus whom he called '*abadat al kawākib*.[423] Likewise the author of *Tabaqāt al Umam* divided Hindus in two main groups; Brahima and *Sābia*. According to him the Brahima were in minority while the majority of Hindus were *Sābia*, who believed in the eternity of the world and worshiped the stars and venerate the stars by making different images in their name[424].

4.2.6   Denial of the prophet hood:

The refutation of the Brahmans concerning prophecy show that Islam's basic teachings served as categories of Muslim analysis of Hindu beliefs and practices. It may be said that their arguments and judgments regarding other religions are polemical and apologetic. However, this is not really the case, for their description, evaluation, and analysis of other religious beliefs and practices reveal a genuine interest in understanding non- Islamic religions through comparison.

According to the classical Muslim theologians the Brahima are discussed as a sect of Hindus who deny the prophet-hood. Thus we find al Ghazali, al Baqilani, Qazi Abdul

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[422] Saadi, Sheikh. *Bustān*. Ed., Nur-Allah Iranparast (Tehran: Danish Sadi, 1352/1973) p. 345-354

[423] Al Shahristani. *Al Milal,* P. 443.

[424] Qazi Sa'id al Undlasi. *Tabaqāt al Umam*, P.12

Jabbar, al Sharastani and Ibn e hazm had discussed Brahima as those who deny the Prophethood. The Brahaman according to al Baqilani deny the prophet hood totally or partially and those who had the partial faith believe in prophet Hoodﷺ of Adamﷺ or Ibrahimﷺ. The impression that the Brahima were the deniers of prophecy that we find whole chapter in *Kitāb al Tamhīd* of al Baqilani under the tilte '*al kalāmu ala al barāhima'* in which he refutes the opinions and arguments of those who deny prophethood [425] According to Al Ghazali the *Brāhima* among Hindus were those who rejected the prophet-hood totally and essentially '*aslan wa rasan'* and he also rejected the probability of their being the followers of Prophet Ibrahim and clarifies that among Hindus who accept the prophet-hood of Ibrahim were the dualist[426]. The account of Al Sharistani is also identical with that of Al Ghazali and he also declares that Brahima were those who deny prophet-hood on the ground that reason alone can judge the right and wrong and there is no need of the guidance of prophets in this regard.[427]

Even Al Birūni also points to the fact that the Hindus consider that the laws and norms of religion were set by their sages known as *rishis* and not by prophet who was according to them *narain* an incarnation in the human form who comes to remove misery and hardships but he has nothing to do with the laws of religion, that's why they think that they do not need a prophet in the spheres of religion and worship[428]

4.2.7: Transmigration /Al Tanāsukh:

In the Muslim accounts of Hinduism Transmigration was considered a basic feature. They were aware of the significance of this idea in the religious traditions of *ahl*

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[425] Al Baqillani. *Kitab Al Tamheed* (Beirut: Almakatabh al Sharqiyyah,1957) p. 104-131

[426] Al Ghazali. *Faisl al Tafriqa bayn al Kufre wa al Zandaqa*,(Cairo:1941) p.135

[427] Al Sharistani, *Almilal wa al Nihal*, p. 420

[428] Al Beruni. *Tahqiq ma lil Hind*, p.81

al hind, while al Beruni had unmistakably declared that the concept of *Tanāsukh* is the creed of the *ahl al hind*[429] and that all of their sects agree in this regard.

4.3 Sūfi attitudes and interpretations of Hinduism:

It is very important to study the Sūfi attitudes towards Hinduism for two basic reasons; 1) The Sūfiā of the subcontinent have given much importance to the Hindu religious tradition and the Indian mysticism, 2) The analogies between the two systems of thought were so strong that led many scholars of the world to consider the Indian thought as the fountainhead of Islamic Sufism[430].

Sufism emerged as a spiritual movement from within the Muslim community with its roots in the Quranic concept of piety and remembrance of God. Later on it developed further and was transformed into distinct orders, while these orders developed into network through which the Sūfia spread their ideas in different parts of the world .The movement reached as a spiritual force in the subcontinent during the time of Mahmūd Ghaznavi, there emerged Sūfi settlements in different parts of India, a clear evidence of these early Sūfi activities is the celebrated work of Uthmān Ali Hajweri[431], written in the

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[429] Ibid

[430] For instance Renan, Reitzenstein, Goldzihder in *Muhammad and Islam,* p 173-176 talks about the analogies between Buddhist Dhiyana and Sufi Muraqbah, the Noble path and Sufi Tariqat andregards the Sufi concept of Fana is borrowed from the upanishadic and Vedantic thought. Brown in his work; *Literary History of Persia* (London, 1909) p. 416-444 has discussed about the Aryan origin of Sufism.

[431]Abul Hassan Ali Ibn Usman al-Jullabi al-Hajvery al-Ghaznawi, also known as *Daata Ganj Bakhsh*, which means the master who bestows treasures, was a Sufi and scholar during the 11th century. He was born around 990 CE near Ghazni, Afghanistan during the Ghaznavid period and died in Lahore in 1077 CE.

Ghaznavid Lahore during the eleventh century, '*Kashf al Mahjūb[432]*' which provides a lot of information about the development of different orders, the main differences between the different orders and an evaluation of the Sūfi ideas and practices of the period from an orthodox point of view.

From the thirteenth century onwards Sufia's interaction with the Hindu ideas and practices increased. The study of these interactions can help us here to understand the Sūfi attitudes towards Hinduism and also to see whether the Sūfi attitudes were different than the theological attitudes of the Muslim scholars and theologians or not? It is very important to highlight here that one can find in Sūfi literature of the subcontinent a tradition of reception of Hindu devotion and worship beside the critical interpretations of Hindu beliefs and practices. Following is a survey of the major Sūfi orders of the subcontinent and their approaches to the Hinduism; *Chishtiyah, Qādriyah, Suhrwardiyah, and Naqshbandiyah* [433]

4.3.1 Chishtiyah *Sūfiā* and their views of Hinduism:

The Chishtiyah order is named after Chisht, a town in Khurasan, which lies about one hundred kilometers east of Herat[434]. The spiritual founder of the order was Khwaja Abu Ishāq Shāmi[435] (d. 940) who came from Syria and settled down in Chisht. But it was

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[432] Hajwery, Abul Hassan. *Kashf Al Mahjūb* written in the Persian language. The work is one of the earliest and most popular treatises of Sufism in the Subcontinent it discusses major Sufi doctrines and orders of the period.

[433] The first Sūfi order was the Qadri order, or *tariqah,* founded by Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1071-1166). This was followed by the Suhrawardi order of Abu Najib al Suhrawardi (1098-1168) and the Naqshbandi order of Khwaja Bahaud din Naqshbandi (1318-1389). While the Chishti order, traces its origin to Chisht near Herat, where the spiritual founder of the order, Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami (d. 940) dwelled. However it was Muinuddin Chishti (d.1236) who brought the *silsila* to India and laid its foundations by establishing his centre in Ajmer

[434] Herat is situated in the modern Afghanistan.

[435] He was a disciple and a *khalifah* of Mimshad Dinwari. He traced his spiritual lineage through Hasan Basri back to Ali ibn Abu Talib and the Prophet Muhammad, and is believed to be ninth after Ali in the line

Muinuddin Chishti[436] who laid the foundation of the Chishtiyah order in the Indian subcontinent. The Chishtiyah order became very popular in this part of the world. The Chishtiyah accounts clearly indicate that the Chishtiya Sūfiā established their centers in the midst of the Hindu population and interacted with the Hindus, this pattern was adopted from the very beginning as the Sheikh Muʻin al Din Chishti himself is reported to have settled in the town of Ajmer which was a Hindu majority area.[437] There is debate among the scholars as regards the explanation for his selection of Ajmer instead of any Muslim majority city. Whatever the reason behind his decision is accepted it is evident that there had been direct interactions between Chishtiyah Sufia and Hindus from the very early period.

Beside the Social interactions, multiple evidences are also available which show that there had been a great interest among the Indian Sūfiā to study and understand the Hindu mystical ideas. There are also examples of adaptation of the practices of Hindu Jogis. One example of the Sūfi adoption of these practices is a short Persian text on yoga and meditation that is generally attributed to the famous founder of the Indian Chishtı Sūfi order, Shaykh Muʻin al Din Chishti (d. 1236). A number of different versions of this treatise are found in manuscripts held in different libraries, often with different titles, but the content is almost the same. The attribution to Muin al Dın Chishti seems pseudo-graphic[438] but the importance of this text in the Chishtiyah Sūfi circles indicates that the practices of yoga were important enough that they should have been part of the teaching of the greatest Sūfi master in the *Chishtiyah* tradition.

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of spiritual succession. According to *Nafahāt al Unus* khawaja returned back to Syria and died there in 329AH/940AD. see S.A.A. Rizvi. *A history of Sufism in India*. Vol 1, p 114-115.

[436] Moin ud Din Chishti, founder of the *Chishtiyah silsilah* in the Indian subcontinent, was born in Sijistan and was brought up in Khurasan the disciple of Khawaja Usman Harwani.

[437] Amir Khurd. *Siyar al Arifin* (Delhi,1885)p.45-7

[438] The *Tadhkira* and *Malfuzāt* literature do not mention any such book written by him which makes it highly probable that this attribution is psudeo graphic.

Commonly it is called *Risālah e Wujudiyah* or the treatise of existence.[439]It is also entitled *Risālah e Sarmāyah e Jogi.* The treatise deals with the description of yogic physiology and cosmology alongside a Quranic and Islamic account of the nature of the world[440]. The treatise has a composite structure, in which the Islamic metaphysical and cosmological concepts are linked with the yogic practices. It further links these states with knowledge revealed during the ascension of Muhammad☪ to heaven, and moreover it maintains that this knowledge was then conferred on Muin al Din Chishti either spontaneously by the Prophet Muhammad☪ or through the agency of Muin al Din's master, Shaykh Uthmān Harwānı[441]. The principal teachings of this yogic text are supposed to be the somehow related with the knowledge that the Prophet Muhammad☪ received during his ascension or the Mi'rāj.[442]

Another variation of such Sufi teachings is a 14th-century Persian anonymous text on yoga called *The Kamarupa Seed Syllables* which draws eclectically upon Islamic references to comprehend and present the occult yoga techniques that are valuable because of their practical results. Here one finds that Hindi mantras are transmitted by the prophets, Yunas☪, Khidr, and Ibrahim☪[443]. This text also identifies the Sanskrit seed mantra *hrim* invariably represented in Arabic script as *rhım* with the Arabic name of Allāh *Rahım*, the merciful. The minor spiritual beings called *indu-rekha* in Hindi was rendered by the Persian term *firishta* for angel.

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[439]There are several MSS of the text available in Pakistan, Ahmed Munazvi mentions 10 MSS among these 1) MSS no 6314 in ganj bakhsh library under the title; *Risala e Muin ud Din Sijzi, Ajmeri Risala e Muin ud Din Sijzi, Ajmeri* 2) MSS 62,297 in Punjab Public library, title *Guftear e Khawaja muin ud din*. 3) Hakim Abdul Rahim Jamil collection Gujrat 4) and 5) in Lahore Sherani College11/1249/4302. And 575/8/3598, under the title *Wujudiyah Maroof bi Risala e ragha,* 6) Karachi, Moza e Mili,4/210-1965. 7) Sialkot, M.E.Kazmi. 8) Lahore, Muhammad Shafi Kazmi.11/305 under the title *Wujudiyah ya Risala dar Bayan e Ragha*. 9) Karachi, Anjman Taraqi it has only two chapters. 10) Lahore, Faqir Sayyad Mughith ud Din library. see *Fihrist Mushtarik Nuskha hai khati e farsi e Pakistan* Ganj Bakhsh, Islamabad, vol3 p 2101-3.
[440] Ernest, Carl.W. *Two versions of a Persian text on Yoga and Cosmology. Elixir* 2 (2006): p.69–76
[441] Ibid
[442] ibid
[443] Ernest, Carl. W. "*The limits of Universalism in Islamic Though" i*n The Islamic World, Vol 101 (Jan 2011) p. 11-12

The text also provides an estimate of the presence and adaptation of the yogi practices in the Islamic society of the subcontinent. For instance the practice of breath prognostication or predictions through breathing was present in the Muslim society; one learns to approach "the *qadı* or the *amır* for judgment or litigation only when the breath from the right nostril is favorable. There are also references to the Muslim magicians or practices that may be performed either in a Muslim or a Hindu graveyard, or else in an empty temple or mosque, and occasionally one is told to recite a Quranic passages, or to perform a certain action after the Muslim evening prayer.[444]

The text also bears evidence of the popularity of such practices among the Muslim circles. A Muslim from Broach is reported to have successfully summoned one of the female deities known as yoginis. The text is dotted with Islamic references like; invocation of God and praise of the Prophet ﷺ at the beginning, likewise at the end, a quotation of a *hadīth* saying and some mystical allusions and thus provides a religious outlook for the magical practices. For the average Persian reader, the contents of *The Kamarupa Seed Syllables* most likely fell into the category of the occult sciences, and its Indic origin would have only enhanced its esoteric allure. The text employs standard Arabic terms for different yogic techniques for instance it translates astral magic as *tanjım*, the summoning of spirits as *ihdār*, and the subjugation as *taskhır* of demons, fairies, and magicians. The chants or mantras of the yogis are repeatedly referred to as spells *afsun*, a term of magical significance. The more unique is however the way the text employs these techniques for summoning the female spirits known in India as yoginis[445].

The evidences of appraisal and assimilation of the spiritual values of Hinduism are also present in biographies of Chishtiya Sufi masters like *Shaikh* Fariduddin and Nizamuddin. *Shaikh* Farid ud Din had connection with Yogis who often visited his

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[444] ibid
[445] Ibid

Jama'at Khana[446] and talked on spiritual matters. Likewise Nizamuddin appreciated the devotion of Hindus[447]. *Shaikh* Nasiruddin had studied Hindu yoga practices and asked his followers to follow the yoga practice of holding breath in order to concentrate[448]. *Shaikh* Gesu Deraz, the Chishti sufi mentions of conversing with yogis on Hindu spirituality and studying it by himself and arguing with gurus on spiritual matters Chishti master, Shaykh Abdul-Quddus Gangohi (d. 1537), was familiar with the yoga of the Naths and wrote Hindi verses on the subject. He also used to teach the Pool of Nectar to his disciples.[449]

The above details do not imply that the Chishtiyah Sūfiā approved of the Hindu polytheistic ideas. We have examples of Chishtiyah Sūfiā who criticized Hinduism and rejected the idolatry. Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud "Chirāgh i Dihlı" (d. 1356) was one of the principal leaders of this important South Asian Sufi tradition in Northern India. In his recorded conversations, known as *Khayr al Majālis*, Chirāgh i Dihlı through a story of a Hindu idolater clearly conveyed his attitude towards idolatry that God does not approve of idolatry, but a true repentance even after many years of idol worship is accepted by Him.[450]

4.3.2 Suhrwardiyah Sūfiā and their view of Hinduism:

The Suhrawardi order traces its spiritual origins to Shaykh Abu Najib Suhrawardi (1097-1168)[451] though it was his nephew and disciple Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi

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[446] Amir Hasan Sijzi. *Fawā'id al Fu'ād*. P-144, 97

[447] Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi. *Anwār al Uyūn*. Delhi 1895,p4

[448] Qalandar, Hameed. *Khair al Majālis*. P 59-60(12 Majlis in Urdu p51-53)

[449] Rukn al Din. *Lataif i Quddusi* (Delhi, 1894), p. 41;

[450] Qalandar,Hamid.*Khair al Majalis,* Urdu (Karachi,javed press,dnm36[th] majlis) p.110

[451] Abu Najib Abd al Kahir bin 'Abd Allah al (1097-1168) was born in Suhraward in the Jibal region. As a young man he came to Baghdad and studied the *hadith*, *Fiqh* and Arabic grammar and literature at the famous Nizamiya *madrasa*. He wrote a work in Arabic, *Adab al Muridin*, which a number of Indian Sufis subsequently translated into Persian. He had numerous disciples, one of whom, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, his nephew, went on to give an organizational form to his teachings and doctrines.

(1145-1234)[452] who furthered his teachings. The order was brought to the The subcontinent by his able disciples, Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya, who founded a *khanqah* in Multan, Shaykh Jalal'uddin Tabrizi, who settled in Bengal, and Qadi Hamiduddin Nagauri who settled in Delhi. The Suhrawardi *silsila* went on to become one of the most popular in the subcontinent, next only to the Chishtiyyah.

The attitude of *Suhrwardiyah* Sūfiā was much different than their counterparts the Chishtiyahs towards the adaptation from the Indian mysticism. One of the leading Sheikh of Suhrwardiya order Makhdoom e Jahaniyan Jahangasht (d. 1385) urged his followers to resist the tendency to call God with the Indian names such as gosian and Naranjan[453] He objected strongly the adoptation from the Hindu traditions and spoke against such practices which were present in the Muslim society like; exploding crackers at festivals, referring to Allah by Hindu names, and the whitewashing of graves and placing lamps on them at night. His disciples compiled his sayings in a work known as *Khulasah al Alfaz Jami'al Ulum*[454].

The *Suhrwardiya Sufia* used a philosophical framework for understanding and interpreting the Indian religious beliefs and practices. This philosophical framework was based on the Ishraqi thought of Shihab al Din Suhrawardi, the founder of the Suhrawardiya order himself. The philosophical ideas of Ishraqi School played a significant role in the religio political thought of the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent.

Muhammad Sharıf bin Nizam al Din Ahmad bin al Harawı[455], made significant comments on Indian religions in his Persian translation and commentary on Suhrawardı's *Al Hikmah al Istashraqiyah* under the title *Anwariyya* or *The Luminous Treatise*.

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[452] Shihabuddin Abu Hafs al Suhrawardi (1145-1235) was born in Suhraward and came to Baghdad as a youth. He was deeply influenced by his uncle Abu Najib.

[453] *Siraj al Hidaya*. F64b and f68a quoted by S.A.A. Rizvia. Vol-1,p 280

[454] W.Ivanov. *Concise Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Asiatic society, Bengal* (Calcutta,1924) No 1209.

[455] Muhammad Sharıf was the son of the well-known Mughal courtier and historian Nizam al-Dın Ahmad , author of the *Tabaqat -i Akbarı*.

Muhammad Sharif comments on a number of aspects of Hindu religious thought and practice. He distinguishes between the ordinary Hindu worshipper and the philosopher. In this sense Muhammad Sharıf disdained the ordinary believers among both the Hindus and the Muslims. Muhammad Sharıf also presented a unique approach in describing the Yogi whom he called *murtadan* that they may become connected to the planetary spirits, he compares these experiences to the ascensions of Idris, Jesus, and Muhammad; in both cases, he argues, there is recognition of a single light or source for these separate manifestations. Thus he thought that such mystical experiences unfortunately given way over time to blind worship of bodies in the form of Indian idolatry.

4.3.3 Naqshbandiyas *Sūfiā* and their views of Hinduism:

Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband (1317-1389), was the founder of the Naqshbandi order.[456] The views of the Naqshbandi Sufi Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi are mostly considered as insular for his criticism of Akbar's religious policies and his efforts for the revival of Islam in Indian subcontinent. His views mark a clear shift in the Sufi attitude towards the Hindu practices as he regarded Islam and kufr as mutually exclusive. A Muslims can have limited social contact with the unbelievers but at the same time it is important to hold them and their idols in contempt, and to reject the *bidas* innovations borrowed from Hinduism during centuries of contact. The main concern of his reform was the rejection of the indigenous practices adopted by the Muslim society in general and by the Muslim elite of his time in particular. His criticism of *Muslamānān e Hindu Mazaj*[457] clearly indicates that his main concern was the revival of Islam in its pure and true form.

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[456]He was born at Kushk-i-Hinduwan, a village near Bhukhara in Central Asia. Later, in his honor, the village came to be known as Kushk-i Arifan The title *Naqshband* that he used literally means 'a painter' or 'an embroiderer'. It is possible that it refers to the profession followed by his family, but it may just as easily have been a metaphorical usage indicative of his spiritual capacity to imprint the name of God upon a disciple's heart

[457]Sirhindi, Sheikh Ahmad.*Maktuba*t, Vol,3 letter 41

Mirza Mazhar Jān i Jānān (d. 1781) also a Naqshbandi Sufi of the eighteenth century reflected a different theological attitude than his predecessor towards Hinduism. According to him the Vedas were revealed scriptures though he further added that these ancient scriptures had been abrogated by the most recent revelation, the *Quran*. According to him the four books of Vedas contain commandments, prohibitions and information about the past and the future. Their revelation was made through the mediation of an angel named Brahma, who is an instrument of the creation of the world.[458] The sages of the Hindus derived from the Vedas the six systems of their philosophy, and based on them their religious beliefs.[459] All their sects agree that God is one, hold that the world is created and will vanish and believe in resurrection and retribution. Their idolatry does not involve association or *shirk* its essence is different. It is in a way similar to some *dhik*r ceremonies of the Sufia, who meditate on the person of their *pir* in order to obtain in this way the spiritual benefits. The Hindus on the other hand make representations of certain angels, of the spirits. They concentrate their thought on these representations and thereby create a link with the entities represented by them and attain their material and spiritual needs.[460]

4.3.4 *QādriyahSūfiā and their views of Hinduism:*

The Qadri Order is named after Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077-1166).[461] The Qadri *tariqa* in India was established by Sayyid Muhammad Makhdum Gilani (d.1517), known also as Muhammad Ghawth, who founded a khanqah in Uch.

The practices of Shattāriyah branch of *Qādriyah* order were so analogous to that of the Jogis that a mid-nineteenth-century Arabic treatise on Sufi orders by the North

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[458] Some of the passages about Hinduism were published and translated by Ghulam 'Ali, *Maqamat-i Mazhari*, Delhi, n.d., p. 99-101. An Urdu translation of some passages may be found in Khaliq Anjum, *Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan ke khutut*, Delhi, p 92-95 and in Ikram, Sheikh. *Rud-i Kawthar* (Rawalpindi: Services Book Club,2003) p. 450-453

[459] Ikram, Sheikh. *Rud-i Kawthar* p. 450-453

[460] Ibid.

[461] Shaykh Abdul Qadir was born in the village of Nif, in the district of Jilan in northern Iran, south of the Caspian Sea. He was descended from Imam Hasan, the Prophet's grandson.

African author Muhammad al-Sanusi (d. 1859) includes a section on the yogis *al jūjiyya* as a subset of the *Ghawthiyyah* branch of the *Shattariyya* Sufi order; for this he clearly draws both on the writings of Muhammad Ghawth and on the Arabic text of *The Pool of Nectar.*[462]

Muhammad Ghawth' had translated an Indian work on Yoga from Arabic into Persian, In his translation of the Amartakunda he not only appreciated the Hindu yoga is but presented it in an integrated with the Sufi and Islamic concepts. In the text one finds the attempts to compare between the most famous Indian masters of yogic lore with the images of some prophets of Islam like Idris عليه السلام, Khidr, and Yunas عليه السلام, and even the identification of the Indian gods Brahma and Vishnu with Ibrahim عليه السلام and Mosa عليه السلام.[463]

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[462] Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi al-Khattabi al-Hasani al-Idrisi, *Al-Silsabil al-main fil-tara'iq al-arbain* (Cairo, 1989) p. 84-87

[463] See for details.Carl.W. Ernest. *Sufism and Yoga according to Muhammad Ghawth.* In Sufi, issue29.Spring 1996

Chapter 5:

Synthetic and syncretistic elements in the religious thought of the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent during 16th C.E.

Sixteenth century witnessed a mushroom growth of different religious approaches, sects and philosophies, which influenced the religious outlook of both the Hindus and the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. The contemporary historians like Abu al Fazl[464], Abdul Qadir Badāyūni [465] and the author of *Dabistān al Madhāhib*[466] all contain the first hand information about different sects and movements which appeared during this period. What grabs our attention here that majority of these religious trends and movements were synthetic or syncretistic in their nature.

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[464] Abu al Fazal ibn Mubarak also known as Abu al Fadl Allami (1551-1602) was the minister of the Mughal emperor Akbar, and author of the *Akbarnama*, the official history of Akbar's reign in three volumes, (the third volume is known as the *Ain-i-Akbari*) and a Persian translation of the Bible. He was also the brother of Faizi, the famous poet at the court of Emperor Akbar.

[465] Abd-ul-Qadir Bada'uni bin Muluk Shah (c. 1540 - 1615) was an Indo-Persian historian and translator living in the Mughal Empire. His historical work *Muntakhab al Tawārīkh* is a contemporary record of the major events as well as the religious of the period under review.

[466] The Persian *work* of seventeenth century, *Dabistan e Madhahib* has been ascribed by many writers to Mulla Mohsin Fani Kashmiri. William Jones had attributed it to Mullah Mohsin Fāni and following him, David. Shae and Troyer, the editors and translators of the work had also ascribed the work to Mullah Mohsin Fāni. Recent researches had shown that Maubad Zulfiqar Ardistani (C.1615-1670), a Zoroastrian priest was the author of the *Dabistan al Mazahib*. Earlier Mulla Firuz, Dr. S.A.H. Abidi in his *Mathnawiyyat e Fāni* Kashmiri and William Erskin on the basis of the biographical account of Mohsin Fani in the *Gul e Ra'na by* Lachmi Narain Shafiq, had observed that it did not mention the Dabistan as a production of Mohsin Fani.see for details M. Athar Ali (1999*). Pursuing an Elusive Seeker of Universal Truth; the Identity and Environment of the Author of the Dabistan i Mazahib*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland, 9, pp

[466] The *Dabistan-i-Mazhib* has been translated into several languages, including the early Punjabi scripts, '*Takre*' and '*Nagri*' between 1870 to 1880 A.D. 'Takre' Manuscript is lying in the Dogri Deptt., Jammu University, Jammu under No.: *380/156*The '*Nagri*' script is still preserved in the Research Library, University of Kashmir, SrinagarThe work has been translated into English by Shea and Troyer, and section on the Sikhs or Nanak Panthies has been translated by S. Umrao Singh Majithia in English. Dr. Ganda Singh translated, in 1939, a portion on "*Nanak Panthis*" in latter stage, both in English and Punjabi, along with footnotes. This translation was published in *Journal of India: History* published by Kerala University, Trivandrum. *Dabistan al Mazhib* was compiled in 1055 A.H., (1645 A.D.). It was published in book form by Nawal Kishore press, Cawnpore in 1904.

Before highlighting the sects and movements of the sixteenth century which were synthetic or syncretistic it is very important to clarify the meaning and scope of the terms synthetic or syncretistic in the framework of this chapter, because every term has its own bearings and significance. Both the terms are very popular and are randomly used in different fields of investigation and research, and especially so in the fields of social sciences like anthropology, linguistics, cultural studies and history of religions. But during the last few decades there has been an increasing debate over the use of the terms which are somehow value laden and normative in appeal and both terms 'synthesis' and 'syncretism' are being considered to be such.Whereas these terms are used here for categorizing and analyzing the religious thought of the subcontinent during the sixteenth century.

The main difference which lies between the term synthesis and syncretism is that synthesis is simply to combine different preexisting ideas which are relevant somehow, while syncretism is an attempt to combine ideas that are disparate and may even be contrary to one another such as the notions of monism and monotheism. Therefore, synthesis can often result in an eventual unity of the combined ideas; the syncretistic grouping of ideas may result in an incoherent, disjointed or jumbled pattern.

Syncretism is a contentious word. Some regard it as a pejorative term, referring to local versions of notionally standard `world religions' which are deemed `inauthentic' because of being blended with foreign content. Syncretistic versions of any religion do not conform to `official' models. In other contexts however, the syncretistic amalgamation of religions may be validated as a sign of cultural survival, or as a means of authorizing political dominance in a multicultural state.[467] To avoid such attached meanings it is necessary here to take it as classification of religious phenomena which resulted during the sixteenth century due to early contacts between Islam and Hinduism.

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[467]For detailed discussion on religious synthesis see: Charles Stewart; Rosalind Shaw *,Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*

Thus 'Syncretism' as I will put it here will be applied to the sects, movements and practices of the sixteenth century with a tendency to combine and mix the beliefs and practices of the two religions Islam and Hinduism or even some other religions as we will see in the case of some movements below, while I will use the category of 'Synthesis' or 'Synthetic' for the groups or figures of the period that were more concerned with the process of drawing comparisons and looking for parallels and commonalities between Hinduism and Islam. Hence 'Synthesis' is a category of the analysis in my scheme of research by which I will try to differentiate between varieties of interactions between the two religious traditions ranging from comparison and appraisal of each other's tradition to merging and absorbing each other's beliefs and practices. This polarization is not meant for any normative or judgmental categorization of the sects or movements of the period, rather it is a tool for the analysis of multiple interactions, hermeneutics and interpretations of the believers of the two major religious traditions; Islam and Hinduism in a particular historical context.

Before making any generalizations it is necessary to analyze the historical facts. I will be trying mainly to collect and analyze the historical facts in this research connected with synthetic and syncretistic aspects of religious interaction between Islam and Hinduism and during the sixteenth century. The attempt may seem inadequate, partly due to the nature of the enquiry as the religious themes are so deeply interwoven with history and partly due to my own limitations as a researcher.

While in the preceding chapters I have tried to provide the stances of early Indian response and resistance to Islam[468] and how that beside the severe insular attitude there also started the attempts to synthesize some teachings of Islam and Hinduism which resulted in form of Bhakti[469]. This chapter will mainly focus on the synthetic and syncretistic trends in the religious thought of the subcontinent during the sixteenth century.

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[468] See above Chapter 2 of this work
[469] Discussed above in Chapter 3

5.1. Synthetic Elements

5.1.1. Synthetic approaches of Sūfiā:

Both the *Sūfiā* of the subcontinent and the Yogis had been synthetic in their ideas and practices in the sense that both groups had much to share and adopt from each other from the very early period. The earliest reference to such symbioses was recorded by Al Beruni in his *Tahqiq ma lil Hind* where he mentioned the similarities of Samkhya Yoga and the Sufi ideas[470] likewise Al Hajweiri in his *Kashf al Mahjub* also points to the presence of synthetic approaches among the Muslim *Sūfiā* in his times[471]. Whether or not these commonalities resulted from the mutual confluences of Yogis and *Sūfiā*? remained a controversial issue and there had been different theories expressed in this regard that the *Sūfiā* had borrowed their ideas from the Indian mysticism[472].

There had been convergence of the Sufi and the Yogic ideas in the subcontinent during the period under review. Though the roots of this mystical synthesis can be traced back to the earlier contacts between the both groups, yet the fruits were to come in form of more synthetic approaches of the Muslim *Sūfiā* towards the Hindu system of yoga and vice versa. The pantheistic doctrine of *wahdat al wujūd* of Ibn al Arabi[473] also contributed to the development of synthetic attitudes. Among the *Sūfiā* of the

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[470] Chapter 5 p 42, 44, where he quotes from Patanjali Yoga the ideas regarding soul and compare with Sufi ideas in this regard.

[471] See his discussion about *hululiyah in kashf al Mahjub,*(Islamabd: Markaz Tahqiqat e Farsi, 1978) p.376-77

[472] Among the advocates of the Indian origins of the Sufism see Nicholson; *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. For instance Renan, Reitzenstein, Goldzihder in *Muhammad and Islam*, p 173-176 talks about the analogies between Buddhist *dhiyana* and Sufi *muraqbah*, the Noble path and Sufi *Tariqat* and regards the Sufi concept of *fana* is borrowed from the upanishadic and Vedantic thought, also Brown. *Literary History of Persia* (London, 1909) p. 416-444

[473] Muhiuddin ibn al Arabi, commonly known as al Sheikh al Akbar, he was born on 17 Ramadan 560/28 July 1165 at Murcia. Of his more important works are *al Fatūhā al Makkiyah* in 560 chapters and *Fusūs al Hikam* containing a complex system of mystical knowledge, both the works are extant and enjoy a great popularity in the mystical discourses worldwide. Al Zarkali, Khair ud Din. *Al A'alām.* vol.6, p.210

subcontinent who supported the idea of Ibn al Arabi were the figures like Ja'far Makki[474],
Mas'ūd Bak[475] Sheikh Sharaf ud din Yahya Manairi[476] and Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngir
Simnani. Jafar Makki was a much travelled and learned Sufi of the fifteenth century. In
his celebrated work *Bahr al Ma'āni* his approach towards Islam and kufr is very
significant. Islam and kufr both according to him are the veils between God and His
worshippers. As long as one remains obscured by these veils one cannot seek the
Divine.[477]Such ideas were very popular in the religious and literary circles of the
subcontinent and were perhaps contributing to the synthetic viewpoint and attitudes on
the whole for promoting an essential unity and non-difference between Islam and
Hinduism.

The pantheistic ideas were also conveyed by the poets like Mas'ud Bak, who
according to Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlavi was most expressive among the
Chishti *Sūfiā* of the subcontinent about the mystical union. To him is also attributed a
prose work entitled *Mir'at al Arifin* containing the expositions and discussions about the
pantheism.[478] Likewise Sheikh Sharaf ud din Yahya Manairi and Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngir
Simnāni were also among the supporters of the *Wujūdi* approach. Ashraf Jahāngir

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[474] Sayyad Muhammad b Nasir ud din Jafar Makki al Husaini was an eminent khalifa of Sheikh Nasir ud
Din Mahmūd Chiragh e Dilhi in Sirhind, well known for his education and knowledge. See Akhbar al
Akhyar, p165

[475] Ahmed bin Mahmud Nakhshabi Sher khan most popularly known as Mas'ūd Bak, See Dehlavi, Abdul
Haq. *Akhbar al Akhyar*, P 169, see also; Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. Gulzar e Abrar, Urdu
translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, Azkar e Abrar, p 491-492

[476] Sharaf ul Din Yahya Manairi, also known as Makhdum ul Mulk Bihari, his name was Ahmed ibn
Shaikh yahya, title Sharfuddin, and he claimed his descent from one of the prophet's Uncle's, Zubair ibn
Abdul Muttalib, belonging to the Hashimite clan of Quraish of Makkah. His grandfather, Maulana
Muhammed Tajuddin, a contemporary of shabuddin Ghori, was a celebrated scholar and mystic who had
emigrated to Manyar in Bihar, the town is presently known as Maner from the town of Al Khalil in Syria.
Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi has considered him a *Muhaqqiq* and *Mujtahid* of the path of *sulūk* and *tasawwuf*,
seeSharafuddin Yahay Manairi.see *Tāarīkh Dawat o Azīmat*, Vol 2, p.198; See Mandwi, Muhammad
Ghausi Shattāi. Gulzār e Abrār, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*, p.97-98

[477] Ja'far Makki. *Bahr al Ma'āni*. Letter no 8. (Muradabd: Ihtashamia Press,1889) p.41

[478] Dehlavi, Abdul Haq. *Akhbār al Akhyār*, p. 169

Simnāni is perhaps the best example in this regard who had left his kingdom after he had succeeded his father, in order to become a disciple of Ala ud Dawla Simnāni but was inclined to *wujūdi* ideas, which were severely criticized by his teacher so he later on joined the discipleship of Abdul Razzaq Kashani, who was an able master of *wujūdi* thought. He not only learnt the *wujūdi* doctrine but became an ardent supporter of the ideology in the Indian subcontinent. His work *Lataif e Ashrafi* records many such debates between the *wujūdi* and the *shuhūdi* Sufism in the subcontinent in a vivid style[479].

No doubt that the there had been a kind of invective attitude among the orthodox Ulama towards the *wujūdi* doctrine of the Sufia in the subcontinent as well as throughout the Islamic world from its very inception but the doctrine remained popular in the Sufi circles of the subcontinent. On the other hand many among the Indian Sufia had criticized the doctrine vehemently, among these one finds Sayad Muhammad Gesū Darāz who categorically condemned and refuted the works of Ibn al Arabi, Farid ud din Attar and Jalal ud Din Rumi which contained the pantheistic tendencies and later on Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi had also criticized and targeted the *wujūdi* ideology and his Maktubat provide an ample witness to the fact that the *wujūdi* ideas were very much popular in Sufi circles of the subcontinent and hence a severe criticism was launched. It is worth mentioning that the Sufi thought of the subcontinent had remained in the pendulum of *wahdat al wujūdi* throughout the centuries.

Besides the pantheistic approach towards Divine, Indian *Sūfiā* had also adopted the Hindu yogic metaphors and practices in a synthetic manner. Yogic practices such as *pranayama* breathing exercises and *asana* postures became a common ground between the both systems. No doubt that Sufia had not differentiated between different sects and denominations of the Indian mystics and called the Jain *Yatis* and the Hindu *Siddhas* and

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[479] *Lataif Ashrafi* vol 2 p 132-151, vol 2 31-489 life sketch

Yogis by the common epithet *Jogi*, a term which randomly appears from the very early period of these contacts. But their knowledge and adaptation of *Yogic* techniques in a synthetic manner is very much apparent in their discourses or the *Malfuzat* literature.

5.1.2 *Sūfiā and Synthesis of yogic practices:*

Among the Indian Sufi orders of the sixteenth century one comes across such approach in the Shattāri silsilah, known as such for guiding the seeker through a quick path towards God. To mention Shattāris in the list of the synthetic elements of the religious thought of the subcontinent is due to their concern with the methods of Hindu Yoga, which their masters like Muhammad Ghawth Gawāliāri[480] not only learnt and understood but also taught to their disciples. The teachings and the methods of Yoga remained a part of the Shattāri practices through later centuries as well. As we can find in the work of an eighteenth century sufi of the Shattari order Shah 'Ināyat Qādri Shattāri known as *Dastūr al 'Amal* in which he had elaborately discussed the various Yogic practices. There continued the synthetic tradition of the Shattāri Qadiris in Punjab in the form folk poetry[481] of Bullhe Shah who had synthesized the Vaishnava themes of *avatarvada* with the Islamic concept of Prophet, he adores the Prophet ﷺ not as a messenger of God but as God himself.[482]

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[480] Muhammad Ghawth was a sixteenth century Sufi scholar, to him is attributed the translation of Amartakunda into Persian. For a detail discussion of Muhammad Ghawth's synthesis of Yoga and Sufi ideas see: See Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattāri. Gulzar e Abrar, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, Azkar e Abrar,p.290-302

Carl.W. Ernest. *Sufism and Yoga according to Muhammad Ghawth*. In Sufi, issue29.Spring 1996.

[481] The Punjabi folk poetry is an oral tradition of the short rhythmic songs *like Kafis, Siharfis, Dohras, Chandas,Athwara* and *Baramaha.*These are sung at gatherings and different fairs held round the year.

[482] *Piyara pehan poshakan aya;*
Adam apna nam dharaya;
Ahad ton ban Ahmad aya;
 Nabian da sardar.

This way of establishing identity of God with the Guide here the Prophet himself was a synthesis of the concept of the *Guruvada* in the system of Nath yogis[483] with that of the Prophet. This analogy between a Punjabi Shattāri Sufi's concept of Prophet and the Nath yoga may seem farfetched apparently but historically speaking the Nath panthis or the Nath Yogis had established centers all over the region, starting from their base at Peshawar the Nath Yogis frequented throughout the Indian subcontinent. The presence of yogis in the *Jamā'at khanas* of many eminent *Sūfiā* was recorded by different Sufi accounts for instance one can find many instances of the appearence of yogis in the *Jamā'at khāanah* of Shaikh Safi al Dīn Gāzirūni of Sindh, Baba farīd, Nizam al Dīn Auliya, Nasir al Dīn Chirāgh e Dehli[484]. Moreover some of the Yogic text had been translated earlier for instance the *Yoga sutra* of Patanjali was translated by Al Birūni and *Amirta kunda* a work on *hatha yoga* was translated by Qazi Rukn al Dīn Samarqandi into Arabic and then into Persian by Sheikh Muhammad Ghaus Shattāri. The involvement and interest of Shattāri *sūfiā* reveals their synthetic approach as they were trying to combine the elements from both mystical systems; the Islamic Sufism and Hindu Yoga.

5.2. Syncretistic elements:

The syncretism of beliefs also had started in some early Islamic heresies. Thus rejection of metempsychosis by the early Muslim theologians and heresiographers[485] also

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[483] *Guruvada* had remained an essential part of all the systems of Indian Yoga generally and of and Nath system particularly which regards the God and the Guru are interchangeable in devotion and concentration.

[484] See for further details S.A. A. Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India. Delhi, 2 vol, p.335, 323

[485] Muslim theologians and heresiographers have discussed the issue at length in their discussions about sects and heresies among Muslims, while doing so they identified and the persons and the sects holding such beliefs as well as highlighted the origin and the source of such ideas. Among these one can mention for example; Baghdādi in his *Al Farq bayn al Firaq* and Al Shahristāni in his celebrated work *Al Milal wa al Nihal* has mentioned many sects among the Shi'ah who believed in *Tanāsukh* see;Al Shahristāni, *Al Milal*, p.118,121-122, 141and see also Abdul Qāhir al Baghdādi. *Al Farq bayn al Firaq* (Al Qahira:

indicates that such ideas were being adopted much earlier by some heretics.[486]Besides the syncretistic beliefs one can find various popular traditions emerged which were syncretistic by nature. In the following a brief sketch of such practices and groups will be provided which were current during the sixteenth century.

5.2.1 Popular Syncretistic practices:

There are many other such earlier syncretistic traditions which now have become a part of mass consciousness, and it is very hard to trace their origin due to the scarcity of the historical data. Indigenous local beliefs and traditions were gradually absorbed into local Muslim practice and as a result of this overlapping there started a variety of syncretistic activities. These included different popular practices centered round some historical or semi-historical figure like that of Jhūlaylaʻl, Guga Pir, Panch piriya, Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, Shah Makai, and Manki Pir and so on. The list is not exhaustive as there are many such figures throughout the subcontinent that are invoked by the Hindus as Avtars or divines and adored by Muslims as their Pirs and Saints. On the other hand, especially in the East, in Bengal, Muslim peasants commonly worship Hindu deities, such as Kali side by side with Islamic worship. In the following lines I will give a brief introduction of these early syncretistic groups;

5.2.1.1 Jhūlaylaʻl or Daryapanth:

No doubt that earliest forms of syncretistic beliefs between Islam and local Hindu traditions can be traced back to the period of first Islamic conquest in the parts of Sindh, where popular cult of the worship of river Indus developed into a syncretistic tradition of

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Matbaa al Madani) P.272-276; Ibne Hazm in *Al Fisal fi al Milal wa al Ahwa i wa al Nihal*.(Beirut: Dar al Jail,1996) vol.5 ,p. 65

[486]For instance some radical forms of Shi'ism like Druze, Nusayris and some other sects believed in *tanasukh* for detailed discussion about some of these see Rehatsek., Edward "*Doctrine of Metemsychosis and Incarnation Among Nine Heretic Muhammadan sect*" Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asaitic Society,14,1880. P 418-438.

Underolal[487], later on known as Darypanthis, Jhūlayla'l, Khawaja Khidr and Zinda-Pir[488]. It is also very interesting to note that even being a much neglected cult historically, it has now a day's re-emerged as a part of Sindhi-Hindu consciousness and from the second half of the twentieth century onwards there are many temples being erected by the Sindhi-Hindu Diaspora in the different parts of the world.

The Jhūlayla'l or the image of the tradition has become a very popular in the murtis or the icons of the Hindus in Bombay, London and many other places where the Sindhi-Hindus are living outside Pakistan since their migration after partition[489]. Moreover, the Jhūlayla'l is also a very common image to be seen in the Pakistan, An image much common in the public transport and also can be found in some shops in different parts of Pakistan which shows that there is good number of Pakistani Muslims who have belief in Zindah pir or Jhūlayla'l [490].

There are many legends concerning the river deity, called by various names, *Uderolal, Jhūlayla'l* and *Amarlal*, associated with certain historical events in Sindh during the early medieval period. It is commonly believed that, the river deity Darya Shah, incarnated himself in a family of a boatman at Nasarpur (on the banks of river Sindhu in central Sindh), in the tenth century, as their savior from the atrocities of a chief of Thatta named Mirkh Shah in lower Sindh. Having won the fierce battle, Uderolal through his miracles brought about a change of heart in the atrocious king, who also

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[487] Aitken, E.H. *Gazetteer of the province of Sindh* (Karachi: 1907) the Gazetteer also points to the various names of the same tradition in different parts of Sindh. And the cult was popular among Muslims who called Jhulelal Khawaja khizir, as well as among Hindus with the name like Uderolal.

[488] Ahmed, Aziz. *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Enviornment*,

[489] Mark, Anthony Falzon. *Cosmopolitan Connections; Sindhi Diaspora 1860-2000* (Netherland: Brill, 2004)　p.59-74.

[490] An image much common in the public transport and also can be found in some shops in different parts of Pakistan. I have personaly questionedmany people about this image and found that the common belief is that *Jhūlayla'l* is the pir of safe journey.

became his devotee. Devotional hymns, called Janam Sakhis[491] and Panjiras[492], are sung by the devotees of Daryapanth, exalting the river deity as a young warrior on a valiant horse emerging from river Sindhu, as a sage riding on palo 'sweet-water fish' against the tide, and as a jogi who received guru mantra from Gorakhnath and made a pilgrimage to the Hinglaj Devi[493]. A samadhi and a mausoleum, attributed to Jhūlayla'l and Zindah Pir, are located at the same place near village Jhijhan (in Nasarpur), where Hindus and Muslims go for pilgrimage, which is called by both Muslim and Hindu names respectively *La'l ka Maqbara* and *La'l ka Mandar*.[494] The Sufi dargah of Lal Shahbaz in Sehwan is also associated with the worship of Zindah Pir. Till today a place in the interior of the dargah is maintained by the Sufia for the worship of Hindu devotees.

5.2.1.2 Panchpiriya:

Panchpiriya or the cult of five saints remains one of the most popular practices in the subcontinent even today. But the list changes from district to district. Every area has its own list of the holy quintet, thus in Punjab it sometimes includes khawaja Moin al din

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[491] Janam Sakhi means literally birth stories, these ar based on legends usually containing miraculous birth and the feasts of the saints.

[492] *Panjiras*, five-line devotional verses (sometimes stretched to seven lines), are composed by devotees for specific occasions and presented as an offering to the exalted deity.

[493] It was a holy place of Nathpanthis, situated on the Sindh-Baluchistan border. The place is also called Nani ki Mandar and is venerated by local Baloch tribes and the pilgrimage also called 'Nani ki Haj' by local Muslims takes place before summer. The pilgrimage starts at a place near the Hao river which is 10 km from Karachi. The name of Hinglaj lends itself to the Hingol river, the largest river in Balochistan and there is also a park which takes its name from the Hingol river; the Hingol National Park comprizing 6,200 square kilometers.

[494] The tomb of Sheikh Tahir Amar lal also called Mangla son of Ratan, was built near to historical Shah Jahan Masjid and bank of river Indus. This tomb was built on his birth place in Nasārpur, see the image of this Mandar at the end of the work.

Chishti of Ajmer[495], Khawaja Qutb al dīn[496], Sheikh Nizam al dīn Auliā[497], Fakhr al dīn Abu al Khair[498] and Sultan Nasir al dīn Mahmūd[499]. A second list includes Bahā al dīn Zakariā[500], Shah Rukn e Ālam[501], Shah Shams Tabriz[502], Shiekh Jalāl Mkhdūm e Jahāniyān Gasht[503] and Baba Farid al dīn Ganj Shakar.[504] In the United Provinces and

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[495] Moin al Dīn Chishti also known as Gharib Nawāz, he was the founder of the Chishtiya order of the Indian subcontinent because he introduced and established the order here. According to the Sufi Tadhkiras and Malfuzat he reached the Ajmer even prior to the Islamic rule during the time of Pirthvi Raj Chauhan, for details see: Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. Gulzār e Abrār, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*,p.27-29

[496] Khwaja Syed Muhammad Qutb al Dīn Bakhtiar Kaki (born 1173-died 1235) was a renowned Muslim Sufi mystic, saint and scholar of the Chishti Order from Delhi, India. He was the disciple and the spiritual successor of Mo'īnal Dīn Chishti the founder of Chishtiyah order in the Indian subcontinent.Afīf, Shams Sirāj. *Tarikh e Froz Shāhi*, p.78-82; see also Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. *Gulzār e Abrār*, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*,p 39-42;

[497] Sultān al Mashāikh, Mehbūb-e-Ilāhi, Hazrat Shaikh Khwaja Syed Muhammad Nizam al Dīn Auliyā R.A (1238 – 3 April 1325) was a famous Sufi saint of the Chishti Order in the Indian Subcontinent.

[498] He was the eldest son of Khawaj Moin ud Din Chishti. See Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. Gulzar e Abrar, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*, p.32

[499] Nasir al Dīn Mahmūd Chirāgh e Dilhi, **(**1274-1356) was a 14th century mystic-poet and a Sufi saint of the Chishti Order. He was a *murid* (disciple) of noted Sufi saint, Nizam al Dīn Auliya, and later his successor. See; Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. *Gulzār e Abrār*,, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*,p.115

[500] Baha al Dīn Zakariya, also known as Bahā al Haq (1170-1268), he was the disciple of renowned Sufi master Shaikh Shahāb al Dīn Suhrawardi who had awarded him Khilafat only after 17 days of stay at his Khānqah in Baghdad. For fifteen years he went from place to place to preach Islam and after his wanderings Bahawal Haq settled in Multan in 1222. See Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattarwi. Gulzar e Abrar, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*, p.55-56

[501] Sheikh rukn al Dn abu al fath commonly known Rukn e Alam and also called Shah Rukne Alam was among the eminent Sufi saints from Multan, Pakistan.The Shaikh was the son of Pir Sadar-Al-Din Arif born and the grandson and successor of Shaikh Baha-Ud-Din Zakariya See; Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattari. *Gulzār e Abrār*,, Urdu translation by Jevri, Fazal Ahmad, *Azkār e Abrār*,, p.458-61

[502] Shah Shams Tabrez, Shams al Din Muhammad a Persian Sufi who is considerd tobe the spiritual instructor of Mawlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumi who had a great reverence for him which is reflected from the title of one of his poetic collection *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrīzī*.

[503] . Makhdoom was born in Uch near Bahawalpur. His father, Syed Ahmed Kabir, was the youngest son of Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari, who came to the South Asia in 630 AH (1232 AD) from Bukhara, see; Mandwi, Muhammad Ghausi Shattari. *Gulzār e Abrār*,,p112-113

[504] Farid al Din sulaiman bin Qazi Sho'ab bin Ahmad known as Baba Farid Ganjshakar, (1173–1266) or (1188 - May 7, 1280), was a 12th-century Sufi preacher and saint of the Chishti Order. According to Gulzar e Ibrar he died in 664 AH at the age of 95. *Azkār e Abrār*, translation of *Gulzār e Abrār*,, p.48-49

Bengal the quintet includes usually Ghāzi Miyān or Salar Mas'ud Ghazi, [505] in some other parts of subcontinent he is also called Satya pir and is regarded the main figure, with him are joined four of his disciples or fellow martyrs. The Panchpiriya s have syncretistic outlook in almost all parts of the subcontinet particularly in the areas where Muslims and Hindus are living closer because many Hindus also share the belief in five saints with their Muslim neighbours and some lists do include some Hindu deities as well.

5.2.1.3 Salār Mas'ūd Ghāzi:

The earliest and most widely known syncretistic practices which were recorded by the historians were around the *dargah* of *Sipah Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi in Bahraich, near Ayodhya in what is now Uttar Pradesh. The tradition of pilgrimage to the tomb of *Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi reaches back into the twelfth century during the rule of the Ghorids, though the architectural complex of the tomb was erected later, approximately in the year 1250, by Sultan Nasīr al Dīn Mahmūd[506]. We also find reference to *Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi in Amir Khusrow's historical work *'Ejāz i Khusrawi*[507]. Barani in his chronicle informs that *Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi was Sultān Mahmūd Ghaznawi's nephew.[508]

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[505] He was the nephew of Sultan Mahmūd Ghaznavi, whose tomb is in Bharaich, where was martyred in a battle. Abdul Rehman Chishti wrote a biography of *Salār* Mas'ūd which was translated and by Muahammad Siddiq Hasan Qadiri Bhahraichi. Under the title *Mirat e Mas'ūdi wa Tarikh e Bahraich* (Ghazi dargah Bharaich: Almarkaz Alislami Dar al Fikr, 1990)

[506] Nasir ud din Mahmud, (rulled 1246–1266) was the eighth sultan of the Mamluk Sultanate (Slave dynasty). He was the youngest son of Shams ud din Iltutmish (1211–1236), and he succeeded Ala ud din Mas'ūd after the chiefs replaced Mas'ūd .As a ruler, Mahmūd was known to be very religious, spending most of his time in prayer and renowned for aiding the poor and the distressed. However, it was actually his Deputy Sultan or Naib, Ghiyas ud din Balban, who primarily dealt with the state affairs. After Mahmud's death in 1266, Balban (1266–1287) rose to power as Mahmud had no children to be his heir. Minhaj-us Siraj dedicated his famous work *Tabquat e Nasiri* to Nasiruddin Mahmūd. See Wasti, Syed Raza. *Biographical Dictionary of South Asia*, p.390. Frishta, Muhammad Qasim. *Tarikh e Frishtah* Vol.1, P 268-276, for the contemporary records of his life see; Juzjani. *Tabquat e Nasiri,*p201-227

[507] Amir Khusro, *Ejāz e Khusravi* (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore Press,1867)Vol 2 p. 155

In the year 1340 Muhammad bin Tughluq performed a pilgrimage to Bahraich, accompanied by Ibn Battuta, who described not only the legends connected with the saint, but even some of the details of his cult, and in particular, the ritual of the veneration of the saint's banner and spear[509]. More interesting is the account of the visit of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, who considered him to be the saint's spiritual disciple. As testified by the historian Shams Sirāj 'Afif, the saint *Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi appeared in the Sultān's dream, told him to adopt a tougher policy with respect to the followers of other religions, to propagate Islam more persistently, and also to get ready for the day of the Last Judgment. The next morning, says 'Afif, the Sultān got his head shaved, like a neophyte being initiated into a Sufi fraternity, and started spending every night in prayers.[510]

Another eminent historian, Abul Fazl, refers to the popularity of *Salār* Mas'ūd's cult, and describes how people from remote districts carry offerings and multicolored flags to the saint's tomb. He further informs that multitudes of pilgrims set out from Agra to Bahraich by night, hollering, making merry and disturbing the Mughal capital. Abul Fazl also informs that the Mughal Emperor Akbar, also showed particular interest in these practices and in the disguise of an ordinary man walked several stages with the pilgrims' procession on the way to the saint's '*urs just for the sake of observing their practices*[511]. Perhaps due to the syncretistic nature of the practices Sikandar Lodhi in the year 1490 had forbidden the celebration of his '*urs* in the first week of the month of *jet'h* (May–June) on the pretext of the unseemliness of the rites being performed there[512].

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[508] Zia ud din Barani. *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi* (Asitic Society of Bengal, 1862) p .491

[509] Ibn e Batūtah, p. 190

[510] Shams Siraj Afif, *Tārikh e Firoz Shāhi*,P 372-375

[511] Abu al Fazl, *Akbar Nāmah*, p 212.

[512] Abdullah. *Tārikh e Dā'ūdi*, edited by Sheikh Abdul Rashid (Aligarh, 1954) p.38; see also Rizq ullah Mushtāqi. *Waqi'āt e Mushtāqi*, edited and translated by I.H. Siddiqui(Rampur,2002)

The most comprehensive record of Salar Mas'ud's biography is *Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman Chishti's *Mir'āt i Mas'ūdı* compiled in the seventeenth century. *Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman ,wrote the *Mir'āt* account according to his own preface on the basis of a dream in which the *Sultān al Shuhadā* *Salār* Mas'ūd Ghāzi appeared in his dream and inspired him to write the account.[513] He interprets numerous episodes of *Salār* Mas'ūd's feats and miracles as visions, revealed from above[514]. More interestingly both the Muslims the Hindus venerated Ghāzi Miyān. The Muslims regarded him a warrior for faith and a martyr, while the Hindus called him by affectionate nicknames, emphasizing the saint's young age: *Bale Miyan*[515], *Bale Pır*[516], *Hathıle Pır* Obstinate Saint[517]. The last nickname is more expressive of the syncretistic nature of beliefs related to the figure of *Salār* Mas'ūd, as the word *hathıla* is commonly used in Krishna-bhakti songs or bhajans as an epithet for young Krishna, a naughty, obstinate and mischievous child. This nickname, as with the other affectionate names, by laying emphasis on the saint's young age, automatically suggests the idea that in the consciousness of the Hindus *Salār* Mas'ūd became identified with child Krishna, the most acclaimed hero of popular Hinduism.

There were numerous factors conducive to the transformation of *Salār* Mas'ūd's tomb into an inter-religious sanctuary and a source of syncretism. First, and the foremost reason was perhaps the historical topography of the place itself as the saint's tomb was erected where there used to be a sun temple, which was located on the banks of a sacred reservoir '*surya kund*' a place consecrated by the Hindu mythological tradition. Second, the mutual identification of the legends of the saint's life with local deities, most likely with Rama and Krishna, thus analogies of young age, marriage, and the tragic

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[513] Abdul Rehman Chishti,*Mir'āt e Mas'ūdi*

[514] I found the Urdu translation of *Mir'āt e Mas'ūdi* by Muahammad Siddiq Hasan Qadiri Bhahraichi. Under the title *Mir'āt e Mas'ūdi wa Tarikhe Bahraich* (Ghazi dargah Bharaich: Almarkaz Alislami Dar al Fikr, 1990)

[515] A Hindi title which means revered boy.

[516] Again a Hindi phrase which means boy saint.

[517] Rizvi, Athar Abbas. *A History of Sufism in India,* Vol-1.p 314

death provided the ground for syncretism. The veneration of Ghāzi Miyān remained syncretistic in its form and manifestation throughout the history.[518]

5.2.1.4 Lal Shahbaz Qalandar:

Abu Ali Lal shahbaz Qalandar was from Marwand in Sistan who eventually setteled in the town of Sehwan in Sindhin the Indian subcontinent. His name Lal Shahbaz (the red falcon) is attributed to different legends about him. According to some it was due to his ability to attract flocks of birds to his shrine[519]. While according to some others he had ability to fly and his wearing of red clothes particularly was the reason to call him Lal Shahbaz.[520]The shrine remains one of the most popular centers of mystical practices for instance the *dhamāl, urs and Ashūra* celeberation at the shrine are essentially syncretistic as thay merge together the beliefs and practices of Sunni, Shi'ah and the Yogic origin[521].

5.2.2 Alfi or the millennium movements and syncretism:

The religious thought of the sixteenth century was also charged with the Alfi or the millennial currents as it was nearly a thousand years since the advent of the Prophet Muhammadﷺ, and a belief and concern for the advent of a rejuvenator or an Imām or Mahdi was common. It will be very interesting to observe in what follows that the main thought currents of the period under review were somehow millennial in their appeal. This longing for some *coming one* was shared by all the section of Islamic society i.e. the Sunnis, the Shias and even the rationalist or philosophers.

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[518] For a more detailed account of the common beliefs and practices related to Sālar Ghazi and his Dargah in Baharaich see the first hand and vivid account of Tahir Mahmood, *The Dargah of Sayyid Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzi in Baharaich; Legend, Tradition and Reality, Muslim shrines in India*; edited by Christian, W Troll (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989)

[519] Phyllis G. Jestice (edited) *Holy People of the World: A Cross-cultural Encyclopedia,* p. 493

[520] This is common and well spread explanation of the name Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, which one of my informants of the Sehwan Sharif had told me.

[521] Frembgen, *At the Shrine of the Red Sufi* J. Ripken, Trans (*Karachi*: Oxford University Press, 2011) gives an anthropological account of his visit to the shrine of the Sufi saint during the *urs*.

This socio- religious ferment of the sixteenth century led to the emergence of different Syncretistic groups among the Muslims as well as among the Hindus. Some of these Syncretistic groups even survive to this day like the Nūrbakhshiyah and the Raushaniyah, while others extinguished with the passage of time like the Imperial Syncretism or the Divine Faith of Jalāl al dīn Muhammad Akbar.

5.2.2.1 Raushaniya:

The founder of the sect was Miān Bāyazid Ansāri 932/1525-980/1572 also known as Pīr e Roushan[522]. He spread his religious ideas during the second half of the sixteenth century Bāyazid Ansāri was born in Jalandhar and belonged to a learned family and it seems that his father Abdullah had the sympathies of Afghan ruler because according to the contemporary sources soon after Mughal Emperor Baber got the power in Delhi, his family moved to Kanigaram a place in South Afghanistan.

According to the author of *Dabistān al Madhāhib* his early age was badly influenced by the strained relations between his father Abdullah and his mother Banin, and this had a great effect on his nature. From his early age he used to ponder over the questions like; 'the heavens and earth are here; but where is God? It is also mentioned that he wanted to become a disciple of his relative Khawaja Ismael, who was a saintly figure but his father stopped him as it will be an insult for him to become a disciple of one who is in an inferior position than his own. Instead his father asked him to become of disciple of the descendents of Bahā al dīn Zakaria of Multan.[523] Historical sources are silent about his creer and learning except that his father had taught him the basics of religion. Later on he himself started teaching a new creed or ideology which was

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[522] *Dabistān al Madhāhib*, P304 for a detailed biography and teachings of Bāyazid Ansāri see Tariq Ahmed. *Religio- Political Ferment in the North West Frontier During the Mughal Period, The Raushniyah Movement (*Delhi: Idara e Adabiat,200)

[523] Dabistan al Madhahib, p.304

according to him based on his own mystical experiences and the revelations which he thought that had received from God[524].

All the contemporary records like *Akbar Nāmah* of Abu al Fazal, *Muntakhab al Tawārikh* of Abdul Qādir Badāuni and *Tabaqāt e Akbari* of Nizām al dīn Bakhshi refer to the Raushaniyah movement and its founder. No doubt that the courtly chroniclers were largely concerned with the revolts and the campaigns of the Raushaniya. And perhaps the importance which was given to this movement by the official records was due to the warfare which continued between the Mughal rulers and the followers of Raushaniyah for a century. Besides the Mughal historians there are some other works of the critics of the Bāyazid Ansāri and his movement. The severest one was of Akhund Derwiza an Afghan leader who considered it his religious responsibility to check the influence of the heresy of Bāyazid Ansāri. There are three works of Akhund derwiza which discuss the teachings and beliefs of Raushaniyas these are *Makhzan al Islām, Tazkirat al Abrār wa al Ashrār* and *Irshād al Tālibīn*. No doubt that he treats the Raushaniya very harshly but his works are very important for they provide us with a contemporary Afghan viewpoint regarding the tenets of this movement which was largely based among Afghans.

Apart from these the author of *Dabistān al Madhāhib* also provides with an objective discussion of Bayazid and his teachings without going for or against his doctrines. It is also very interesting that here the author had with him one of the basic books written by Bayazid himself known by the name *Hālnāmah* as he gives a lot of quotations from his work. The core of the teachings which one can derive from these different sources can be described as under:

i.   Pantheistic concept about God; no doubt that according to Sufia a person can experience Union with God momentarily and this was considered by all of them

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[524] Ibid p.305

as a state or feeling but according to Bayazid this Union was permanent, and every existing object was but His form.

ii. The Murshad is divine authority and that whatever he taught his disciples was received by revelation and that angel Jibrael used to bring these revelations.

iii. Bāyazīd also thought that facing towards *Qiblah* was not necessary for worship.

iv. The most significant idea in his teaching was belief in transmigration of the soul that reveals the syncretistic outlook of his mysticism.

v. Hindus were also initiated and were allowed to practice according to their own faith.[525]

5.2.2.2 The Imperial millennial syncretism or the divine Faith (Din Ilahi)

The religious views of the Emperor Akbar are much relevant to the schema of our discussion here. The sources, from which his religious views can be derived, are, besides Abu al Fazl's *Āin e Akbari*, the *Muntakhab al Tawārīkh* by 'Abdul Qādir bin Mulūk Shāh Badāyūni and the *Dabistān al Madhāhib* a work written about sixty years after Akbar's death. We should not forget the valuable testimony of some of the Portuguese Missionaries whom Akbar called from Goa.[526] All of the contemporary historians had provided us a detailed account of the development of the religious ideas of Emperor Akbar. Beside the contemporary records the religious views of Akbar and his *Din e Ilāhi* has remained highly contested and much debated subject for the national as well as international historians of the period. There are many wonderful and comprehensive works written by different perspectives on the subject[527]but our main concern is here to view the Syncretistic nature of his approach.

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[525] Ibid

[526] Among these the records of Rodolpho Aquaviva, Antonio de Monserrato, Francisco Enriques, have reached us and of whom the first is mentioned by Abu al Fazl under the name of *Padri Radalf*.

[527] Almost all the historians of medieval period had discussed his views, besides there are some works which deal with Emperor Akbar and his religious views exclusively. Among these see;
Nizami, Khaliq Ahmed. *Akbar and Religion* (Delhi :Idara e Adabiyat ,1989)

In order to provide an estimate of the religious views of *Dīn e Ilahi*, we must penetrate through the thick layers of the contemporary narratives of the period Abu al Fazl and Abdul Qadir Badāyūni and others on the one hand and on the other the modern historiography under which Akbar's personality and his religious views lays buried. This Mughal emperor is the most well known and extensively studied figure of sixteenth century Indian sub continent, here I will give but a brief summary of his religious views for the purpose of our analysis and that is; whether his approach was a synthetic or syncretistic in its nature?

It appears that the religious views of the Emperor were an outcome of his syncretistic approach towards the religion. Thus we learn from Abdul Qādir Badāuni that after consolidating his powers the Emperor ordered to construct different religious buildings. Among these religious buildings was a meeting place near a tank called *Anūptalāo*, where Akbar, accompanied by a few courtiers, met the 'Ulamās and lawyers of the realm. The building was known as *Ibādat khānah* where the Muslim orthodox Ulamās, as well as heretics and the scholars of other religions discussed their views. The result, to which the discussions led, can be seen from the following extract:

From this day henceforth, 'the road of opposition and difference in opinion' lay open, and remained so till His Majesty was appointed Mujtahid of the empire." [528]

We learn from both Badāyūni and Abu al Fazl that these discussions were intended to reach at some consensus in different matters of religion and law. But strangely enough the result was that the moderator who was Emperor himself was to create a new creed and new laws and even adopted new methods of worship and new rites. He and doctors of his new creed went even further as we learn from his critics to

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Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury. *The Dīn e Ilāhi or the Religion of Akbar* (New Delhi: Munshi Manohar Lal Press1952)

[528] Badāyūni, Abd al Qadir. *Muntakhab al-Tawārikh*, vol 2, p.200

ridicule Islamic values and rituals, with a view that a thousand years had passed since the advent of Prophet ﷺ of Arabia and now the new era starts for which the Emperor himself was the Guide.[529]

Contemporary Muslim records and chronicles highlight the resentment of the Muslim Masses as well as the Muslim scholars on the heterodox nature of the views of Akbar. This heterodoxy was not the product of Emperor's mind alone; rather there was an agon of the heterodoxies which resulted in the syncretistic views of the Emperor. Due to the eclectic approach of the Emperor himself many heretic from different parts of the world reached in his court. These were the persons who had been persecuted by the rulers and the scholars of their respective localities had declared them to be heretics, here they had found a safe place to live as well as the opportunity to spread their beliefs[530].

Persian heretics the *Nuqṭawis* also played an important role in this emperial syncretism. Sharif of Amuli who considered himself the restorer of the Millennium, persecuted as he was in Persia for his views, also reached the court. As soon as the Emperor heard of him, he invited him one night to a private audience. It seems that Emperor had surrounded himself with an audience of mixed and heretic principles, he had started to doubt the truth of the Islām, being confound by different religious approaches he lost sight of his real object, the search of truth.[531]

Thus in a short while the court of Akbar was overwhelmed with the figures known for their heterodox views, who had successfully attached themselves to the emperor. Among these one finds the names of Mulla Muḥammad of Yazd commenced openly to revile the *Ṣaḥābah* and told queer stories about them, and also of Bīr Baṛ, Abū al Fazl, and Hakīm Abu al Fath, who successfully influenced the emperor and led him to

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[529]The ilāhi era was introduced by Akbar at the beginning of 29th year of his reign 8th Rabiʿ al Awwal 992AH/10March 1584, 29 to 32 days were reckoned for month and the last two days were called *rozo'shab* as per Ain no. 1 *Akbar Namah* vol-3

[530] See Badāyūni *Muntakhab al Tawārikh*, vol 2, p 211.

[531] Ibid. Vol.2, p. 225

disregard the inspiration, prophet-hood, the miracles of the prophet and of the saints, and even the whole law. We come across the persons like Deb Chand Rajah Manjholah who held that Allah after all had great respect for cows, else the cow would not have been mentioned in the first chapter of the Qur'ān. Bīr Baṛ also impressed upon the emperor that the sun was the primary origin of everything, hence it was but proper to worship and reverence this luminary; and people in praying should face towards the east, instead of turning to the west as east was the direction of rising sun[532]. For similar reasons, the regard for fire and water, stones, trees, and other forms of existence, even to cows and their dung, to the mark on the forehead and the Brahminical thread was justified by the Hindu Bramans and Pandits surrounding the court.

Persian heretics the *Nuqṭawīs* also played an important role in this emperial syncretism. Sharif of Amuli who considered himself the restorer of the Millennium, and was persecuted in his homeland Persia for his heretical views, also reached the court. As soon as the Emperor heard of him, he invited him one night to a private audience. It seems that Emperor had surrounded himself with an audience of mixed and heretic principles, he had started to doubt the truth of the Islām, falling from one perplexity into the other, he had lost sight of his real object, the search of truth which was his main objective from these religious discussions.[533]

The large number of learned men of all denominations and sects that came from various countries to court, and received personal interviews contributed to the syncretistic creed of Akbar. Akbar might had initiated these discussions in his Royal 'Ibādat khānah for the sake of knowledge and for this he can be coined as a Comparative Religionist in true spirit but the end result was not the knowledge or some science or any academy for that purpose, rather a syncretistic approach towards all the religious questions from the wonders of nature to the subtleties of revelation and prophet-hood and

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[532] According to Smith Birbar was a Saurite or a sunworshipper see; Smith, V.A. Akbar. P 165

[533] Badāyūni, Abd al Qādir. *Muntakhab al Tawārīkh*, vol.2, p. 225

even the worship. Thus by collecting the opinions of everyone, retaining whatever he agreed of, and rejecting everything which was against his dispositions and defied his wishes he introduced a syncretistic system of his own. His syncretistic system was a selection out of all sorts of religious practices and sectarian beliefs, without a peculiar way of selection principle. [534]

The syncretism of Emperor Akbar and his courtiers was intentional and intellectual as compared to other common forms of syncretistic trends of the period. At times he requested some Brahmins to prepare for him some particular texts or liturgies based in Hindu traditions that resulted in development of some syncretistic texts. Thus we learn of a Brahmin whose name was Purukhotam whom he asked to invent particular Sanskrit names for all things in existence. At other times, a Brahmin of the name of Debi was pulled up the wall of the castle, sitting on a *charpai*, till he arrived near a balcony where the emperor used to sleep. Whilst thus suspended, he instructed the emperor in the secrets and legends of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of Hindus, as Brahma, Mahadev, Bishn, Krishna and Rama.

This patronized effort at syncretism by the Emperor also resulted in compilation of some strange texts and odd pieces of literature. Thus between the years 1575 and 1580, an anonymous author, likely a Brahman, composed a strange but noteworthy Sanskrit text at Akbar's request titled *Allahupaniṣad*[535] . The text included a number of Perso-Arabic words with a focus on the multi-valence of the word Akbar, which may mean great, particularly in reference to God, and was also the proper name of the Emperor himself. There are many other such references which show that Emperor Akbar frequently drew upon the ambiguous meaning of his name, particularly by invoking the common Islamic

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[534] Ibid. Vol.2, p. 256.

[535] B.N.Luniya, *Evolution of Indian culture,p.*311

phrase "Allāhu akbar"God is great in contexts where it could also mean "Akbar is God." The eighth verse of Allahupaniṣad used this phrase twice, and the brief work also directly referenced the reigning sovereign in two separate verses. These read identically: "Muhammad Akbar is Allah's messenger." Here in Allahupaniṣad the name of Akbar is the inserted instead of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ, as the messenger of God.[536]

Whether or how this *Allahupaniṣad* or other similar texts influenced the public remains unclear, but the text nonetheless indicates a striking cross-cultural effort at syncretism by the intellectuals during the period under review.Apart from intellectual and the liturgical or the ritual aspects the syncretistic design of the Emperor also involved some doctrinal issues. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls especially took an important place in this *Dīn e Ilāhi* or the *Tauhīd e Ilāhi* as per Abu al Fazl. It was accepted by the emperor as a universal phenomenon and thus was considered a valid doctrine, likewise he also accepted the truth of Zoroaster's doctrines.He also learned the religious terms and rites of the old Pārsīs who had come from Nausāri in Gujrāt, and ordered Abū al Fazl to make arrangements, that sacred fire should be kept burning at court by day and by night, according to the custom of the ancient Persian kings, in whose fire-temples it had been continually burning; for fire was one of the manifestations of God, and 'a ray of His rays.[537]

He is also reported to have openly worshipped the sun and the fire by prostrations; and the courtiers were ordered to rise, when the candles and lamps were lighted in the palace. On the festival of the eighth day of Virgo, he put on the mark on the forehead, like a Hindu, and appeared in the Audience Hall, when several Brahmins tied, by way of auspiciousness, a string with jewels on it round his hands, thus the custom of Rākhī or tying pieces of clothes round the wrists as amulets was also accepted as a rite.

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[536] Akbar often ordered Persian authors to eschew the praise of Muhammad and is even reported to have unsuccessfully attempted to emend the Kalima in 1580 to read; there is no God but God and Akbar is his representative.

[537] Badāyūni vol 2,(urdu) p 471

But the more interesting feature of the syncretistic approach of the emperor was the denial of the existence of *Jinns*, of angels, and of all other beings of the invisible world, as well as the miracles of the prophet and the saints; he rejected the successive testimony of the witnesses of our faith, the proofs for the truths of the Qur'ān as far as they agree with man's reason, the existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body, and future rewards and punishments in as far as they differed from metempsychosis[538].

Many other features were adopted from the mystical expressions and were appropriated for the syncretistic use by emperor. Thus we learn about some sufi figures who interpreted the pantheistic ideas of the Sufism in support of Akbar's thought. Among these one finds *Tāj al Dīn* of Dihlī, who discussed with emperor about some unusual issues such as the ultimate salvation by faith of Pharaoh which is mentioned in the *Fusūs al Ḥikam*, or the excellence of hope over fear, and many other. He also said that infidels would, of course, be kept forever in hell, but it was not likely, nor could it be proved, that the punishment in hell was eternal. His explanations of some verses of the Qur'ān, or of the Tradition of the Prophet, were often far-fetched. Besides, he also impressed that *Insān i Kāmil* (perfect man) referred to the ruler of the age, from which he inferred that the nature of a king was holy. Even the *sijdah* (prostration), which people mildly call *zamīnbos* (kissing the ground,) he allowed to be due to the Insān-i Kāmil; he looked upon the respect due to the king as a religious command, and called the face of the king *Ka'ba i Murādāt*, the sanctum of desires, and *Qibla i ḥājāt*, the cynosure of necessities[539].

There had been great debate as regards to the religious dispositions of the emperor Akbar; whether he remained a Muslim or turned an apostate or a heretic? To decide all this is not the object of our research, but which can be concluded from his ideas is that his conception of monotheism was so crude that he was led to the Veneration of sun as supreme embodiment of God's effulgence in the material world. This attitude of laxity

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[538] Ibid

[539] Ibid vol 2(urdu) p 469

and openness of Akbar and his courtiers resulted in development of his syncretistic formula. He reached to a syncretistic hotchpotch of rationalism and pantheism and of eclecticism and innovation without any effort at synthesis. Whatever were the contributors of his *Tauhid e Ilāhi* his views were not even momentarily systematic for building up a religious brotherhood or order as his imperial cult withered even before the decline of his power.

5.3 Imported Syncretistic trends;

Another type or category of the syncretistic trends which influenced the religious thought during the sixteenth century, were the trends which were not based in the subcontinent but their followers and preachers had brought them here. Following the contemporary Persian chroniclers and historians three such groups can be highlighted here; the Hurūfi trends, the Nuqtawis and the Nurbakhshis. All these started in Iran but persecuted as these were in their homeland, many of their leaders and proponents had reached in the Indian subcontinent. More interestingly these Iranian thought patterns contained some of the ideas which were closer to Hinduism than to Islam; like their belief in metempsychosis and incarnation. It seems unavoidable here to mention few highlights as regards to these foreign syncretistic trends.

5.3.1 Hurūfis:

Hurūfis were a mystical sect that spread in Persia, Anatolia and Azerbaijan in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. It drew heavily from kabalistic mysticism. The founder of the sect is Fadlullah Astar Abādi also known as Naimi (1340-1394). Fadlallah was born in the year 740AH 1339CE, according to the biographiers of his life at a very early age in1357when he was seventeen he was inspired by a mystical verse of Rumi and had severed his connections with the material world and decided to set for hajj on foot. But

later on as a result of series of dreams and mystical experiences he founded a new sect known as Hururfism.[540]

His teachings were condemned for heresy and he was executed in 1394 in Alinja near Nakhichevan by Miran Shah Son of Timūr.[541] The centre of his influence was Baku and most of his followers came from Shirvan. Some of his distinguished followers were executed while others were instructed by him in his last will to hide and disperse in different areas[542]. No doubt his executions added a more secret character to his sect as well as its syncretistic tendencies helped them to spread their teachings in the guise of mysticicsm.

Fadlullah taught the divinisation of man: God must be sought in man himself and the Throne of God is the heart of man. Fadlullah believed that he himself was the manifestation of God [543].Fadlullah promoted an esoteric interpretation of Quran based upon numerical sciences of letters or Hurūrfs and thus his followers were known as Hurūfis. He draw a conclusion about the unity of the universe and actually all the letters represented a single one, which would only manifest itself when man reaches the level of *insāne e kāmil i.e.*perfect man. In the end all of Fadlullah's doctrines, including the very intricate science of letters *ilm al hurūf*, converged to demonstrate the most important and greatest of all secrets that man is the Divine. This anthropomorphic tendency will also influence the development of syncretistic tendencies in the mystic circles of his followers.

Another important idea which was taught by Fadlullah was that of the epochal evolution according to which the time was linear and was devided into three epoches of

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[540] For the biographical details of Fadlallah Astarabadi see; Basher Shahzad, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis. (*Oxford:Oneworld Publications,2006)

[541] Ibid, here author has pointed out that generally it is held that Miran Shah himself conducted the execution which seems a legend as Fazlallah was not a huge threat for Timor or his son.

[542] Ibid p 39-40

[543] Ibid

nabuwwah from Ādam to Muhammad☷; that of *walāyah* from Ali through Hasan Askari to Fadlullah; and that of *ulūhiyyah* beginning with Fadlullh.[544]

Hurufism contained within its teaching a Kabbalistical[545] doctrine based on the science of letters. It also taught an anthropomorphic and mystical pantheism. Hurūfism was a syncretism of different ideas and interpretations of cosmogony, hermeneutics and mythologies current in the medieval milieu. The teachings of Fadlullah reveal his awareness of the early apoclytic traditions of the Jews and Christians and different messianic currents of the period or that he had adopted these themes from somewhere, whatever the case might be this syncretistic Iranian teaching had reached and influenced the religious and mystical circles of the subcontinent by that time. After discussing the basic teachings of Hurūfism it can be concluded here that many of these ideas provided a substance to the syncretistic interpretation of the *Dīn e Ilāhi* of Akbar.

5.3.2 Nuqtawis:

Another important trend which was also syncretistic in its nature but was not of the Indian origin was the Nuqtwi school of thought, which like the preceding Hurufi sect had originated in Iran but soon some of its leading figures reached in the Indian subcontinent. The Nuqtawi ideas were based on the thought of Mahmud of Pasikhawn, their attitude towards Islam was that of a deviated sect. according to their belief Mahmud presented himself as reappearance or a complete appearance of Prophet Muhammad ☷

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[544] Bashir, Shahzad. "*Deciphiring the cosmos from creation to apocalypse; the Hurufiyyah Movement and Medieval Islamic Esotericism*" in *Imagining the End; Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America.* Abbas Amanat, Magnus T. Bernhardsson I.B.Tauris, 2002. P 168-187

[545] Kabbalah was a Jewish esoteric mystical sect which based its teaching on the science of letters, and the mystical powers of the Hebrew alphabets.

and thought that in his body all the purity and powere of the Prophets and the saints appeared, and styled himself as *Shakhs e wāhid* or the Nuqta hence the title Nuqtawi.[546]

He also regarded the sun and the fire too be the same and venerated the sun and declared it to be the sanctum for worship. He also believed in metempsychosis and cyclical notion of time. The author of *Dabistān al Madhāhib* provides us with many such details of this belief like those who wear the sewn cloth during Hajj will be reborn again as squall. In one of his works *al Mīzān* he stated that from the start of this age till the next ages starts there is a laps of sixteen thousand years and out of these sixteen years eight thousand years are for the prophecy of the *'Arab* and after that the next eight thousand years will be for the *'Ajam* or the non Arabs. He also proclaimed that with him starts the *'Ajam* cycle.[547]

The syncretistic framework of the Nuqtawis became very popular in the subcontinent and the main reason behind that was the severe persecution of the Nuqtawis in their native soil Iran which led many of their adherents to migrate to Indian subcontinent. Here the Nuqtawis found a warm reception in the court of Emperor who was deeply influenced by these ideas which nurtured his own syncretistic design.[548]

5.3.3 Nūrbakhshiya:

The followers of Sayyad Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Abdullah, generally known by his epithet Nurbakhsh (795-869/1393-1465). He was born in Quhistan. He was a disciple of Khawājah Ishāq Kuttalāni, who in turn was khalifah of Sayyad Ali Hamadāni. In 826/1423 he openly proclaimed himself to be Al Mahdi. Though the idea

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[546] Ardistani, Maubid. *Dabistān al Madhāhib,* p. 300
[547] Ibid 301
[548] See Badāyuni. *Muntakhab al Twārīkh ,*vol 2 p

that a Guided one will come at the end of time was common in all the groups of Muslim society, nevertheless it was stronger among the Shiʻah it served as the basis for their fundamentals like the concepts of *Imāmah* and so on. Though the movement started in Iran but it gained a significant number of followers in the subcontinent during the sixteenth century.

The founder of the sect in the subcontinent was Shams al Dīn from a place Talish in Iraq who had migrated to Kashmir in the time of Fateh Shah (892-898/1486-93).[549]According to Frishtah he started preaching Shiʻism in grab of *tassawuf*.[550]He was successful in influencing the Chak tribe in Kashmir, who became his disciples and helped him to spread his ideas to Laddakh and Baltistan.[551]*Tārīkh Rashidi* a sixteenth century chronicle also points to the heterodox nature of the sect that their teachings were neither in conformity with the Sunni and nor with the Shiʻah.[552]According to the *Tarikh e Rashidi* the author who was a Mughal Commander had sought the *fatwa* of ʻulamā as regards the doctrines of the sect and informed that the ʻulamā repudiated their beliefs as well as rejected the claims of Nūrbakhsh that God had commanded him to do away all the differences among the people, no matter be it on the matters of laws i.e. *ahkām* or in the fundamental principles *al usūl* among all the religions of world.[553]

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[549] Maulavi Muhammad Shafi, *Maqālāt*, ed Ahmed Rabbāni (Lahore, 1972) vol2. P. 12

[550]Qasim, Muhammad. *Tārīkh e Frishta*.vol 2, p. 671

[551] A significant number of Nūrbakhshi are living in these areas even today, see for the present situation of the Nūrbakhshis see Bashir, Shazad. *Messianic hopes and Mystical Visions; Nurbakhshiya between Medieval and modern Islam* (South Carolina univ.2003)

[552] Mirza Muhammad Hayder Dughlat. *Tārīkh e Rashidi.* English Translation by N Elias and Denison Ross, p. 435-437

[553] Ibid

5.4 Regional syncretistic movements:

5.4.1 Zikrism:

The Zikris are the followers of of the Mahdi Mullah Muhammad Attocki[554] Many of the Zikri teachings are preserved through hand written scripts and usually they do not publish their works. It was very recently that some of their works were published to cater the needs of their own community.[555]Although the Zikris call themselves Muslims, they reflect many dissenting and heretical tendencies which cut them off from the mainstream of orthodoxy. Among the main departures of the Zikris is their believe that the authority of the Prophet ﷺ has been superseded by the Mahdi[556] and normal orthodox prayer forms have been substituted by zikr, their own version of daily prayer ritual. Ramadan, the month of daily fasting which constitutes one of the pillars of universal Islam, is not observed by the Zikris. The extreme of their departure from the principles of Islam is the belief of the Zikris about their founder that he was created from light and that he was the seal of the prophets.[557]

This Mahdi is usually confused with a fifteenth century figure Mahdi Jaunpuri but a comparison of the teachings of the both figures reveals that while the Mahdism of Jaunpuri was based on the following of shariat and a call for repentance the Zikri Mahdism was a clear departure from its predecessor. Many of the tenets of Zikri Mahdism reflect a syncretism of the Mahdi Prophecy and Ismaili concept of *Imāmah*. Zikri Mahdi taught a denial of all the basic Islamic practices; *salāh*, *Ramadhān,* while replacing the *zakāh* with their own ten percent tax and the *hajj* with their own pilgrimage

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[554] Qandi, Sha Muhammad Qasar. *Ser Jahāni* p 153 quoted from Ludhhayānwi, Yousuf. *Kya Zikri Muslmān hen* (Karachi:Maktaba e Bayyinat,1410AH)

[555]Lari, Sheikh Aziz. *Safar Nāmah e Mahdi*., Qandi, Shah Muhammad Qasar. *Ser Jahāni,* Durazai, Muhammad Ishaq. *Zikr e Ilāhi* published 1956, Shahzada, Muhammad Ayyub. *Zikr e Tauhid*.(Karachi; All Pakistan Muslim Zikri Anjman,
1973) All Pakistan Muslim Zikri Anjman,

[556] *Safar Nāmah e Mahdi* p 3, *Ser Jahāni* p. 117

[557] *Zikr e Ilāhi* p. 39, *Zikr e Tauheed* p. 42, *Nūr e Tajalli* p. 68-69*, Ser e Jahāni* p. 59

to the koh e Murad. Zikris also replaced Qur'ān with their own *Burhān* also known by the name of *Kanz al Asrār*.

Even today near Turbat in central Makran the mount of *Koh e Murād* remains as a place of pilgrimage or hajj for the Zikris. They believe that this place is the *Muqām e Mahmūd* or the most blissful and admirable place in the world. [558]The annual pilgrimage to *Koh e Murād* takes place at the end of the Ramadhān when Zikris from as far as Karachi, gather on a plain about five miles Southeast of Turbat at the base of their holy mountain. There is a small village nearby which is inhabited throughout the year by a few Zikri families who are in charge of maintaining the place of worship. The primary holy area which is called *ka'ba* by the Zikris for worshippers consists of a large plateau, about one half mile on a side, and a steep hillock overlooking a small dry basin which fills with water only during the sporadic and meagre rainfalls typical of Makran. This entire area is surrounded by a low wall of loose stones. Orthodox Muslims are not permitted beyond this wall and Zikris must remove their footwear once they enter its environs.

While the annual hajj is the focus of Zikri public ritual, and the occasion for the massing of thousands of followers encamped near the spot of pilgrimage, there is a resident community of spiritual leaders in Turbat responsible for the collection of dues, largely in the form of sheep and goats since most Zikris are pastoral nomads.

A close examination of Zikrism reveals that it was a syncretistic interpretation of the prophecy and revelation. The concept of Mahdi or Imām reflects the Ismaili tendencies or influences and the concepts of light or *Nūr* as per zikri understanding reveals its anology with the Zoroastrian concepts of light. Whether there had been any Zoroastrian settlements and influences in the sixteenth century Balochistan is a hypothesis yet to be tested. But the Zikri dissent with the main stream Islamic teachings and their denial and rejection of the basic Islamic worships and rituals calls for an

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[558] Bajarani, *Noor e Tajalli*, p. 41

analyasis of the socioe religious background of the Baloachistan prior to Islamic *da'wah* in this region.

5.5 Synretistic tendencies and the Ismā'īli thought:

Ismailism had reached the Indian sub continent towards the end of the eighth century. The *Ismā'īli* of the subcontinent trace their origin to the legendry preacher Abdullah and to the *Nizāri* form of Ismailism of the post Alamūt period in Persia[559]. In the subcontinent the *Ismā'īli* generally resorted to the practice of concealment or *taqiyyah* due to the opposition and persecution of the Sunni rulers of the Sultanate period and also adopted a strategy of adopting the beliefs and practices of the local Hindu public whom they sought to convert to their own message. Thus the *Ismā'īli* mission in the India had used the synthesis and syncretism to practice *taqiyyah* on the one hand and to convert the Hindus towards their message on the other.

Their leader Sadr al Dīn regarded Ādam and 'Ali as *avatar* of Vishnu, while according to him Muhammad ﷺ was another name of Mahesha. Imāmshāhi sect reflects a kind of transition from ordinary Islamic doctrine of the Shi 'ite type, to Hinduism[560]. At present it is divided into two main branches: the Khojas who were the followers of the Aga Khan, and the Satpanthis who followed the *Pirs* the descendants of Imām Shah. The Satpanthis are divided into several groups paying allegiance to the different branches of the *Pir's* family. In addition, various sections of the community show different tendencies. The majority of the Khoja community continues its traditional tendency of giving preponderance to Islamic elements at the expense of the Hinduistic, while in the Imāmshāhi branches certain groups may pursue just the opposite line of going back to

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[559] Historians of the *Ismā'īli* thought had usually classified the development of *Ismā'īli* thought into three main phases; pre Alamut period, Alamut period and the post Alamut period. See for history of Ismailis according to this periodization: Daftary, Farhad. *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press,2007)

[560] Akram, Muhammad. *Āb e kausar*. p.347

Hinduism. Moreover, there is a general tendency on the part of the leading strata of the Imāmshāhi community, especially their *Pir's*, to disclaim all connection with *Ismāʿīliyyah*, however untenable such position may appear from a historical point of view. In Gujarat the Sayyids, i.e. descendants of Imām Shāh, would claim they and their ancestors were *Ithna'ashariyah*, while the Sayyids of Khandesh prefer to be, with their ancestors, pure Sunnites of the most orthodox complexion.

The Khojah are still present in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. Imamshahis are a subsect of the Khojah, which started during the sixteenth century by Imām al Dīn, they call themselves Mominah or Satpanthis. They follow a number of Hindu practices. Their leader is a Hindu whom they call *Kākā*. According to Sheikh Muhammad Akram the Mominah are from the Muslim background while the Hindu followers are called the Sat panthis.[561]

The syncretistic form of the *Ismāʿīliyyah* which developed in the subcontinent during the period under review may resemble many other religious movements and thought waves discussed here. These are known as Satpanth or the true sect. Satpanth by no means presents an exceptional phenomenon in the religious thought of Indian subcontinent. It presents a unique form of syncretism and symbiosis between Islam and Hinduism. In what follows we will try to highlight some synthetic and syncretistic approaches and elements of the Indian *Ismāʿli* groups.

The preachers of the Nizari branch of *Ismāʿīliyyah* of whom the Satpanthis were a sub group, drew heavily from the Vaisnava and Saiva sources. They developed their own doctrines of Vishnu's Avatars equating the tenth one the Kalki avatar with their Imām ʿAli and with every living Imām considered to be his cyclic incarnation.Their leader Sadr al dīn regarded Ādam and ʿAli as avatar of Vishnu, while according to him

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[561] Ibid, p 350-51

Muhammad ﷺ was another name of Mahesha. Likewise the Saivite ideas and practices of the Tantric yoga deeply influenced the literature and rituals of the Ismailis of the subcontinent.

The *Nizāri Ismāʿīli* literature can be viewd as an example of such syncretism in this regard. Their sacred texts known as *ginan* are a rich and wide ranging corpus of songs and poems. These texts are replete with the Tantric and Hatha yogic ideas. For instance the story of the Gopichand and his sister who had renounced the royal throne, the jogvanis which are the series of poems attributed to Imamshah and a conversation between Imāmshāh's father Hasan Kabir al dīn and Jogi Kanipha. [562]Afore mentioned text is much revealing in this regard. Where Hasan Kabir al dīn claims that ʿAli, the manifestation of Divine Light was the original founder of Satya Dharama, while according to a manuscript form of *ginan* it appears as Saiv Dharama. Whatever be the reading Satya or Saiva, the text points to the *Nizāri* spiritual message is not in contradiction with the Satya dharama the Hinduism or the Saiva dharama the Saivites teachings rather it incorborates all such teachings.

5.6 Syncretistic (Bi Sharaʿ) Sūfiū:

5.6.1 Madāriyah:

The sect started during the second half of the fifteenth century. They were known as *Madāriyah* or the followers of Shah Badīʿal dīn Madār, who is according to some modern writers was a mythical figure[563], but according to Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi Shah Madār was known for his piety among public and was reached to a higher

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[562] The conversation between Guru Hasan Kabir al dīn and Jogi Kanipha exists in both manuscript and printed form. The manuscripts are written in sacred Khojki script which was used by the Nizāriyyah as their secret alphabets. The printed form is available in both the Khojki and the Gujarati scripts. This conversation is translated into English by Dominique-Sila Khan and is published with a discussion in; White, David Gordon. *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton University Press, 2000)p.285- 295

[563] M. Mujeeb. *The Indian Muslims*, p.303

stage of *sulūk* known as *Samadiyyah*, and that Shah Madār used to cover his face with a veil as if anyone saw his face fell prostrating to him. He further provides us with the date of birth and death of Shah Madār. According to *Akhbār al Akhyār* he was born in1369CE/771AH and died in 1447CE/851AH.[564] He also informs that Shah Madār avoided eating for twelve years. The *Madāriyah* were more extremist in their austerities, they practiced celibacy and wore no dress except a piece of cloth round their wastes to cover their private parts which was known as *langot* a common feature with those of the Yogis. There was hardly any difference in appearance of a *Madāri* and a Yogi, besides they also believed in the Yogic concepts of monism.

The *Madāriyah* adopted a number of practices from the Indian Yogis. They went about naked, smeared their bodies with ashes, had their hairs grow long, avoided meat, practiced severe austerities like beating oneself with chains and practiced celibacy[565]. They also used the intoxicating *bhang*. It was owed to such practices of *Madāriyah* that *Dabistān al Madhāhib* a contemporary work on the different religions and schools of the subcontinent had classified them among Hindus, who had joined *bi shara'* Sufism[566]. The work further informs that the *Madāriyah* did not fast and pray and regarded Shah Madār superior even to the prophets. He relates an anecdote popular among the *Madāriyah* that "on the night of *mi'rāj* prophet ﷺ was guided by the angel to enter into paradise through a narrow hole, when prophet ﷺ asked as how to enter from such a narrow hole the angel Jibra'īl asked him to say *dam madār* and was able to do so after repeating the formula."[567]The formula *dam madār* is one of the popular *zikr* of *Madāriyah*.

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[564] Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, *Akhbār al Akhyār* (trans) p 296

[565] Yusuf Husain, *Glimpsis,* p.28

[566] *Dabistān al Madhāhib*,214

[567] Ibid p 214

5.6.2 Malangs:

A group among the *Madāriyah*, were known as *Malang,* who were the followers of Jamanjati[568] a disciple of Shah Madār. They lived like Hindu *gosain*[569] ascetics. Another subsect of the *Madāriyah*, the *Khirqaposh Madāriyah* wore the patched robes like the Sūfiā and believd in Trinity with God as spirit, Muhammad ﷺ as body and Madār as breath.[570]

5.6.3 Jalāliyah:

Jalāliyah were another sub sect of the Bi Shara Sufism; they were more extremists in their practices. They were known for taking intoxicants, and eating snakes and scorpions. The leader of the *Jalāliyah* had the right of sexual intercourse with any women of his sect he liked[571]. It seems that this group was more influenced by the Sakti and tantric practices.

The *Jalāliyah* were branded with a special mark on their right shoulder, wore glass armlets, a necklace of wool or thread, usually they carried a club and went about naked. They were mostly vagabonds and used to beg. It can be concluded that these Sufi groups had adopted and appropriated many of the Yoga techniques and practices. Moreover contrary to the orthodox Sufi orders these Bi Shara' mystics had severed their relationship with mainstream Islamic practices and instead incorporated many of the Hindu Yogic ideals and practices.

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[568] Ibid
[569] Ibid
[570] Ibid p 215
[571] Ibid

Chapter 6:

Synthesis and Syncretistic elements in the religious thought of the Hindus during 16th C.E.

6.1 'Hindu' a religious identity:

For an analysis of the religious thought of the Hindus during the sixteenth century it seems indispensable to address a very common probe which has bothered many scholars of Hinduism during the last decades about the usage of the term Hinduism; whether the term Hinduism was a colonial construct or it was the term used by the indigenous for their beliefs?

Almost certainly one can say that the term Hindu was a foreign connotation used to refer to those living in the land beyond river Indus which was used much earlier by the Persians, Greeks, and Chinese and later on by Arabs to refer to this land. The term *Hind* owes its origin to the Persians who didn't reach beyond the *Sindhu* at the time of their conquest of Indian provinces[572]. The Greeks who first heard of India from Persians called the river *Indus* and the people were called *Indoi* and the country *India* just as they ended the names of countries with *ia* e.g. Persia , Babylonia, Arabia, etc. The land was known to the Chinese by the name of the river *Sindhu* with different Chinese pronunciations i.e. *Sheri-tu-ki*, *Hsien-tou*, *Hsien-tu*, *Kan-tu*, *Yin-tu* which were probably the phonetic

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[572] Gandara, and Hindush as appear in the Achaemanid Inscriptions referring to the Gandhara usually denotes the region comprising the modern cities of Peshawar and Rawalpindi in Pakistan but it appears from early Persian inscriptions that it included the Kabul now in Afghanistan as well and Hindush included the Western Punjab and Sindh. See for further discussion on the geographical boundaries of Persian rule in the Indian subcontinent: E. J Rapson, *Ancient India*; from earliest times to first century CE (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011) P81-82, Imanpour, Mohammad Taqi. *bar rasi jaigahi sayasi satraphai hakhamanashi dar dora e Dariush bazurg ba takya bar kataibah ha (*A Study of the Political position of Achaemenid Satrapies during the Reign of Darius the Great, based on Inscriptions) published in Iran History: No. 61/5, Summer 2009. p 25-54; also M. A. Dandamaev *A political history of the Achaemenid*, p. 147-148.

variations of the word *Sindhu*.[573] The Arabs also referred to the land as *Al-hind*, perhaps it were the Arab geographers who were more precise in their study and description of this region.[574]

Later on the term became religiously significant as well, as most of the historical works of our period use the term *Hindu* and *Hinduvan*[575] in singular and plural form in both the social and religious sense, but the term was not used to refer to a homogenous belief system rather it was used as an umbrella term to refer to manifold indigenous religious traditions or *Sampraday*. Thus we find Abu al Fazal in his *Ain e Akbari* mentioned that throughout the wide extant of Hindustan there were three hundred and sixty systems of philosophy and conduct.[576]

Beside the Muslim sources we find that during the sixteenth century the term Hindu was used to refer to a variety of indigenous belief systems or the Sampraday sharing some common grounds, thus one finds Nanak[577], Nabhadas[578], Eknath[579] many other religious figures of the sixteenth century using the term 'Hindu' to refer to indigenous religious community contrasting a Muslim other. On the bases of the *Bhaktamal* of Nabhaji and the verses of Nanak and the Ekanath's poem *Hindu Turk Samavat* it can be inferred here that the term Hindu as a religious identity did exist prior to the colonial or British usage of the term. Hence the argument that Hinduism was

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[573] See: Krishna Chandar Sagar. *Foreign Influence on Ancient India* (New Delhi: Northern book Centre, 1992) p. 4-6

[574] See for Muslim geographical divisions of the area: Abul Fida Ismael bi Ali, *Kitab taqweem ul Budan*. (ed)Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, William MacGuckin Slan (Paris: Imperial Press, 1840) P352-353

[575] Barani, Zia al Dīn. *Tārikh e Firozshāhi,* p. 383., also Babur. *Memoirs of Babur*, trans.Annette Susannah Beveridge, London, Luzac 1969 p. 518

[576] *Ain e Akbari* vol.3, p.47

[577] Guru Nanak the founder of Sikh Religion, to him are attributed many poems which make the sacred texts of the Sikhs known as Granth Sahib, in these verses he uses the term Hindu in contrast to Muslaman, the most popular phrase *na me Hindu na me Musalman* was his expression.

[578] Nabhadas also called Nabhaji the poet and the author of the famous hagiography of medieval saints known as *Bhaktamal*.

[579] Eknath, a Marathi poet of the sixteenth century.

invented and that it was a colonial construct does not stand well in light of the sixteenth century hagiographical works.

Some of these *Sampraday* were probably defined as orthodox by Sankra Acharya a few centuries earlier, who had declared all other sects or *Sampraday* to be dissented and heretical except the six; the *Vaishnava*, the *Saiva*, the *Sakta*, the *Saura*, the *Ganapatya* and the *Kapalica* and hence was known as *Sanmatasthapanacharya* or the teacher who established six beliefs,[580] a fact which somehow help us to identify a common and shared identity which was conceived during the period of our study as Hinduism.

These *Sampraday* had developed through centuries into further groups known as *parampara* and panth which were usually established through a chain of the teachers and their disciples. Thus we find that during the period under review there were multitudes of these different groups which formed the mass of Hindus.

According to *Dabistān*, which is a contemporary source on religious situation of the subcontinent there were numerous religious groups among the Hindus. The author of *Dabistān* further explains these groups on the basis of the philosophical schism, among these he mentions the supporters of the *Sankhya*, the y*oga*, the *Vaiseshika*, the *Charvakas*, practitionars of the *Mimansa* and the *Vedanta* systems. He also mentions that the worshippers of Vishnu, Siva and the goddess had also splited into different sect each regarding the deity they adored to be the supreme. In addition to these he points to a number of groups whom he calls *mukhtalifa e ahl e Hind*, he treats them as the dissent traditions as they did not regard the authority of Brahmins, among these he mentions the *Nanak Panthis, the Dadu Panthis, Niranjani, Bishnoi Panth, Bairagis, Suraj mukhia, Agni Bhakta, Pon Bhakta, Chandra Bhakta, Pirthvi Bhakta Jal Bhakta* and *Manus Bhakta*.

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[580] Radhakrishnan. Indian Philosophy. London: George Allen & Unwin. Vol 2 p 653

The Vashnavaites were split into number of *Sampraday* during the sixteenth century; among these one can find the reference to some more popular groups; the Ramanujas, the Ramanadis, the Vallabcharis. The Ramanuj *sampraday* had its roots back into 12th century Vaishnava reformer Ramanuja Acharya. The Ramanuja's followers were also known by the name of Sri Laksami *Sampraday*. They believed that the Vishnu is the Supreme Lord, they endowed the Vishnu with all good qualities and their doctrine was based on the teachings of Ramanuja himself and was known as *Vishishtadwaita*[581].

Shortly after the death of Ramanuja the Sri *Sampraday* was split in two major schools; the *Vadakalai* or Northerners and the *Tenkalais* or Southerners also known as the cat school. Both these schools had their own preferred body of scriptures, masters and interpretations.[582]The essential difference between the two schools was about the issue of God's grace and human effort, the *Vadakalai* hold that as the cub of the monkey has to hold fast its mother when she climbs from one tree to another to take her child to safe place likewise the process of deliverance starts by devotee himself hence they were also known as the monkey school. While the *Tenkalai* used the illustration of cat and its kitten as the cat catches its kitten without any effort at the kitten part likewise the process of deliverance starts by Gods's grace. The other main difference was about the caste distinction while Northerners taught well treatment of the inferior classes but they observed the caste distinctions, the Southerners held that they should be treated equally in all respects and no distinction should be made[583]. Likewise the Saivaites had split into number of groups and the *Sakta*, *Saurya* and *Ganapatyas* had developed into different minor systems.

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[581] Vishishtadwaita or the Qualified monism of Ramanuja; he taught the unity of Brahman and self or Atman but that unity was qualified one that of similarity and likeness but perhaps not of identity.

[582] Klostermaier, Klaus K. *A Survey of Hinduism*. New Delhi, Munshiram Manohrlal, 1990. P 239

[583] Bhandarkar, Ramakrishna Gopal. *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious System*s, p78-9

Nonetheless the *sant*[584] tradition, which emerged as a religious movement in North India which was based on the teaching of Ramanand a fifteenth century reformer, was one of the popular features of the sixteenth century religious thought of Hindus. Though the *sant* tradition was based on the Ramanand's thought its origin has went into the background[585] of a generally perceived non sectarian *sant* tradition. Thus many of the religious figures of the fifteenth and sixteenth century are included among the *sant*, who are claimed by different sects as their founders; among these one can find the figures like Nanak, Ravidas and Kabir. These different figures share some common ideas which are somehow synthetic or syncretistic in their character.

6.2 Bhakta, Sant, Sadhu and dissented Syncretism;

These *Sant* shared a disdain for Brahmanical knowledge and ritual, their frank criticism for idols and images, and an enthusiasm for egalitarian and caste ridden society[586]made the *Sant* tradition as a distinct religious group. Moreover they shared the their views poetic expression in their regional dialects for which the *Sant* literature is considered as markedly counteract to established religiosity and ritualism and essentially folk oriented expression.[587] A multitude of smaller groups usually called *Sampraday* or

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[584] *Sant* is often translated as saint, while both words are diffent in etymology and meaning the word *sant* is derived from the Sanskrit sat which means truth, whereas the word saint is derived from the Latin *Sanctus* meaning sacred a more accurate translation for *sant* would be the truth exemplar for different interpretation see Karine Schomer. *The Sants: Studies in Devotional Traditions of India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidan, 1987) p 1-9

[585] Thus van der Veer's main criticism of Daniel Gold, *The Lord as Guru: Hindi Sants in the Northern Indian Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), in the *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (August 1988): 678–79: "Although the name of Ram is central to sant tradition and Ramanand is often said to be the guru of Kabir, there is no mention of the most important 'Vaishnava' ascetic tradition of North India, that of the Ramanandis."

[586] See Schomer, "The Sant Tradition in Perspective," 8; and Charlotte Vaudeville, "*Sant Mat: Santism as the Universal Path to Sanctity*," in Schomer and McLeod, eds., *The Sants*, p.21

[587] See, for instance, Linda Hess's introduction to *The Bijak of Kabir*, ed. and trans. Hess and Shukdev Singh (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986

Parampara gathered round these *Sant* or *Bhakta* emerged in the period under review which reflects the variety of the religious approaches and phenomena.

The tradition is generally divided into two main groups; the Northern group which includes the figures from the North-Western provinces of Punjab and Rajasthan and from the Gangetic valley, including eastern Uttar Pradesh. They composed in a rough form of archaic Hindi. The Southern group worked in Maharashtra, and composed in an archaic form of Marathi. Both these group are given a lot of credit for the development of vernaculars in their area.[588] Both groups are included within the wider framework of *Bhakti* or *Sant Mat*, but they related differently to the existing established religions. Whereas the Southern tradition was connected to mainstream Vaishnavism, and practiced Saguṇa Bhakti, the tradition of the North for the most part rejected all established traditions and everything they represented, and are reckoned to belong within the *Nirguṇa Bhakti* fold.

The social, religious and political context of the Northern *Sant* seems to have been complex. The 16th century is considered to have been marked by a favorable growth of diverse religious movements. The religious thought of Hindus in our period was infused with many of the Islamic ideas and principles, although the interaction between the religious ideas of the Hindus and Muslims had actually started earlier, around the eighth or ninth century but it was enhanced during the thirteenth to sixteenth century with the permanent establishment of Muslim domination in Indian subcontinent. Bhakti and the theories and practices of Tantric Yoga, especially under their latest form, Nathism, played an important part in this process, which was strengthened by the influence of Islamic monotheism and *Tasawwuf*.

Thus the *sant* tradition during the period was for all intents and purposes a synthesis between the two systems of Indian spirituality the Vaishnavaite bhakti and the

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[588] Vaudeville, *Kabīr* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1974)117

Savite Siddha or the Nath yoga. Besides the teachings of these *sant* seems to absorb the Islamic ideals, while at the same time they discarded themselves form the established systems of belief and practice.

It is perhaps due to the synthetic nature of *Sant* message that in the study of medieval Hinduism an assumption has become very popular that the *Sant* were non-sectarian and did not hold a body of doctrine in common [589]and that the figures like Kabir, Raidas and others were promoters of Hindu-Muslim unity that they emphasized the inter religious tolerance and composite culture, but a close look at their ideas reflects that these Sants belonged to either *Vaishnava Sampraday* or Nath tradition. Not only that these sants and their disciples were sectarians in their orientation they themselves served as a founding stones for multitude of *guru sisya paramparas* which over time developed into new *panths* and *samparday. The* reason which seems plausible for the flexible and open ended nature of these *sant* based groups is their syncretistic character.

The *Sant* tradition is generally traced back to the teachings of Ramanad a fifteenth century Hindu reformer. His followers were known as *Ramanandis* or *Ramawats* he himself gave them the title *Avadhuta* or the liberated ones, while their ascetics were known by the name of *Vairagi* or *Virakta*. The teachings of Ramanand were focused on denial of caste system and many of the Brahmanical observances. The *Ramanandi* were further split into different branches or panths and the founders of these various branches were disciples of Ramanand; among these twelve were very popular, a contemporary Hindi work Bhaktamala provides the name of these twelve disciples of Ramanand; Kabir the weaver; Raidas the Chamar;; Dharma the Jat; Sena the Barber, Anantananda. Bhavananda, Sukha, Sursura, Padmavati, Narhari,. Dhana, and the wife of Sursura.[590]. Ramanad taught indiscriminatingly to all rich and poor, high caste and the lowcaste, Muslim and Hindu alike. A later source *Bhaktavijaya* treats all these figures as avatars or

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[589] Charlotte Vaudeville, "*Sant Mat: Santism as the Universal Path to Sanctity*", in Schomer and McLeod, *The Sants*, 21.

[590] Tara Chand. *Influence of Islam*, p.145

incarnations of Vishnu who had appeared in *kali yug* to redeem his worshiper from the evils of this age.[591]

The famous author of this tradition were Nabhaji the author of Bhaktamala, Surdas the poet and singer, Anatadas the poet and Tulasi Das the poet and the translator of Ramayan into Hindi, Jayadeva. It seems probable that Ramanad worked as forerunner of synthetic and syncretistic tendencies that appeared during the sixteenth century through the teachings of many of his disciples or their own disciples in turn.

6.3 Syncretistic Panths and groups:

At the religious chart of the sixteenth century one can find a multitude of panths or groups sharing some key features derived from different and sometimes paradoxical traditions within the Hindu fold as well from the outside. Here will follow a brief description of such tendencies in the religious thought of the Hindus during the sixteenth century:

6.3.1 Kabir Panthis:

Kabir is generally regarded a disciple of Ramanand whose teachings were very popular during our period. He promoted dissented ideas which were focused to assail the whole system of idolatrous worship and also ridiculed the learned Hindu Pandits and the Muslim scholars. Though Kabir was living much earlier in the beginning of the 15th century[592] but the effect of his ideas was tremendous on some of the sects which appeared

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[591] Justin E. Abbot and Narhar R Godbole.*Stories of Indian Saints; Translation of Mahipati's Marathi Bhakta-vijaya*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas.1995.vol 1, p 8-10

[592] There is debate about biography of kabir among the recent scholar; different writers give different dates of his birth and death. According to Macauliffe whose date is accepted by Bhandarkar, he was born in 1398 A.D. (1455Samvat); but according to Westcott, who was followed by Farquhar, Burns and others, the date of his birth was 1440 A.D. The Hindi authors do not give clear guidance. The editor of the *Santa Bani Sangraha14* gives 1398 A.D. as the date of birth and 1518 as that of death. Sitaram Saran Bhagvan Prasad

during the sixteenth century and *Kabir Panthis* were one among such besides one can find the *Dadu Panthis, Lal Dasis, Alakh Namis, Nanak panthis* or the disciples of Nanak.

Kabir expressed his ideas in *vanis* or folk verse, a feature which was shared by all the Bhaktas or the Sants of his time. . His verses were collected and named *Bijak*, which literally means seed, which later onbecame the scripture of the Kabir Panth.His ideas reflect a kind of syncretistic tendency which is unique for its dissent as he himself mixes freely Hindu and Islamic themes for expressing his worldview, while at the same time he criticizes and rejects the both traditions.his poetry supplies many such expression to quote here one;

Ek Niranjan Alakh mera,

Hindu nahi nahun me Turk

Mine is the One Formless God, neither am I Hindu, nor Turk.

In the same *pad* he says;

Pooja karoon na namaz guzaroon,

Ek nirankar haride naan pukaroon,

Na hajj jaon na tirath pooja,

Ek pachanya to kya duja [593]

I do not go for puja or namaz, just I repeat the name of the one Nirankar in my heart, neither I go for *hajj,* nor I visit the *tirath,* I have recognized the one what is the need for anyother.

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quotes a Doha which gives 1492 A.D. (1549 Samvat) as the date of death and says that Kabir lived for a hundred and one years, except the last writer most of the others agree in assigning 1518 as the date of death.[592]Keay,F.E. *Kabir and His followers.*(Delhi*;* Mittal Publications 1995)

[593] Hari Odh. *Kabir Wachna Wali* (New Delhi:Sahitya Acadamy,1996)

This and many other verses in the same tone show that Kabir was not calling for a Hindu-Muslim unity[594] as it is generally suggested rather his was a dissented approach to both traditions and he rejects and criticizes the beliefs and rituals of the both religions. Another issue which is related to his religious ideas is that he used the reverse course or the *ultivani,* a very puzzeling language to convey his ideas. Thus his verse can not be taken literally; rather one has to explore a vani with the help of some key words or expression inherent in the symbols and allegories.

In his poetry Kabir adopted and used many of the Sufi ideas, to attain the union with God Kabir uses different Sufi expressions, while at the same time he held firmly some of the Hindu doctrines for instance the doctrine of transmigration. His reverse or the ultivani scheme sometimes confuses a researcher, to some he becomes inconclude

6.3.2 Nanak Panth:

It is very important to analyze the Nanak panth of sixteenth century in the framework of our discussion.The followers of Nanak were one of the many guru-shishya pramparas or groups gathered around the teachers, what made this group to be of a different nature was the teachings of Nanak. Nanak himself was a born Hindu of the khatri origin[595] but his teachings reflected an essential departure from some Hindu tenets though he retained some of the Hindu doctrines like *karma* and *samsara*. On the other hand some of the Islamic principles were appropriated in his world view and the most significant of these was the prophecy and revelation.

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[594]There are many works which tend to show him as a promoter of Hiindu-Muslim unity, see Hedayatullah, Muhammad. *Kabir; the Apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity* (New Delhi; Motilal Banarsidas, 1989) *see also* Rahlan, Om Prakash. *Kabir; the Apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity*(Delhi:Anmol publications,2004)

[595] Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was born in Rai Bhoe ki Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib in Sheikhupura distirict, Pakistan. There are different biographies of guru Nanak compiled by his followers these are known as janam Sakhis or the birth stories the most popular among these are the three; Bhai Man Singh's Janamsakhi, Wilayat wali Janamsakhi and mehrban Wali Janam sakhi, besides there are many other Janmsakhis which were composed during the centuries.We have also many other historical sources which contain the biographical details of Nanak's life.

He also denounced the Hindu rituals and caste system, idolatory and taught monotheism and social equality.The earliest extant source for the information about the teaching of Nanak are his verses which were known as *'pothi'*.These verses reflect an interiorized faith or a mystical teachings and do not contain any identity markers like the 5'ks' which were devised during the later period.

Moreover some of the later developments in the growth of panth also reflect some analogies with the Ismaili tenets and there is a strong possibility of Ismaili influences on Nanak Panthis besides the Hindu and Sufi influences, among these one can find the divinity of the Guru and the concept of the transferring of this divinity from one Guru to the other, the institute of *daswandh* and the initiating or the *pahul* ceremony.[596]Thus the view that the Gurushipn was in fact the transfer of the same Guru Nanak or the soul of Guru Nanak

Nanak Panthis or the disciples of Nanak also reflected syncretistic tendencies from an early period. The thesis that Nanak's teachings were syncretistic is generally contested by the Sikh scholars.[597]However this seems very much self contesting on the part of Sikh scholarship because at the same time their sacred hagiographies or the *janamsakhis* point to the journey of Guru to the Islamic countries and his discussions with the learned Muslim scholars. A survey of contemporary records shows that the Nanak Panthis emerged as a dissented group within Hinduism while at the same time the group had syncretistic outlook. The early followers of Guru Nanak were known as Nank Panthis, and to be a follower of Nanak in the earliest time meant to be a follower of Guru or *Gurumukh* in contrast to *manmukh*. Thus what came to be known as Sikhism was a

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[596]   Khan, Dominique Sila.*Conversions and Shifting identities*(Delhi:1997) P 235-236

[597] For the Sikh views on th issue of syncretism see: Khalsa, Gurdharm singh. "*The End of Syncretism: Anti-Syncretism in Sikh tradition*" in Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier, Ed *Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change*.(New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1999) p 93-108 some other works in the same vein; Ganda Singh, *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1964).

later development, here it is intresting to highlight that the word *sikkha* appears once in the banis of Guru Nank and was used to refer to the student.[598]

The early disciples of Nanak were like many other *Guru-shishya paramparas* gathered round their preceptor who taught a new doctrine based on the the revelation he received as per the Sikh belief. At the same times it should be noted that Guru Nanak spiritual experience seems resounding of the Sufi ideas and practices. Thus some of his teachings can be easily related to the system of Sufi Khanqahs which were spread throughout the whole Punjab the centre of Guru Nanak's activity. Thus the focus of Guru on *Sangat*, *Pangat* and *Kirtan* reflects a Sufi influence generally and particularly of the Chishtis whose centre at Pakpattan was much famous long before Nanak.Besides the sacred book of the Sikhs also bears a testimony to the fact that the Guru was much influenced and inspired by Baba Farid of the Chishti silsilah, and as many as 130 or 134 salokas of him are included in it. It is debated whether these belonged to Baba Farid Ganj Shakar or to farid the second one of his descendents, but what remains significant for us is the inclusion of the Sufi verses into the sacred text by the followers of Nanak, if not by Nanak himself. The inclusive canon is unique in its making and highlights the syncretistic tendency of Nanak Panth and later on the Sikh Gurus.

Likewise there are many Sikh traditions recorded in the Janam Sakhis that Guru Nanak himelf met many Sufia and had interviewed with them. Thus the third *Udasi*[599] of Guru Nanak was towards the Islamic lands, where he is depicted in the dress of Muslim Faqir. He is reported to have visited the centeres. It is not in the scope of my work to discuss the historicity of the travels of Guru Nanak or to challenge such occurrence, my point is here the existence of well-built inner evidence of the Sikh literature that Nanak not only had the links or relation with the Sufia in his homeland but he also had urged to

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[598] Opinderjit Kaur Takhar. *Sikh Identity: An Exploration Of Groups Among Sikhs*.(Barlington: Ashgate,2005) p. 5-37

[599] Udasi is a word used in the Janamsakhis for the travels of Guru Nanak. See Gandhi, Surjit Singh.*History of Sikh gurus Retold* (new delhi: Atlantic Publications,2007)

know and approach the centres of Islamic learning in the subcontinent and abroad. Sikh scholars had rejected vehemently that Guru Nanak ever had synthesized or syncretized the teachings of Islam and Hinduism and they believe that his was a new message based on his inspirations from the divine source. But at the same time they do accept that Guru had a good knowledge of Islamic principles and that he had a mystic outlook.[600]

He is also reported to have rejected the Hindu life cycle ceremonies from his early youth he had rejected the ceremony of sacred thread.[601]The tendency to break with the established religious traditions of the period and to form a new separate outlook further increased when the later Gurus started to establish some identity markers. While taking into consideration all the synthetic speculations of Nanak and his successors any researcher can easily discern different elements which went into making of the Sikkh identity and religiosity. No doubt later Gurus contributed some peculiar features and themes to the Sikkh religion like the five k's but even these patterns can be located in the multiple socioreligious backgrounds for instance to wear a mark itself be it a sign or dress code or the colour was not unique to Sikkhism rather all the *Jatis* and *sampradaya* used to have their caste markers and sectarian markers. Likewise a gradual development and canonization of the Granth literature not only through the medium of Gurus but inclusion of the poetry of the Muslim Sufia is an unmistaken proof for the syncretistic attitude of the Sikh Gurus.

6.3.3 Dadu panth:

Dadu panthis or the disciples of Dadu were among the popular religious sects of our period. Dadu was a disciple of Kabir. His syncretistic ideas were expressed by him in Braj Bhasha. He admitted both Hindus and Muslims as his disciples. The scripture of the

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[600] Ibid
[601] Ibid

Dadu Panthis is a collection of the devotional writings of the Hindus as well as of Muslims. Many hymns of the Muslim saints like Kazi Kaddan, Sheikh Farid, Kazi Muhammad, Sheikh Bhawad and others were included in the Dadu Panthis Granth. It is very important to note that this was the first anthology in the religious literature of the world in which the views of the different sects and religions were collected together, which was followed by the Sikh scripture the Granth Sahib, which was compiled in1604, one year after Dadu's death.

Dadu also shared the same dissented outlook of Nanak and Kabir towards the Hindu and Muslim practices, at the same time he wanted a way of his own.Nonetheless this new way itself had some commonalities with either Islam or Hinduim.

He ignored all Muslim customs

And abandoned Hindu practices.[602]

And the reason he gives from Dadu's vani;

If I do not adhere to Muslim customs,

What does it matter to you?

Who has said that such worship is essential?[603]

Beneath the popular Panths of kabir, Dadu and Nanak, there were many other socio-religious groups with syncretistic tendencies which appeared during the period under review. These different sects were some times defined as oral traditions or the popular traditions and were regional or *Jati* based in their appeal. These oral or popular

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[602] Gopal, Jana. *The Hindi Biography of Dadu Dayal*, with critical edition and notes by Callewaert, Winand M. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas,1988) p. 37

[603] For a detailed comparison and the study of some analogous aspects between Sikhism and Islam by a Sikh writer see the work; Dhillon, Dalbir Singh. *Sikhism; Origin and Development* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers,1988)

panths were based in different parts of the subcontinent and were centered round the figures like Ramdeo, Jambhoji, Bhaironji, Rajjabji and many others.

6.3.4 Jasnath Sampraday:

Jasnath Sampraday is one such Jati or caste based sect which revolves round the teaching of fifteenth century poet saint Jasnath, who belonged to the Jat peasants of Rajasthan. Jasnath tradition is one of the local traditions which has continued through centuries and has preserved its identity as a separate Hindu sect and had attracted the social scientist for their peculiar socio-religious behavior and their echological teachings.[604]

Their sacred teachings were collected and compiled as Sabad Granth by its followers very recently[605], which contains not only the teachings but all kind of the materials related to the Jasnath sampraday. Jasnathis have preserved their teachings throught the practice of *jagran* or assemblies where the Siddhas or their religious teachers used to explain the verses and meanings of Jasnath and other Siddhas. Likewise the official records of the Bikaner state contain some references to the Jasnathis which indicates that these were a tax paying community.[606]The Jasnathis literature indicates their reverence for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and some of the Muslim pirs as their sacred figures. This reverence for Islamic figures and adopting them as their own *Siddhas* with a frame work of syncretistic mythologies and practices is one of the key features of Jasnathis.

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[604] For a social scientific and anthropological survey of the present Jasnath sampraday see: Zaidi, Sunita. *Oral Tradition and Little Culture; Jasnathis in Historical Perspective* in 'popular Literature and Pre-Modern Societies in South Asia' edited by Surinder Singh, I.d Ghaur (Delhi: Dorling Kindersly, 2008) p 162-177.

[605] *Sabad Granth* was first published in 1996 it was compiled by Surya Shankar and published by a Jasnathi trust 'Sri Deo Jasnath Sidhashram Dharamarth Trust, Bikner.

[606] Ibid.

6.4 Minor Syncretistic Groups:

6.4.1 Satnamis

A sect that worships God as Satnam the true name, the term refers to number of groups. The Satnami sect was founded in the sixteenth century by a Birbhan in Narnaul, Punjab. The sect was suppressed by Mughal Empror Aurangzeb during the seventeenth century. The seven main precepts of the sect were; abstinence from liquor, meat, certain red vegetables, chili, tomato and lentils as they have the colour of blood; no image worship; prohibition of employing cows for cultivation, no ploughing after mid day or taking food to the fields and worship of one supreme God.[607]

Among the major religious aspects of this sect was the denial of image worship and caste system. They were also known as sadhus. Two later sects had also the same bearing; one during the eighteenth century founded by Jagjivan Das (1669 -1760)[608], and another during the nineteenth century by Guru Ghasidas a Chamar in Chhatisgarh.[609]Both of these latter sects were perhaps efforts for the revival of the early Satnamis.

6.4.2Dharma panthi:

A popular religious group known as Dharma cult emerged in Bengal bore an unmistaken syncretistic outlook. The significance of this religious order was that it was based on monotheistic concept of God calling him the Dharma-Thakura. This sect was based on the teachings of one Brahmin Ramai Pandit who was declared outcaste by other Brahmins as he had failed in proper arrangement for his father's funeral rites. Ramai Pandit's work *Sunnyapurana* also called *Dharmapuja-Vidhana* not only reflects his criticism of the prevailing Hinduism and especially of the Brahmins but also bears palpable influence and admiration of Islam and Muslims. Moreover he also taught

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[607] *Hinduism; An Alphbatical Guide.* 2011, p364

[608] Farquhar, J. N. *An Outline of religious Literature of India,* P 343

[609] Ibid

monotheistic concept about God. While describing his concept of God, Ramai Pandit expressed

"He is the Niranjan, who is neither space nor fame; who has neither lotus like feet nor any form nor any primary colour… He is neither up nor down; neither Siva or Sakti neither male nor female"[610]

Ramai Pandit also rejected the caste system and life cycle rituals as it appears from his own circumstances. Besides the Dharmaites also adopted some Muslim customs they used to sacrifice goats, ducks and pigeons by cutting their throat which was known as *Javaia* which was perhaps a local rendering of Arabic word Zabiha. They also held Friday as their sacred day. These and many other features of this cult reveal a syncretistic approach towards religion. Their ideas can better be expressed by a poem *Niranjaner Ruksma* or 'Anger of God' by Ramai Pndit a portion which I quote here from Muhammad Abdul Rahim;

Dharama haita yavana rupi mathaeta kala tupi

(Dharma has assumed the forms of Yavana Muslims having black cap on the head)

Hate shuve terkash Kaman, Chapia uttam hai, tribhubane lage bhai

With bow and arrow in hands, the good is attained without fear

Khudai balai ek nam, Niranjan nirakar haila Bhest ekakar, Mukheta balai dambdar

Uttering the name of God, Who is formless and without any attributes and incarnates in heaven (Bhest), they (the Muslims) utter the name of Damdar (a Sufi saint)

Zathek devatgan, sabhi haia ekman, Anandeta parila ijar

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[610] Abdul Rahim, Muhammad. *Social and Cultural History of Bengal* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society)p.70

All the gods with one accord, delightfully took the forms

Brama haila Mahamad, Vishnu haila pekambar, Adampha hail sulapani

Brahma became Mahmad, Vishnu became prophet, Siva became Adam,

Ganes haila Ghazi, kartak haila Kazi, Fakir haila zatha muni

Ganes became Ghazi, kartika became Kazi, all the Hindu sages (munis) became fakirs

Tejia apan bhek, Narad haila shek, Purandar haila malna

Narada became *Shaikh*, Indra became maulana

Chandra, Surya adi devi, padatik haia sabe, sabe mile bajai bajna.

The moon, sun and other gods became the foot soldiers, and all started to play martial music.[611]

Here the poet not only interprets the historical event of the victory of his city by the Muslims but also embraces different Islamic figures and themes in a syncretistic manner and mixes them with some popular Hindu gods and goddesses. Thus through his imagination he developed a syncretistic worldview in which all the Hindu dtransformed deities and avataras were transformed into Muslim figures. Such a worldview will surely accommodate a variety of the practices from both traditions. This incorporation and merging of the different concepts like prophets, angels and avatars with taking into consideration their peculiarities is one of the key syncretistic elements of Dharma panth of the sixteenth century Bengal.

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[611] The poem is given in appendix A by the author on P421-422, while the translation is available on p-70 see; Abdul Rahim, Muhammad. *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*

6.4.3 Dhattatreya Parmpara:

The Dattatreya *parmpara* of Maharashtra also had its root back into the sixteenth century. The hagiography of the cult reflects a syncretism of the Sufi and Hindu ideas.[612]This cult was based on the teaching of guru Jnardana. According to sectarian hagiography of this cult Janardana was considered to be an incarnation of god Dattatreya. The famous Marathi poet Ekanatha was one of the disciples of Janardana. The teachings of Janardana presented a blend of basic Islamic teachings as well as the practices of contemporary Sufi with Hindu themes. According to some modern researches on Marathi literature scholars have shown that Janardana Swami was a disciple of Canda Bodhale a Qadiri Sufi. It is also argued that Ekanatha the poet who was a disciple of Janardana had concealed the Sufi links in order to avoid the displeasure of the Brahmans, and traced the spiritual lineage to a popular deity Dattatreya through his guru.[613]This argument is based on a text *yogasangrama* of a Sufi Sheikh Muhammad who was also a disciple of the Cand Bhodale.

Whether or not the poet Ekanath concealed his relationship with Sufism is a question for the biographers of Ekanatha, what is important here for our analysis is the presence of syncretistic spirituality during the late sixteenth century in the northern Deccan areas. The existence of spiritual link like *gurushishya* or discipleship across the religious boundaries is really striking. The dhattatreya parampara is a remarkable case of syncretism where the Gurus themselves are deriving their religious and mystical authorities from across the tradtions.

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[612] This cult was first highlighted as a blend of Hinduism and Islam by V.S. Bendre's thesis about the hagiographical links of Ekanath with the Qadiri Sufis via a *Malang* known as Dattatreya, Cand Bodhale or sayed Candasahib Qadiri in 1958, Later on R.C.Dhere and S.G. Tulpule confirmed these findings with additional historical materials respectively in their works. For details see V.S. Bendre and Tulpule. *Classical Marathi Literature* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979) p.353

[613] Tulpule,S.G.*Classical Marathi Literature,* p.453

6.4.4 Guga:

Guga Pir also known as Zahir pir is quite well known in the Indian subcontinent. He is described as the Lord of Snakes. It is generally believed that snake poison is cured by his grace and barren women are blessed with offspring. The well known Chhappar Fair is also held to propitiate him [614]. It is said that he was a disciple of Guru Gorakh Nath and that he had embraced Islam towards the evening of his life.[615]

The tradition of the Guga Pir reflects the syncretism of the indigenous worship of *Nagas*, the *Yakshas* and the *Yakshinis* on one side and veneration of saint or martyr among Muslims on the other. The Nagas were once a very powerful people. They were worshippers of snakes and were Saivaites by faith. Some of their names, like Vasuki, Takshaka, Karkota, etc. have survived though only as synonyms of the snake which in fact, was their totem or the sacred symbol.[616] In Kalhana's Rajatarangini, the Nagas are described as the uncivilized people lived around the home of the snakes, springs and lakes.[617] The Nagas used to burry and rever snakes and believed that the snakes have supernatural powers and worshiped them as the guardians of human dwellings, treasures and the graves of their progeny,[618] which also shows that the Nagas used to burry their deceased.

There are many anecdotes current about the figure of Guga, who flourished during the fourteenth century and is generally associated with Guru Gorakh Nath. *Ain e*

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[614] A very popular fair held every year on fourteenth day of the bright half of the Bikrami month of Bhadon (August-september), which lasts for three days. The fair is named after the village Chapar, the venue of Guga fair situated on Ahmedgarh - Raikot road, 5 miles west of Mandi Ahmedgarh.

[615] A legendary figure who is sometimes accorded divinity or incarnation regarded by Nath Yogis

[616] Harjinder Walia. *Punjab Fairs and Festvals*.(Patiala: Global Media Publication.dnm) p.

[617] Kalhana. *Rajatarangini, Trans. Eng.* Stein, M.A. vol 2, p 424.

[618] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XI, 1954, p. 400.

Akbari also mentions some of the Naga practices.[619]According to these different stories he is reported to had embraced Islam, the anecdote tells us that Guga wanted to go down into the earth, but the earth denied this to him for only a Muslim can be buried under the earth and not a Hindu therefore Guga, had to turn a Muslim in order to get buried.

The Guga temples scattered in different cities of Punjab like Ludhiana, Ahmadgharh and Rajputana reflects a syncretistic outlook. Inside the temple there is a tomb of the Guga and the cobra. A sculpture of the infant Guga sitting in a posture of meditation can also be seen there. A snake of stone and a snake-hole have also been built close to the tomb. One day before the commencement of the fair, cattle are brought to the Guga shrine so that they may have the blessing and protection of the Guga against snake bite. During the three days of the fair the visitors scoop out the earth with their hands seven times in front of the Guga shrine as a mark of respect to the snake-God. They make offerings of coins, wheat grains, sugar and cotton yarn, sweets are also offered to the visitors. Guga is equally adored by the Muslim and the Hindu folks of Ahmadgarh.[620]

6.4.5 Bairagis

According to the details provided in the *Dabistān al Madhāhib* the Bairagis were syncretistic in their approach. As they regarded the Vishnu is equal to Islamic phrase Bismillah so the Vishnu and the Allah are same. Moreover both Muslims and Hindus were welcomed in their circles. He further informs us about four sampradhayas of the Bairagis Ramanaj, Namanaj, Madhu acharariyas and Radhavallabhas.[621]

To conclude our discussion about the religious thought of Hindus during the period it can be said here that a varity of attitudes were reflected by different groups and figures. On the one hand we have seen the attempts to relate and to synthesize the

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[619] Abul Fazal. *Ain-i Akbari* (Nawal Kishore ,1869) Vol. 2, p.153 see also Eng. tr. from Persian, H. S. Jarrett, (Calcutta, 1927) pp. 354–6, 359–63

[620] Ibid

[621] Ardistani. *Dabistān al Madhāhib*, p.200

corresponding ideas of the both traditions, while on the other hand some groups reflected a dissented attitude towards both tradition but this did not meant their departure from the both traditions rather they attempted at a syncretistic reappropriation of the Islamic and Hindu ideas and practices, among these we can count the Nanak Panth, Dadu panth and Kabir Panth. While on the other hand unconscious or spontaneous forms of syncretism emerged as a result of mutual day to day contacts between the followers of the both traditions which took the form of local cults like the Gugga, Dattatreya and Dharma.It is also very important to note that these tendencies continued during the long period and even today we can find multitude of such groups which rever and worship both the Hindu and the Muslim figures.
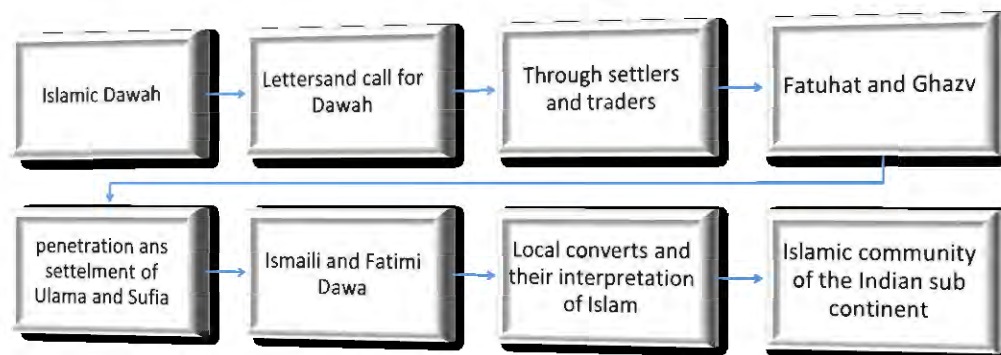
Conclusions:

1. Interaction between the two religious traditions results into large scale of Synthetic and Syncretistic phenomena and also causes the revival and resistance and denial of Synthetic and Syncretistic phenomena.Synthsis and Syncretism are two important analytical categories in the history of religions, and especially in the discussion of religious encounters.In the context of Muslim Hindu interface we have been able to explore a variety of encounters between the two tradtions. A dioganastic use of the term in the study of religious encounters and interfaces is not only useful but also inevitable since there had been always some patterns of religious thought which have been essentially syncretistic in the context of Muslim Hindu encounters. Thus syncretism and synthesis can help to interpret the multitude of religious expressions, movements and sects which had their root in both the Islamic and Hindu traditions.

2. The history of interaction between Islam and Hinduism can be traced back to the early Islamic period. We have also noted that the traders and missionaries settlements in the subcontinent were much earlier than the Fath or the Ghazw. Perhaps a satisfying presentation of the history of these interaction has yet not been accomplished and there are many loose ends waiting a revisit from our recent scholarship to fix many such points like the situation of the early Muslim settlements horizontally and vertically, the limit and scope of Da'wah activity in different parts of the Indian subcontinent, variety of beliefs and practices, process of conversion itself, likewise there are many debates and issues related with biographies of important religious scholars of not only Muslims but also of the Hindus. It is not meant here that these issues are not studied yet rather my point is that the written history is somehow biased and historians of the subcontinent had brushed it with their own colors, Indian National color, British Colonial color, Pakistani color and so on. It needs to be read in its own terms. By reading different accounts of the same figure or the same event by different historians one can easily find these diverse reflections.

3- Centuries of historical links and interaction went into making of the sixteenth century religious ferment; in fact more than six centuries of Muslim-Hindu interface. The factors that led to such interface were many:

I. The coming of Muslims in different waves and patterns and formation of Muslim strongholds in different parts of the Indian subcontinent,

II. Inconsistent methods of Daʿwah which varied from open Daʿwah towards Islam i.e. letters and messages from Muslim rulers to the Hindu rulers and public Daʿwah activities carried in the conquered areas to the concealed Daʿwah carried by traders and settlers in the Hindu ruled areas by different groups i.e. Sufis, Ismailis,

III. Incomplete or half conversions were another factor behind the development of Syncretistic tendencies among the half converts as they had embraced new religion but retained many of their earlier beliefs and practices.

IV. Interaction of Indian mystical ideas and *Tasawwuf* also resulted in a kind of synthesis between the two systems of thought.

Islamic Dawah	→	Lettersand call for Dawah	→	Through settlers and traders	→	Fatuhat and Ghazv

penetration ans settelment of Ulama and Sufia	→	Ismaili and Fatimi Dawa	→	Local converts and their interpretation of Islam	→	Islamic community of the Indian sub continent

4. Sixteenth century was critical for transmission and reception of different religious ideas. The deep rooted interaction between Islam and Hinduism resulted in manifold expressions and interpretations. From the very inception of Islam in the Subcontinent there had been deep interactions between the followers of both religions. Both Muslims and Hindus not only lived side by side for a long time, but there were many mutual responses ranging from hatred and conflict to appreciating and regard, all these resulted in the ferment. Religious thought of the sixteenth century subcontinent was marked by variety of approaches; some of these were attempts to synthesize while others were syncretistic.

Centuries of Interaction of Islamic themes and Hindu ideas
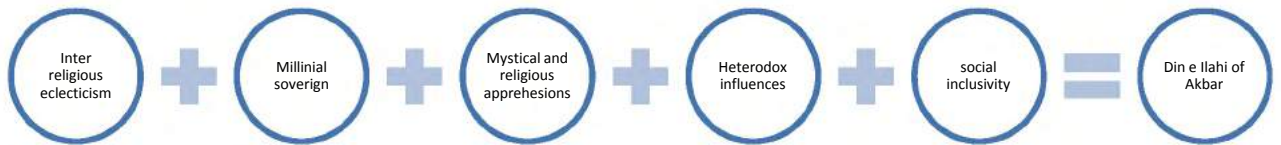
Deep rooted Interaction of yoga and

religious ferment
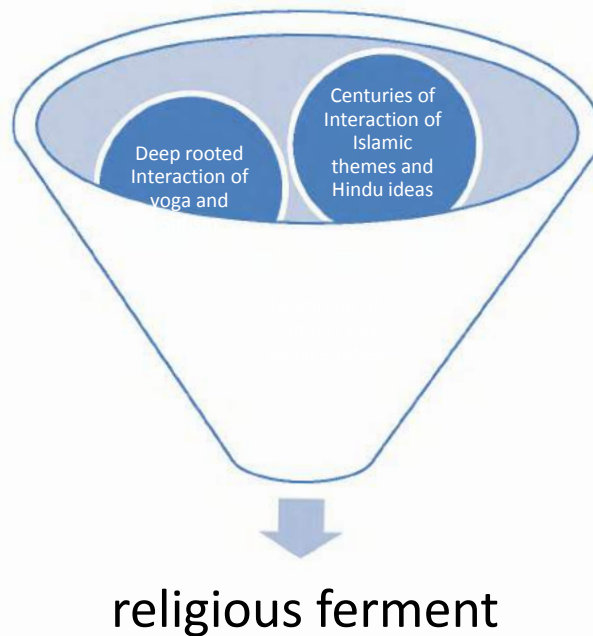
5. On the one hand the Sufia and Yogis synthesized the analogous aspects of their understanding and practices and adopted and appreciated each other's view point, their synthesis involved the subtleties and delicate ideas and experiences of mysticism. While on the other hand some syncretistic movements and sects also appeared which were

stimulated by the Sufi Yogic synthesis which is quite evident in the teachings of kabir, Dadu, Nanak and others.

6. The Muslim rulers were much inclusive in their social norms and practices which also led to the popularity of syncretistic trends. Muslim rulers of the subcontinent had treated the Hindus as *ahl al kitāb*. Thus appreciating Hindu religious tradition they not only accorded them the status of *dhimmi* but they also married with the Hindu women. These long term social interactions led the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent to adopt some of the socio-cultural norms and to include a lot of Hindu elements in their cultural outlook.

7- Emperor Akbar went even further in his inclusive approach and adopted some of the religious beliefs and practices from different religious traditions. These ranged from applying *tika* a vermilion mark on the forehead, to the public worship of the sun by Akbar with prostrations facing the east before a sacrificial fire and recitation of its name in Sanskrit. He not only married the Rajput princesses and allowed them to perform their religious rituals ceremoniously in the palace but he himself adopted many of these practices in his own religious order '*Dīn e Ilāhi*'. Emperor was not alone in such syncretistic ideas his chief minister Abu al Fazl went further in adopting and appropriating the conceps from different religious and cultural perspectives. The religious outlook of Emperor Akbar was shaped by the convergence of different ideas which can be depicted as under:

Inter religious eclecticism + Millinial soverign + Mystical and religious apprehesions + Heterodox influences + social inclusivity = Din e Ilahi of Akbar

8. Another important factor in the early modern sense of epochal change across this entire region was the turning of the Islamic calendar's new millennium in 16th CE, which was itself a calendared signpost in what has been described as a much broader millenarian conjuncture that operated over a good part of the world in the sixteenth century. The period was marked by excited expectations of new human possibilities; this excitement was resulted in some quarters in stimulation of messianic cults, visions of approaching of new epoch and signs of the end of days.

9. Hindu religious thought developed under synthetic force of Bhakti and resulted in variety of new sects. These sects varied in their synthetic and syncretistic character. Some of them can be viewed as the popular practice or the folk practice while others were more complex in their syncretism, they borrowed Islamic themes like prophet-hood, angels, names of the prophets, Islamic worship and rituals and mixed them freely with the Hindu themes like *avatarvad*, *guruvad*, gods and goddesses to the extent that it is very hard to reorganize these jumble patterns of thought. . But all these sects and movements have shared few elements which I have tried to show in the following diagram:
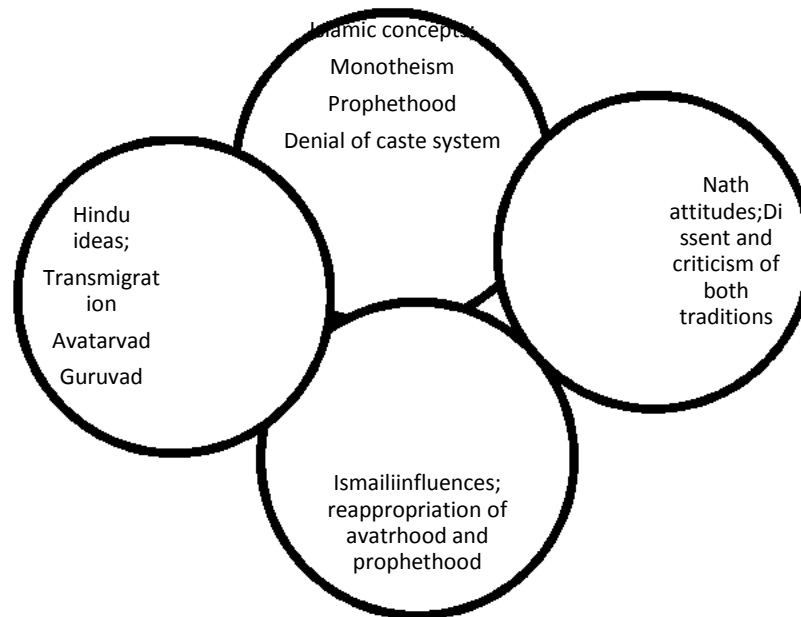
Thus we find that these movements absorbed manyIslamic concepts like Monotheism, Prophethood and Denial of caste system, and also incorborated the Ismaili approach of reappropriation of avatrhood and prophethood and also shared the Hindu ideasof Transmigration and *Guruvad* and at the same time reflected the dissent and criticism of both traditions

10. Moreover the period also produced some syncretistic religious anthologies based on the hymns of the saints and poets of different sects and orders of both traditions Islam and Hinduism; for instance there are four hymns and 130 salokas attributed to Sheikh Farid which have been included in the sacred literature of the Sikhs the Granth Sahib, though the author of these hymns was probably Sheikh Ibrahim. However what remains significant that the Sufi influence on the Sikh tradition is beyond doubt. Likewise the anthologies of Dadu Panth and Prannami Panth also bear ample proof to such syncretistic attitudes.

Bijak

Bani

Sabad Granth

Granth Sahib

Pothi
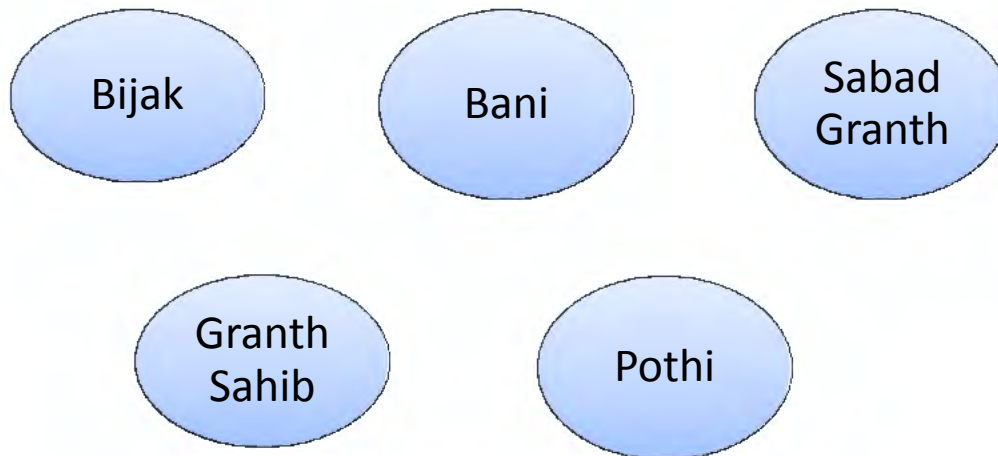
11. To explore the religious past it is very important to understand the socio-religious outlook of different groups which emerged during the period. One cannot treat the religious groups and boundaries with blanket terms and expressions like religious tolerance, pluralism and composite culture, rather one has to go beneath these major groups and boundaries and to explore further subdivisions and splits to find the variables in socio-religious outlooks of these different groups. After exploring these variables the vagueness of the blanket terms becomes quite clear. All those movements and sects which were somehow trying to synthesize between the socio-religious outlook of both communities Muslims and Hindus; reflect different attitudes towards each other as well as towards the process of synthesis itself, Hence it cannot be expressed by blanket term like religious tolerance , pluralism and composite culture.

12. Many of the movements and trends which appeared in the period under review were syncretistic in their nature which also gave them a heterodox outlook both in their own tradition and from the outside perspective for instance the Zikris, Nurbakhshis, Imamshahis or the Divine faith of Akbar were the syncretistic and the heterodox trends from among the Muslim community.Apart from being syncretistic these sects also shared some of the bsic elements which shaped their religious outlook, some of these basic elements were:

- ✓ Anthropomorphism
- ✓ Belief in the efficacy of mantras and formulas
- ✓ Denial of key Islamic principles like; tauheed, finality of Prophet, *salat, zakat, hajj* and fasting of *Ramadan.*

13- Likewise the Kabir Panth, Dadu Panth, Nanak Panth and many others were syncretistic and heterodox trends which appeared among the Hindu community. There were some common characteristics of these sects;

- ✓ Worship of One God, with apartial or total rejection of images.
- ✓ The stress on the value of guru.
- ✓ The compilation of sacred anthologies in vernacular verses.
- ✓ The value of repetition of *nam.*
- ✓ Prohibition of the age old Hindu customs like; widow burning, ascetism and denial of caste based socio-religious norms and practices.

  But soon after the death of the founders of these sects a process of drifting back towards Hinduism started and the belief of the divine incarnation of gurus of the sect, the formation of the orders of priests and monks as well as caste distinctions were acknowledged and validated by the followers of these different sects.
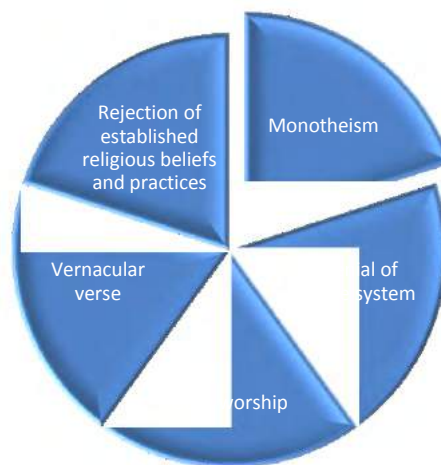
14. I also want to conclude here that religion is by its very nature exclusive as there are certain principles and beliefs in every religious tradition which make it different from the other tradition which are sometimes paradoxical to the extent that these cannot be juxtaposed, and an attempt to put them together may lead to development of a new pattern alien to the existing one. This appears very true in all the above cases, as all these trends had remained heterodox and aliens to both their own tradition as well as to the one with which they attempted to synthesize or syncretize. This alienation was very much felt by the founders of these sects and movements themselves as well as by those who observed them from the outside. While the saying '*na me hindu na musalman'* echoes the inner dissent those from the outside judged them to be heretics and outcastes.

15. The religious thought of the Muslims and the Hindus during the sixteenth century can be viewed as an encounter between various fluctuating lines which represent the religious movements which have their roots in more than one religious tradition. Thus we find that during the sixteenth century a variety of camps were gathered under the banners of the both traditions, Muslims and Hindus and between these two groups there were clusters of syncretistic tradtions which were trying to establish their own separate identities and still there were some others with blurred identities. To conclude here it can be said that the religious discourse of the sixteenth century the subcontinent was essentially multifaced and the syncretism became the trend of the day and all the sections of the both communities were engaged in one way or the other with syncretism to the extant that there emerged the antithesis and the revivalism in both tradition. This syncretistic discourse can help us as students of history and religious ideas to have an estimate of the reform movements which started by the dawn of the next century in response to such synthetic and syncretistic tendencies.

16. The study of the synthetic and syncretistic elements during the sixteenth century also helps to have a true appreciation of the views of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and

the reform of *Muslamānān e Hindu mazāj.* [622] His theological discourses about the difference between Ram and Rahim and *chūn* and *bechūn* can be perhaps better related to the religious syncretism of his time than to the themes of nationalism versus communalism as it is some time projected that his was a communal message.[623]

Further it can be also concluded here that the syncretistic outlook of the Muslim community during the sixteenth century provided the base for sirhindi's reform. He not only criticized the syncretistic tendencies of Muslims but alsocriticized the syncretistic interpretations of Hindus like calling with the name of ram and that ram and rahim are stand for the same meaning. These syncretistic attitudes were very influential in making of the exclusivist and revivalistic attitudes among both the communities.

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[622]*Maktuba*t, Vol,3 letter 41

[623] Here I have in mind the book of Sayyad Athar Abbas Rizvi, The Revivalist Movements during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, he has tried to convince his readers that Sirhindi did inject the communal virus in the Muslims of the subcontinent which made them separatist, otherwise Muslims of the subcontinent might not had adopted the insular and separatist outlook

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Glossary

'Abadat al asnām: *(Arabic)* the idol worshipers

Adiyar: *(tamil)* saivite poet saints

Afsun: (Persian) the chants or mantras of the yogis/spells

Aknatoriah: those who worship fire as per al sharistani.

Al ahāmirah: *(Arabic)* the foreigners from Sindhliving in basra

Al siābajah: *(Arabic)* the dark skinned people of Sindh and hindh who accompany the ship sailors as gaurds against the pirates

Al zut: (Arabic) Arabic black people who belong to Sindh, and it is said that are an indian tribe jatt which is pronounced as alzut.

Alvars: (Tamil) Vaisnava poet saints

Ammah: (Arabic) the folk or the laymen

Aryadesha: the land of aryans

Ashāb al kawākib: (Arabic) the star worshipers

Ashāb al ruhāniyāt: (Arabic) those who believe in spiritual beings.

Avatara: the incarnated god, usually Hindus believe in ten avatara of vishnu, at the same time they also believe that other deities can also appear as *avatara.*

Bale miyan: a Hindi title which means revered boy.

Bale pir: a Hindi phrase which means boy saint

Basti upasraya: (Hindi) rest house for the monks or ascetics.

Basvia: the term was used to refer to the the vaisnavaites.

Bhāsira:

Bhakti: (Sanskrit) the word "bhakti" is derived from the verb "bhaj", meaning broadly worship, devotion, attachment, faith, share, and partition

Bhartavarsha: the abode of king bharta a legendary Indian hero.

Bot-kada: (persian) a temple where idols are placed and worshipped, in the persian sources it is used to refer to the temples of Hindus and Buddhist

Brāhima: the brahmana

Candala: the outcaste.

Candrayana: series of fasting for one month

Caturdvipa: the notion that there exist only four continents.

Charita: biography

da 'wah: (Arabic) literally means to invite or to call, term is used for preaching islam or calling towards islam.

Dahriyya: (Arabic) those who believe in the eternity of the world

Dayr: (Persian) a place of worship, temple

Devi: the goddess.

dhimmī: (Arabic) non Muslims living in an islamic state

Dvaita: the doctrine of dualism expounded by Hindu thinker madhva (1238-1317ce)

Dvipas: (Sanskrit) word for islands or continents.

Farmans: (Persian) letters of the rulers

Fath :(Arabic) invasion, conquest.

fatiḥīn: (Arabic) the conquerors.

Fatwa: (Arabic) the legal opinion of jurists.

Gachcha: Jain sect

Gana: Jain group

Ganapati: those who worship elephant or the elephant headed deity.

Garjana; the term was derived from the place name Ghazni, it appeared in the context of ghaznavid conquest, but was also used to refer to the Muslims on the whole.

Gopis: (Hindi) Lierally female cowherds, love song of Gopis and Krishna is a very popular Vaishnavaite theme.

Gosian: Lord of cows, Vaishnavite title used for Krishna.

Gow-math: cow temple

Gurumukh: follower of guru

Guru-sisya: (Hindi) teacher disciple relationship.

Guruvada: guruvada had remained an essential part of all the systems of indian yoga generally and of nath system particularly which regards the god and the guru are interchangeable in devotion and concentration.

Hama ust: (Persian) all is He (God)

Hathıle pır: obstinate saint

Henotheism: an approach or belief about one God without denying the presence and truth of others.

Ihdār: (Arabic) the summoning of spirits

Ilm al huruf: (Arabic) science of letters

Inhirāf: the deviation

Insan ı kamil: (Persian) *Sufi* ideal of perfect man

Ishta devata: (Sanscrit) chosen deity, a Hindu belief that conveys the idea that one can adore one any deity he likes.

Jambudvipa: the continent of jambu tree.

Janam sakhis: literally birth stories, usually legends containing miraculous birth and the feasts of the saints.

Javaia: (Bengali) a local rendering of Arabic word zabiha

Jhalukiniya: the term was used to refer to the water worshipers by al sharistani.

Jizyahh: *(Arabic) the tax on non-Muslim citizens living in an Islamic state.*

Ka'ba i murādāt: (Persian) the sanctum of desires, and

Kalkin: the tenth or the awaited avatara or incarnation of god Vishnu as per Hindu belief.

Karma: Indian concept of reward and punsihment

Kathenotheism: the term was used by Max Muller for thee Hindu belief about God; it means to seek one god at one time while another in other situation and this is what is meant by the term litraly as well i.e.one by one god.

Khawass: *(Arabic)* the elite

Khutbahh: *(Arabic) the religious sermon, especially the Friday sermon.*

Kuffār: *(Arabic)*a quranic term for disbelievers.

Kurma: the tortoise incarnation of vishnu

Madhyadesha: (Sanskrit) the central world

Mahbat Ādam: *(Arabic)* the place where Adam descended on earth.

Manmukh: (Hindi) literally who follows his desires, term was used to refer to the person who does not obey the Guru by Nanak.

Matha: Siva matha or mattas were the places for religious education in early medieval India, where the religious acaryas and siddhas expounded and taught their respective systems.

Matsaya: the fish, one of the ten popular avatara or incarnation of god Vishnu as per Hindu belief.

Mey khana: (Persian) the wine-house

Mleccha: literally filthy, the term was used by Hindus to refer to the foreigners generally and to the Muslims particularly.

Naranjan: (Hindi) Literally pure, formless, a word very commonly used for God by Bhaktas and saints.

Narasimha: the man-lion, one of the ten popular avatara or incarnation of god Vishnu as per Hindu belief.

Panjiras: five-line devotional verses (sometimes stretched to seven lines), are composed by devotees for specific occasions and presented as an offering to the exalted deity.

Panth: Hindi term used for sectarian groups

paraka: a fasting penance

Parampara

Parasika: the term was basically used to refer to the Persians or the inhabitants of faris or paris, later on it was generalized to refer to the muslims irrespective of their origin.

Patitaparavartana: purification or bringing back into the Hindu fold those who had fallen away from it

Prayascitta: the atonement or penance

Qiblah i hājāt: (Persian) the cynosure of necessities

Sābia: (Arabic) Quranic term for star worshipers

Sampraday: Hindi term for religious sects and groups

Samsara: transmigration

Sangha: religious company

Sanmata sthapanacharya : the teacher who established six beliefs a title of Sankara

Sapta dvipa: (Sanskrit) the notion that there exist seven dvipas or the continents

Saura: the sun cult.

Siddhas: religious teachers

Sikka: the coinage.

Smirtis: the books of the laws of the Hindus these include:

Sraman: a medieval term used to refer to the Buddhist or the Jain monks as compare to brahmana

Sruti: literally means the heard, the term is used to refer to the sacred books of the Hindus

Suddhi: *re-purification, reconversion.*

Sulh e kul: (Persian) literally peace with all, the expression was used for the pluralistic approach towards religions

Sumnaniya: a term used by the Arab scholars to refer to the buddhists.

Tajika: the Arabs are referred to as *tajikas*.

Tanāsukh al arwāh: (Arabic) the Arabic term for the idea of transmigration of souls.

Tanjīm: (Arabic) terms for astral magic

Taskhīr: (Arabic) the subjugation of demons, fairies, and magicians.

Tenkalais: SouthernersShortly after the death of Ramanuja the Sri Sampraday was split in two major schools; the Vadakalai or Northerners and the Tenkalais or Southerners also known as the cat school. Both these schools had their own preferred body of scriptures, masters and interpretations.

Thanawiyya: (Arabic) the dualists

turuska; an ethnic term used to connote the turks an ethnic group but later on it was transformed into a generic term and was used to refer to the Muslims as a whole*:*

Vadakalai: Northerners Shortly after the death of Ramanuja the Sri Sampraday was split in two major schools; the Vadakalai or Northerners and the Tenkalais or Southerners also known as the cat school. Both these schools had their own preferred body of scriptures, masters and interpretations

Vama marga: the left handed saivaite cult known for wine drinking and sexual excesses.

Vamana: the dwarf, one of the ten popular avatara or incarnation of god Vishnu as per Hindu belief.

Vanis: folk verses

Varah: the boar incarnation of Vishnu

Vishishtadvaita: the concept of qualified monism taught by ramanuja (1017-1137)

Wahdat al wujud: (Arabic) the doctrine of *wahdat al wujud* is attributed to Ibn al Arabi; it can be summarized in his own words "there is nothing but god, nothing in existence other than God

Yatis: the Jain monks

Yavana: (Sanskrit) the term *yavana* was originally used for Greeks and later for those coming from West Asia or the west generally.

Zaminbos: (Persian) literally kissing the ground, a visiter used to bow in front of emperor for greeting; this norm was was introduced in the Mughal court.

Historical Hindu Temple (Munder) - Nasarpur

www.nasarpur.com/citiyhisSites/image/lal