EARLY CONTACTS.

RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND ARABIA BEFORE THE BIRTH OF ISLAM.

Before the birth of Islam, Arabia and India were linked pretty closely together through trade and commerce. The Arabs in those days carried the rich merchandise of India right up to Egypt and into the countries of Europe, on the west, and, on the east, passing through the rich and fertile Islands of the Pacific athwart the Indian coasts, they carried it to the distant countries of Japan and China. On this account, the Western and Eastern coasts of India had Arab colonies, and Arabs and Indians knew each other and lived and worked with each other on terms of perfect friendliness and cordiality, centuries before the birth of Islam.

From time immemorial incursions from the north by the migrating tribes of Central Asia, who came and settled in the land from time to time, sometimes peacefully and at others through invasions and conquests, were introducing an element of cosmopolitanism in the life of India. This cosmopolitanism was further helped through her economic relations with other civilized nations of the world almost from the beginning of history, because during all this time, and down to the 19th Century when British rule was well consolidated, she continued to be one of the richest and greatest centres of world-trade. These factors contributed to give to her economic and political life a liberalism which was directly opposite in form and spirit to the rigid exclusiveness of her religious and social systems. No other coun-
try extended its unstinted hospitality and welcome to followers of other faiths and creeds in the same way and to the same extent as India did in the past. And no other country benefited more by such foreign contacts and successfully assimilated the good points of the other systems without undermining the roots of its own culture or annihilating its own individuality. We are mentioning these aspects because they are generally absent from our histories and because a knowledge of them is essential to see our past in its true historical perspective.

First Muslim Colonies.

When about 630 A.D. almost the whole of Arabia adopted Islam the Arab colonies in India automatically became Muslim colonies, and the profound moral and economic impulse that Islam gave to the life of the Arabs had its immediate reactions in India by increasing the number and the importance of these colonies. From 630 A.D. to 1000 A.D., when, with the exception of the solitary Arab invasion of Sindh, the Muslim invasions of India may be said to begin, India lived in intimate contact with Islam. During this period Islam spread into practically all those parts of the world where it exists at present; it set its cultural and intellectual stamp on the various nations of the world and passed the meridian of its power and glory. Its real political contacts began to be established with India when the first flush of its cultural and spiritual momentum was practically exhausted. With the exception of the invasion of Sindh, which may be regarded as a comparatively isolated episode of Indian history, up to 1000 A.D. India never came under the dominance of any Muslim power or suffered from any Muslim invasion. But during all this time Islam spread peacefully practically in all her provinces and made considerable progress. Particularly in Southern India, in regions below the rivers Mahanadi and Narbada, which remained altogether free from Muslim invasion and conquest right up to the end of the thirteenth century, Islam made its earliest appearance and continued peacefully to progress, and the followers of the two religions lived together in perfect harmony. Not that their relationships remained confined to trade alone. Throughout this period we find them cooperating and working together in every walk of national life. We give below a bird's-eye view of these relations to show the nature of the reception Islam received in these regions and other parts of India and the relations which existed between the Muslim and the other communities inhabiting India.

"The first Muslim fleet appeared in Indian waters in 636 A.D. Meanwhile commerce by sea continued and the Muslims made their settlements in the towns along the South Indian coast and in Ceylon. Rowlandson says that the Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar coast about the end of the seventh century. . . .

"In the eighth century the Arab fleets attacked Broach and the ports on the Kathiawad coast. Their trade and settlements continued to flourish. . . .

"Henceforth Muslim influence grew rapidly. For over a hundred years the Muslims had been established on the Malabar coast. They were welcomed as traders and apparently facilities were given to them to settle and acquire lands and openly practise their religion. They must have entered upon missionary efforts soon after settling down, for Islam is essentially a missionary religion and every Musalman is a missionary of his faith. Many were undoubtedly
held in respectful esteem; they came to India not like the Christian colonies of Syrians driven and persecuted from their homelands but full of the ardour of a new-found religion and of the prestige of conquest and glory. Before the ninth century was far advanced, they had spread over the whole of the western coast of India and had created a stir among the Hindu populace as much by their peculiar beliefs and worship as by the zeal with which they professed and advocated them. The south of India was then greatly agitated by the conflict of religion, for Neo-Hinduism was struggling with Buddhism and Jainism for the upper hand. Politically, too, it was a period of unsettlement and upheavals. The Cheras were a losing power and new dynasties were emerging into power. Naturally the minds of the people were perturbed and they were prone to accept new ideas from whatever quarter they came. Islam appeared upon the scene with a simple formula of faith, well-defined dogmas and rites, and democratic theories of social organisation. It produced a tremendous effect, and before the first quarter of the ninth century was over the last of the Chera- man Perumal Kings of Malabar who reigned at Kodungallur had become a convert to the new religion.

"The Musalmans evidently had acquired great importance at this period. They were designated by the name of Mappillas which means either "a great child" or a "bridegroom" and was considered a title of honour. It was bestowed on some Christians also, and in order to distinguish the two communities the Christians were called Nussarani Mappillas. Other privileges were showered upon them. A Musalman could be seated by the side of a Namputiri Brahman while a Nayer could not do so. The religious leader of the Mappillas, the Thangal, was allowed to ride in a palanquin alongside of the Zamorin.

"Under the patronage and encouragement of the Zamorin the Arab merchants settled in large numbers in their dominions, and not only materially increased his power and wealth by their trade but directly supported him in his campaigns of aggrandisement. The Zamorins, who originally hailed from Nediyiruppa in Ernad, overran Palnad the neighbouring territory of Portlattiri Raja and secured the land thus won at the point of the sword by a fort at Velnapuram. Here, according to tradition, a merchant who had been trading with Arabia settled and established a mart which grew into the flourishing port of Calicut. He became the Koya (Kazi) of Calicut and his successors fought on the side of the Zamorin against the Rajas of the surrounding Nads. The Raja Valluvakona of Walavanada was defeated and management of the Manamakham festival at Tirunavayi and with it the predominance in Southern Malabar passed into the Zamorin's hands. The Muslim family of Ali Raja (Lords of the deep) who were the admirals and ministers of the Kolattiri rajas were according to one tradition: the descendants of an Arab Musalman who had been invited from their native land by Chera Perumal and were installed as Chiefs of Kannanur (Cannanore), according to another tradition the first chieftain of the family was a Nayar who was a minister of the Kolattiri and who embraced Islam but was retained in his post on account of his skill and ability.

"The Zamorin thought so highly of the Muslims that he definitely encouraged conversion in order to man the Arab ships on which he depended for his aggrandisement; he gave orders that in every family of fishermen (Mukku-
vans) in his dominion one or more of the male members should be brought up as Mohammadans.

"These narratives conclusively show that on the western coast of India Muslims settled down early and grew in numbers, wealth and power.

"Their principal settlement on the east coast was Kayalpattanam in Tinevelly district near the mouth of the Tamraparni river, where still the Labbies form the majority of the population, and where Caldwell picked up in large quantities broken pieces of pottery and what is more important a number of Muslim coins bearing dates from the 7th Century (71 A. H.) to thirteenth Century A. D.

"The Musalmans started their religious propaganda as soon as they had settled down in some numbers. Many of the Islamic communities of the South trace their origin to these times. The Ravuttans of Madura and Trichinopoly believe that they were persuaded to change their religion by Nathad Vali whose tomb exists at Trichinopoly and bears the date of his death 417 A. H. (1039 A. D.).

"The Dudekulas attribute their conversion to Baba Fakhruddin, the saint of Pennukonda. He became a disciple of Nathad Vali, converted the Raja of Pennukonda and built a mosque there. The date of his death according to Thurston was 564 A. H.

"In Madura the Musalmans made their entrance in 1050 A. D. under the leadership of Malik ul Muluk, who was accompanied by a great saint Hazrat Aliyar Shah Sahib whose remains were buried near the Hazur Kacheri in Madura. The grant (of villages for its maintenance made in the eleventh or twelfth century) was subjected to enquiry in the time of Virappa Nayakan and confirmed in 1573 A. D.

"The Coromandel Coast became the Mabar (passage) of the Muslim traders. According to Wassaf, it extended from Kulam to Nilwar (Nellore) nearly three hundred parasangs along the sea-coast." *

**ISLAM PRECEDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSLIM POLITICAL POWER IN INDIA.**

The conditions which we find existing in the regions south of Mahanadi and Narbada existed practically all over India. Almost in every province Islam preceded the establishment of Muslim political power by centuries and the Muslim colonists are found to live and participate practically in every sphere of Indian life. To mention a few of these colonies, they existed in Daibal, Broach, Cambay, Sindh, and Chaul; also in Cutch and Kathiawar. There was one in Sopara in Maharashtrat and others in the kingdom of Kanauj and even in Benares. In Gujarat their relations with the State were as cordial as in Malabar itself.

"Sulaiman, Masudi, Ibn Haukal, and Abu Zaid, all agree in praising Balhara (the Valabhi ruler of Gujarat) for the friendship which he exhibited towards the Musalmans. Sulaiman writes, 'There does not exist among rulers a prince who is more generous than Balhara, and his subjects follow his example.' Masudi says he was 'the Valabhi ruler of Gujarat for the friendship which he exhibited towards the Musalmans. Sulaiman writes, 'There does not exist among rulers a prince who is more generous than Balhara, and his subjects follow his example.' Masudi saw his co-religionists practising their religion openly everywhere. Speaking of the King of Gujarat he says, 'In his kingdom Islam is respected and tolerated, in all parts rise chapels and splendid mosques where the Muslims say their five daily prayers.' Al-Istakhari (951 A. D.) found Muslims in the cities of the kings-

---

* "Influence of Islam on Indian Culture," by Tarachand, M. A., D. Phil.
dom of Balhara, and 'none but Musalmans rule over them on the part of Balhara.'”

Thus already before the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni, Muslims had assumed in Western India and other principalities a position of influence, and they used it to disseminate their religion among the people. They were considerably encouraged in this by the Hindu rulers themselves. In Cambay, on one occasion the Hindus destroyed a Muslim Mosque. The Raja of Gujerat made personal enquiries and restored the Mosque at the expense of the State. The Muslim saints came in large numbers. Baba Ratan came to Broach with a party of darveshes. The head of the Borah community came from Yemen and settled in Gujerat, and Nur Satagog converted the Kunbi, Kherwas, and Koerics of Gujerat. Sindhi, which in those days included Multan and touched the boundaries of Kanauj towards the west, was, from 715 A. D. onwards, as we shall see, under Muslim rule.

“In northern India we find that in Wahind, . . which became the capital of the Punjab after Kabul passed into Muslim hands, the number of Muslims was quite respectable and they had a state of their own alongside of the Hindu Raj, but the majority of the population was yet Hindu.”† “In Kanauj, a city which was on the borders of Punjab, the Muslims had already established their rule. Muslim Arabs were also present in Kashmir.”‡ In the province of Punjab which extended in those days to Hindukush and covered practically all the area towards the

---

* Ibid.
‡ Ibid.
fact whether the invader was a Hindu or a Muslim. There were Muslim armies and generals in the employ of many Rajas, and the armies of Muslim Kings included Hindu troops and commanders. The army of Ghaznavi itself had Hindu troops and several Hindu generals even from before the time of Mahmud. Apart from all this, in various places, as we have seen, Muslims had succeeded in carving out small independent principalities for themselves. Neither in the territories of Sind and Multan, which were under Muslim rule, nor in the rest of India which was under Hindu rulers, was any difference made between the treatment of the subjects on account of their religion. There was, of course, under Arab rule in Sindh a difference on the basis of taxation. The Muslims substituted a general tax for the Bradari and other taxes which were charged by the Hindu Rajas in their territories, but the burden of taxation could not have varied much between the two systems, for the Jizia was a fairly light tax, lighter in fact than the Zakat taken from the Muhammadans.

Thus, it is obvious that before the establishment of Muslim rule, Islam had already secured a firm footing in India, and Muslims and Hindus were living side by side and in perfect amity practically all over the country. If the antagonism and intolerance we find today had been inherent in the two systems, this was evidently the period when they would have found their fullest expression. On the contrary, we find Islam spreading in this country with the aid and under the patronage of Hindu rulers themselves, and the sweep of its mission covered every stratum of society from the humble kories to the Kings. Hindu temples and Muslim mosques existed side by side, and the votaries of both found no difficulty in performing their respective

worships. Religious exclusiveness remained confined to the individual and social concerns of life and was very different in its nature and expression from the religious intolerance which, we shall see in a moment, existed in other countries. In economic and political spheres no barriers whatever seem to have existed between the two communities, for such barriers seem to have been foreign to the religion and culture of both. The outline of social conditions given above indicates that Hinduism even in its most orthodox form, if left to itself, was incapable of generating forces of social bitterness towards communities outside its own social organization, the more so as it had for several centuries ceased to make and take converts and thereby given up all aggression. If we find such forces existing now, they must necessarily be of later growth and foreign importation.

Now let us turn to another side of the picture and see how the Muslim Arabs behaved when they entered as invaders the North-West confines of India.

First Muslim Invasions.

The first Muslim fleet, as we have seen, appeared in Indian waters in 636 A.D., during the Caliphate of Omar, when Usman Sikijj, the governor of Bahrain and Uman, sent an army across the seas to Sana. But the Caliph disapproved of the invasion, because India was a land where there was perfect freedom for the practice and propagation of Islam, and in those days, according to Islamic law and practice, it was not permissible for the faithful to attack such a country without any valid justification. Usman Sikijj was severely rebuked by the Caliph on the occasion and was threatened with dire punishment in case he dared to repeat the experiment. About the same time an expedition was
taken out to Broach and Debal, but Omar vigorously countermanded these expeditions also, and the policy of armed interference with India remained in abeyance for almost a century. These hundred years were momentous in the history of Islam. It may be taken to have started on its world-mission in 622 A.D., and within a century or so it took the world by storm and succeeded in creating a revolution unprecedented in history.

"The rise of Islam is one of the marvels of History. In the summer of A.D. 622 a prophet, without honour in his own country, fled from his native city to seek an asylum in the town of Yathrib, since known as Madinat-un-Nabi, 'the Prophet's City,' rather more than two hundred miles north of Mecca, the town which had cast him out. Little more than a century later the successors and the followers of the fugitive were ruling an empire which extended from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian to the cataracts of the Nile, and included Spain and Portugal, some of the most fertile regions of southern France, the whole of the northern coast of Africa, Upper and Lower Egypt, their own native Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Transoxiana."

"By the beginning of the eighth century of the Christian era the Arabs had carried their arms as far as the western confines of India and bore away in Mekran, the ancient Godrosia, that torrid region extending inland from the northern shore of the Sea of Oman. Immediately to the east of this province lay the kingdom of Sind, ruled by Dahir, son of the usurping Brahman Chaach." *

* "Cambridge History of Medieval India."

---

**EARLY CONTACTS**

**MUHAMMAD BIN QASIM'S REIGN IN SIND.**

It was in 711 A.D. that the first Muslim invader Muhammad bin Qasim crossed the sea, defeated Dahir, and laid the foundation of the first Muslim kingdom in Sind. We do not wish to follow all the details of his campaign or of his administration. We will only mention four incidents:

"During the conquest of Sindh when the Arab Commander Muhammad bin Qasim reached Alor (Alor), the citizens resisted the invaders vigorously for several months. Then they sued for peace insisting on two conditions, (1) that no resident of the city be killed, and (2) that there should be no interference with their places of worship. Muhammad bin Qasim in accepting these terms said, 'The temples of Hindustan are like the Churches of Christians, the Synagogues of Jews and the fire-temples of the Magians.'” *

And true to their word the Arabs throughout their rule in these parts never desecrated the temples of the Hindus nor did they interfere with their religious practices and festivals.

The second incident is as follows:

"After the conquest of Sind a deputation of Brahmans waited on Muhammad Qasim. Muhammad Qasim received them with great respect. The Brahmans made this representation to him that in accordance with the Hindu tradition and practice they should be given in the kingdom a position higher than that of other communities. Muhammad Qasim

after ascertaining its truth accepted their demands and appointed them to all higher posts and offices.” *

This is the third incident:

“The Arab Amir got it proclaimed that those who wished to be converted to Islam might do so and be our brothers, and those who wished to stick to their religion might do so and pay poll-tax. Therefore some people accepted Islam and some remained attached to their old religion.” †

Chach-nama contains the following:

“Those of them that had turned. Musalmans got exempted from poll-tax and slavery, and those who stuck to their religion were split up into three divisions: (1) Highest class, that is, the wealthy section, (2) Middle class, and (3) low class. They were respectively charged 48 dirhams, 24 dirhams, and 12 dirhams. Those who accepted Islam were exempted from this and those who adhered to their ancestral religion paid poll-tax, but they were not deprived of their estates and property, and were allowed to retain them.”

“The modern equivalent of one dirham cannot be more than three and a half annas. Thus calculated, the rich must have paid an annual tax of Rs. 10, the middle class five, and the poor rupees two and annas eight. And naturally, according to established tradition, women, children, aged people, priests and other religious servants, and those incapacitated people who cannot earn must have been exempted. And Musalmans had to pay instead of poll-tax, two and a half per cent. Zakat. The Musalmans might have been charged one-tenth of their land produce and non-Muslims their normal rent. There was no other tax besides these in the kingdom of the Arabs.” *

The fourth incident is this:

“When the people of Brahmanabad implored Muhammad bin Qasim to grant them freedom of worship, he referred the matter to Hajij, who sent the following reply:

"As they have made submission and agreed to pay taxes to the Khilafat, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection, and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion. They live in their houses in whatever manner they like.” †

The Arab administration of Sind has been favourably noticed by historians for its religious toleration, one of them describing it as “a shining example of moderation and religious tolerance.” And we have seen that in its treatment of other religions, India was even more tolerant than the Arabs. It was not in religious tolerance alone but in various other aspects of life that India in this period represented a higher stage of development, not to Arabs alone, but also to the countries that had already come under their domination. As a consequence, the first contacts of Islam with India produced a profound influence on its later growth and history.

† “The History of Medieval India,” by Ishwari Prasad, p. 52, 53.
THE HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM

INDIAN CIVILIZATION HIGHER THAN THAT
OF THE ARABS.

"It may be conceded at once that the Arab conquest of Sind, from the political point of view, was an insignificant event in the history of Islam. But the effects of this conquest upon Muslim culture were profound and far-reaching. When the Arabs came to India, they were astonished at the superiority of the civilization which they found in the country. The sublimity of Hindu philosophical ideas and the richness and versatility of Hindu intellect were a strange revelation to them. The cardinal doctrine of Muslim theology, that there is one God, was already known to the Hindu saints and philosophers, and they found that in the nobler arts, which enhance the dignity of man, the Hindus far excelled them. The Indian musician, the mason, and the painter were as much admired by the Arabs as the philosopher and the man of learning. Tabari writes that Khalifa Harun once sent for an Indian physician to cure him of an obstinate and painful disease. The physician succeeded in restoring his patient to health and was allowed to return to India in safety. The Arabs learnt from the Hindus a great deal in the practical art of administration, and the employment of Brahman officials on a large scale was due to their better knowledge, experience, and fitness for discharging efficiently the duties of administration. Muslim historians are apt to forget or minimise the debt which the Saracen civilization owed to Indo-Aryan culture. A great many of the elements of Arabian culture, which afterwards had such a marvellous effect upon European civilization, were borrowed from India. India, then, stood on a much higher intellectual plane, and the Arab scholars sat at the feet of Buddhist monks and Brahman pandits to learn philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, and other subjects of study. The court at Baghdad extended its patronage to Indian scholarship, and during the Khilafat of Mansur (753-774 A.D.) Arab scholars went from India to Baghdad who carried with them two books, the "Brahma Siddhanta" of Brahmagupta and his "Khandakhadyaka." These works were translated by AlKhazari into Arabic with the help of Indian scholars. It was from them that the Arabs learnt the first principles of scientific astronomy. The cause of Hindu learning received much encouragement from the ministerial family of Barmaks during the Khilafat of Harun (786-808 A.D.) Though the Barmaks had been converted to Islam, they never felt enthusiastic about it, and prompted by their Hindu inclinations, they sent scholars to India to study medicine, astrology, pharmacology, and other sciences. They invited Hindu scholars to Baghdad and appointed them as the chief physicians of their hospitals and asked them to translate from Sanskrit into Arabic works on medicine, philosophy, toxicology, astrology, and other subjects. But it must be admitted that the Muslims soon secularised the learning they had borrowed from India, and presented it to the European world in a new garb, which was perhaps more acceptable to the European mind. When the Khilafat of Baghdad lost its importance after the extinction of the Abbasid dynasty at the hands of Hulagu, the Arab governors of Sindh became practically independent. The cultural connection was broken, and the Arabian scholars no longer in contact with Indian savants, turned to the study of Hellenic art, literature, philosophy and science. There is ample reason to endorse Havell's view that 'it was India, not Greece, that taught
Islam in the impressionable years of its youth, formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals, and inspired its most characteristic expression in literature, art and architecture."

Attempts at Early Synthesis.

The quotation above shows the intimate nature of the relationship which existed between Islam and India for centuries at a time when she was altogether free from Muslim political dominance, and it reveals the deep synthesis of religious thought and culture which began to grow so early between Islam and Hinduism. The remarkable tolerance for other faiths which existed in India and which the Arabs also exhibited to such a degree was a most uncommon feature for this age. Nothing shows a greater affinity between the Hindu and the Islamic religions and cultures than their tolerance in matters of religion when religious persecution of the most narrow and brutal type was a normal feature of the times elsewhere. Of the many wrong impressions prevailing at present one which is the most fruitful source of bitterness and ill-will is the impression that Islam is inherently bigoted and intolerant. But history shows that in its earlier stages Islam was extremely tolerant. As its spiritual life got gradually overwhelmed by its political successes, priest-craft and king-craft got the upper hand and introduced much intolerance and persecution where originally very little existed. As a fact, intolerance, to some extent, seems inherent in every religious system, though it may assume different forms in different religions and may be indulged in to a greater or lesser degree. But history does not seem to justify us in giving a major share of it to Islam. On the contrary, we find that, for its age, as a political power, Islam behaved as tolerantly as any other religion, and in some cases much more tolerantly in dealing with peoples with whom it came in contact at the outset of its career. The theory that Islam has spread by the sword has been canvassed so widely and so persistently that for the average Indian mind this proposition has become almost an axiom. And as this theory is responsible for much misunderstanding and gives its edge to the Hindu-Muslim problem today, we propose to give a few illustrations which may help us to see things in a truer perspective.

Toleration in Islam Contrasted with That in Other Faiths.

Let us take Christianity. The Christian Church, till quite recently, tolerated no liberty of conscience within its jurisdiction. Harsh and cruel to other faiths, it never spared its own protestants and dissenters. At the period under discussion, so relentless was its spirit of persecution that it alienated vast sections of its Christian subjects to such an extent that when Islam emerged from Arabia and went as a conqueror to Christian territories, it was everywhere hailed as a deliverer by the Christian populations. Examples of this can be quoted from almost every country under Christian rule, but the following will be sufficient to illustrate our point of view:

"The people of Emessa closed the gates of their city against the army of Heraclius and told the Muslims that they preferred their government and justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks."
"Such was the state of feeling in Syria during the campaign of 633-9 in which the Arabs gradually drove the Roman army out of the province. And when Damascus, in 637, set the example of making terms with the Arabs, and thus secured immunity from plunder, and other favourable conditions, the rest of the cities of Syria were not slow to follow. Emessa, Arclnusa, Hieropolis, and other towns entered into treaties whereby they became tributary to the Arabs. Even the patriarch of Jerusalem surrendered the city on similar terms." *

The facts of the surrender of Jerusalem are thus stated by the same writer:

"When Jerusalem submitted to the Caliph Umar, the following conditions were drawn up: 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The following are the terms of capitulation, which I, Umar, the servant of God, the Commander of the Faithful, grant to the people of Jerusalem. I grant them security for their lives, their possessions, and their children, their churches, their crosses, and all that appertains to them in their integrity, and their lands, and to all of them their religion. Their churches therein shall not be impoverished, nor destroyed, nor injured from among them, neither their endowments, nor their dignity; and not a thing of their property; neither shall the inhabitants of Jerusalem be exposed to violence in following their religion; nor shall one of them be injured.' A tribute was imposed upon them of five dinars for the rich, four for the middle class, and three for the poor. In company with the Patriarch, Umar visited the holy places, and it is said


while they were in the Church of the Resurrection, as it was the appointed hour of prayer, the Patriarch bade the Caliph offer his prayers there, but he thoughtfully refused, saying that if he were to do so, his followers might afterwards claim it as a place of Muslim worship." *

We will give only one more example from Turkish rule in the 17th Century which will show that the character of Muslim tolerance and Christian intolerance continued to be the same up to that time.

"But if we except the tribute of the children, to which the conquered Greeks seem to have submitted with so little show of resistance, and which owed its abolition, not to any revolt or insurrection against its continuance, but to the increase of the Turkish population and of the number of the renegades who were constantly entering the Sultan's service, the treatment of their Christian subjects by the Ottoman emperors—at least for two centuries after their conquest of Greece—exhibits a toleration such as was at that time quite unknown in the rest of Europe. The Calvinists of Hungary and Transylvania, and the Unitarians of the latter country, long preferred to submit to the Turks rather than fall into the hands of the fanatical house of Hapsburg; and the Protestants of Silesia looked with longing eyes towards Turkey, and would gladly have purchased religious freedom at the price of submission to the Muslim rule. It was to Turkey, that the persecuted Spanish Jews fled for refuge in enormous numbers at the end of the fifteenth century, and the Cossacks, who belonged to the sect of the old Believers and were persecuted by the Russian State Church, found in the

dominions of the Sultan the toleration which their Christian brethren denied them. Well might Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch in the seventeenth century, congratulate himself when he saw the fearful atrocities that the Catholic Poles inflicted on the Russians of the Orthodox Eastern Church:

"We all wept much over the thousands of martyrs who were killed by those impious wretches, the enemies of the faith, in these forty or fifty years. The number probably amounted to seventy or eighty thousand souls. O you infidels! O you monsters of impurity! O you hearts of stone! What had the nuns and women done? What the girls and boys and infant children, that you should murder them? . . . And why do I pronounce them the Poles accursed? Because they have shown themselves more debased and wicked than the corrupt worshippers of idols, by their cruel treatment of Christians thinking to abolish the very name of Orthodox, God perpetuate the empire of the Turks forever and ever; for they take their impost, * and enter into no account of religion.

* NATURE OF THE JIZIA

The capitation tax which the non-Muslims had to pay was not in its nature a measure of persecution.

"This tax was not imposed on the Christians, as some would have us think, as a penalty for their refusal to accept the Muslim faith, but was paid by them in common with the other dhimmis or non-Muslim subjects of the State whose religion precluded them from serving in the army in return for the protection secured for them by the arms of the Musalmans.

". . . And it is very noticeable that when any Christian people served in the Muslim army, they were exempted from the payment of this tax. . . ."

"We find similar instances of the remission of jizyah in the ease of Christians who served in the army or navy under the Turkish rule.

". . . On the other hand, when the Egyptian peasants, although Muslim in faith, were made exempt from military service, a tax was imposed upon them as on the Christians in lieu thereof.

". . . But, instead of Jizyah, the convert had now to pay the legal alms, zakaat, annually levied on most kinds of moveable and immovable property."

("The Preaching of Islam," by T. W. Arnold, pp. 54-57.)

The rates of Jizyah fixed by the early conquerors were not uniform and the great Muslim doctors, Abu Hanifa and Malik, are not in agreement on some of the less important details; the following facts taken from the Kitab-ul-Kharaj, drawn up by Abu Yusuf at the request of Harun-ur-Rashid (A. D. 786-809) may be taken as generally representative of Muhammadan procedure under the Caliphate. The rich were to pay 48 dirhams a year, the middle classes 24, while from the poor, i.e., the field-labourers and artisans, only 12 dirhams were taken. This tax could be paid in kind if desired; cattle, merchandise, household effects, even needles were to be accepted in lieu of specie, but not pigs, wine, or dead animals. The tax was to be levied only on able-bodied males, and not on women or children. The poor who were dependent for their livelihood on alms and the aged poor who were incapable of work were also specially exempted, as also the blind, the lame, the incurables and the insane, unless they happened to be men of wealth; this same condition applied to priests and monks who were exempt if dependent on the alms of the rich but had to pay if they were well-to-do and lived in comfort. The collectors of the Jizyah were particularly instructed to show leniency and refrain from all harsh treatment or the infliction of corporal punishment in case of non-payment.

Let us now to turn Persia. Here we find Zoroastrianism equally intolerant.

"The Zoroastrian priests had acquired an enormous influence in the State; they were well-nigh all-powerful in the councils of the king and arrogated to themselves a very large share in the civil administration. They took advantage of their position to persecute all those religious bodies—and they were many—that dissented from them. Besides the numerous adherents of older forms of the Persian religion, there were Christians, Jews, Sabaeans and numerous sects in which the speculations of Gnostics, Manicheans and Buddhists found expression. In all of these, persecution had stirred up feelings of bitter hatred against the established religion and the dynasty that supported its oppression, and so caused the Arab conquest to appear in the light of a deliverance. The followers of all these varied forms of faith could breathe again under a rule that granted them religious freedom and exemption from military service, on payment of a light tribute. For the Muslim law granted tolerance and the right of paying jizyah not only to the Christians and Jews, but to Zoroastrians and Sabaeans, to worshippers of idols, of fire and of stone. It was said that the Prophet himself had distinctly given directions that the Zoroastrians were to be treated exactly like 'the people of the book,' i.e., the Jews and Christians, and that jizyah might also be taken from them in return for protection."

Again,

"But the Muslim creed was most eagerly welcomed by the townsfolk, the industrial classes and the artisans, whose occupations made them impure according to the Zoroastrian creed, because in the pursuance of their trade or occupations they defiled fire, earth or water, and who thus, outcasts in the eyes of the law and treated with scant consideration in consequence, embraced with eagerness a creed that made them at once freemen and equal in a brotherhood of faith." *

From Persia Islam entered into India. Here also the Arabs were helped by large numbers of inhabitants who were discontented with their own people.

"Besides these Arab troops, Muhammad Bin Qasim enlisted under his banner a large number of the discontented Jats and Meds who had old accounts to settle with the intolerant Hindu Government which had inflicted great humiliations upon them. They had been forbidden to ride in saddles, wear fine clothes, to uncover the head, and this condescension to the position of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water had embittered animosities to such extent that they readily threw in their lot with the foreigner." †

Again,

"The people of Multan, merchants, traders, and artisans, together with the Jats and Meds of the surrounding country whom the native government had persecuted, waited upon the conqueror and paid him homage."

Thus we see that the age was an age of religious persecutions, and in that age Islam seemed to be quite an exception. At least, it was no worse than other religions.

We shall also see later on that such intolerance as was exhibited by the Indian faiths was rather different in its

---

† "Medieval India," by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 50.
† Ibid., p. 53.
nature from that of other faiths in being a heritage of social
custom from the past which inspire of her best endeavours.
India had not been able to shake off. We have quoted at
such length because we wish to remove a wrong impression
at the outset, as such impressions stand in the way of a
dispassionate consideration of historical incidents and pro-
blems. The facts that we have adduced so far go to show
that the relations of Hindus and Musalmans in India con-
tinued to be amicably and cordial up to the time of the
invasions of Mahmud Ghaznavi: that the main cause of this
cordiality was the tolerant attitude of the two religions towards
each other: and that during this period of intimacy religious
and cultural processes had already come into existence
which promised to make their life and thought more harmon-
ious. In succeeding chapters we shall see how this union
of two religions and cultures acted and reacted upon the
various aspects of national life. We shall confine, as far as
possible, our examination to those developments which
tended directly to influence the mutual relations of the two
communities.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF INDIA
IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

In this chapter we will confine ourselves to the considera-
tion of the social problem with which India was faced
at the time of the advent of Islam in this country; and we
will try to indicate the nature of the contribution of Islam
towards the solution of that problem.

During the last years of the Prophet Muhammad and
the reigns of the first three Khalifas, King Harsha built
up a great Empire in the north of India over the ruins of
the Gupta Empire which had its seat at Pataliputra (modern
Patna). His ambition was to conquer the whole of India,
but he was checked by Pulakeshi II who made himself
sovereign of the southern half of the country. King Harsha
gave to his great dominion a spell of peace and prosperity.
He was equally tolerant to Vaidika Hinduism and Buddhism,
and impartially helped both; with his death in 647 A.D.
Buddhism began to decline and an age of religious anarchy
set in when various old and new religions began to fight for
mastery.

"Anandagiri, in his 'Shankara-Digvijaya' has drawn a
graphic picture of the religious condition of India in the eighth
century. He mentions the numerous sects that sprang into
existence and inculcated the worship of all kinds of gods
from the noblest and highest to the most repulsive deities,
taking delight in drunken orgies and grotesque rites. The
leaders of rival sects cited the authority of the Vedas in support of their doctrines and practices, and wished to overpower one another. Some worshipped Shiva, while others worshipped the fire, Ganesha, the Sun, Bhairava and Mattari, Kartika, the god of love, Yama, the god of death, Varuna, sky, water, snakes, ghosts, etc., and acted according to their own inclinations. Udayana, by his relentless crusades against Buddhism, had prepared the way for Shankara's vigorous onslaughts. *

"All these religions, or rather sects, derived their authority from the Vedas, and consequently all were indissolubly bound up with the existing caste system, for at that period it was practically universally, though wrongly, believed that such hereditary caste was sanctioned by the Vedas. Also all of them were remarkably tolerant towards each other except on occasions of heat and controversy.

"Buddhism and Hinduism flourished side by side and Jainism too. In the same kingdom, in the same city, in the same family even, Hindus, Jains and Buddhists lived peaceably, amicably holding discussions without embitterment on the most abstruse questions of man and god. If the father was a devotee of Shiva, the son was a devotee of Buddha, and the same man in his own life might change his religion without causing disturbance either in the family or the society." +

Besides, as in the case of Islam, they were tolerant and at times even indulgent to other religions. But while so

* "History of Medieval India," by Ishwari Prasad, pp. xi, xii.

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

tolerant to each other and also to outside religious, they were very intolerant in their treatment of the Shudras and other lower castes. The Shudras were shut out from all religious knowledge and practices. The current revision of the Code of Manu contains many penal provisions against them which seem unbelievable to modern minds. Along with the higher knowledge, the Shudras were shut out from the political life of their country also.

"Particular persons of the three higher castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas did take some interest in politics, being soldiers and officials, but the generality of the people, being Shudra, was debarred from all participation in political activities." *

In addition to this general exclusion from all the higher spheres of life they were subjected in various ways to many hardships and humiliations as we saw in the case of the Meds and Jats of Sindi. No wonder that large sections of the children of the soil were discontented with their lot and considered their lives miserable. When we descend to still lower strata of Indian society we find a population almost as numerous as the Shudras themselves, existing altogether outside the pale of Hindu civilization and society. The Shudras were only debarred from all near participation in the political and religious life; but these classes were rigorously excluded from even all social intercourse and contact at any point with the higher castes. The Shudras were almost as high above these un-

fortunate outcasts of society as the Brahmans were above the Shudras. Such was the rigour of their exclusion that in some cases even their shadows had become contaminating to the Brahmans and some of these unfortunates had to shrivel from a distance to give notice of their presence when they saw a human being approaching. It was a strange anomaly that such inhuman intolerance and persecution should have existed in the Hindu society which even in those days was pre-eminent for its intellectual power, and spiritual and moral fervour. But somehow the convention and practice had become too deeply rooted in the body politic to be easily eradicated.

In Buddhism India’s soul had risen against this inhuman system and shaken it to its foundations. But the relentless logic and the cold moral severity, the ascetic renunciation of Buddhism, and its refusal to take any aid from the mystic and emotional side of human nature, made its scheme of life too high for its age and too dry and unattractive for the emotional culture of India. In its later form of Mahayana it could not compete with the ancient faiths of the Land. The image of Buddha could not evoke the same feelings of awe and reverence which the images of Shiva, Vishnu and other ancient gods evoked. Besides, the new sacerdotal class which grew up within and imposed itself on Buddhism gradually became very avaricious, superstitious and immoral. Consequently Buddhism lost its hold on the people. It was almost sinking under its own weight when Brahmanism, taking advantage of its weakness, delivered against it its final blows. The Kshattriras and other higher castes also co-operated because the upheaval in the lower castes which Buddhism had greatly helped was antagonistic to their interests and undermined their social monopoly and influence. This powerful combination of the most organized and resourceful sections of society wiped Buddhism out of India and, side by side, gradually crushed the rebellion against the established social order which Buddhism had inaugurated.

When this struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism was going on Islam made its appearance in India. Like the other religions with historical beginnings, it arose essentially as a spiritual movement meant to raise the believers morally and socially. But again, as in the case of the other religions, it became unavoidably connected with politics; and this very much obscured its real nature and aspirations. It knew nothing of great religious dogmas and complicated systems of transcendental philosophy at first. Its simple message was: “God is one; so, as His humble servants and creatures, we are all brothers. Let us then live like brothers and worship Him.” This message directly or indirectly is the message of every religion, but the speciality of Islam lay in the fact that its followers somehow or other succeeded in embodying this message in their social system to a greater extent than the followers of other religions. Consequently at the psychological moment when it came into India this peculiarity naturally acted on the mind of the lower classes of India as a very strong recommendation. Their minds were in a state of ferment and the hand of the ancient social tyranny was falling more heavily upon them because of their rebellion. Besides, the desire to be free must have been seeking some avenue for expression, and this was provided by the social system of the new religion.

This mostly accounts for the great success which Islam seems to have met on its arrival in India. It was not spread by the sword of the invader but by the indigenous caste tyranny. It satisfied the social yearnings of vast sections of India’s populations which were struggling to be free from that tyranny. Besides, it could not have met with the opposition which drove Buddhism out of India. The higher castes dreaded the intrusion of their lower sections into their own social preserves. It did not at all matter to them if these classes accepted another religion.
and became a part of another social system.* In fact, the presence of another system, outside their own social economy, which could absorb these classes, might well have seemed to them to be even an advantage, as it would remove a pressure and a potential danger from their midst.

There is another aspect.

As we have seen, socially at this period as ever before, India was a collection of castes differentiated from each other by sectarian creeds and customs. But these smaller and bigger groups had not developed that collective consciousness which is implied in the present-day communalism. There was a unity in the people as a whole, no doubt; but it was a somewhat vague, broad, loose-socio-religious unity, the effective and active strength of which was beginning to decay in direct proportion to the growth of rigidity in the caste system. The higher castes were linked together by common cultural ties and collaborated with each other without any collective communal bias or feeling in the economic and political upbuilding of society. The lower castes hung loosely about without much organic relationship with the higher, almost outside the pale of Hindu religion or civilization. And though various regions were well demarcated one from the other in language, dress, food, and minor details of life, yet territorial predilections and conceptions in their present Western form found no place in the Indian life of those days. Consequently, along with social exclusiveness of a particular type, no racial or territorial barriers existed anywhere in the country. In fact, the caste life of India made the growth of such barriers impossible. In a society so constituted every one who lived his own life without interfering with the exclusive side of his neighbour's life was welcome. Neither could the change of faith by groups or by individuals, as it was in those days, bring about any serious consequences or misunderstandings, for such secession left the life of the parent group intact and gave liberty to the seceding group to live its own life. It was this aspect of Indian life which made the superimposition of a collective communal consciousness impossible. The phenomenon of the increase or decrease in the number of a group was inconsequential, for very little communal rivalry in its present form existed in the economic and political concerns of life.

The weight which attaches to numbers in politically competing groups is largely a gift of present-day democracy and representative institutions. The present collective consciousness existing in the followers of the two religions which makes each feel as a separate entity with separate political and economic interests, was not yet born, because both could and did cooperate together in the highest concerns of life and there was no third party intervening between the two to rouse suspicions and foment disunion.

* What of those far past times, this feeling prevails even today among the orthodox. Only the other day an old Bengali Pandit was heard to say, "A-barjan jachhe," at a bathing ghat of the Ganga in Benares, when a young man tried to convince him that Hinduism was losing followers because of these caste tyrannies. "A-barjan jachhe" means "Rubbish is going away."
Thus, free from bitterness and friction and also from those social restrictions to which the lower classes were subject, Islam could carry on its mission unfettered in every stratum of Indian Society. Indirectly the proximity of a social system so completely free from all caste barriers and indefensible 'touch-me-notism' would naturally act as a great warming and stimulus to rouse the Hindu intellect and conscience to the great enormities of their social life. Buddhism had already greatly sapped the intellectual and moral foundations of this system. Though Shankara himself did not throw his great weight against it, yet almost all the great reformers who came after him denounced it as being irrational and against the real principles of the Vedic religion. In proportion to their success these preachings indirectly raised the prestige of Islam in the eyes of the common people and added to its success. The tragic immobility of the Hindu system and its failure to respond to the call of its own reformers continued to increase the numbers of converts to Islam. Islam satisfied a crying need of the social system which Hinduism continued to neglect and whose satisfaction was essential in the wider interests of nationalism and humanity.

**Its Social Work**

The real nature of the social work of Islam in India has been much obscured on account of its being mixed up with politics and with the 'odium theologicum' of the learned. Acts of intolerance and persecution perpetrated through bigotry and pride of power or policy by some Muslim rulers and exaggerated accounts of them in our histories have raised strong feelings and created the impression that Islam has spread by compulsion or other unfair means. We have seen in the last chapter that such a view is one-sided and greatly misleading. Moreover, present-day knowledge of sociology and psychology has put this fact beyond contention that no religion can live long or spread on a large scale through fraud or compulsion, and that the one and basic reason for the success of a faith is that it satisfies the social and psychological needs of a people. "We know by this time that whatever may be the temporary effect of illusion, religions live and spread by the truth at their core." In fact, the only criterion to judge of the true nature of such movements and the real causes of their success is the utility they possess for the people among whom they are found to grow and prosper. And we must judge of this utility from the human and the natural point of view. Thus judged, it will appear that the service which Islam has done to its adopted mother in the social sphere has, in the main, been constructive. We must recognize that so long as caste-barriers and a privileged class exist in India in such vast numbers, and Hinduism fails to remove these barriers and to give that class a reasonable place of equal opportunity in its religious, cultural, and social economy, the utility of Islam for India will not be exhausted.

The advantage Islam holds out to such classes as the Koris and Chamaras, who stand at the lowest level of Hindu society, and the deliverance which conversion to Islam brings them, may be best understood from the following passage descriptive of their social condition as Hindus: "The lowest depth of misery and degradation is reached by the Koris and

*J. Estlin Carpenter, "The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World."*
Chamars, the weavers and leather-cutters to the rest. Many of these in the northern districts are actually bondslaves, having hardly ever the spirit to avail themselves of the remedy offered by our courts, and descend with their children from generation to generation as the value of an old purchase. They hold the plough for the Brahman or Chhattri mast, whose pride of caste forbids him to touch it and live with the pigs, less unclean than themselves, in separate quarters apart from the rest of the village. Always on the verge of starvation, their lean, black and ill-formed figures, their stupid faces and their repulsively filthy habits reflect the wretched destiny which condemns them to be lower than the beasts among their fellow-men, and yet that they are far from incapable of improvement is proved by the active and useful stable servants drawn from among them who receive good pay and live well under European masters. A change of religion is the only means of escape open to them, and they have little reason to be faithful to their present creed.

"It is this absence of class prejudice which constitutes the real strength of Islam in India and enables it to win so many converts from Hinduism. . . ." *

Our histories do not present the problem from this point of view. They generally content themselves with making dark suggestions about wholesale conversions and religious persecutions which only tend to cloud the real issue and make it difficult for us to grasp the real causes of the success of the movement.

Take for example Bengal.

Again,

"In Bengal, for example, the weavers of cotton piece goods, who are looked down upon as vile by their Hindu co-religionists, embrace Islam in large numbers, to escape from the low position to which they are otherwise degraded.

"Of the 19 millions of Muhammadans in Bengal not more than 25,000) belong to what is known in Bengal as the Bhadralog class."*

At present there are about ten million Muslims of the weaver class in India who are actually employed in the profession of weaving. About double this number, who belong to this class or caste, are working in other departments of life, and some are distinguishing themselves as political leaders, administrators, legislators, etc. These facts give us some idea of the real nature of the problem and of the great national loss involved in the exclusion of the lower classes from equal opportunities of development.

**Islam Essentially a Social Movement,**

It is not by advancing theories of compulsory conversion but by coolly reflecting on the peculiarity of the two social systems and realizing how they supplement each other in the national life that the true nature of the problem can be properly understood and the understanding constructively applied. We give below another quotation which goes a long way in showing that Islam is essentially a social movement, and reveals the measure of its success which really can be nothing else than the measure of its social utility. In fact, it is not the first propagation of Islam that has to be explained but the permanence with which it retains its hold upon the convert and the sweeping nature of its progress in places where no question of any political pressure or allurement can arise.

"And this advance is still active. The impression of some superficial observers that Islam is dying of formalism, or is stricken with decay like other societies, is not supported by the indisputable evidence of its progress among the races of very different origin, history and social organization. The Wahabi movement has carried it in triumph through half Africa, where some eighty millions out of the two hundred occupying the Dark Continent are now gathered under its sway. The simplicity and sternness of its faith, the plainness of its ethical standards, the deep sense of brotherhood which it inspires, all make it a powerful agent for good among the negroes who rise above their fetishism when they embrace it. But these elements operate no less upon the mingled races of India, where caste disappears before the Mohammedan missionary and the traditions of Hinduism fade in the light of Allah's name. The increase in the number of Mohammedans far exceeds the natural growth of the population. The last census (1861) shows an advance of more than five million on the figures of ten years before (1891, 57 million, 1901, nearly 62). In China, the rate of progress is believed to be even more rapid. In 1892 the Mohammedans were estimated at 30 million, ten years later good observers reckon between 30 and 40 million, chiefly in the North and West. Such is the growing power of Islam in the midst of the Confucian tradition.

Its missionary energy carries it steadily forwards; and neither the State cultus nor the outworn forms of Buddhism can prevent its extension.*

In face of a phenomenon so portentous the theory of compulsion is altogether inadequate and should be almost unthinkable. Canon Isaac Taylor has thus pointed out the central difference which makes Islam more successful in its mission than Christianity.

"The Christian ideal of the brotherhood of man is the highest; but Islam preaches a practical brotherhood—the social equality of all Moslems. This is the great bribe which Islam offers. The convert is admitted at once to an exclusive social caste, he becomes a member of a vast confraternity of 150,000,000. A Christian convert is not regarded as a social equal but the Moslem brotherhood is a reality. We have overmuch 'dearly beloved brethren' in the reading desk but very little in daily life." †

A Suggestion for the Future ‡

If we compare Hinduism with Islam or even with Christianity in this respect, we shall find that instead of giving any 'bribes' of the nature indicated above, Hinduism has been doing all in its power to drive its own children into other folds. It must either expand its own social consciousness or calmly reconcile itself to the process of natural attrition. It has deviated from its ancient ideals and forgotten its spiritual mission of Aryanizing the world. At present it is taking a very narrow view of that mission. But it has vast stores of moral and spiritual energy yet left in it and its destiny calls it to remove the inequities of its social system and reorganize it on the basis of a brotherhood wider and more real than that of Islam itself, a brotherhood not only of religion but of all humanity. If it could once make up its mind to rise to the heights that are potential in it, it would not only emancipate and absorb its outcasts but would give to Islam itself as well as all the other great religions an honoured place in its internal economy.

Hinduism can easily rise to these heights by the simple yet far-reaching measure of transforming the current meaningless caste system into a system of real social organization, by shifting it from the basis of rigid heredity to the basis of spontaneous variation in respect of vocational temperament. The four castes should be interpreted again—as they in ancient times were, there is much reason to believe—as (1) the men of knowledge fit for the learned professions, (2) the men of action fit for the executive professions, (3) the men of (acquisitive) desire, fit for the wealth-producing and wealth-managing professions, and (4) the (comparatively) intellectually less evolved and not educaable men of labour, fit only to assist the other three classes in minor capacities. And the main prizes, rewards, or (psychological) luxuries of life, viz., (1) honour,
(2) power, (3) wealth, i.e., large personal possessions, especially artistic, and (4) amusement, and also the main classes of means of livelihood, viz., (1) public and private honoraria, (2) rents, or share of produce or income, or public salaries, (3) profits of trade and industry of all kinds, and (4) ample wages—these should be partitioned between the four classes. This will fit every individual into his appropriate place in society, ensure ‘necessaries’ to him, and at the same time provide an adequate incentive for enterprise and good work in the shape of one of the main ‘luxuries,’ the principal objects of ambition.

Such a transmutation of the now wholly reasonless centrifugal disruptive caste system into a rational social organization of four interdependent and mutually helpful vocational classes will enable Muslims, Christians, Jews, Parsees, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc., all to enter into these classes without changing their creeds in any way.

It will automatically shift interdining and intermarriage from the basis of nominal caste and sub-caste to the basis of similarity in personal habits, sympathy in tastes and interests, friendship, and parity of temperament.

There will be freedom for all to intermarry or not as they feel persuaded from within. There will be compulsion neither for nor against. Untouchability on irrational grounds of nominal caste and sub-caste will be automatically abolished, but will attach instead, to uncleanness, contagious disease, evil personal habits, and such other obvious scientific causes. Religio-communal antagonism will disappear. Life for all will become more elastic and sympathetic. All the followers of all the creeds inhabiting this land will grow together side by side, rationally and happily, as common members of four great natural interdependent occupational guilds, instead of all decaying side by side because of perpetual religious antipathies and conflicts.

“It is the goal of commerce to organise all the resources of the earth for the supply of the wants of mankind; it is the goal of science to diffuse one system of knowledge; it is the goal of politics to combine all countries in one harmony of justice, peace, and progress. Similarly, it is the goal of religion to inspire one faith.” * We may add that it is the goal of labour to assist in the work of the others.

A social organization like that indicated above will achieve just this, through its four guilds or classes of the men of (acquisitive) desire, its men of knowledge, its men of action, and its men of labour. The spreading of the knowledge of essential universal religion as composed of the body of truths which are the common core of all the religions, will also be the duty of the men of knowledge. The helping of all these specialists with unskilled or little-skilled labour will be the duty of the men of labour.

Such a social organization will reconcile Individualism with Socialism, ambitious spurs to individual enterprise with altruistic inducements to social service, will make possible a pure and philanthropic as well as experienced and talented legislature, a true Swaraj of the higher Swa, and will help to solve all human problems.

* “The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World,” p. 113.
Such is the high mission of Hinduism, and such the way in which it may be fulfilled, all in accord with its best and most ancient genius and traditions too, if only the Hindu mind will turn to them.

Islam also can successfully do her share in this mission if it earnestly tries to understand why it has appealed mostly only to the masses in India, why its mundane glories have decayed in the countries where it established great kingdoms and empires, whether the establishment of such kingdoms and empires was in accordance with its principles, and if so, to what extent and under what limitations; and why it has developed a priesthood despite its principles which are against any such priestly class. It should find answers to these questions, and having found them should modify its current customs and practices in accordance with them.

Hindus and Muslims should both realize that the real ultimate cause of all communal tension is the exaggeration of non-essentials in the religions. If there is any way whereby in the present conditions of life the religious, moral, and political practice of the people can be reformed, it is the inculcation far and wide of the fundamental truth that true Self-government is Government by the higher Self in all departments of life. The mission of India is to incorporate this truth in its institutions and to establish a real and universal human brotherhood on its basis. If her religions fail to co-operate with her in this mission they will do so at their peril.

CHAPTER III.

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM.

Political Disintegration after the Death of Harsha.

The period of Indian history which began after the reign of Harsha is marked by the political confusion and disintegration which usually follows in the wake of the fall of every great Empire. It is an era of small states, though these were often much bigger than many of the states of modern Europe. After the death of Harsha in 647 A. D. right up to 1000 A. D. the political confusion grew from bad to worse, and no person or dynasty of any eminence arose who or which, by political prowess and ascendency, could bring about that unity and integration which the Empire of the Guptas and then that of Harsha had given to India. At this time, as remarked by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, “what India lacked was political unity and social solidarity. Her leaders counted by hundreds; her energy was frittered away in petty squabbles between the various states. She may correctly be described during this period as a geographical expression.”

How to make this geographical expression a political reality was the great problem of India, and the immensity of the problem can be conceived from the fact that India is not a district or a province but a whole continent having for its population one-fifth of the human race. The process which brings about the gradual fusion of small territorial units into bigger ones, of principalities into kingdoms,
and kingdoms into Empires, has so far in history been invariably a series of wars and conquests, and as invariably these wars and conquests have been attended with much destruction and misery. In the initial stages the numbers of these wars are as numerous as the numbers of conflicting political units, but gradually as these smaller groups are absorbed in bigger ones the number of wars comparatively lessens, and greater security and uniformity are established in the life of these bigger groups. Thus the process of integration goes on, the bigger groups merging into still bigger ones or being co-ordinated with them into some sort of a stable political union, till a paramount power is evolved strong enough and organized enough to consolidate and maintain this unity for some time. For some time only—for, as history shows only too plainly, these most painful blood-cemented integrations are invariably followed, before very long, by disintegration. Empires are formed, with vast slaughter, out of small states, only to break up again into small states, in one or two or three generations. It is a problem of immense practical importance now in political science and art, what the line of the unitary state should be for the purposes of permanent as well as effective administration; on what principles states should be federated; and whether the overlordship could reside effectively in a body like the League of Nations. But such problems and viewpoints were unthinkable in that day.

India was in the travail of a fresh political birth, and her religious and caste divisions added to this travail and delayed the development of that unity after which her heart was yearning. Our historians are obsessed with the development of European political life and so generally look upon the Indian problem under the influence of this obsession.

"The Rajputs," it is said, "idealized chivalry which led to fierce wars among themselves. They could never rise to the lofty conception of national organization or unity. Perhaps the idea of a national patriotism was foreign to the Age." [The idea of a national patriotism could only evolve after territorial consolidation on an all-India basis had taken place, and economic and political competition with similarly consolidated other countries and nations as such had begun. The evolution of an ideal of territorial patriotism which existed in some of the old states of Greece, or in the cities of Italy during the Middle Ages, or again which developed in Europe and became idealized in the theory of nationalism which holds the field today, could not take place in India then, as we have seen, on account of her caste and creed divisions. But its non-development was not a curse but a blessing, for if the sentiment of territorial patriotism had developed in India before she had developed an all-India political synthesis, her body politic would have become fixedly divided into mutually independent and conflicting units infinitely more numerous than these into which Europe stands divided today. There are about six hundred Indian States under the British, and British India may well be taken to have absorbed at least half as many. The development of an untimely territorial patriotism would have tended to petrify and perpetuate these divisions, and, like her social system, India's political life also would have become hopelessly and permanently divided. India was developing a larger political synthesis than that of Europe and ultimately succeeded in developing it. This was the more marvellous because, compared to Europe, she represented a greater diversity in religion, in social divisions, and even in general culture. This difference was due
perhaps to the deeper moral and religious basis of Indian civilization as compared with the more economic and political basis of the civilization of the West.

Man's nature and environment are such that political consolidation up to a particular point can be developed only through wars and conquests. Incessant wars therefore formed a natural part of India's economy. Chivalry was a part of Rajput nature, fighting their usual pastime; and the desire for an all-India political domination was not only encouraged by their traditions but formed even a part of their religion. The great Rajsuya Yajna was a symbol of this desire, and even a virtuous king like Yudhishthira, by performing it, gave it an almost divine sanction. Therefore in Indian society, as all the world over, war needed no justification other than the desire of acquiring an 'all-India' suzerainty and founding an all-India Empire.

After the death of Harsha this painful process of development continued. Principality fought against principality, clan against clan, and one dynasty against another. Now Kanauj held Kashmir in sie; at another time Kashmir held Kanauj in subjection, or Bengal struggled against it and destroyed its power. Again it rose and became the centre of a big empire under Mihir Bhoja, and again it succumbed in the year 916 to the power of the Rashtra-Kuta India III. The kingdom of Ajmer repeats the same story. Chauluns, Chandelas, Rathors, Parmars of Malwa, all struggle one against the other for mystery. And the Chalukyas and the Rashtra-Kutas of the Deccan contribute their own share, like the Pandyas, the Cholas, and the Cheras of Kerala. For three hundred years this turmoil goes on unbated till 1000 A.D. Then a political move-

ment begins from the north and steadily and slowly carries on the process of political consolidation and integration, and at the end of a few centuries India, from merely a geographical expression, becomes a political entity with a central paramount power and an imperial organization to sustain and further solidify that power.

This process of development involved untold misery to the people. War has always been the cruellest of human institutions, and in the times of which we speak its ravages knew no bounds. But the fact that from 1000 A.D. Musalman Kings take a dominant part in this movement of political consolidation, has greatly tended to obscure its real nature.

**Characteristics of Medieval Life**

Religious bias has given it a deeply religious colouring and exaggerated its sufferings and horrors. Muslim invaders and conquerors have been painted as having been much too barbarous and bigoted even for their age. But a comparative view of history does not support this view. In fact, the enslavement of men and women, destruction of cities, and desecration and spoliation of temples was a common feature of war throughout the Medieval Ages. We would mention a few instances to give an idea of the age. The poet Anwari has written a dirge on the destruction of Khurasan by the Ghuzz Turks from which we quote the following:

A stable now, where dome nor porch is found,
Now can the savage foe proclaim his reign,
For Khuraniya’s criers all are slain
And all her pulpits levelled with the ground.*

The destruction of monasteries in England during the Danish invasion is another instance in point.

"Not a monk was left alive; the altars were overthrown, the relic cases ransacked; the library which was rich in beautifully illuminated parchments was strewn about and then all was set on fire; and it went on burning for a fortnight before all was destroyed. Then the fierce heathens went on their course, marked by blazing churches, pillaged farms, and mutilated corpses, on to Ely, where they found a nunnery, and after shocking atrocities slaughtered all the women. This was but the story of what went on in different parts of the country year after year."†

The fate of women during times of war in a cultured country like India was unenviable.

"... In beleaguered fortresses and cities no mercy was shown to the weaker sex when it fell into the hands of the enemies."‡

"... We have to notice another inhuman custom which appears to have then obtained from the writings of poets and even the descriptions of Bana in the 'Harsha Charitra.' Widows of kings conquered and slain in battle appear to have been reduced to the condition of servitude in the family of the conqueror. ... But that widowed queens of conquered kings should usually have been reduced to the status of servants and sometimes of concubines seems rather strange and cruel compared with the otherwise well-ordered and moral condition of Hindu Society."*†

The cruelty belonged to the age and not to individuals and religions. Even Nausheron the Just, king of Persia in the sixth century, who is regarded as a very wise and humane monarch and who belonged to the Zoroastrian faith, represented his age in his campaigns and retributory measures. His campaign in Syria is thus described:

"He treated with pitiless cruelty the first town that he captured in order to strike terror throughout Syria, and marched towards rich Antioch, ravaging the open country and extorting ransoms as he proceeded. Antioch had suffered from a series of earthquakes little more than a decade previously, its fortifications were badly designed and in a broken-down condition, and there was no adequate garrison for its defence. Consequently the capital of Syria with its priceless treasures fell an easy prey to Nausheron, who in pursuance of his policy which aimed at inspiring terror, destroyed every house and building that was not ransomed. As was invariably the case under the Parthian and Sassanian monarchs alike, there was no idea of annexation and administration, but only of raiding and destruction."†

His dealing with his political opponents was equally characteristic.

"This conspiracy being discovered, Nausheron took ruthless action and put to death all his brothers together with

* Quoted in the "History of Persia," by Sir Percy Sykes, vol. i.
‡ "History of India," by Ishwari Prasad, p. 35.
their entire male offspring, the son of Zames, by name Kobad, alone escaping. . . . Equally ruthless was the action taken against Mazdak, who had escaped the former massacre. He and one hundred thousand of his followers were put to death, and the sect was crushed for the time being by this awful severity.**

Even Ashoka the Good realizes the enormity of imperialism and political ambitions and is struck with remorse after about one hundred thousand persons had been slain in his first and only war with the King of Kalinga. Only after this does he devote himself, heart and soul, to the moral and material uplift of all the people of his vast Empire. Desecration of temples, violation of women, and limitless slave-making was the order of the day during wars. When the Moors were driven out of Spain every mosque in the country was destroyed and wherever the Christian rule established itself by dislodging the Muslim, all traces of Islam were wiped out. The strong sentiments about religious liberty which exist at present were not yet born, and religious intolerance in various forms was a common feature of medieval life. But in India before as well as under Muslim rulers, conditions were much better than in many other countries. No doubt in the heat of war many wild deeds were done. It may be easily understood what a welcome prey would be temples and monasteries, for “nowhere else was the booty so plentiful and nowhere was it so easy to take.” Moreover, the prestige of power nowhere would seem to shine more effulgent than in destroying the gods who were supposed to protect the conquerors’ adversaries. Yet another method of asserting royal authority existed in Medieval India. In this the victor compelled his vanquished opponent to surrender the most cherished idol in his principality. Harsha compelled the king of Kashmir to part in this way with one of the holiest Buddhist relics, and his namesake of the Chandelas clan compelled the Raja of Kanauj to deliver to him a valuable image of Vishnu as a recognition of his superior power. But in India such incidents remained generally confined to times of war or to acts of administrative exigency, and the people in those troubled times took such occurrences as part of the day’s work and soon forgave and forgot them. In a preponderatingly large number of cases the temples destroyed by Muslim Kings were permitted to be rebuilt and when peace was established people were generally left to themselves to practise their religions freely.

**Stories of the Destruction of Idols and Temples.**

Though under these conditions many temples were and must have been destroyed by Muslim Kings yet the stories about such destructions which are generally in vogue are much too exaggerated. We know as a matter of fact that in the course of about two centuries thousands upon thousands of Buddhist temples and monasteries with which India teemed in the days of Buddhist glory had all vanished leaving no trace behind. Says Mr. Vaidya:

“...And the wonder is that no Buddhist temples remained in the land though there were thousands when Huen Tsang visited India, if we except the cave temples and the colossal images of Buddha hewn out of hill sides. The Mohammedans in the time of Mahmud of Ghazni and later...

destroyed temples by thousands but they were apparently all Hindu temples."*  

If we remember that Harsha stopped sacrifices involving the killing of cows, horses and other animals," and thus created a strong resentment in the orthodox Hindu King families which after his death led to a concurrence between Hinduism and Buddhism; if we also remember that the tolerant King Harsha had to exile 500 Brahmans from his territories for conspiracy to take his life because he appeared more partial to the Buddhists in his charities; then we may find some clue at least to the perishing of some of these temples. But although before the time of Mahmoud practically all Buddhist temples had perished and, as Buddhism had been completely suppressed, no new ones could have been built in their places; nor could the Buddhist images have been tolerated in Hindu temples; still the responsibility for the mutilation of countless Buddhist idols and images with their arms, legs, noses chipped off, which are found in every part of India, is thrown exclusively on Mahmoud, Aurangzeb, and Muslims generally. Obviously these people could not have gone about hunting for idols already discarded and thrown away, to chip off their noses, and if they were mad enough to do so we might well forgive them, as at least for once they acquired religious merit without hurting anybody's feelings. But these very images are collected from far and near and exhibited in public places and in museums to keep old wounds fresh and aching. In the Calcutta Museum some images are exhibited on which disparaging things are inscribed in Arabic letters. The inscriptions cannot be genuine, since no Muslim bigot will ever commit what he would regard as the sin of profaning his alphabet in which God's name is written by inscribing it on idols. But all the same these idols do their work, for the Hindu is as ignorant in this respect as the exhibitor himself.

These stories of idol-breaking and forcible conversions give colour to the view generally canvassed in our histories which represents the whole movement as if it was a continued religious war between Hinduism and Islam extending over eight centuries. Even those writers who seem to understand its political nature by their general treatment of the subject, invariably leave upon the mind the same impression. Muslim Kings are regarded as zealous crusaders whose dominant motive was the spread of Islam and whose method for achieving this object was the destruction of temples and forcible conversions. Thus the real drift of affairs and the constructive trend of the political events is lost sight of and a wrong perspective is set which altogether blurs the view. All the facts and conditions of Indian life which militate against this view are slurred over. The Muslim writers deplore the want of true religious feeling in Muslim Kings in permitting idolatry to persist in their dominion and the unbelievers to prosper, while the Hindu writers bewail the weakness of the religious sentiment in Hindu rulers and their want of patriotism in not combining effectively against a foreigner in defence of their religion and their country.

We have seen in the first chapter how Muslim colonies existed practically in every province of India. Though Musalmans gradually increased in numbers yet up to the time of the Moghal rule the proportion of the Musalmans to the Hindus must have been exceedingly small. Through-
out this period the entire subordinate work of administration, many of the higher posts, scores of states and principalities, and above all the greater part of the imperial army must necessarily have all been manned by members of the Hindu Community. Moreover, it was a religious age, and Hindus and Muslims both were very religious-minded. Under these conditions it was obviously impossible for a religious crusade to have lasted unremittingly for a thousand years. A religious war does not remain confined to actual fighting at particular points. It automatically spreads to all centres where the contending parties live together, and it does not find expression merely in wars of Kings but assumes the nature of a general civil war extending into every nook and corner of the country. But such a phenomenon, or anything resembling it even distantly, is not met with anywhere during the Muslim period. Throughout, Hindu Kings in many campaigns of consequence fight on the side of Muslim Kings as their allies, and Muslim Kings fight on the side of Hindus. The defeated kings, whether Muslim or Hindu, are generally given back their thrones on promise of mere allegiance. In no religious wars elsewhere in the world have soldiers belonging to two contending religious fought indiscriminately on both sides. In India, from first to last Hindu and Muslim soldiers in almost every important battle fought side by side for their kings irrespective of their religion. A slight suspicion that their religion was being tampered with supplied the immediate occasion for an explosion which well-nigh shattered the British Empire in 1857. Is it conceivable that a deliberate, cold-blooded and continuous trampling upon the religious sentiment of the Hindus would have been permitted to extend over centuries without any sign of a general overt revolt in the people? All this shows that the one-sided treatment of these writers has very wrongly introduced religious motives and given to exclusively political movements and events a deeply religious colour.

"The rhapsodies of Muslim historians in their accounts of the suppression of a rising or the capture of a fortress, of towns and villages burnt, of whole districts laid waste, of temples destroyed and idols overthrown, of hecatombs of ‘misbelievers sent to Hell,’ or ‘despatched to their own place,’ and of thousands of women and children enslaved, might delude us into the belief that the early Muslim occupation of northern India was one prolonged holy war waged for the extirpation of idolatry and the propagation of Islam, had we not proof that this cannot have been the case. Mahmud the Iconoclast maintained a large corps of Hindu horse; his son Masud prohibited his Muslim officers from offending the religious susceptibilities of their Hindu comrades; employed the Hindu Tilak for the suppression of the rebellion of the Muslim Ahmad Niyalgin, approved of Tilak’s mutilation of Muslims, and made him the equal of his Muslim nobles; Muizuddin Muhammad allied himself with the Hindu Raja of Jammu against the Muslim Khusrava Malik of Lahore and employed Hindu legends on his coinage; all Muslim rulers in India from Mahmud downwards, accepted, when it suited them to do so, the allegiance of Hindu rulers and landlords, and confirmed them, as vassals, in the possession of their hereditary lands; and one of the pretexts for Taimur’s invasion of India, at the end of the fourteenth century, was the toleration of Hinduism.”

*"The Cambridge History of India," vol. iii
DIFFICULTY IN DEALING WITH THE PERIOD.

The main difficulty in dealing with the period arises from the fact that the only authorities for it on the Hindu side are lyrics composed by Court Bards and poets, who take the Mahabharata as their model, and conceive and develop their themes with more regard to literary and poetical requirements than to historical truth or accuracy. The other remaining sources are the contemporary or distant accounts of Persian chroniclers who though they write in prose are carried away by the rhetorical style of the times and choose as their model the old chronicles of the first Mujahidins. These chroniclers are usually Ulemas who naturally desire to exalt their religion. Consequently their poetical tendencies lead to exaggerations at every point and their religious bias gives an intensely religious colour to every political event. With these writers the force of the enemy is always as numerous as the sands of the sea, the pearls secured by the king as spoils are more than the vast bosom of the ocean could hold, and the diamonds so innumerable that, if scattered, they would illumine the whole world like the stars of the firmament. And each successful campaign brings such treasures. While the gains are so prodigious, the loss inflicted on the unfortunate enemy is equally great. Whole broods of infidels are sent to hell, thousands of temples are levelled with the earth, and after every important battle, the world is purged clean of every vestige of idolatry. Such was the force of habit generated by the conventional style of the times that even Hindu historians writing in Persian use such expressions as Kafir ba:jahannam raft (The infidel went to hell), for their own co-religionists. It should have been impossible to mis-

understand such statements or to take them seriously, but a serious difficulty has arisen in the way of appraising them at their proper value, from the fact that the histories we read are compiled from such sources by people who for various reasons are interested in giving prominence to such rubbish and suppressing the surrounding facts which would enable us to estimate them properly.

These Chroniclers consider it an act of piety to represent their kings as idol-breakers and champions of their faith. Among the idol-breakers Mahmud Ghaznavi tops the list, probably because his campaigns in India are described by his own scribe Utbi. Perhaps Utbi wanted to defend his master from the attacks of many contemporaries who condemned him as a Kafir. That Mahmud's expeditions were not in the nature of a religious crusade is accepted even by many Indian historians, both Hindu and Musalm. In fact, the estimate of his character which we generally meet in history shows that the unbridled vandalism attributed to him is partly exaggerated and partly attributable to the age in which he lived. We give below two estimates of his character by Hindu historians. And we give also a few samples of the Persian chroniclers to show their style and the weight that should be attached to their exaggerations.

THE GHULNAR.

Mr. Vaidya thus sums up his estimate of Mahmud's character:

"To sum up, we think that Gibbon is right when he says that Mahmud was one of the greatest kings of the world. He was an intrepid soldier and a consummate commander, a lover of justice, and patron of learned men,
a sovereign who laboured for the peace and prosperity of his people and strove to extend education and commerce. As a man, Mahmud was a person of strict discipline and was not by nature cruel or avaricious, but was temperate and generous. He was also highly religious and of pure rigid faith. The great and perhaps solitary blemish in his character was, according to our view, his bigoted intolerance."

Dr. Ishwari Prasad goes a step further, for he seems to exonerate him even from the charge of excessive religious zeal.

"It is not difficult to determine Mahmud’s place in history. The foregoing remarks have made it abundantly clear what a great personality he was. To the Musalmans of his day, he was Ghazi, a champion of faith, who tried to extirpate infidelity in heathen lands. To the Hindus, he is to this day an inhuman tyrant, a veritable Hun, who destroyed their most sacred shrines and wantonly wounded their religious susceptibilities. But the unbiased enquirer who keeps in mind the peculiar circumstances of the age must record a different verdict. In his estimate, Mahmud was a great leader of men, a just and upright ruler according to his own lights, an intrepid and gifted soldier, a dispenser of justice, a patron of letters, and deserves to be ranked among the greatest kings of the world.”†

THE GHORIS.

After the Ghaznis come the Ghoris. Their first exploit was the destruction of the city of Ghazni which Mahmud had converted into one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

† "History of Medieval India," by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 91.

"Ala-ud-din followed up his victory and took the city of Ghazni by storm. The finest buildings of the city, exquisite memorials of the greatness and splendour of Mahmud, were demolished, and during the seven days the Ghori chieftain remained in occupation of the town the air, from the blackness of the smoke, continued as black as night; and those nights, from the flames rising in the burning city, were lighted up as bright as day. Rape and massacre were carried on with the greatest pertinacity and vindictiveness, and men, women and children were either killed or made slaves. The dead bodies of all the Sultans of Ghazni except those of Mahmud and Ibrahim were dug out from their graves and treated with indignity and burnt.”

Next, the Ghoris turned their attention to India. The victories of Shahabuddin Ghorie are thus glorified by the Persian chroniclers:

At Ajmere, "you might have said that the secret depositaries of seas and hills were revealed. While the Sultan remained at Ajmere he destroyed the idol temples and built in their place mosques and colleges."

At Kansa, "The impurities of idolatry were purged from that land and immense booty was obtained such as the eyes would be weary to look at."

At Benares:

"The royal army proceeded to Benares and there one thousand temples were destroyed and mosques were raised.

— "History of Medieval India," by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, pp. 110, 111.
on their foundations and the faces of the Dinars and Mohurs were adorned with the blessed name and title of the King."

But when the actual facts are analysed even historians who can in no way be described as partial to the Muslims form the following estimate of Shahabuddin:

"It cannot be alleged that the religious fervour actuating Shahabuddin and his Mohammadans was stronger than that actuating the Rajputs. Although Mohammadan historians describe the former as making a religious war, Shahabuddin was fighting for conquest of territory and not for extending religion. Indeed, we find that conversion of the people to Mohammadanism was not his motive in conquering Northern India."

After Shahabuddin the campaigns of Kutbuddin and Altamash are described in the selfsame strains. But when we prune away the hyperbolical setting we find that—

"Kutbuddin and Altamash were not fanatical Muslims and were wise rulers who, like the British, saw the justice and even the wisdom of not interfering with the religion of the people."

It is everywhere the same. In fact, as in every other country, so in Muslim India also, there was a bigoted section of Ulemas, "who in spite of Islam formed an Islamic priesthood, who claimed the right of interpreting the Quran and therefore of guiding the policy of the State." And, as priests of all religions are the same in nature, the influence of the bigoted section was generally reactionary. But the conditions in India were such that from the very outset the good offices of this section were a source of the greatest danger to the Empire and consequently the kings could never listen to their advice in the higher policies of the State, and so its influence even with religiously inclined rulers remained confined within narrow limits and to unessential details. But while exercising little authority in matters of State policy and administration their bigotry and that of their disciples got full opportunity to bubble at will in historical and other compilations of the State. The kings and other high officers did not object to this form of insidious adulation, because, in the first place, it was altogether conventional and could not be misunderstood, and in the next, it gave them religious merit in the eyes of the faithful without in any way endangering their empire or raising uncomfortable administrative complexities.

It is because of this that the pages of our histories are covered with stories of desecrated temples and broken idols, and almost every Muslim King is depicted as having a fair share of such achievements to his credit. But so far no honest attempt has been made to discover how many Hindu temples were built by Muslim rulers, and how many of them received royal grants and subsidies. When such researches are made it will be found that even a king like Aurangzeb gave grants to a larger number of temples than he is credibly alleged to have destroyed.

**The Compelling Social Pressure.**

In fact, the conditions in India were such that, even if the Muslim rulers were narrow bigots, these would not permit them to indulge freely in the luxury of religious persecution or wholesale conversion. There was scarcely a
Raja in the land of any consequence who had not a considerable number of Muslim soldiers in his employ, and the army of every Muslim king in India inevitably possessed a large number of Hindu soldiers raised from territories under his rule according to established custom and practice. If we analyse the battles of the Muslim period from the 8th century to the sixteenth or even up to the establishment of British Power in India we shall find that the same number of battles are fought between Muslim and Muslim and Hindu and Hindu as between Hindu and Muslim kings. Nothing shows more clearly the dominance of the political rather than the religious motives both in the Muslims and the Hindus, and nothing shows more emphatically the utter dependence of the Muslim Kings on their Hindu allies and confederates. To be openly hostile in conditions like these would have been to court evident disaster. It was this compelling social pressure which would have tamed the wildest bigotry or destroyed it before it could do much mischief. And it was this which in addition to their moral and religious culture inclined the Hindu and Muslim sovereigns to follow, in religious matters, a policy of generous toleration which while morally meritorious was also the safest and the best policy.

**Geographical Confines of India.**

Not alone has this political movement from the North been represented as a religious war but it has also been invariably represented as a foreign invasion, and continues to be represented as such. The irony of fate is that even the British themselves, foreigners from 6,000 miles away, are blessed in our histories for freeing India from a foreign rule, and giving us security from Northern invasions by foreigners, though after the transfer of the centre of political power from the Pun’ab to Delhi up to the fall of the Moghal Empire, no invader came to India from or through the Afghan territories, if we except the passing inroads of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah, and the whole of this region remained, with occasional lapses, an integral part of India and of Indian Empires. The successful invasions from or through Afghanistan which took place during the course of some 800 years represented huge Central Asian movements which produced considerable repercussions in Asia, the Middle East, and other adjoining countries. These movements have now ceased because the entire nature of the Central Asian regions and their problems has changed altogether, and not because of any special protective potency in the British Raj. The money that has been spent on efforts to subdue the Frontier tribes and keep the Afghans in check during the British Period will perhaps be found to be greater in amount than that spent by any set of Muslim kings during the same number of years in their efforts to subjugate and stabilise political conditions in the whole of India. And as for Afghanistan, though it was a turbulent province, any governor, whether Muslim or Hindu, who was appointed to the task, kept it under tolerable control like any other province without much ado and without any special expenditure from the imperial revenues.

Yet inspite of all this, religious bias and interested motives have created the impression that the invasions from the North which began with Mahmud in the beginning of the 11th Century were all foreign invasions. That Islam came from outside is enough to make every Muslim a foreigner to the Hindu, though the Hindu himself is taught that he is descended from Aryan conquerors who came into
India from outside. So persistently and with such vigour and assurance has the cry been repeated that the northerners were foreigners that it has succeeded in producing a hypnotic effect upon the whole nation. And the Muslim too has begun to regard himself as really a foreigner and conqueror. Yet the patent fact is that the vast bulk of the Muslim population is of purely Indian race, and that the few lakhs who came in from other countries during the entire Muslim period have merged completely into the indigenous population.

In fact, Ghaznis and Ghoris were as Indian in their blood and culture as the Indians of more southerly regions, for Afghanistan and even its adjacent territories on the west, from the most ancient times up to the British rule, were considered an integral part of India and were regarded as the cradle of her civilization.

"It is clear that before the 10th century the whole country east of Helmand was Hindustan. Even Ghazni when it was taken by Yakub-i-Ilias was in India and so was Kabul, and Kandhar which was in the country of Rajputs (Al Masudi 953 A.D.) When the Ghazni Kingdom was founded it was bounded east, south, north, and even west by Hindustan. This country was properly called Hindustan, the people being Hindus." *

Strange though it may seem, the change of religion by the people of this region not only made them foreigners but made proper Hindustan also a foreign country. Yet the territories so ostracised were those which gave to India her religion and her culture.

* Vaidya, "Medieval Hindu India."

"The Punjab had no doubt been the home of Vedic Aryans from the most ancient days; the place where the Vedic hymns were mostly composed and sung at sacrifices, the place where even later Vedic civilization developed. Gandhara and Madra are the lands of Panini and Asvapati, the teachers of grammar and philosophy. The Upanishads contain many references to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas of these famous lands on the west and the east of the Indus. But the 'land of the five rivers and the sixth Indus' subsequently became a home of Buddhism, next only to Magadha. Buddha himself preached successfully in Afghanistan and the Punjab, and later on Mahayana Buddhism was evolved under Kanishka in this land. Purushapura (modern Peshawar) and Takshasila, two places of Vedic fame, became centres of Buddhist learning. The Punjab, therefore, though originally the home of Indo-Aryans (even now it is pre-eminently Indo-Aryan as Sir H. Risley found from facial measurements taken at the Census of 1991) was less strong in the Hindu sentiment than the rest of India." *

This movement began from the land where the Vedic hymns were mostly composed, and which gave to India the language and the philosophy on which were laid the foundations of her succeeding culture. In every period of Indian history these regions played an intimate part in her life, and in the period under discussion most of the cities named above formed part of the province of the Punjab which had its old capital at Kabul. Alaptigin carved his kingdom of Ghazni out of this province. Consequently even before the reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi hostilities had commenced.

* "Medieval Hindu India," p. 129.
between the Ra'a of the Punjab and Alaptijin, and when Mahmud succeeded, the Ra'a made another attempt to retrieve these territories. This was the beginning of the hostilities which produced such profound results in the history of India.

The people of these regions up to the time of Mahmud were mainly Hindus. In 1000 A.D. Islam was filtering into these regions slowly.

"In the more important cities of Afghanistan Muslims were living no doubt but the Afghans themselves had not accepted Islam so far. Though a king of Kabul had accepted Islam about the third Hijri, i.e., about a century before the Ghaznavids, yet most of the Afghan tribes began to accept Islam only in the days of Mahmud." *

**THE REAL NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE.**

Thus we see that the tussle which this political movement involves is not in the nature of a foreign invasion. It is a continuation of the same old Rajput struggle to give India her political unity. The Hindus and the Muslims of India both participate in this struggle in the same way and to the same extent as the Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Jains, Buddhists, etc., participated in such struggles in the good old days. That the Muslims prevailed in this struggle is due mainly to the fact that their new religion gave them a more cohesive and more broad-based social system. It was the want of a real social solidarity which had made the development of a real and lasting political solidarity so difficult of achievement in Hindu India. The Muslim

---


**THE POLITICAL PROBLEM**

social solidarity partially remedied this evil and to that extent facilitated political development on an all-India basis. As far as the actual work of construction was concerned, it was done by the mutual co-operation of Hindus and Muslims, who worked throughout this period in the economic and political concerns of their country without importing much religious fanaticism or bigotry into them. But no movement of this nature, especially in the times we are dealing with, could work wholly without exhibiting such traits. Religious intolerance and persecution are an immemorial heritage of human history, and they must have had their normal share in the life and activities of the times. Nor could India have remained altogether free from the savagery and the ravages of war any more than she was in the earlier past. But a study of comparative history shows that from the 11th to the 15th century India passed through comparatively quieter times and fared better in both these respects than most other parts of the world. Let us take for instance the fate of Persia and other Islamic countries of the Middle East.

The political movement which the birth of Islam set in motion in 622 A.D. proceeded from the South to the North reaching almost to the confines of China. But from the 11th Century A.D. a reverse current sets in which practically annihilates all the centres of the cultural and political life which Arab conquests had brought into existence. Arabia, no doubt, continues to be a religious world-centre and Islam as a social and religious movement continues to spread, but as a political power all vestiges of its life are destroyed during this period; and even Arabia itself which had never accepted a foreign yoke before, comes under the subjection of Turkish rule. Even before this final catastrophe its
political life had weakened greatly. We cannot trace here the movement we have referred to above in all its ramifications among the Turks and the Mongols and the other hordes of Central Asia that took part in it and encompassed the destruction of the Muslim kingdoms of Persia and the Middle East. We will give only one example, that of the Moghul invasion, which is thus described by Arnold.

"There is no event in the History of Islam that for terror and desolation can be compared to the Moghul conquest. Like an avalanche, the hosts of Jengiz Khan swept over the centres of Muslim culture and civilization, leaving behind them bare deserts and shapeless ruins where before had stood the palaces of stately cities, girt about with gardens and fruitful corn-land. When the Mongol army had marched out of the city of Herat, a miserable remnant of forty persons crept out of their hiding-places and gazed horror-stricken on the ruins of their beautiful city all that were left out of a population of 100,000. In Bukhara, so famed for its men of piety and learning, the Mongols stabled their horses in the sacred precincts of the mosques and tore up the Qurans to serve as litter; those of the inhabitants who were not butchered were carried away into captivity and their city reduced to ashes. Such too was the fate of Samarqand, Bakh, and many another city of Central Asia which had been the glories of Islamic civilization and the dwelling-places of holy men and the seats of sound learning. Such too the fate of Baghdad that for centuries had been the capital of the Abbasid dynasty." *

The sack of Baghdad lasted for a week, during which nearly one million of its inhabitants were massacrecd. The effect of this invasion on Muslim civilization is thus summed up by Sir Percy Sykes:

"Moslem civilization was at that period the shining light in the world, and it has never recovered from the deadly blow. The awful nature of the cataclysm which set back the hands of the clock of progress among Muslim States, and thereby indirectly throughout the world, is difficult to realize and impossible to exaggerate. Incidentally the Arabic language, which had held a position analogous to that of Latin in Europe, gradually declined in importance." *

THE NEW POLITICAL UNITY.

While the Central Asian movement took the form of a catastrophe for the Islamic world, the Indian movement from the North took a steady and constructive form, and remained comparatively free from those volcanic elements of the other movement which blasted the Middle East. This fact is all the more significant when we consider that members of the same sub-races of Turks and Tartars and Mongols are seen taking a part in the Indian movement also. But these Turks and Tartars are people who have been partially humanized by Indian religion and culture, and the Mongols before they come to India as conquerors have accepted Islam and become humanized by a close contact with Islamic culture. The enslavement of men and women, violence to women and places of worship, destruction of resisting cities, religious intolerance towards the conquered people were, as said before, features common to ordinary warfare and conquests in those days. If a comparative study

of the period is made India, will be found to have been much freer in all these respects than other countries though religions and sects were many and wars frequent.

The political movement which begins from 1001 A.D. with the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni does not descend upon India like a destructive torrent or a devastating avalanche. Its progress seems to resemble more the course of a river which, though it may cause destruction at the outset or when it casually overflows, is beneficent and life-giving in its ultimate results. It takes this movement quite a century to consolidate itself in the Punjab, whose boundaries in those days extended right up to the Hindu-Kush. In the next century it descends to the northern banks of Mahanadi and Narbada in the south, and to the east extends right to the farthest corners of Bengal. By the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the 14th under Alauddin Khilji it reaches the farthest southern confines of India and, for the first time in Indian History India “the geographical expression” comes under one suzerain and assumes, however temporarily, a sort of political unity. No doubt, Chandra Gupta and his grandson Ashoka ruled a great Empire, but the empire was built at a time when the centrifugal forces in the country were much too strong, and lasted barely a century. The Gupta Empire lasted longer, for a little more than three centuries, fourth to seventh. Harsha’s was another attempt, but his empire was the result of his personal greatness and so ended with him. Alauddin’s Empire also fell to pieces, but it was the result of a continuity of effort which existed from before and did not die with him. The movement which he represented continued to work even after his death. Delhi from now becomes a recognized centre of permanent politi-
tical authority, and though kings may change and provinces may rebel, its right to punish and subdue them remains more or less unquestioned in the mind of the people. Gradually the centrifugal forces are subdued and a political organization to keep them in check evolved, and thus the development of a central paramount power rendered increasingly more feasible. The Moghals inherit this colossal effort of over five centuries and during the Moghal period India realizes as she had never realized before within historical times, except once, in the days of the illustrious Ashoka, the objective towards which she had been consciously moving. From the beginning, her one mission had been to weld her myriad children into a harmonious people by giving them a political, economic and cultural unity. During the Moghal period the foundations of this national synthesis were again strongly and deeply laid.

... On the other hand, the two hundred years of Mughal rule, from the accession of Akbar to the death of Mohammad Shah (1556-1740), gave to the whole of Northern India and much of the Deccan also, oneness of the official language, administrative system, and coinage, and also a popular lingua Indica for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk. Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal Emperors, their administrative system, official nomenclature, court etiquette and monetary type were borrowed, more or less, by the neighbouring Hindu Rajas.

All the twenty Indian subahs of the Mughal Empire were governed by means of exactly the same administrative machinery, with exactly the same procedure and official titles. Persian was the one language used in all office records, farmans, sanads, landgrants, passes, despatches and
 receipts. The same monetary standard prevailed throughout the Empire, with coins having the same names, the same purity and the same denominations, and differing only in the name of the mint-town. Officials and soldiers were frequently transferred from one province to another. Thus, the native of one province felt himself almost at home in another province; traders and travellers passed most easily from city to city, subah to subah, and all realised the imperial oneness of this vast country." *

No doubt, the irruption of Europe which India could not control disturbed this synthesis. But England inherited the skeleton and the muscles of the Indian Empire from the Moghals, just as the Moghals had inherited the outline and back-bone from their predecessors. It was the result of eight hundred years of constant building that within a century of British rule India began to make herself felt as a political unity and, as we shall see, inspite of the utmost efforts of the British to the contrary, imbued national idealism and began to move irresistibly towards securing Western representative institutions and freedom from foreign rule. There runs throughout this period a continuity of constructive political development of which any people may well be proud.


CHAPTER IV.

THE NATIONAL SYNTHESIS.

THE MEETING OF ISLAM AND HINDUISM.

The followers of Islam may well have wondered at their reception in India and at the existence of a culture and a tolerance of other faiths unknown in the history of civilized people. They must have seen the high tenets of their faith regarding religious tolerance, highest perhaps for the age in which they were given, being lived up to by a whole nation. They must have wondered all the more that the people who were so tolerant to outsiders and so free from all racial and political bias, were the most conservative in the world and rigidly exclusive in their social habits and customs. These caste restrictions were a heritage from the past and the whole soul of the nation had rebelled against them in the shape of Buddhism. But there was a reaction from that rebellion, for it is not given to humanity to transcend easily its great limitations, historical, social and psychological. All the same, the religion and culture of India had obviously transcended them in some respects and to some extent, and inspite of the caste system had evolved a humanitarian outlook and sympathy not vouchsafed to other peoples whose civilizations are seemingly free from such limitations. We must also remember that in their social organization and in their religious beliefs the Hindu and Muslim communities greatly differed from each other. And at the time when they came together, Islam was in its first flush and Hinduism was in the throes of a
great religious ferment, socially reactionary and orthodox in its nature. With all this the two communities found it possible not only to tolerate each other but to live and grow together with the utmost cordiality and co-operation. This shows a deep moral consciousness, a unity of culture, a harmony and a broad outlook on life which could have come to them only through religion, for both were deeply religious.

Influence of Muslim Art on Indian Architecture.

Like religion, the arts of India also filled the newcomers with admiration. The temples, tanks and embankments were wonderful works of art which have been very highly praised by Alberuni. Speaking of Hindu architecture he says:

"In this they have attained to a very high degree of art, so that our people when they see them, wonder at them and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them."

But soon on the soil of India the "clash of the two divergent mentalities and their cultures resulted in the creation of a new culture. . . In art, Hindu and Muslim elements coalesced to form a new type of architecture. The buildings erected by Musalmans for religious, civil or military purposes were not purely Muslim, Syro-Egyptian, Persian, or Central Asian, nor the Hindu buildings, temples or palaces or cenotaphs purely Hindu. The simple severity of Muslim architecture was toned down and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu was restrained. The craftsmanship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu. The arced form, plain domes, smooth-faced walls and elevated and spacious interiors were super-impositions of the Muslims." *

India Wanted a New Synthesis.

But though India had made considerable progress in religion, philosophy and art, she was faced with a very serious problem in her social and political life when Islam appeared on the scene. Her religious life represented religion almost in every stage of its evolution, from the simplest and crudest to the most complex and the most perfect. Her social system was split up into pieces by her caste-system, and after the fall of Harsha's Empire, the partial political unity which he had achieved had been shattered, and, like the social, her political life at the time consisted of innumerable small and independent states, perpetually involved in mutual conflicts and dissensions. In the face of these facts it is obvious that her crying need at this period, as ever before, was religious harmony and synthesis and social and political integration. The mosaic of her caste-system with its political replica of independent and conflicting units had to be built up anew into a harmonious structure. The people had to be welded into a common brotherhood, and a corresponding political unity had to be evolved to serve their common needs and save them from unending conflicts. A Pax Indica was wanted. This was the great problem before India when Islam began to act socially and politically on her national life. To judge of Islam's collective influence on that life we

*"Influence of Islam on Indian Culture" (MS.), by Dr. Tara Chand.
shall have to see how far it helped India in the solution of the problem.

How History has been Perverted.

Our historians do not approach the question from this point of view. The Muslim historian glories over the discomfiture of the unbeliever and counts as his successes the treasure he collects, the temples he destroys, and the large number of Jaffirs he successfully sends to hell. The Hindu bemoans the loss of political power, the acts of religious vandalism, and the contamination of his religious and social life by the intrusion of Mechechhas. The Westerner laughs at them both and cleverly sets them one against the other. Such a communal and interested treatment of history has done a lot of mischief. It has generated an atmosphere of prejudice and passion which makes a dispassionate and constructive consideration of the problem very difficult. Social and political movements have to be judged from the point of view of their collective utility for the nation and not from isolated acts of tyranny and intolerance, which are common to such movements and part of the inevitable vicissitudes of human life. In the one-sided pictures generally presented to us emphasis is laid on the incessant political conflicts, on the tyrannies, intolerance, cruelties, and extravagance of kings and conquerors and on the general poverty and insecurity of the people. All this is attributed to a general listlessness of the people, their other-worldliness, their want of interest in political life and want of stamina to shape it according to their will. But nothing is said of those countless checks and safeguards, cultural, religious, and constitutional, against the exercise of autocratic power, which no king, Hindu or Musulman, could ever think of transgressing; nor of that arrangement peculiar to India in which the king and his court, though a part of the social organism, had as little direct bearing on the economic, religious, or social concerns of the people as the people had on court interests, intrigues, and conflicts. Like the political, the religious life of the people is also ridiculed, and its grosser elements and superstitions are represented as if these were the be-all and end-all of Indian civilization. A general impression is thus produced that our progenitors were a set of superstitious dreamers, who in their care for the other world lost even the one entrusted to them. We are never told that from the beginning of human history up to the 19th Century, when England had already consolidated her power, India continued to be among her contemporaries the richest and the greatest manufacturing country in the world. Obviously in her care for the next, she had not neglected this world. Again, by concentrating attention exclusively on political conflicts, we are made to believe that, prior to the advent of the British, the whole country was in a state of veritable anarchy; though, as a fact, the maintenance of law and order in India was the function of those countless republics which covered the land in the shape of independent rural and urban units, whose constitutional administrative rights within their respective areas were never interfered with by Hindu or Muslim kings right down to the time of Warren Hastings; and consequently the fights of kings and the changes of dynasties could not disturb to any appreciable degree the general peace and tranquility of the country. Still less could this affect its economic, religious, and cultural progress. Such perversions of our history are designed to create a contempt for our past, a feeling of abject impo-
ence, and an atmosphere of unshakeable inferiority. Here we are concerned with the Hindu-Muslim problem, and we feel constrained to say that nowhere the design to demoralize and denationalize us through historical perversions is more pointedly and more extensively used than in the treatment of the Muslim period.

The example in this respect has been set by great but interested and prejudiced English historians, and it is being followed by others unconsciously or consciously from a variety of motives. The Muslim period is represented as the darkest period of Indian history, during which the national life of India was deflected from the normal course of its evolution and plunged into a social and religious chaos from which it is difficult for it to extricate itself. Muslim rule is represented as a foreign rule and its wars as protracted crusades to convert the country and to molest and persecute the native populations. Patronizing tones are also adopted at times, but the above is the general impression left on the mind of the average student after a perusal of his prescribed courses of history. And as school histories are more poisonous than the higher ones, so the higher student goes to his studies almost with his mind made up and with a strong bias which it is almost impossible to shake. Through the schools and colleges the poison has gone to papers and magazines, popular pamphlets and books, speeches and conversations, and has thus come to pervade the whole of our life.

We have rapidly traversed the whole period of Muslim rule and indicated some lines of thought which go to show that such a view is not warranted by our history. In fact, though the differences between the two religions were obvious, the fundamental unity of the lives of their followers in India and the compelling necessity of their common destiny were even more obvious and more real. And out of this grew that atmosphere of co-operation and goodwill, of tolerance and reverence for each other's sentiments which, in spite of temporary set-backs, settled them down as brothers to solve together the common problems of their lives. Their union was a marvel for its age, and it took interested agencies quite a long time to shake it seriously. Before it was thus shaken it had made many achievements in the social, religious and political fields.

The Muslim conquest of India was very slow and steady. In 713 Sindh was conquered. In 1030 Punjab and Sind both came under the rule of Mahmud. Towards the end of the 12th century Northern India and Bengal were conquered. At the end of the 13th century Muslim rulers reached the southermost confines of India. Thus Alaudin’s achievement was in fact the direct result of six centuries of continuous effort and aspiration. The impetus for this prodigious effort came from the North and a dominant part was played by the Muslim sons of India, because the compactness of their social system served as a backbone in the midst of a society divided by castes, and it gave a continuity and a coherence to their policy which was lacking in previous post-Buddhist efforts. Along with this impetus much fresh equipment of the kind needed for Empire-building also became available from the Muslim world outside India. Thousands of the best minds and men of great experience, enterprise, and ability came to India and assisted her in her great task. During these six centuries she was able to construct a new a skeleton, imperfect, crude, and incomplete, yet one round which could continue to grow flesh and
muscled till in the Moghal period it became a powerful living organism, representing on an enduring basis the inner synthesis of the political life.

Kingship in India.

This work was rendered possible because her ancient religion and culture was comparatively free from racial and territorial jealousy. Though orthodox and exclusive in her social tendencies, India was always ready to adopt and assimilate all that was noble and life-giving in other systems of culture. India's tolerance, like her power of steady assimilation, except in the one respect of caste, was boundless, and it was this tolerance which made it possible for the Hindu and the Muslim communities to co-operate whole-heartedly in her political and economic advancement. Her people, moreover, both Hindu and Muslim, believed (whether rightly or wrongly) kingship to be a divine dispensation, and consequently without any qualms of conscience they could be loyal to any king whether Hindu or Muslim. The social sphere of life was thus freed from much of the acerbity and conflict which usually results from political revolutions. Every king no doubt had to maintain his position against ambitious claimants and rebellious nobles, but the people in general took no interest in their court competitions and conflicts, and readily offered their loyalty to the person who ascended the throne irrespective of whether he had done so through rightful power or through treachery. This social device served as a safety valve to limit the destructive results of ever-recurring political revolutions, and it permitted the widest scope for evolution of that fresh political synthesis after which the collective mind of India was aspiring, and which it was trying to achieve by using the personal ambitions of able men as instrument.

Besides all this, a great merit of this theory lay in the fact that as it secured to the ruler the allegiance and loyalty of the whole mass of his subjects almost automatically, it deprived him of the motive of sowing religious or communal discord among his people. We find the kings (with unfortunate exceptions, of course,) playing a high role, irrespective of caste or creed, in helping movement's of cultural assimilation and social harmony. They welcomed and by their personal example encouraged that synthesis of thought and belief which the saints of both religions were working into the life of the common people.

The Social Synthesis.

While the two religions co-operated in the political field to give shape and form to the synthesis of Indian national life, their influence on social synthesis was no less remarkable. Obviously the social organizations of the two communities are very different. The Hindu social system is a collection of separate units mutually exclusive and deliberately made impervious to all foreign intrusion by a rigid denial of inter-dining and inter-marriage. The social system of Islam is the reverse, broad-based, inclusive, inspired by a feeling of brotherliness and equality. The Hindu system had its own absorbing and assimilating potentiality, but worked slowly and imperceptibly and with many limitations. The Muslim system had great powers of ready adoption and conscious expansion, though it also had its own aloofness and distinctiveness in some respects.
The proximity of two such systems would on a superficial view seem to indicate a great likelihood of mutual friction, but on a closer view it becomes apparent that it was not so.

The age and the rigidity of the caste system of India are a marvel for the present-day world. But from all times it has been a problem of the first magnitude to all Indian thinkers and reformers. The indigenous population of India was divided into clans and tribes, before the Aryan civilization crossed its northern valleys. There is reason to believe that the early Aryan thinkers and leaders developed a scheme of social organization, in accord with the psycho-physical laws of heredity as well as spontaneous variation, by which they were able to absorb and civilize and Aryanize the tribes they subjugated, as directed in the Vedas, assigning them to one or another of four main vocational classes. In the course of time, the living elasticity of this scheme was lost, and it became ossified into a caste-system based rigidly on heredity alone, which broke up Hindu society into thousands of fragments. But the national mind continued to yearn for a higher synthesis and its yearnings at last found a powerful expression in Buddhism. Buddha enunciated again, in a famous verse, the basic principles of the system of four-fold vocational social organization which had degenerated into the so-called caste-system. Though a profound reaction followed after twelve hundred years of Buddhism, yet the higher minds and instincts of the nation continued to move in the same direction. With these Islam was quite in tune, and its advent in India rallied them anew, so that within the Hindu fold itself powerful movements against the caste-system came into existence. Thus, so far as the social organization was concerned, though there was an antagonism on the surface between Islam and Hinduism, yet both were trying, the former consciously and the latter subconsciously so to say, to lead the social system in the same direction. In matters of proselytization there was a fundamental difference between Islam and Buddhism. Buddhism acted from within the social organism and Islam acted wholly from without. Buddhism tried to destroy the hold of Brahmanism, and its Bhikshus were the competitors of Brahman priests. Muslim kings almost universally recognized the special privileges of the Brahmans and there was no competition whatever between the Muslim learned and pirs and faqirs, and the Hindu religious orders—their clientele being different. Islam claimed its disciples mainly from the lowest strata of Hindu society which were practically outside the pale of orthodox Hinduism, and the Hindu religious orders and learned men, who were the custodians of its religious knowledge, could well afford to look upon its successes with indifference. Its greatest successes were in the Punjab and Bengal where the revival movement had met with the strongest resistance and where, though Buddhism had been crushed, the old order had not been able satisfactorily to assert its authority. Indeed, the sting in the rivalry lay in the fact that the number of Muslims increased rapidly and that of the Hindus dwindled steadily. But this fact had not and could not have dawned upon the collective Hindu consciousness as no such consciousness existed, on account of the division of the people into innumerable creeds, each of which was as real and as self-contained and self-assertive as Islam itself. The consciousness of a collective unity could not grow till a real and living religious synthesis had been established, and though the national
mind was fast moving in that direction, it was at that period not an accomplished fact. This process of synthesis had already included Buddhism in the array of its other cults, and gave promise that when it became an accomplished fact, Islam would be as much a part of it as the other religions of India.

Comparatively free from social and religious rancour, co-operating closely in many concerns of life, the two communities generally lived together in peace and harmony. The foreign element in the Muslim community was almost microscopic. And even those who came from other countries generally married women of the land. The Indian woman carried into the homes of those strangers her own spiritual yearnings and religious outlook and thus created a powerful link between their home-life and the life of the country. Besides she imparted into the new home all her graceful and mystic talents and social ceremonies and thus laid the first foundations for the evolution of a common culture. Apart from this section, exceedingly small in numbers, the rest of the Muslim community consisted of Indians who had accepted Islam as their religion but had never seen any other culture of life than their own. These made a few necessary adjustments in their daily life while the whole tenor and background of that life on the cultural side remained practically unaltered. Conversions, as we have said, were generally en masse, whole biradaries deciding together to accept the new religion. Consequently in the lower stations of Muslim society the old caste organization yet prevails, sometimes to the exclusion of the personal law of inheritance itself. At no point therefore were the social contacts between the two communities ever broken and the change of religion involved no violent break

with the past. While thus the lower spheres of life were closely interlinked there was a still closer co-operation and comradeship in its higher spheres. In the region of politics, in mutual alliances and intrigues, in wars and treaties of peace, Hindus and Muslims acted as members of a common brotherhood. In the sphere of Art, of Painting, and Architecture, and even in Music, the two grew side by side and took education, training, and inspiration from common masters. Hindu savants taught Muslim pupils and Muslim savants had Hindus as their disciples, and consequently a synthesis in the genius of two cultures was created which, in its richness and beauty, surpassed all that had been achieved in the past. The military life of the two communities was a mosaic in which Hindu and Muslim officers and Hindu and Muslim chiefs all were pieced together. And there could scarcely have been a battle of any consequence in India in which the war-cries of the two communities, "Har Har Mahadeva" and "Allahu Akbar," did not both rise equally on each side of the warring hosts.

AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO CULTURES.

The natural and inevitable result of these historical processes was that the Hindus and Musalmans were constantly influencing each other, and affecting and changing each other's ways in every walk of life. This mutual influence was very considerable, and necessarily tended towards an amalgamation of cultures. Even so, to-day we see assimilation of Western ways of thinking and living by well-to-do Hindus and Musalmans going on in the towns. The difference is that this assimilation is one-sided, and not being reciprocated by the Western resident, is tainted with complete political subjection, and is therefore of the nature of
imitative slave mentality rather than of free acceptance. The political domination of Musalmans over Hindus as such, even when the suzerainty of Delhi was undoubted, was never so one-sided and complete as that of the British has latterly been over both. And even the Musalmans who came from outside became and were Indians, as the British have never been. The amalgamation of the cultures progressed slowly because the outer forms of the two religions were rather sharply different, but all the same it has been steady and far-reaching on account of their constant nearness, interwoven lives and a common destiny.

They borrowed ideas from each other in philosophy, science, astronomy, medicine, etc.; in fine arts (architecture, music, dancing, painting, calligraphy, illustration and illumination of manuscripts, weaving of fine cloths of cotton, linen, silk and wool, jewellery, perfumery, etc.); in crafts (metal-working, weapon-making, utensil-making, etc.), and in almost every conceivable department of life. And in all these lines there was a syncretic progress which enriched life and made it more beautiful than before. Especially in arts connected with gustation and fragrance, did the Musalmans introduce many improvements. Many of the most favourite flowers of India to-day were brought from other lands or were improved here—Gulab, Gul-i-Daud, Gul-i-Shahin, Gul-i-Alhas, all show the country of their importation or the religion of their improvers. Many fruits were newly introduced, many indigenous ones were perfected. Along with the flora, the fauna of India also was enriched. The breeds of horses, camels, and pigeons were greatly improved. In music, Khayal, Thuuri, Dadra, Ghazal, all were developed during this period. The lower we descend the wider becomes the basis of this synthesis. In food and dress, wonderful interchange and additions took place in this period. While the basic articles of use remained common to Hindu and Muslim homes, such as dal, bhat, chappati, roti, tarkari, may new additions were made to sweets and other delicacies such as Halwa, Qalaqand, Khurma, Balushahi, Barfi, Gulab Jamun, etc., which were developed by the common tastes of the people. The additions to meat dishes were innumerable, as Muslims were meat-eaters and so were a very large majority of Hindus also, the difference being that the one avoided one animal, as too beneficent to humanity, to be killed, and the other another, as too unclean to be eaten. The names of the clothes and garments and utensils and articles of furniture used by Hindus and Musalmans alike are an inseparable mixture of Sanskrit and Persian words.

The Hindus especially, already accustomed by their priests to all sorts of minor gods and goddesses, mineral, vegetable, and animal, readily adopted into their pantheon and scheme of worship, takiyas, maqbaras, dargahs, and masjids. And they added to the list of their existing preceptors imams, mujawirs, fakirs, auliya, etc., and resorted to them for spiritual enlightenment and worldly blessings, and also for magical cures, charms, and amulets, as they had been resorting to their own pandas, sadhus, mahantus, and jogis. If Hindu priests had been less exclusive, it is possible that illiterate Muslims might also have begun going to them and their places of worship in the same way and in the same numbers as Hindus began going to the Muslim priests and places of worship. Millions of Musalmans to this day offer milk and cattals on the altar of Shitala, the goddess of small-pox, in villages, and many other Hindu shrines are worshipped by them.
Also whole sections of Muslims retained their caste exclusiveness in various shades and degrees, and some sections adopted even Hindu 'touch-me-notism' in food. Consultation of Hindu and Muslim astrologers was a common feature of the Muslim period. Thousands of Hindu astrologers were patronized by and lived in various Muslim courts and palaces.

Some learned men and poets and physicians of the other community were almost always attached to the courts and houses of royal and other powerful families of each community. In legal matters, also, there was approximation, many new converts retaining their old customary laws in matters of inheritance and succession. The Musalmans Taluq-dars of Oudh, like their Hindu counterparts, follow the law of primogeniture, reaffirmed in a British Indian Act. The Khajias also follow the Hindu law of inheritance. And in the matter of the daughter's share in the property left by the father, the Hindu law and custom, i.e., of not giving her any share, has in many places been retained.

The Muslim converts often retained their Hindu ceremonies which were added to many new Muslim ones. Many Muslim ceremonies were likewise adopted by the Hindus. Such approximation was natural and inevitable, for the converts from the ranks of the Hindus could not give up their life-long habits at once, especially when those habits had been developed by and were suited to environment. On the other hand, the comparatively few Musalmans who came from other countries, when they decided to settle here permanently, were compelled by the same climatic and other conditions of the country to adopt many of its habits. Converted Hindu women married into Muslim house-
guests of the other community, and special arrangements are made to suit their ways of living. Gymnasiums and Akharas, the teaching and practice of arms, were almost always joint. Hindu experts had Muslim as well as Hindu pupils, and Muslim experts had Muslim as well as Hindu pupils. Both communities joined in each other's festivals freely, in which Akharas and display of arms played a great part. This was the greatest and safest protective against all dangers from mutual misunderstandings and frictions in the common life of the people, for it introduced between the communities links deeper than that of friendship—for disciples of the same guru or ustad were regarded as nearer than brothers in eastern society.

Many teachers arose, from time to time, with numerous following, within Hinduism, Kabir in the Middle country, Namadeva and Tukaram in the south, Chaitanya in the east, Nanak in the north, to mention only a few, who preached the essentials of Universal Religion. They tried hard to break the unreasonable, harmful, tyrannical and withal largely unreal and hypocritical, system of countless rigidly hereditary castes and sub-castes; to promulgate simple, forms of worship; and to reconcile Hinduism and Islam, using in their teachings and preachings terms and conceptions taken from both religions. Though some subtle defect in the mental atmosphere caused the followers of each such teacher to make only another sect and another sub-caste, so to say, yet some approximation, very limited, was achieved. The followers of one such teacher still make periodical pilgrimages to both Mecca and Pandharpur. The Swami Narayan sect, which counts many followers on the west coast, is still said to have both Hindu and Musalmans members, and the Aghakhani's many Hindu lay-members.

Some heads of Sufi sects even to-day claim many Hindu lay-disciples.

The Moghal Court a Symbol of the New Central Unity.

This unity and harmony of life was reflected in the Royal Courts of India more or less throughout the Muslim period. But in the Moghal period it developed to such an extent that the life of the great Mughals may well be regarded as a symbol of the unity of the two cultures. The Moghal Emperors and Hindu Kings wore the same type of dress at least on formal occasions. The extant portraits of Akbar and Pratap Singh, and Aurangzeb and Shivaji show the same kind of head-dress as well as body clothes. We will content ourselves with mentioning a few striking features of the Moghal court and life.

The Moghal Emperor sat for the Jharokha-Darshans every morning and there, as the centre of political unity and symbol of divine protective power, received homage from multitudes of his subjects. This was no doubt an excessive exaggeration of a sentiment, in itself just and proper, of mutual loyalty and personal affection between the people and the head of the State; possibly it was also not unmixed with a wish for divine honours (a common failing, witness the case of some of the Roman Emperors,) on the part of that head; and certainly it tended to weaken the people's self-respect and self-dependence, and their sense of the duties owed to them by the king. But in that day, from the people's standpoint, as God was the father of all, so the sovereign was his symbol and shadow. This idealism largely deprived the people's devotion of the taint of servility, for it was not a person that they worshipped but an
ideal. And it supplied the strongest motive for sovereigns
to rise above themselves, though they unfortunately often
failed to do so. At this distance it is very difficult for us
to comprehend or to appreciate the extent to which this
idealism tended to humanize politics in India. But apart
from these wider issues, what we mean to emphasize here
is the fact that a common devotion to a common symbol of
political unity had also a cementive value for the life of
the two communities.

Apart from the Emperor being a common symbol, his
costume and court ceremonial reflected a common life, the
Hindu and Muslim elements and traditions both finding in
it their full expression. On festive occasions this cultural
unity found its fullest and most visible expression. Nauroz
was celebrated first for eleven and then for nineteen days.
Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, all joined in it, and the elegance
and splendour with which it was observed by the Emperor
has left its echoes in contemporary world history.

"Next to Nauroz and second only to Nauroz in pomp
and magnificence, came the weighing of the Emperor on
his lunar and solar birthdays. On the former he was
weighed eight times, and on the latter twelve times again
against various articles which were distributed among the
courtiers and the indigent. Pomp and ceremony hardly
knew any bounds.

"The various Hindu and Muslim festivals were cele-
brated with impartial splendour. On the Dasehra, the
anniversary of Ramas victory over the demons, the Im-
perial horses and elephants were arrayed in decorated
panoply and paraded for inspection. On the Raksha-bandhan,
the Hindu nobles and Brahmans fastened strings on the
Emperor's arms. The Divali saw gambling in the palace.
The Shiva-ratri was duly observed, nor were the Muslim
Id and Shab-i-barat neglected."

Like Tula-dan, there was another interesting feature in
the Moghal Emperors' private life. It was a habit with
the Moghal Emperors to drink no other water than Gang-
jal, and whether in court and camp, at home, or in travel,
there was a whole department to keep up a regular supply.
Their keener sympathy and wider assimilation of the
spirit of Indian culture is further evidenced by their treat-
ment of the cow. Akbar stopped the slaughter of cows all
over his dominions, and Jahangir and Shahjahan both follow-
ed the example. Jahangir went a step farther and decreed
that for two days in the year there should be no slaughter
in his realm of any animal, even hunting being rigorously
prohibited. These were human touches which stirred deeper
chords in the hearts of the people and produced a unity
of thought and emotion between the rulers and the ruled
as beautiful as it is unique in history.

The life of the Moghal Emperors reflected even a closer
union of the two cultures than the blood that flowed in
their veins from Jahangir downwards. Akbar had married
several Hindu princesses of the noblest blood and tradition.
Jahangir, himself the son of a Hindu princess, married
several Hindu wives, of whom Man Bai, the daughter of
Raja Bhagavandas of Ambar, was his best beloved.

"Her suicide in 1604 (she was married in 1585) plunged
Salim into the deepest grief. Not a morsel of food, not a
draught of drink passed his lips for full four days. For a

while life ceased to offer any attraction to his afflicted soul. Words failed him when he attempted two years later to describe her perfect ‘intelligence, her excellences and goodness; and her all-consuming devotion to him.’*

She committed suicide because her son Khusrav plotted against her husband, and her own brother Madho Singh sided with her son in these plots. She could not bear the thought of her son and her brother joining together to destroy her husband.

Shahjahan, who succeeded Jahangir, was the son of Jodh Bai or Jagat Gossain of Udaipur.

In the royal houses as well as in the courts, Hindu and Muslim women and princesses lived together almost in equal numbers and such intimate companionships could not fail to produce the profoundest effect on the relationship of the two communities.

The education and training of the princes was on the most liberal terms, and it was their temperamental differences and accidents in life that became responsible for such diametrically opposed outlooks as those of Dara and Aurangzeb, who were sons of the same mother. The picture of Dara as given by Persian chroniclers shows the extent to which he had become imbued with Hindu culture.

**Dara’s Character and Views.**

“Dara Shikoh in his latter days did not restrain himself to free-thinking and heretical notions which he had adopted under the name of Tasawwuf (Sufism), but showed an inclination for the religion and institutions of the Hindus. He was constantly in the society of Brahmans, Jogis and Sannyasis, and he used to regard these worthless teachers of delusions as learned and true masters of wisdom. He considered their books which they call Bedas being the word of God and revealed from heaven, and he called them ancient and excellent books. He was under such delusion about this Bed that he collected Brahmans and Sannyasis from all parts of the country and paying them great respect and attention, he employed them in translating the Bed. He spent all his time in this unholy work, and devoted all his attention to the contents of these wretched books. Instead of the sacred name of God, he adopted the Hindu name Prabhu (Lord) which the Hindus consider holy, and he had this name engraved in Hindi letters upon rings of diamonds, ruby, emerald, etc. Through these perverted opinions he had given up the prayers, fasting, and other obligations imposed by the law. It became manifest that if Dara Shikoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for that of infidelity and Judaism.”* *

Just as the king is, so are his subjects. And the Royal courts of the Moghals and the harmony of their cultural and emotional life itself were at once the reflection and the reflecting centre of the harmony and the cultural assimilation that was going on in the people.

**The Spiritual Harmony.**

Such a unity of life and aspiration could never be possible in a country intensely religious-minded like India.


without a deep moral and spiritual harmony. As we have seen, Islam came into India at a time when reactionary conservatism had defeated Buddhism and Jainism and was trying to revive the rigidly hereditary social order and its connected ways of worship of all sorts of things. The deeper side of Buddhism naturally could not appeal to the masses of India because it was too metaphysical. No doubt, it was presented to it also in a popular form, but Mahayana, on its intellectual, emotional or mystic sides, was not substantially different from or superior to the other great cults of India. But though India gave up Buddhism in name and form, it assimilated and retained within itself its metaphysics and moral consciousness, and high and wide spiritual yearnings in the shape of revived Vedanta and the Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, and Karma-yoga of the Gita, and unfortunately also its Buddha-image worship in the shape of multifarious idol-worship. While she did not endorse the social unity of life which Buddhism had preached, her genius continued to search for a spiritual conception which could destroy all religious separateness and weld her religious systems into a common mould. Just before Islam entered into India this powerful tendency of the revival movement was finding expression in re-emphasizing the old great conception of the Tri-murti which represented the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshu, as three aspects (Sat, Chit, Ananda; or Wujud, Hlm, Shuhud) of the same divinity. Shortly before or after Islam’s entry into India was born the great Shankara who was one of the profoundest thinkers of his age. Shankara systematized anew the teachings of the Vedanta and gave to his nation’s genius the conceptual synthesis and the spiritual principle it was struggling to re-discover. He put this synthesis on a sound philosophic basis, and reconciled and disarmed conservatism by basing it on the authority of revealed scriptures. Shankara showed that the diversity of religious beliefs and forms of worship was due to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the scriptures; that Sanastha Dharma had always insisted on the worship of one God, the creator and sustainer of the Universe; that his worship was the true worship and the rest was all delusion. The burning Monotheism (or Monism) of Shankara had a fraternal resemblance to the burning Monotheism (or Monism) of Muhammad, and there was nothing in the two systems which could repel one another.

La manjuda illâ Hu: Sarvam khalvidam Brahma; Wahdahu la sharika lahu; ekam evadvitiyam.

**Hindu and Muslim Saints.**

No sooner the principle was discovered and put before the people in the proper form than the genius of India began to think of applying it to the practical concerns of life. India works upon her people not through economic and political motives but through moral and spiritual ideas, and consequently her approaches to life’s problems are not so much intellectual as emotional. Two centuries or so after Shankara, another great teacher and preacher, Ramanuja, gave a devotional turn to Shankara’s Monism. The worship of the Divine Principle became the ruling passion of the Indian people. This movement found its

*This portion does not present my view.—Maunala Zafarul-Mulk.*
emotional expression in the dominance of the Bhakti schools of thought with their fervour of devotion and their (at least theoretical) disregard for established ritual and caste restrictions. Islam, through Sufism, was developing its emotional side identically on the same line; and here the synthesis of the two systems became so complete that they virtually lost themselves in one another. The joy of the new-found oneness transcended all social and religious barriers, and through the emotional side India came near to the realization of that social unity which Buddhism had essayed to achieve from the intellectual side. Thousands upon thousands of hymn-singers covered the land with their songs of divine oneness and human brotherhood. Many saints, Hindu and Muslim, wandered from place to place, propagating the same message. Many Gurus and Piris settled down in every corner of the land to whom millions of Hindu and Muslim disciples went indiscriminately for moral and spiritual guidance. The intellectual understanding and sympathy which existed after Shankara between the learned and higher sections of the two communities was thus carried through the emotional side to the lowest strata of Indian society.

It was natural that this exuberance of devotional feeling and the intense hankering after a realization of the basic unity of human life should begin to militate against the formal side of all religion itself. The trend of human evolution, while, on the one hand, it makes for differentiation of capacities, on the other hand, to the levelling down of all barriers whether social, political or economic, which divide man from man and group from group. Religion, whose mission is to destroy these barriers, after a while becomes a barrier itself, and the most rigid and indestructible of all. To a soul struggling for unity with its Creator, a petrifed religion with its cold formalism and creed-barriers would naturally appear as a shackle and impediment and all social divisions and discriminations as an impious blasphemy. The created cannot really be different from the Creator, and therefore no limitations tending to cloud this moral and spiritual unity can be tolerated. Such limitations constitute, as it were, a denial of the very law of life. This passion for unity transcending all classes and creeds and having for its social ideal the conception of a real human brotherhood—sans religion, sans caste, sans worship, sans everything which tended to divide—found many powerful exponents. These enaptured saints and hermits, by their spiritual outpouring, and by the more powerful influence of the example of their dedicated lives, transmitted this message to the masses and infused its spirit into every section of Indian society. In Kabir this great movement reached its climax, and the sway it acquired over the mind of the people can be imagined from the fact that Kabir counted in his followers less of Hindu and Muslim disciples.

**Kabir's Synthesis.**

"He asked the Hindus to give up—what every reformer since the days of Buddha had insisted upon—ceremonial, sacrificial, lust for magical powers, lip worship of idols, gods and goddesses, Brahman supremacy, caste differences, prejudices concerning touchability and food. He openly com-

* I do not subscribe either to the cult of Kabir and Akbar or to all that has been written here about them.—Maulana Zafur-Mulk.
demanded the doctrine of incarnations (avatars). 'The Creator did not marry Sita, nor did he make a stone bridge across the waters. They say that the Lord of the world finding inequalities of the weak and the strong came as Rama. But Kabir says, before such a one as Rama who took birth and died, I cannot bend my head."

"He asked the Musalmans to give up their exclusiveness, their externalism in the performance of rites, pilgrimages to Mecca, fast and regulated prayers, their worship of saints (sulia and pirs) and prophet (paighambar).

"He asks both Hindus and Muslims to have reverence for all living creatures and to abstain from bloodshed. He asks them both to give up pride whether of birth or position, to give up extremes of asceticism and worldliness, and to consider life as a dedication.

"I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body: I see with my eyes open and smile, and behold his beauty everywhere.

"Whatever I do, it becomes his worship. All I achieve is his service."

"He repeats again and again that Hindus and Muslims are one, they worship the same God, they are the children of the same father, and they are made of the same blood. 'All the men and women that are created are your form, Kabir is the son of Allah and Rama. He (the Father) is his Guru and Pir,' and 'the Hindus and Turks have one path which the True Teacher has pointed out; says Kabir, hearken ye saints! say Ram or Khuda, the religion of those who understand is one, whether they are Pandits or Shaikhs.'

"Kabir's was the first attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. The teachers of the South had absorbed Mus-
of her moral depths was successfully evolving a synthesis which would transcend the bounds of nationality and even of all formal religion itself.

"When the real history of Medieval India comes to be written, it will be seen that the fundamental fact about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is the energetic spirit of protest against old creed and formula, resulting in the religion of direct communion with the Supreme Soul. Then it was that the currents of Islamic Sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined into a mighty stream which fertilized old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. Fifty years before the birth of Akbar, one of the greatest of Indian saints, the poor Muslim weaver, Kabir, had riddled current Hinduism and Islam with argument and invective, ridicule and banter, and had attracted a devoted band of disciples, and left behind him not only a numerous sect but powerful strains of religious thought and emotion. Rai-das, a Hindu cobbler, Saina, a barber, Dhanna, a Jat, Peps, a ruling prince, followed him in proclaiming the gospel of living personal faith in a living personal God. Nanak organised the community of Sikhs (disciples) along the new reformed lines. The sixteenth century was likewise prolific in Muslim saints and reformers who discarded tradition and traditional ways of thinking and emphasized the supreme importance of faith." *

**Akbars Recognition of the Movement.**

In Akbar's time this movement received royal recognition and a unity was reached in the national consciousness which extended from the cottage to the throne. Akbar's efforts to give it the form of a new religion were bound to fail, because religions could not be created through politics and also because a movement whose essence consisted in transcending all religious formalisms could not be imprisoned in new bonds though cast in gold and set with diamonds. But after this recognition politics could not be an obstacle in its path, and we find that throughout the Meghal period, though thwarted by Aurangzeb, for a while, to some extent, the movement continued to widen and deepen in its course. Such was its force that even Aurangzeb could play the bigot only half-heartedly and with considerable self-restraint. And inspite of the disruption which followed at the end of his rule, the convulsions and upheavals of politics could not overwhelm the synthesis of social life, and Hindu-Muslim relations continued the same up to the War of Independence of 1857.

Upto 1857.

*We may go further and say that even the political synthesis was not seriously disturbed. The universal surge of loyalty and devotion towards Bahadur Shah, the symbol of political unity, conclusively showed for the first time in History that India had become politically self-conscious and that the foundations of Indian nationality had been truly and deeply laid. At the time of the War of Independence, British diplomacy also had been acting with fatal effects for over a century, but still Hindu-Muslim unity held its ground. Even after that war, though now England stood between the two and tried to pull them asunder with all her might, the social relations of Hindus and*
Muslims, though much perturbed, continued to be very close and amicable till within recent memory. And in the Indian States even now we can get living pictures of the old days, the two communities living together in perfect cordiality without any of that distrust and bitterness which are unhappily so prominent now throughout British India.

We have now indicated the broad lines on which India developed during the Muslim Period. We have seen how throughout this period Hindus and Musalmans worked together in the up-building of the social and political structure of the country. Just as the Aryan had mingled with the pre-existing Indian culture and evolved a new one, finer and more beautiful, so Islam also during this period brought its Semitic treasures to the store of the adopted Mother, and out of the union of the two an edifice arose whose glory surpassed all that the past had seen. No doubt, that glory has passed away and the sons of India no longer take any pride in it. They are overwhelmed by the sense of shame at their great fall, brought about by handful of strangers. They are trying to cover that shame by mutual dissensions. Like defeated generals, they are blaming each other for the capricious turn of their fate. The present bitterness of their soul throws its own shadow on the past and embitters it too, and they are turning away from the one great solace which can enhearten them and the one great light which can guide them in their present gloom.

The Present Need.

In all that has been written above, our endeavour and our hope has been to turn again their hearts and eyes to that solace and that light. There is in truth no reason to be down-hearted. In her struggle with India, England has not succeeded. She has physically overpowered India, no doubt, for a little while, but she has not succeeded in really and permanently undermining the moral and spiritual aspirations of India's soul. India's moral energy has stood the test, and within the short space of half a century she has begun to assert herself in her own peculiar way which is astounding the world. Unarmed, disorganized, held down by all the military contrivances that Western science has evolved, and with a house divided against itself by the terrible manipulations of Western diplomacy, India is still asserting herself and is shaking the foundations of the British Empire. Its mission is to renovate the world spiritually, for if its moral sanction destroys the physical sanction of Europe, militarism all over the world will be destroyed, and India the slave will rise as the world's great emancipator. The need of the hour is to look towards the past, to pick up the processes of synthesis at the points where they have been broken, to destroy communism and to draw upon the inexhaustible moral and spiritual resources of the country.

Before closing this part of our Report dealing with the Muslim period, we may repeat that we have not tried to write the history of twelve centuries. Our main purpose has been to suggest in a broad outline the nature of the relationship which existed between the Hindus and Muslims during the pre-British Period. We are painfully conscious of the imperfections of our efforts. The picture we have presented may appear to some as over-coloured, but it may, at least, be taken as a supplement and a corrective to the one-sided pictures we generally find of this
period in the current histories. We have emphasized the constructive aspects of the Hindu-Muslim relationship because we want to draw the attention of the people strongly towards these aspects. No doubt, much correction, supplementing, and balancing will be necessary before the true perspective is developed, but a beginning has to be made, and we have only tried to make that beginning.

Thus, it will be noted that all the main controversies which at present embitter—and have latterly divided the two communities, for example, the cow question, Ramlila and Moharram, and other religious occasions or processions, music before mosque; as also the question of representation in services, in Municipalities and Councils, joint and separate electorates; safeguards; redistribution of provinces and federal, as opposed to a unitary, basis of the constitution—all these did not and could not have existed during the Muslim Period. They are all products of the British Period and of British Policy. In the next section we shall try generally to indicate the conditions of their birth and growth.