INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON INDIAN CULTURE

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“Hindustāni way”21; his successors so gloriously adorned and so marvellously enriched this legacy that India might well be proud today of the heritage which they in their turn have left behind.

21 Beveridge: Memoirs of Nāhājī.

RAMANANDA AND KABIR

RĀMĀNANDA was the bridge between the Bhakti movement of the south and the north. There is a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the dates of his birth and death. According to Bhandārkar1 and Grierson,2 he was born in 1299 A.D. Macauliffe3 places him between the end of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries, and Farquhar4 agrees with him. Nābhājī does not give any dates; the Agastya Samhita5 gives the date of birth as 1299 A.D. (1356 Samvat); and a Sanskrit commentary of Rāhasyatrayī by Agraswāmi, 1299 A.D.6 Bhandārkar and Grierson both consider that Rāmānanda was the fourth in spiritual descent from Rāmānuja. This, however, does not seem to be borne out by tradition. Nābhājī only says, “The immortal glory of Rāmānanda’s system prevailed upon earth. Devāchārya (was the first) and Hariyānand the second greatly renowned (teacher) from him Rāghvānanda came who gave great joy to the devotees……From him was manifested Rāmānanda who incarnated for the joy of the world.”7 Nābhājī here only mentions the names of some specially famous saints who were in a direct line of descent from Rāmānuja but does not name all of them. Sitārām Bhagwān Prasād8 definitely states that Rāmānanda was twenty-second in descent, Devāchārya (or Devādhīpa Ačārya) being sixth from Rāmānuja, Hariyānanda fifteenth from Devāchārya, and Rāmānanda next

1 Bhandārkar: Vaiṣṇavism and Saivism.
3 Macauliffe: The Sikhs, Vol. VI.
5 Sitārām Sitārām, Bhagwān Prasād: Bhākta Māla, p. 264.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
to Hariyānanda. If Rāmānuja’s date of death was 1187 A.D. and twenty teachers followed him before Rāmānanda then it is more likely that he was born about the end of the fourteenth rather than that of the thirteenth century.

The date of his death again is difficult to determine. Bhandārkar puts it at 1411 A.D. (1567 Samvat). Farquhar at 1470 A.D. and the Sanskrit commentary at 1448 A.D. (1505 Samvat). The date of Bhandārkar is obviously unacceptable; it is incompatible with the date of his birth and the dates of his disciples. The date of Agraswāmī gives him nearly fifty years of life but raises no great difficulty with regard to the dates of his disciples. Farquhar’s data fit all the facts easily but it does not appear on what authority it is based. The authors of the history of Hindi literature, Misra Bandhu Vinod, vaguely suggest that Rāmānanda lived about 1456 A.D.⁹ His career may provisionally be accepted to lie in the last quarter of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries.

Rāmānanda was born at Prayāg (Allahabad) in a Kānya-īkubja Brahmin family. He was educated partly at Prayāg and partly at Benares. His first teacher was a Vedāntist of the monist school, but he became later the disciple of Rāghavānanda who belonged to Rāmānuja Śrī sect. He had an independent mind, he travelled about the country broadening his outlook, and, according to Macauliffe, “it is certain that Rāmānanda came in contact at Benares with learned Musalmans.”¹⁰

The result of his experiences and discussions was that he made a bold departure from the doctrines of the school to which he belonged. In theological belief he substituted the worship of Rāma for that of Viṣṇu and his consort, and he taught the doctrine of Bhakti to all the four castes without prejudice. He rejected the regulation of Rāmānuja with regard to the preparation and partaking of meals, and admitted to his new sect disciples from all castes, from both sexes and even from among the Musalmans. The names of his twelve disciples who became famous were Anantānanda, Kabir, Pipā, Bhāvānanda, Sukhā, Sursura, Padmāvatī, Narhari, Raiḍās, Dhanā, Sainā and the wife of Sursura.

Rāmānanda’s teaching gave rise to two schools of religious thought, one conservative, and the other radical. The first remained true to ancient beliefs and allowed only slight changes in doctrines and rites, the other struck out a more independent path and attempted to create a religion acceptable to men of different creeds—especially Hindus and Musalmans. The greatest name in the first class is that of Tulsiḍāsa and in the second that of Kabir. These two indeed are undoubtedly the most remarkable men that the middle age of India produced. Tulsiḍāsa is unrivalled as the saintly singer of Rāma Bhakti. He combines profound philosophy with passionate yet chaste and ethical emotion. He delves into the deepest recesses of the human heart but never completely exposes their mystery to the common gaze. Yet he knows the varying moods of man and his directness and simplicity appeals to all, young and old, ignorant and learned. He is essentially humble and therefore touchingly humane. He is completely wrapped up in his devotion and utterly lacking in self-conscious or self-righteous sentiment. He is like a natural perennial mountainspring which bubbles with the waters of pure sweet joy and slakes the thirst of those who are weary and heavy-laden with the sorrows of the world.

Kabir is a genius of a different order. He has gazed into the mystery of life and seen the vision of the ineffable light. He brings from the world of beyond a new message for the individual and for society. He dreams of a future purified of insincerities, untruths, uglinesses, inequalities; he preaches a religion based on the only foundation on which faith can stand, namely, personal experience. He brushes aside unhesitatingly the whole paraphernalia of dogma and authority, for his soul is sick of the sorry spectacle of the quarrels of creeds and the worship of empty shells of formal religions. He tolerates no

⁹ Misra Bandhu Vinod: Rāmānanda.
shams and demands reality in the search after God. Kabir is no retiring ascetic who has abandoned the world in despair, nor is he an idealiser who finds good in all things, he is eager to lift the sword in the moral struggle of the world and strike a doughty blow for the victory of righteousness, and he is not afraid of administering stern even harsh rebuke to all infringements of rational conduct and all degradations of human dignity. He is a mighty warner, an intrepid pathfinder, the great pioneer of the unity of the Hindu and Muslim communities of India and the apostle of the faith of Humanity who taught that “the divine disclosed itself in the human race as a whole.”

Kabir’s life is shrouded in obscurity. Different writers give different dates of his birth and death. According to Macauliffe, whose date is accepted by Bhandarkar, he was born in 1598 A.D. (1455 Samvat); but according to Westcott, who is followed by Farquhar, Burnes and others, the date of his birth was 1440 A.D. The Hindi authors do not avoid giving dates. The editor of the *Santa Bāṇi Sangrahā* gives 1598 A.D. as the date of birth and 1518 as that of death. *Śīrām Śaraṇ Bhagvān Prasād* quotes a *Doha* which gives 1492 A.D. (1549 Samvat) as the date of death and says that Kabir lived for a hundred and one years. Excepting the last writer most of the others agree in assigning 1518 as the date of death. There is however no adequate reason for preferring 1518 to 1492. If the latter date is accepted as that of death, and 1598 A.D. as that of birth, the total length of life comes to ninety-four years which is unusual but not impossible. These dates however make Kabir a contemporary of Rāmānanda, and in this respect contradict the tradition according to which he was a mere youth when he became the latter’s disciple. In any case it is difficult to hold to the year 1598 as that of Kabir’s birth. If Kabir was about eighteen years of age at the time of his initiation and remained under the tutelage for three or four years—which may be surmised from the fact that Rāmānanda passed out of Kabir’s legends quite early and leaves only a shadowy impression upon the development of his ideas, the year 1425 may be fixed as much as any other for the date of his birth. This subtracted from the year 1492 gives a life of sixty-seven years which is eminently reasonable, or from the year 1518 it gives him ninety-three years.

Kabir was the son of a Brahmin widow who in order to hide her shame left him on the side of a tank in Benares. He was found by a weaver Nirū and his wife Nīmā who adopted him. Kabir spent the years of his childhood in the house of his Muslim parents, who were very poor and were unable to give him regular education. He was left more or less to his own devices, except that he learnt his father’s profession. In the city of Benares, surrounded by the Hindu atmosphere and endowed with a keen and enquiring mind, he early became familiar with both the Hindu and the Muslim religions. It is related that even as a boy he showed such freedom from bias, that both Hindu and Muslim boys misunderstood him and persecuted him. He soon began to seek for a teacher, and, according to Dabistan Musīn Fni, “at the time when he was in search of a spiritual guide, he visited the best of the Musalmans and Hindus, but did not find what he sought, at last somebody gave him direction to an old man of bright genius, the Brahman Rāmānanda.” Thus he became the disciple of Rāmānanda. Kabir himself says, “I was revealed in Kāśi, and was awakened by Rāmānanda.” He initiated him in the knowledge of Hindu philosophy and religion.

14 *Śīrām Śaraṇ Bhagvān Prasād*: *Bhaṭṭa Māla*, p. 474.
16 Westcott: *Kabir and Kabir Panth*.
17 *Śīrām Śaraṇ Bhagvān Prasād*: *Bhaṭṭa Māla*, p. 474.
18 Troyer and Sheh: *Dabistan-i-Musīn Fni*, p. 186.
19 Kabir: *Bījak, Rāmānāṇi*, p. 77.
It appears however that he did not remain long with his teacher, for tradition finds him soon after wandering from place to place and associating with ascetics and saints. He spent considerable time in the company of Muslim Sūfis. On this he speaks in a Rāmānī, ‘Mānkpur was the dwelling place of Kābīr, where for long he listened to Shaikh Taqī. The same (teaching) he heard at Jaunpur, and at Jhūsī (now Allahabad) he learnt the names of the Pirīs (Muslim preceptors). In that place they have a record of twenty-one Pirīs who recited the prayers (khutbā) in the name of the Prophet.’

The knowledge which Kābīr acquired from his teacher was all imparted by word of mouth. It is almost certain that he never learnt to use books and he does not display acquaintance with the learned languages, Persian or Sanskrit, although he uses freely the technical terms of Sūfism and Hindu philosophy. However, learning and scholarship have not been the objects which men, drunk with the love of God, have principally placed before themselves; and Kābīr, whose mind was saturated with Hindu and Muslim traditions and theories of knowledge, could not accept learning as an end. He was a seeker after higher knowledge (parā vidyā), gnosis (mārijān), which he later became satisfied he had attained. History has kept records of the struggles and achievements of an ancient predecessor of Kābīr, viz., Buddha, but is entirely silent regarding him. It is under the circumstances impossible to give a consecutive account of the various events of his life.

After the period of his apprenticeship was over he settled down as a teacher at Benares. His teaching was of so independent a character that both Hindus and Muslims were greatly offended, and they tried to suppress him by all the means which priestcraft with its vested interests has employed in all the ages. There were in the beginning bitter and prolonged discussions and petty persecutions, and when they failed, the aid of the State was invoked. Legend has thrown a veil woven of marvellous occurrences and miraculous escapes round the actual facts but this much may be probable that Sikandar Lodī (1488–1517), impressed by the simple earnestness of Kābīr, allowed him to get out of the hands of the Pandits and Maulvis persecuting him by a temporary exile. Kābīr’s teaching was so much akin to the then prevailing Sūfī antinomianism that it could have hardly appeared to him deserving of severe punishment. He soon returned to Benares and was not molested any further. He won many followers among both communities and his fame spread all over the land.

The private life of Kābīr was a simple householder’s (grihastha). He did not believe in extreme asceticism and abstraction from the world. He married a girl named Loī whom he met on the banks of the Ganges in the hermitage of a Fīrāgī, and by her he had one son named Kamāl, and one daughter Kamālī. He continued his profession of weaving and his pictures represent him sitting by the loom instructing his disciples. Some of the finest illustrations for his teaching are drawn from this art in which he was engaged, and by which he earned his living.

His departure from the world was characteristic of the man. When he felt that his end was approaching he left Kāśi, the city whose holiness was considered so great as to confer paradise on those who died there, and migrated to Maghār where death entailed rebirth as an ass. This gesture of supreme contempt for ignorant superstition was the last act of his strenuous life. It is related that on his death Hindus and Muslims quarrelled as to the method of disposing of the body—Muslims desiring to bury him and Hindus to cremate. The quarrel is significant, for it shows that Kābīr’s faith was so broad and impartial that Hindus and Muslims could both claim him as their own; it also shows that although both revered and admired the man both failed to rise to his message. But where have not the disciples betrayed their Master?

What was Kābīr’s message? In the words of Nāthādī, “Kābīr refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, nor

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18 Ibid., Kābīr Bījak, Rāmānī, p. 48.
did he set any store by the four divisions of life prescribed by
Brahmins. He held that religion without Bhakti was no reli-
gion at all, and that asceticism, fasting and alms-giving had
no value if unaccompanied by Bhajan (devotional worship).
By means of Rāmānā, Shabdas and Sikkhis he imparted reli-
gious instruction to Hindus and Musalmans alike. He had
no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was
appreciated by the followers of both. He spoke his mind
fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his
bearers.”¹⁰

The mission of Kabir was to preach a religion of love
which would unite all castes and creeds. He rejected those
features of Hinduism and Islam which were against this spirit,
and which were of no importance for the real spiritual welfare
of the individual. He selected from both religions their com-
mon elements, and the similarities between them. He found
analogies in their philosophic ideas, their dogma and ritual.
He used both Sanskrit and Persian terms and both forms of
the vernacular, Rākha and Hindi Bhāā. He placed the
greatest value upon the inwardsness of religion and impartially
condemned the external formalism of both. He deliber-
ately abandoned the divisions between the two faiths and taught a
middle path.

“The Hindu resorts to the temple and the Musalman to
the mosque, but Kabir goes to the place where both are known.
The two religions (dīn) are like two branches in the middle of
which there is a sprout surpassing them. Kabir has taken
the higher path abandoning the custom of the two. If you say
that I am a Hindu then it is not true, nor am I a Musalman;
I am a body made of five elements where the Unknown (ghaib)
plays. Mecca has verily become Kāśi, and Rāma has become
Rahim.”²⁰

Kabir was conscious of his apostolic mission and his life
and teaching followed the line which is analogous to that of

²⁰ Sārāgāvī: Kabir Sāhib Ki Sākhi, Madhya Ka Anga.

21) Ḥādīd, Ḍīplkā, Ādī Mangal.
22) Ibid. p. 81.
23) Dādārī Dāsā, Adānīt Yagū
“This always is a bubble (hubāb) on the motionless sea, the bubble is essentially the sea, although seemingly the wave, the sea and the vision are separate. It is a bubble when it rises, but in its mingling its aim is God. Both the bubble and the sea are Kabir, and all other names are meaningless.”

“I am not the follower of law (dharma) nor am I without law; I am not an ascetic nor a devotee of desire. I am not a speaker nor a listener, I am not a servant nor a master. I am not bound nor am I free, nor am I engaged in worldly pursuits, I never parted from any nor am I a companion of any. I do not go to hell nor do I proceed to heaven. I am the doer of all actions, yet I am different from them.”

“There is no place to go nor is there room to stay.”

He often compares the relation of the individual with God as that of waves and the sea, and he uses the same simile to represent the essential oneness of the Universe and the Absolute which Jīli and other Muslim mystics have used. “As ice is made from water, and as ice will become water and vapour, so is the reality from that, and therefore this and that are the same.”

He frequently speaks of the wine and the cup of love, of the lover (‘ashiq, habib) and the beloved (ma’shuq, mahbūb), of the rose and the garden, of the path, its stations (muqām) and its difficulties, of the traveller (musāfīr) and of his goal.

All these quotations prove that he was greatly indebted to Sūfī literature, but if his writings do not show more coincidences in phraseology, it is not due to the fact that his familiarity with...
names—Rāma, Hari, Govinda, Brahma, Samrath, Sā'īn, Sah-puraša, Bechūn (the Indescribable). Allah, Khudā, but his favourite name is Sāhib. His conception of God is extremely subtle; according to him God is transcendent and immanent, impersonal and personal, infinite and finite, without qualities and qualified, the non-being and the being, the unconscious and the conscious, neither manifest nor hidden, neither one nor two, both within and without and yet above and beyond all pairs of opposites. It is this difficulty of adequately expressing God’s nature which makes him exclaim:

“Oh, how may I ever express that secret word?
Oh, how can I say He is not like this, and He is like that? ....
There are no words to tell that which He is.”

This inadequacy of the ordinary human consciousness to hold in one moment the entire view of the total reality does not drive him to despair, for his mind has attained certainty through a direct vision in the unitive state, when his expanded consciousness saw “the Lord in me and in you” and in all things and beyond in one magistral survey in which the logical antinomies fused and were transcended.

“Between the poles of the conscious and the unconscious there has the mind made a swing; Thereon hang all beings and all worlds, and that swing never ceases its sway.
Millions of beings are there; the sun and moon in their courses are there.
Millions of ages pass and the swing goes on, All swing! the sky and the earth, and the air and the water.
And the Lord Himself taking form.”

His vision of dynamic reality is vouchsafed to few. It is impossible to see it by the light of ordinary reason, for the analytical intellect is the cause of separation, and “the house of reason is very far away.”

It is necessary however to give to the ordinary man partial views separately and lead him on by demonstrating their inadequacy and the intellect’s futility to the ecstatic condition in which the reality is fully known. This explains why Kabīr speaks of God sometimes as transcendent. “The Absolute (Pāra-Brahma), the Supreme Soul (Purūsha) dwells beyond the beyond,” or as Pure Essence (Pāk Dhāt), at other times as identical with all beings. “He Himself is the true, the seed and the germ, He Himself is the flower, the fruit and the shade. He Himself is Brahma, creature and Māyā” and again as existent within every heart, “in every vessel He is revealed.”

But more usually he holds that the nature and essence of God is Light, herein betraying his deep debt to the Sāfis. “See the ocean-filling One Light (nūr) which spreads in the whole creation.” and, “Thy Light (nūr) fills all,” and, “The Light is covering, the Light is the seat, the Light is the pillow.” Says Kabīr, “hear, O brother saints, the True Teacher (God) is completely Light (nūr).”

Kabīr gives several accounts of how the universe came into existence. Some of these accounts are based on ancient Hindu cosmogonies, others are apparently taken from Islam. Of the first set one example is in the first Rāmāûnī, a slightly

37 Rabindra Nath Tagore: Kabir’s Poems, XCVII.
38 Kābīr: Rekhta, No. 56.
39 Ibid., No. 41.
42 Kābīr: Rekhta, No. 35.
modified one in the second Rámáini, and a fully developed one in the Ādi Mangal. The first Rámáini may be rendered thus:

In the beginning Jīva (soul) existed. The internal light illuminated it. Then was manifested will (ichchhā) which was called Gāyatrī. That woman produced Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. Then Brahmā asked the woman who was her husband, and whose wife she was. She replied, “Thou art I, I am thou, and there is no third. Thou art my husband, and I am thy wife.” The father and son had a common wife, and one mother has a twofold character; there is no son who is a good son and who will endeavour to recognise his father.45

In the second Rámáini after Brahmā is created, he carries on the next stages of creation by bringing into being an egg from which the fourteen regions are developed, and then Brahmā, Viṣṇu (Hari) and Maheśa (Hara) preside over the universe. In the Ādi Mangal, in the Almighty, who in the beginning was alone, first appears knowledge (jñāni), from this comes the word (sabda) and from Sabda five Brahmans and five breaths and from them the whole creation according to the Sāṅkhya system.

The first Rámáini has a curious resemblance with similar notions of Jīlī and Badruddin Shahid.46 Both Kabīr and Jīlī seem to mean, that soul (Jīva or rūkh) is the object of divine knowledge, God as the centre of the soul is the father, yet God becomes the object of knowledge and therefore the son of soul. The account of the sacred Rámáini may be compared with Jīlī’s cosmological myth. Kabīr and Jīlī start with one God who was Himself before creation. Then He created the idea of ideas (haqīqat-al-haqiq) or word (sabda). From Sabda comes Brahma who creates an egg (the white chrysolite of Jīlī), from which evolves the fourteen regions (the seven heavens and seven earths).47

45 Kabīr: Bijjak, Rāmāini, I.
47 Kabīr: Bijjak, Rāmāini II.

In other places Kabīr makes an attempt to reproduce the scheme of nine spheres through which creation develops in accordance with Muslim philosophy. The Panji Mangal gives the list of nine regions and their presiding forces, but does not mention the names of the planets or regions. Sometimes he speaks of creation in such terms: “In the sky He was seated meditating behind closed doors, then He saw his own image and thereby the three became pleased.”48 This seems like an echo of Ibn Sīnā’s theory. Two other speculations occur in the Siddhānta Dipikā, in one everything is created from water, “The whole universe is bodied forth from water, out of the essence of water it is kneced. The seven heavens and fourteen regions all are sieved out of water and dissolved in it. The ten Avatārs, Piris and Paighambars (prophets) are all made of water.”49 In the other, creation is likened to a mechanical process, “The Artisan is a wonderful smith, who has made innumerable things.”50

The individual soul was in the Supreme Being before creation, it came into existence when His Light illumined it. The first created was the female principle Sabda whose offspring were distinct individuals. This distinction however is unreal, “I and thou are of one blood and are one life.”51 Kabīr recognised individuality and yet did not forget the unity that lies behind and thus he avoided an atomic view of personality. He says:

“O friend, this body is His Lyre; He tightens its strings, and draws from it the melody of Brahma,

If the strings snap and the keys slacken, then to dust must the instrument of dust return;

Kabīr says: none but Brahma can evoke its melodies.”52

49 Kabīr: Siddhānta Dipikā, p. 44.
50 Ibid., p. 46.
51 Kabīr: Bijjak, Rāmāini, II.
The destiny of the individual, according to Kabir, is the ultimate realization of union with God. Nothing short of it is adequate, paradise will not satisfy him, for

"As long as you expect paradise (vaikuntha) So long will you delay dwelling at the feet of the Lord."55

and, "Paradise and hell are only for the ignorant, not for one who knows Hari."56

For the attainment of the goal it is of the utmost importance to select a teacher (guru). In the Pantha (way, sect) of Kabir, the Guru holds the same position as in any other Sufi order. If it is true of the Sufis that 'among them the worship of God is the same as the worship of man,' it is equally applicable here, for says Kabir,

"Consider the Guru as Govinda (God)"57, -

nay more,

"If Hari becomes angry still there is some chance, but if the Guru is angry then there is no chance whatever."58

And as among Sufi orders so in Kabir Pantha:

"The real meditation (dhyāna, dhikr) is of the Guru’s form, the real worship is of the Guru’s feet. The real boat is the Guru’s word, which in essence and feeling is true,59 and if the three worlds and nine regions none is greater than the Guru."60

55 Kabir: Siddhānta Dipikā, p. 54.
66 Ibid., p. 6.
57 Ibid., p. 8.
house in order to go to a forest." He himself stayed at home and worked as a weaver. The dying to self meant waging a constant war with one's senses. Kabir calls upon the devotee-

"Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight, Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts . . .
In the field of this body a great war goes forward against passion, anger, pride and greed.
It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment, and purity that this battle is raging, and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His name." 68

The end of the struggle is thus described:

"The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all creatures on earth as his own self, He attains the immortal being, the True God is ever with him." 67

The other aspect of the discipline is living in God. The devotee must realise, "one love it is that pervades the whole world." 66

He must realise that God is not Hari or Ram or Krishna;
He transcends all conception. He is without body or form, yet

67 Ibid., LXV.
68 Rabindra Nath Tagore.

He is most intimate of Beings. He is the Supreme Painter (angrezwa), the world is His picture; He is the great sportsman, the universe is His sport; but above all He is the Father, the Lover and the Husband (pitam). The individual must seek Him as the son, the beloved or the spouse, and he must not rest till he has attained union with Him.

If the Muslim mystic speaks of God as the tender maid and the wine-giver (sâqi), and of the dark hair, the shapely neck, the gazelle eyes and the lovely gestures which all symbolise His surpassing beauty, Kabir thinks of Him as the Spouse, for whom the wife abandons her home, her name and honour, goes out in the night though it may be ever so dark and though storm and rain may impede her path. Like the Sâfi he too invites his fellow-travellers to inebriate themselves with the wine of love and throw worldly discretion to the winds.

The devotee who desires the mystic union must firmly set forward upon the path. It is like walking on the keen edge of a sword. There are many disappointments, and terrible obstacles. "The clouds gather, the evening falls, the rain pours down, the fourfold blanket becomes wetter and wetter and the burden gets heavier and heavier" 70 and 'walking, walking the feet are aching." 71 Kabir experienced all the conditions (hâl), which the Sâfis describe: contrition (pachhtâwa) and sorrow (dukh), hope (âdâ) and fear (durâsâ), intimacy in contemplating His beauty (jamâl) and awe at His majesty (jalâl), violence (gahû) and kindness (mihr), separation (vîrâhâ) and union (milam), absence (gaihat), and presence (muhoori), amazement (hairat, chigângi or bharam), and satisfaction (bharam vidhvams). He describes the journey of the self within the self in the very terms which Mansûr al Hallâj used so early as the tenth century. Says he, "Abandoning the actions pertaining to humanity (nâsût), one sees the sphere of the angels (malakût), then leaving even the sphere of majesty (jabarût) one gets the vision of divinity (lâkât); but when these four are left behind

11 Ibid., 16.
then comes ḥāḥūt, where there is no death or separation and where Yama finds no entrance.””

He knew the correct significance of each one of these terms and he expresses it in two terse lines:

“Humanity (Nūsūt) is darkness, Malākūt is angelic in Jābarūt shines the Majestic Light (Nūr Jalā'), in Lāhūt one finds the Beautiful Light (Nūr Jamā') and in Hāḥūt is the dwelling place of Truth (Haq).”

In the Das Muqāmi Rekhta (the poem describing the ten stations), Kabir in his own way reproduces the whole story of Muhammad’s Mirāj as developed in later Muslim tradition. It is, of course, symbolic of the path which the saint follows in his inward flight towards the ineffable goal “like the butterfly towards the light.” This goal has been described in many beautiful poems by Kabir; just one may be given here in the rendering of Rabindranath Tagore to illustrate his conception of the mystic regions to which the saint rises.

“There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death; Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light; There the unstruck music is sounded; it is the music of the love of three worlds, There millions of lamps of sun and moon are burning, There are drum beats, and the lover swings in play, There love-songs resound, and light rains in showers; And the worshipper is entranced in the taste of the heavenly nectar

Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them.

The right hand and the left hand are one and the same Kabir says, There the wise man is speechless; for this truth may never be found in Vedas or in books.”

72 Kabir: Rekhta, No. 22; Siddhānta Dipikā, p. 15.

In this sorrowless region, Spring, the lord of seasons, reigns, the woods are ever a-bloom and the fragrant scent “He is I” is borne on the wind. There the Lord stands self-revealed and the goal of the long and weary search is at last reached.

Thus did Kabir turn the attention of India to a religion of the universal path: a road was laid out which both could tread together. No Hindu or Muslim could take exception to such a religion. This was the constructive part of Kabir’s mission. But it had a destructive side also. It was impossible to build a new road without clearing away the jungle which obstructed the ancient footpaths. Kabir therefore attacked with fearless indignation and in trenchant language the whole apparatus of externalia which obscured the truth or separated the Indian communities from one another. He spared neither the Hindu nor the Musalman.

He asked the Hindus to give up what every reformer since the days of Buddha had insisted upon—ceremonial, sacrifice, fast or magical powers, lip worship, repetition of formulae, pilgrimages, fasts, worship of idols, gods and goddesses, Brahmin supremacy, caste differences, prejudices concerning touchability and food. He openly condemned the doctrine of incarnations: “The Creator did not marry Sītā nor did He make a stone bridge across the waters”75, and “they say the Lord of the world finding inequalities of the weak and the strong came as Rāma. But Kabir says, before such a one (Rāma) who took birth and died, I cannot bend my head.”76

Again, “the ten incarnations that people talk about do not concern me, they are merely the reapers of the fruits of their actions, but the Creator is some one else.”77

It is difficult to say how far he was attached to the theory of metempsychosis. There are many passages in which he

appears to have repudiated it—"the soul (jīyārā) is a guest which will not come a second time,"78 and, "birth as man is not easy to obtain, it does not happen a second time, when the ripe fruit falls it does not again get attached to the tree."79 Again, "all go from this side taking their burdens with them no one returns from the other side, who could tell the tale."80 There are other passages where he speaks of the eighty-four lakhs of births, and of unceasing coming and going. It appears, however, that he uses the fear of death (yamā and kāla) and of remorseless chain of birth and death, more or less, as warnings for men to deter them from their ungodly lives. He does not expatiate on the doctrine of Karma which is indissolubly linked with metempsychosis, and his whole attention seems to be concentrated upon the here and now, rather than on the hereafter and future.

He asks the Muslims to give up their exclusiveness, their blind trust in one Prophet and his book, their externalism in the performance of rites—pilgrimage to Mecca, fast and regulated prayers, their worship of saints (aulād and pīrs) and prophets (paighambarā).

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 eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere.

Whatever I do, it becomes His worship.
All I achieve is His service."81

78 Kabir: Bijāk (Gaṅgā Prasād Varmā’s Edition), Sākhī 10.
79 Ibid., Sākhī 115.
80 Ibid., Sākhī 226.
GURU NANAK

The Panjab was on the highway along which Muslim arms and culture passed into India. In the fifteenth century the province had longer been under Muslim rule than any other. Its towns and villages were honeycombed with Muslim saints and faqirs, Pānpāt, Sīrhind, Pākpattan, Mūltān and Uchh were places where famous Sūfī Shaikhs had spent their lives, and the names of Bābā Firdūs, ‘Alī-ul-Haq, Jaiāl-ud-Dīn Bukhārī, Makhdūm Jahānīyān, Shaikhu Ismā‘īl Bukhārī, had become household words for piety and devotion. The ferment in the minds of men set up by them prepared the intellectual milieu in which a synthesis of ideas could take place.

In the district of Gujārānwālā, in the subdivision of Shaikhupura, is the small village of Talwandi which is situated on the bank of the river Ravi. Rāi Bulār, a Bhatti Rajput, was the lord of this village, and he had a Bedi Khātrī as an accountant whose name was Mehta Kālli Chand. The accountant was held in respect by the villagers and also by the Rāi. On the full-moon day of Kartik (November) 1469 A.D. the Mehta was blessed with a son. His family priest gave him the name of Nānak, a name common to both Hindus and Musalmans. At the age of seven he was sent to school to learn Hindī, two years later to study Sanskrit, and shortly after to Mūlā Qutb-ud-Dīn to learn Persan. It is difficult to say how much he profited by the teaching of the Pandit and the Mūlā. Tradition relates the usual kind of miraculous story regarding the precocity and astonishing wisdom of the child. It may, however, be presumed that the son of the accountant who was destined by his father for government service acquired some working knowledge of Hindī and Persian. It is also likely that he did not show any violent desire for learning, and therefore he was tried on many odd jobs like agriculture, cattle-tending and shop-keeping with equal fruitlessness. Nānak was a moody, meditative child more given to reverie and day-dreams than energetic practical pursuits. He was unmindful of his personal needs and careless of his appointed tasks. Some thought he was possessed by an evil spirit, others that he had lost his senses. The efforts of the exorcist and the doctor failed to do any good or to render any harm. His father failed to understand him, but his sister, with the discerning sympathy and the sure instinct of a woman, perceived the true nature of her brother’s ailment. She was married to one Jai Rām, a Dīwān in the service of Nawāb Daulat Khān Lodī, a relation of Sultan Buhārī, the Emperor of Delhi. The Nawāb held an extensive jāgīr in Sultānpur near Kapūrthālā. She sent for the young Nānak and obtained for him a post in the Nawāb’s service as the keeper of his storehouse of charities. Here he remained till 1499.

Nānak was married at the age of eighteen, to Sulākhi and had two sons—Sīrhand, who later founded the order of Udāsīs, and Lakhmī Dāis. When he was thirty, he renounced home and service and became a faqīr. Mardāna, the Muslim minstrel of Talwandi and later, Bābā Bālā, joined him and they commenced their wanderings over many lands, interviewing saints and gathering spiritual experience and, if any credence can be placed upon the legends, Nānak visited all the holy places and towns of importance in India, Ceylon, Persia, and Arabia during four series of travels in the remaining forty years of his life. He is said to have had long intercourse with Shaikh Sharaf of Pānpāt, the Pīrs of Multān, Shaikh Brahīm (Ibrahim), the successor of Bābā Firdūs at Pākpattan, and several others. He preached his own ideas wherever he went, and never hesitated to uphold by action what he spoke by word of mouth. At last the wanderings were over, the message was delivered, and the day had arrived when the earthly journey was to end. “The Guru drew a sheet over him, uttered Wāh-guru, made obeisance to God, and blended his light with Guru Angad’s. The Guru remained the same. There was only a change of body
produced by a supreme miracle.”

The Hindu and Muslim disciples had a controversy over the disposal of the body, so Guru decided the difficulty, for when the sheet was lifted, the body had disappeared and there were only flowers there. They were divided, the Hindus erected a shrine and the Muslims a tomb over them, but both were washed away by the flood of the Ravi river.

The mission of Nānak was the unification of the Hindu and the Muslim. He realised that in order to heal the wounds of society it was essential to end the conflict of religions. He says:

“When one remains and one is removed then alone is it possible to live with ease; but as long as the two remain established there is struggle and confusion. The two had failed, then God gave orders; for many had gone taking with them the Purāṇa (Qurān) in order to unite, but they had failed to unite. Thou art my son, go into world, all have gone astray from the path, direct them upon the right path. Go thou into the world, and make them all repeat the one name; Nānak, go thou as the third over the head of both. Establish the religion of truth and remove evil, whoever comes to you from the two receive him, let not life be taken unnecessarily, protect the poor, remember that God pervades the eighty-four lakhs of species.”

He regarded himself as the prophet of God, who had come from the divine court, and “received from His door-step the signs (śītān), the chapters (śūraha), and the traditions (hadith) of the prophet.”

He taught that “there is one God in the world and no other, and that Nānak the Caliph (or son) of God speaks the truth.”

3 Ibid., p. 359.
4 Ibid., p. 360.

It is clear that Nānak took the prophet of Islam as his model, and his teaching was naturally deeply coloured by this fact. He was a mystic in the sense that he had a lively realisation of the presence of God, but he was not an enraptured visionary like Kābhī. His spirit took occasional flights to the sorrowless and where the Divine palace is illumined by His light which exceeds the light of millions of moons, lamps, suns and torches, and where from behind the curtain of the Unknown (ghaib) the sound of bells is heard, but he does not revel in the transcendent joys of that illumined abode. His spirit draws its inspiration from that vision, but it is far too deeply interested in the fate of his fellow-beings upon earth to linger long in the rare mystic regions.

Nānak’s conception of religion was severely practical and sternly ethical. His God is exalted above all. He “is inaccessible, unfathomable, altogether distinct from His creation.”

At “His threshold millions of Muhammad, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahésha, Rāma are lauding Him in millions of ways and millions of forms.” “He is incomprehensible, endless, incalculable, independent, immortal, actionless. He has no caste. He is not born nor does He die, He is self-existent, He has no fear, and no doubts.... He has no family, He has no illusion, He is beyond the beyond, the whole Light is Thine.” Yet he admits that He is immanent in all, “within each body the Absolute (Brahma) is concealed, and within each vessel the whole light is His.” God is husband (khasam) and bridegroom, and thus intimately related to the human soul. But in his more permanent mood Nānak looks upon God as the One Lord of all, the Commander (Hākim) according to whose pre-ordained will man ought to walk, for obedience to Him.

9 Ibid., p. 394.
brings wisdom, knowledge, security from punishment, freedom from Yama, and salvation."10 Nänak has no use for any anthropomorphic Being, nor does he dwell much upon His personal humane qualities; to him He is the great and high, formless (nirankār), light (niranjana), and from the viewpoint of personality the true teacher (Satguru). But he is far too much impressed by His power and His irresistible will to develop greatly the latter aspect.

As Creator He brings the universe into existence out of darkness:

"In the beginning there was indescribable darkness; Then was not earth, nor heaven, naught but God's unequalled order.

Then was not day, or night, or moon, or sun; God was meditating on the void.

The Imperceptible God was himself the speaker and preacher; Himself unseen He was everything.

When He pleased He created the world;
Without supports He sustained the sky.
He created Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and extended the love of mām. He communicated the Guru's words to some few persons.
He issued His order and watched over all.
He began with the continents, the universe, and the nether regions, and brought forth what had been hidden.
His limit no one knoweth."11

The universe is the domain of the Lord. The creation is His play, His motiveless activity; but sometimes he speaks of it in other phrases, "Thou didst effect the expansion of the world"12; again, "from its brilliance everything is brilliant."12

12 Ibid., p. 205.

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and "all is illumined by the light of His appearance."14 Over the universe the Lord has established a system of government of His own.

"The Hindu and Muslim saints are the dhāns in attendance upon the Preserver (parvāt), the great Pir are registrates (siqādārs) and collectors (kavoris), the angles are accountants and treasures (fotedārs). The gentleman trooper (ubad) 'Izā'il binds and arrests, and degrades the ignorant and beastly men."12

Such a conception of God and His relationship with creation lays greater emphasis upon the transformation of human will than upon his intellect or feeling. Nänak demands of his followers, like the Prophet of Islam, a complete surrender to the Lord.

"Nānak maketh one application.
Soul and body are all in Thy power.
Thou art near, Thou art distant, and Thou art midway
Thou seest and hearest; by Thy power didst Thou create the world,
Whatever order pleaseth thee, saith Nänak, that is acceptable."15

and again:

"Whatever the Lord does, consider it is for your
Good, wisdom consists in obeying His order.
Whatever the King commands obey with all your body
and mind, such should be our reverence for Him.
Lose yourself and then you will find the King, no other
wisdom avail."17

Nänak is impressed with the utter worthlessness of man, and there is a deep note of contrition and humility in the consciousness of his own sin. Says he:

'My sins are numerous as the waters of the seas and the ocean.
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Bestow compassion, extend a little mercy, save me who am like a sinking stone."

And adds:

"I utter calumny night and day; I am base and worthless, I covet my neighbour's house. Lust and anger which are pariahs, dwell in my heart.... I am a cheat in a country of cheats. I deem myself very clever, and bear a great load of sin.... Ungrateful that I was, I did not appreciate what Thou didst for me, How can I, who am wicked and dishonest, show my face?"  

Such a person who dares to tear so rudely aside the curtain of self-complacency and egotism which hides the ugliness behind will hardly tolerate the sham and falsehoods which masquerade in the guise of religion. Nānak shows little mercy to himself and he is naturally not very tender when he deals with others. With a mind definite, clear cut and keenly alive to the sharp distinctions between good and evil he condemns with Seismic vehemence the superstition and formalism of Hinduism and Islam. He says:

"Cooking places of gold, vessels of gold, Lines of silver far extended, Ganges water, firewood of the Karanta tree, Eating rice boiled in milk— O my soul, these things are of no account Until thou art saturated with the true Name. Hadst thou the eighteen Purāṇas with thee, Couldst thou recite the four Vedas, Didst thou bathe on holy days and give alms according to men's castes, Didst thou fast and perform religious ceremonies day and night; Wert thou a Qāzī, a Mullah, or a Shaikh, A Jogi, a Jangam, didst thou wear an ochre-coloured dress,

21 Ibid., p. 356.
22 Ibid., p. 353.
23 Ibid., p. 43.
24 Ibid., p. 186.
25 Ibid., p. 36.
What should a man do then to attain salvation, or to blend the light of soul with that of God? Four things are necessary. Fear God, do the right, trust in the mercy of His name, and take a guide to direct you upon the path which leads to the goal. Regarding the first Nānak says:

"Be in fear of that day when God will judge thee."

"Put the fear of God into thy heart, then the fear of Death shall depart in fear."

Regarding the second, his works are so full that it is difficult to make a choice. He is never tired of harping upon two themes—praise of virtue and condemnation of vice. He is careful, however, to remember that a mere catalogue of commands and prohibitions is not enough and that essentially moral conduct is the proper attitude of the inward soul. He also knows that men and women have to live in the world and work in their professions and a religion which suits merely the ḍāqīr and the sādhu who has renounced the world cannot be the faith of an active community engaged in social pursuits. He, therefore, advocates a middle path between extreme asceticism and heedless satisfaction of sense, or rather he advocates an asceticism of the heart combined with the fulfillment of the worldly functions of body and mind. Here is one of the shorter catalogues of virtues:

Practise humility, renounce pride, restrain the mind, remember God,

Be honest, watch, restrain the five evil passions, be contented.  

Nānak loved to draw illustrations for human virtues from the daily occupations of men, for example:

"Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith,
Understanding thy anvil, divine knowledge thy tools,
The fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire.

27 Ibid., p. 78.
28 Ibid., p. 15.

Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein.
In such a true mint the Word shall be coined.
This is the practice of those on whom God looked with an eye of favour.

Nānak, the kind One by a glance maketh them happy."

Nānak was a believer in the transmigration of soul, and he taught that the doers of evil will continue to suffer from repeated births and deaths, till they turned their hearts towards Truth. Transmigraton, however, did not apparently satisfy him as a sufficient deterrent from sin, and so he threatened those who would not walk along the path of virtue with the dire punishments. Says he:

"The sinners who have committed transgressions are bound and led away.
Their luggage of sins is so heavy that they cannot lift it.
The steep road ahead is dark, while the executioner walketh behind them.
In front is a sea of fire; how shall they cross it?
Ravens stand on men's skulls, and peck at them fast as a shower of sparks.

Nānak, where shall men escape when the punishment is by God's order?"

And he goes on to describe the horrible fate that is in store for them. It is too gruesome to describe. From such a fate only the mercy of God can save man. Fortunately He is ever ready to help. "If for a moment thou restrain thy mind, God will appear before thee," and "God bestoweth gifts on whom He looketh with favour and mercy," and "the mere repetition of His name can confer salvation." His gifts are priceless, and his marks priceless, priceless his mercy and priceless His ordi-
nances. Good deeds, approved charities, penances and yoga study of scriptures and meditation. “Nānak, these devices would be of no avail; true is the mark of grace.”

Like all Sūfis Nānak taught that in the soul’s journey towards God it was necessary to be guided by a Guru. In his system the preceptor occupies the same position as in that of Kabīr. Muḥsin Fānī, who was an earnest student of the religions of India and a contemporary and friend of many Hindu saints of the seventeenth century, describes accurately the Sikh belief. Says he: “When Nānak expired, his spirit became incarnate in the person of Angād, who attended him as his confidential servant. Angād, at his death, transmitted his soul into the body of Ramadāsa; and this Guru, in the same manner, conveyed his spirit into the body of Nānak the Second, and so on to the fifth, in the person of Arjun Mal.” The Guru directed the disciple upon the path which has four stages—Saran Khand, Jñān Khand, Karām Khand and Sach Khand, which, according to the author of Nānak Prakāś, correspond with the Sūfī Sufīvat, Ma’rifat, Tariqat and Haqīqat. The path ultimately leads to the goal so dear to the soul of the devotee, where the fear of death is no more, the wheel of birth and death ceases to revolve, where man at last becomes united with the Light from which he emanated.

How deep Guru Nānak’s debt is to Islam, it is hardly necessary to state, for it is so evident in his words and thoughts. Manifestly he was steeped in Sūfī lore and the fact of the matter is, that it is much harder to find how much exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures. His rare references to them lead one to imagine that Nānak was only superficially acquaint-

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33 Ibid., p. 229.
34 The Dabistan by Shek & Trower (Jacksons edition), p. 287.
SIXTEENTH CENTURY SAINTS

Kabir and Nānak were leaders of the radical school of thought. They had many supporters among their contemporaries and numerous followers after them throughout the centuries. Of the twelve disciples of Rāmānanda four others besides Kabir have left some of their hymns behind—Dhannā, Pipā, Sāīn, and Raidās. The hymns of the first three are preserved in the Adigrantha of the Sikhs, while Raidās’s teachings have been collected and published separately.

Dhannā was a Jāt by caste and is said to have been born in 1415 A.D. He belonged to Rajputana, whence he went to Benares to become Rāmānanda’s disciple. Nabhājī and Priyādāsa relate the legends of the supernatural occurrences of his life, which indicate that he was at first an idol worshipper. Later a change seems to have come over him, for he says:

“When the Guru caused the wealth of divine knowledge to enter me, I meditated on God, and accepted in my heart that He was One.

I have embraced the love and service of God and known comfort; I am satiated and satisfied, and have obtained salvation.

He in whose heart God’s light which filleth creation is contained, recognizeth God, who cannot be deceived.”

The Bhaktmāla and its commentary give an extended notice of Pipā, the Raja of Gagurdungarh, and relate many stories of the marvellous events which happened in his life, and of the conversions which he effected. Macauliffe translates a hymn which is found in the Granth, and which shows the same tendency as is found in other contemporary saints, that is, God is the Primal Essence, the Guru is the means of attaining God, and that worship must be internal.


Sāīn was a barber who lived at the court of the Prince of Hindhavgarh, modern Rewa. He is said to have become the spiritual preceptor of this prince. Of him a story is told by Nabhājī which illustrates the saint’s dependence on God and His readiness to help him.

Raidās was a worker in leather and thus belonged to a caste very low in social status. He was born at Benares, his father’s name was Ragghū and that of his mother Ghurūniyā. He was devoted to religious men and saints and used to spend all the money that he could procure from his father in their service. His father became dis pleased and turned him out of the house. He then began to live with his wife in a dilapidated hut, engaged in devotion and earning his living by mending shoes. People were attracted to him by his life of simplicity and contentment, and it is said that a Rajput queen accepted him as her guru.

His hymns breathe a spirit of humility and self-surrender. He did not indulge in high philosophic speculation about the nature and essence of God and His relation with the world and man. His cardinal doctrines are not different from those of Kabir, and like him he uses Rakhta, even the Persian language, and Sufi terms, to show the identity of Hinduism and Islam. He believed in God as the Absolute Lord of all and identical with self. Says he:

“Govind is immovable, formless, unborn, unique, of fearless gait, unlimited, beyond sight and reason, indivisible, unqualified, extreme joy.”

And

“Hari is in all and all is in Hari,”

“Thou art I, and the difference between me and thee is like water in a vessel of gold and in the wave.”

2 Raidās Ki Bānī, p. 25.
3 Ibid., p. 7.
4 Ibid., p. 15.
Thus although He is one He is yet many:

"One is many and many is one Hari, how am I to say that there is a second," and "He is one, and only two by illusion."9

But, according to him, God is not identical with any of the incarnations; says he:

"The Rāma in whom the people recognise Him, they are in error about it, O brother."6

Raidās looks upon the world as the play of God, and is inclined to the view that it is illusory, or, at any rate, not worth paying attention to:

"He arranges it like a player (Bāzigar), no one knows the secret of his play. The play is false, only the player is true, by knowing this the mind is satisfied."7 Again, "the body is empty, the māyā (nature) is empty, emptily hast thou wasted life without Hari. The temple and luxurious living are empty and empty is the dependence on other gods."8 Raidās has complete faith in His grace, for did He not come to the help of Ajāmilā, the elephant, the prostitute, and if He broke their chains, undoubtedly He will do the same for him. Yet there is a pleasing conceit in his attitude;

"Thou hast bound me by chains of illusion (mohā), I have bound Thee with the ropes of love. I am making an effort to emancipate myself, but when I attain freedom then who will adore Thee?"9

The other attitude, of complete surrender and humility, is usual with him:

9 Raidās Ki Bāni, pp. 25, 26.
6 Ibid., p. 6.
7 Ibid., p. 7.
9 Ibid., p. 22.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY SAINTS

"O Rāma, Thou alone art wise, thou art eternity without guise, Thou art King (sultān) of kings. I am thy ignorant broken (shikasta) servant (bandā). I have no manners, no fortune. I am senseless, foolish and given to evil. I am a sinner, an alien (gharib), heedless, cowardly and black-hearted. Thou art powerful (qādir) and capable of taking me across the ocean. I am greedy and cunning. This body of mine is shattered and broken, and my mind is full of many apprehensions. Raidās the slave, begs his Lord (Sāhib) vouchsafe to me a sight (didār) of Thee,"10

and therefore he calls upon Him out of the deepth of his heart:

"Save me, save me, O holy Lord of three worlds."11

It is necessary then to give up all external rites, the pilgrimages, fasts, shaving of head, singing and dancing in temples, offering of leaves to idols, and to betake to the devotion of One only, by losing the self in Him, as the river loses itself in the sea. Although

"My caste is low, my actions are low, and even my profession is low,

Says Raidās, yet the Lord has raised me high."12

Kabīr had many disciples who spread his message throughout Northern India and the Deccan. They founded twelve branches of the Panth, each one recognising some immediate disciple as its head. Some of the branches were merely nominal and took no root where they were planted; others produced important sects. Of his immediate disciples Srut Gopāl Dās succeeded him at Benares and was recognised at Maghar, Jagnānāth and Dwārkā; Bhaggū (Bhagwān) Dās is known as the

10 Ibid., p. 15.
11 Ibid., p. 39.
12 Ibid., p. 20.
compiler of the Bījak; Dharamdās was the author of many poems in which Kabīr appears as answering his questions. Jivanandās was probably the founder of the famous Satnamī sect, and Kamāl who is remembered in the Adigrantha by the disparaging line, “the family of Kabīr founded when Kamāl the son was born,” apparently had a following in Western India. Others hardly need mention.

Of those in the generation following one of the most important was Dādū Dayāl. According to Dabistan, Dādū was a cotton cleaner, who came from Nārāinā, a village in Mārwār, and lived in the time of Akbar. Wilson follows Dabistan concerning Dādū’s caste, but adds that he was born in Ahmedabad, from where he removed to Nārāinā in his thirty-seventh year, and where he lived till the end of his life. Farquhar and Traill, however, state that he was born of Brahmin parents at Ahmedabad in 1544 A.D. But Sudhākar Dwivedī differs from them and is of opinion that he was a tanner or currier (mochī) and his family profession was that of making leather bags (moth) for drawing water from well. His first name was Mahābālī, he retired from worldly pursuits after the death of his first wife and became a disciple of Kamāl. The last authority produces the following couplet in proof of his opinions:

“I found the true and mighty guru, who taught me the reality, Dādū is the leather bag (moth), Mahābālī is the vessel who churned and ate the butter.”

Dādū spent most of his life in Rajputana and he visited Ajmer, Delhi, Amber and other places. He is reported to have had an interview with Akbar. He died at Nārāinā in 1609. His poetic utterances consist of 5,000 verses which are divided into chapters, each dealing with a leading religious question. Their language is a mixture of the dialects Braj Bhāṣā and Rājasthāni; some of the verses are in Panjābi and a number in Rekhta and corrupt Persian. Of the last, one or two instances may be reproduced here:

\[Be mīhr gumrāḥ ghūsīl gosht khurdānī,\]
\[Be dīl badkhār ‘ālam hayāt murdānī.\]

which may be rendered thus:

Men are merciless, strayed from the path, heedless, meat-eaters, heartless, evil-doing, and living yet lifeless.

And,

\[Kul ‘ālam yake didām arwāh akhlās\]
\[Bad ‘āmi badkhār dui pāk yārān pās.\]

which means:

He saw the whole universe as one, and the pure souls cleaned of evil actions, evil deeds and of the sin of duality in the company of the Friend.

And again, there is an entire poem beginning with the lines—

\[Maujūd khabar ma'būd khabar arwāh khabar wajūd\]
\[Maqām chi chiz ast dālanī sujūd.\]

This may be translated as follows:

The existent is known, the adored is known, the souls are known, what is the station of the being to whom it is necessary to bow?

The station of being, according to Dadu, is this:

When the lower self (nafs) is dominant, and pride is in possession and anger, egotism, duality, falsehood, greed, obstinacy are present, then there is not the name of righteousness.

The station of souls (arwāh) is this:

When love, worship, obedience, unity, purity, mercy, affection right, and goodness are present then there is the name of righteousness near.

Sudhākar Dwivedī: Dādū Dayāl Ki Bāni. Introduction.

16 Ibid., p. 80.
The station of the adored (ma'bud) is this:

There is one, the beautiful sight of the Beauty is amazing. To drink the cup of inebriation is a wonderful thing.

The animal stage is when men are away from the path and heedless; the first step is to be bound by law (shari'at) to obtain from a wise person the knowledge of good and bad, and of lawful and unlawful. Then having completed this, it is necessary to abandon the world, and to engage in remembering every day and every moment the Highest God, to love the Lover, and to feel the pain and to complain and cry.

Then the station of gnosis (ma'rifat) is to know that water, fire, heavens ('arsh), the chair were all forms of the Subhās who had taken the quality of fire (sharar). Says he:

"The Truth is found, I have seen the Light, the object is hid which is the sight of the Friend, the spirits of Adam are the being of the being.

"I have told plainly what kind of goal I had attained, the Pir (Preceptors) have informed the soul of the Murids (disciples) about the path to the Adored."

Dādū's description of the true Musalman shows how he rose above prejudices of creed and emphasized the true invariance of religion. He says,

"Dādū the tank of His presence is in the heart and there I take my complete ablation; after performing the ablution in front of Allah I say the prayers there.

"Dādū makes his body His mosque, he finds the five members of the assembly (jamāt) in the mind as well as the leader of the prayers (Mullā'inām); the indescribable God is Himself in front of him and there he makes his bows and greetings.

"Dādū regards the whole body as the rosary on which the name of the Generous one (Karim) is repeated; there is one fast and there is no second, and the word (kalima) is He himself.

"Thus Dādū rises before Allah with concentrated attention and goes himself above the heavens ('arsh) to the place where the Rahmān (Merciful) lives.

"Dādū the worshipper continues thus every day till his death, and then he stands before the gates of the Master and neither leaves Him nor goes."17

Dādū manifests perhaps even greater knowledge of Sufism than his predecessors, perhaps because he was the disciple of Kamāl who probably had greater leanings towards Islamic ways of thinking than others, perhaps because the Sufis of Western India—Ahmedabad and Ajmer—wielded greater influence upon the minds of seekers after God, Hindus or Muslims, than those of the East. At any rate, the effect of their teachings was to make him a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. He repeats again and again the sentiment that,

"In all vessels whether Hindu or Muslim there is one soul,"18

and

"O Allah Rāma, my illusion has passed away, there is no difference at all between Hindu and Musalman."19

and

"The one invisible Ilāhi art Thou, Thou are Rāma and Rahim, Thou are the beautiful Master (Mālik), Thy names are Karim and Karim,"20

and he asks,

"What is the Panth (sect) of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēś which is the dīn (faith) of Muhammad and what is the way of Gabriel; the one Allah is their Pir and Murshid (preceptor and director). Dādū knows in his heart to whom they were owed.

19 Ibid., p. 383.
20 Ibid., p. 455.
devoted, the Invisible Ḡābi is the Guru of the world and there is no other besides him.”

and lastly says Dādū:

“The two brothers are hand and feet, the two are the two ears, the two brothers are the two eyes—Hindus and Muslims.”

With regard to ritual and form, priests, caste, idol worship, incarnations, pilgrimages, ceremonial ablutions and so forth, he held the same opinion as his master Kabir; to him also God alone is essential and He is sufficient:

“I am not a Pandit, I do not know the good of studying and I have not thought over knowledge.

I am not a prophet, I do not know the light, and I do not possess the ornaments of the face.

I am no ascetic, I have no control over my senses, and I have not performed pilgrimages.

I am not a worshipper in temples, and I do not put my trust in meditation.

I am not an adept in Yoga and I do not know the methods of worship.

I do not know anything else, and what after all is the need of other things.

Dādū has placed his whole soul under the protection of one Beautiful Govind.”

His ideas of God, of the world and of man do not differ from those of his predecessors. He insists upon the unity of God and he regards Him in His twofold aspect of transcendence and immanence. To him He is one, unchangeable, immortal, incomprehensible Being; He is brightness, effulgence, light, illumination, perfection; He is within the heart of all beings. “I stay within me, I am the house for me, I am in the heavens (ናት), I am my own support, I depend on myself, so says the Merciful One, the Creator”; and “the whole of nature is His own form, for He is inside all.” Withal He is Creator and Lord, who “by one word created all,” and who wills it and the creation comes out of nothing or relapses into nothing.

Man, as long as he is separated from Him, is a sinful creature; his salvation consists in rending this veil; in realising that all otherness and duality, the world of sense, pleasure and pain is a sport and illusion, they are like the mirage in the desert after which the thirsty man runs in vain. The one road to salvation is to know and love Him alone, the one discipline is to die to self in order to live in Him. The man who journeys along this path must be prepared to lay down his life, for he will meet with terrible obstacles, he will feel weary and sick and maddened by pain, so that he will cry out, “my soul is sorely afflicted, because I have forgotten thee, O God, I cannot endure the pain, deliver me.” But if he perseveres the clouds will roll away and the sun will shine and the Light will illumine his soul, and filled with wonder he will exclaim “O Rāma, my God, I am amazed, no one can find Thy end. Brahmā, Śaṅkara and Nārad all failed to see Thee; I who am insignificant and low and little minded, Thou vouchsafest Thy vision to me.”

Dādū held that man passed through the whole cycle of births and deaths in one life-time. He says:

“The nature of the eighty-four lakhs of lives is within you, there are many births in a single day but few understand them.”

22 Ibid., p. 323.
24 Ibid., p. 59.
25 Ibid., p. 81.
27 Ibid., p. 511.
29 Ibid., p. 159.
"There are as many incarnations (rebirths) as the changes which come over the soul. This is the transmigration which the Almighty Creator removes away."

"The soul does not know of its births, they take place moment after moment, it undergoes the eighty-four lakhs but does not apprehend."

And again,

"The swine, dogs, jackals, tigers and serpents reside in the heart, also the elephants and the insects, but the Pandit knows them not."

It is only by destroying this chain of psychic modifications or spiritual births and deaths that one can become absorbed in God.

Dādū teaches that the Guru is the devotee’s protector (guāl), and the whip which keeps the horse of the mind in control. The Guru is greater than books—Vedas and Qorān—for through Him realisation takes place and the abode of Light is attained. But it is difficult to obtain the right type of Guru, in which case Dādū recommends that one should make birds, beasts and the lord of the forest his Guru, for God is in all.

Dādū did not believe in complete actionlessness, for he says,

"Effort (adyām) does not produce evil effects, for him who knows it, in effort there is joy, but it should be directed towards the Lord only."

The sect which Dādū established, has its chief seat at Nārāmā where he died. There they hold an annual festival which gives an opportunity to the Dādūpanthis to assemble together in memory of the great man who tried to sink all differences of creed and caste in one religion of love.

31 Ibid., p. 160.
32 Ibid., p. 160.
“He who considers all men’s pain as his own, Malūkdatā regards him as the true ascetic.”

He too taught oneness of religions and the unity of the Hindu and the Muslim; says he,

“Where is the string of beads (mālā) and the rosary (tasbīḥ), now awake and rely not on them.

Who is infidel (kafr) and who is barbarian (malecchha) look upon sandhya (Hindu worship) and the prayer (namāz) as one.

Where does Yama live and where is Gabriel? He himself is the judge (Qāzi), who else keeps accounts?

He calculates the good and the evil deeds, and renders account and sends one where he deserves to go.

Malūkdatā, why art thou in error, Rāma and Rahim are the names of One.”

Sundardas was a disciple of Dādu. He was born in 1596 A.D. at Deosā near Jaipur in Rajputana, in the family of a Bania. It is related that when Sundardas was six years of age Dādu came to Deosā. He saw the child and was struck with his handsome face. Since then the child became known as Sundar (handsome), and lived with Dādu his preceptor at Nārāinā. He soon became known for his precocious genius as a saint and poet. But on the death of Dādu in 1608 A.D. he left Nārāinā and returned home. After spending some time at Deosā he went to Benares where he remained engaged in his studies till the age of thirty, and then came back to Rajputana and worked with his co-disciples, Prâgdas and Râjâb, to spread the religion of Bhakti as taught by Dādu. He settled down at Fatehpur Shekhâvât and became friendly with Nawâb Alî Khân and his sons Daulat Khân and Ta’îr Khân. The Nawâb was himself a Hindi poet, and he highly appreciated the talents of Sundardas. In later years he took to travelling and visited numerous places in Rajputana and Panjâb. He died in 1689.

34 Malūk Dâs Ki Bânt, p. 22.
35 Ibid., p. 27.
INDIAN PAINTING

The history of Indian painting is but the history of Indian architecture. Pre-Muslim Indian paintings—Hindu, Jain or Buddhist—have a character of their own. The vision of reality which inspires them and gives significance to their form is their own. They are the aesthetic expression of a culture which grew out of the synthesis of the racial experience, a synthesis which implies a balance between opposing tendencies—joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and failure, worldliness and other-worldliness, attachment to life and renunciation of life, domination by sense and control of sense, ambition, activity and passion, and satisfaction, passivity and calm serenity. It is not true that the Hindu culture is more religious or less materialistic than other cultures, but the quality and content of its religious consciousness is different, the point of equilibrium between the opposing forces of life is differently situated. The whole mentality is cast in a different mould and naturally all that issues from it has a different stamp. What the character of this consciousness was, has been delineated above, it remains to describe how it manifested itself in Indian painting.

The frescoes of Ajanta are almost the only surviving remains of the Indian art as it was practised in the ancient period, although the legendary accounts refer its origins to Brahmā as Visvakarma the architect of the gods. Scholars have discovered references to the art in the pre-Christian literature, for instance, in the Vinaya Pitaka, and in later Hindu poetry, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyana, Sakuntalā, and so forth. There are actual fragments of paintings belonging to great antiquity existing in various caves, but the only adequate remains which truly reflected the character of the art which at one time was spread widely all over India and was extremely prolific in its output, are found at Ajanta. The paintings adorn the ceilings and walls of the temples excavated out of living rock. In all probability, all the twenty-nine cave temples were embellished with paintings but the ravages of nature and time and the vandalism of man have destroyed the greater part. They were executed during the first six centuries of the Christian era.

Who were the artists who painted these pictures and what was the motive of their work? It has been suggested that the artists were priests who were engaged in self-edification. If that is so they were absolutely unlike any other priests whom India at any rate has known. The Brahmans or the Hindu monks would never have dreamt of such pursuits, and it is not probable that their Buddhist or Jain confrères whose life was more or less modelled on theirs would have done so. The whole work is really much too professional to have been left to the amateurs of the monasteries. The Chaiya halls were excavated by a professional class of architects and masons, as they were constructed on the ground, and again a professional class of sculptors and painters must have decorated the edifices built or dug by their brother craftsmen. The wealth of kings and merchant princes, must have been poured out in order to create the works in which both ambition and piety were satisfied.

The conditions of production are reflected in the creation itself. The walls and ceilings were covered with scenes drawn equally from the life of the court and the world and the life of the devotee and the history of religion. The first class of pictures are inundated with joy in life; they throb with the aspiration and glory which are of the here and the now. They delight in the pomp and splendour of the royal state,¹ in the

¹ Griffiths: Ajanta Frescoes. Plates 5 and 74.
Influence of Islam on Indian Culture

In the daily concerns of life, in the romance of love-making, in the delights of feasting, singing and dancing, in the busy hum of the market with its haggling over prices, purchase and sale. They represent the roo tide in the life of man and society when the sap of youth, ambition and power runs violently in the veins. But life is not all noon, for the sun must run its course and the shadows must lengthen as the evening advances. The synthesis of culture is incomplete without the wisdom of age and of detachment, and so there are the second class of pictures which depict the mild, unexciting, tranquil and serene life, which with its 'suggestion of the infinite and the beyond, gives healthy tone and proper perspective to the first world. They are pictures of Buddha's life, of his struggles and eventual victory, of the crowded career of beneficence and propagation of faith, of the stories of previous lives, and of allegories that stop the teachings. But the two worlds do not lie apart, they weave and interweave with one another, for they are both part patterns of the same fabric.

The artistic treatment of the two is informed with the same aesthetic purpose. That consciousness of the intense pressure and throng of life which is observable in the Hindu architecture, is present in their paintings. The figures crowd upon one another; men, women and children in all postures and attitudes, are put together in bewildering confusion, their numbers are beyond tale or count, as if the artist was oppressed with the illimitable, inexpressible fecundity of the reality that was life and was struggling to grasp, and render it. Every form, animate or inanimate, rock or stream, bird or beast, flower or tree, man or superman, is equally interesting, equally sacred, for all form is the articulation of the One. This sanctity of all, expresses itself through the wonderful intimacy which the artist establishes between his human and non-human figures, between man and landscape, man and architecture, man and animals and plants, and between all of them together. The cows and bulls listen to the Buddha's teaching; the geese tell their story to the prince; the angels and gods hover round the teacher; all the creatures of earth and heaven crowd round him with eager attention. Rākhasas and birds and men are engaged together in strife; the lion and the snake and human crowds are united in anger and terror; processions of elephants, horses and soldiers with arms and banners pass in and out of city gates and the wall and gate and animals and men swing with the same rhythm of movement; men and women stand amidst rocks and the overspreading branches of the trees darken the glen and a calm passivity rests upon them all; the roots of plants are hidden in the crevices of rocks, their soft tendrils and slender

Herringham: Ajanta Plate 17.
Ibid., Plate 33.
Ibid., Plates 30, 15.
Ibid., Plate 41.
Ibid., Plates 45, 94.
Ibid., Fig. 64.
Ibid., Plates 49, 80.
Ibid., Plate 85.
stalhs wind upwards almost clinging to them; the river flows amidst crowded scenes, and the fishes and boats and swimming creatures animate its surface, women peer through small oblong windows and look like medallions, decorating panels in the wall, the bananas stand along with courtiers and ambassadors and officers in the halls of reception. The same feeling works itself out in the grotesque bogeys, frightful looking figures, creatures—half man half horse, half man half bird, mermaids and celestial beings flying through air; in the scenes of strife where bears hug men, snakes attack elephants, and bulls fight; and in the attempt to render the features of all known races of men and of beings of the superior and inferior worlds.

The medium through which the intensity of this thronging and unified life is rendered is the line. It is one of the unexplained mysteries of civilization why Europe chose colour and Asia line as the language of its art. Whatever the reasons, the results have abundantly justified the choice. Each civilization has attained its supreme success in its own medium. Thus what colour is to the West, line is to the East, for its schools are divided according to the character of their line. The line employed by the artists of Ajanta is unique for its firmness, breadth and sweep; it moves over vast spaces with an unhesitating assurance, unhalting swing, uniform and rhythmical. It is equally efficacious in rendering the calm, passionless rapture of an illumined Buddha, and the agitated, eager, trembling emotion of the devotee of song and dance. The artist employs it with the same knowledge and success whether he has to render the tenseness of flight through the air, the upward spring of plant and tree, the waving trunk of an elephant, or the wonderful gestures of the hands, and he is equally at home in creating with it types or individualities, forms of man or of nature, idealistic or realistic. In fact, it is impossible for the purpose—that of painting on large surfaces, on ceilings and walls—to suggest a line of character different from the one he has used. The line of the Indian painter, in the suppleness of its form, in the gentle sinuosness of its curve, shares indeed the plastic character of Indian sculpture and architecture.

The process of the Ajanta frescoes consisted in first preparing the ground by two layers of plasters; the lower below was made of a mixture of clay, cow-dung and pulverised trap rock, and occasionally of finely-chopped straw or rice husks. This was applied to the thickness of one-eighth to three-quarters of an inch to hide the rough-hewn surface of the walls. Over this ground was laid an extremely thin egg-shell layer of white plaster which was polished. The next step was to paint the surface thus prepared, and for this purpose a combination of fresco and tempera methods was used. The dry surface of plaster was thoroughly drenched with water the night before, and the next morning it was again wetted with lime water. On the damp surface the painting was made with the pigments which included metallic and vegetable colour.

The outline was first freely sketched out in red on the plaster, but was subsequently corrected in black or brown as occasion demanded. Then a semi-transparent green glaze was applied to the surface, over which the local colours were washed in flat. The colours used were white sulphate of lime, ferruginous red, green iron silicates, and blue ultramarine.

The treatment of the various motifs used in the paintings is worthy of attention. The human figure is slender and supple without musculature or anatomical details. The eyes are
long, almond-like, hands full of meaning, attitudes graceful "of
stylistic breeding," hair done in ringlets or tied in chignons at
back or in loops at side and usually adorned with flowers. Side,
back and half-awed views are not avoided. The dresses vary
from the diaphanous translucent drapery of the high placed to
the coarse jackets and tight-fitting breeches of soldiers and ser-
vants, and the headdress is of many kinds. Jewellery is profuse-
ly used. Many animals are represented; the elephant is drawn
with wonderful insight, the horses have rounded, full-bodied,
high-crested and Roman-nosed heads, hogged manes, tails some-
times neatly clipped, legs adorned with bangles;29 the deer have
calf-like broad faces, the lions are crude, resembling distantly
the Assayan variety; the buffaloes, bulls, monkeys and others
do not call for particular notice. Among the birds the geese
and peacocks are noteworthy. In the landscape the rocks are
made in masses of rectangular forms with ends broken in fret-
like pattern; the water is conventional like basket work or flow-
ning wave scroll; fishes, tortoises and mermaids are added as sym-
boles: the clouds have folds and masses of rounded forms, edged
with shapes like petals of rose, or scales of fish. In plant life
the banana, betelnut, palm, aokha, banian, pipal; among fruits
the mango, custard apple, pomegranate, gourd, and among
flowers the lotus, are most frequent.

The art of Ajanta continued to exist after the last fresco
was painted, but hardly any examples of it remain to show
what developments it underwent. A few Jain and Buddhist
palm-leaf manuscripts illuminated with religious paintings of
unrecorded dates, a Nepalese or Behar manuscript of Asta-
sahasrika Prajnaparamita, dated 1090 A.D.,30 the coloured panels
of Mân Mandir in Gwalior from the end of the fifteenth cen-
tury,31 Târâ Nâsh's history, and indirectly the fragments of
paintings from the sand-buried cities of Serindia—these show
the continuity of the ancient tradition. In reality, however, the
second period of Indian art of painting begins with the Chaghtâ'î
rulers of India after an almost unfilled gap of nearly nine hun-
dred years. The painting of this period belongs to a new style,
a style created by the absorption of new elements from across
the frontiers of India into the ancient traditions.

Before discussing this new school of Hindu-Muslim art it is
necessary to enquire into the characteristics of painting in the
Islamic schools of Samarqand, Herat, Isphahan, and Baghdad.
It is not possible here to disentangle the ramifications by which
Muslim art is affiliated to the antique and the Christian art of
the West, and the arts of China, Khotan and Gandhâra in the
East. But, when this art appears in its full-fledged form in the
fourteenth century, it is so deeply coloured with eastern hues
that it might almost be mistaken as a branch of the Chinese
art. Under Timur this Muslim--Mongol style becomes more
individualized, more independent, and then by insensible gрад-
ations passes into the Safavid and Bokhâriot schools. The
father of the Timuride school was one Gung entitled Nâsir-
u-Muharririn, whose pupil was Jahângrî of Bokhâra, who was
the master of Fâr Sâyi'î Ahmad. The last had for his disciple
Bihzâd, the greatest glory of the school. Bihzâd was born in
the middle of the fifteenth century and became the court painter
of Mansûr ibn Baiqara, the Timuride ruler of Khorasan. He
migrated from Herat in 1506 and took service under Shâh
Ismâ'il Safavi and continued in the service of the Safavid till
he died about 1526 A.D., residing mostly at Tabriz.

When Bâbur conquered India the star of Bihzâd was in
its zenith, his style was the standard of perfection; naturally
the connoisseurs of art, Bâbur and his companions, and, afterwards
on the return of Humâyûn from his enforced exile from Persia
to India, the Chaghtâ'î nobles set Bihzâd before Indian painters


30 Vredenburg: The Continuity of Pictorial Tradition in the Art of
India: Rupam, January 1920.

31 Griffiths: The Monuments of Central India.
as the master in whose footsteps they should follow and whose paintings they should copy. Bibhāzād and his school thus became the exemplars of Indian painters and the elements of the Timurid school were grafted upon the traditions of Ajanta.

The character of this art is its intense individualism. This art is not interested in masses and crowds; it has hardly any direct interest in composition. It sees things limned in clear light and in definite outline, it looks at every detail of the individual figure and takes infinite pains with it, it feels the urge of life with tremendous force, and it communicates this passionate energy to what it delineates, but inter-relations of form and the infinite multiplicity of form it does not feel and does not care for. Its life has a different pulse and a different rhythm.

This art, born and cradled in the courts of Changiz and Timūr, the world-shakers of their age, could not conceivably be soft and sentimental. The scenes of battle and siege and hunt, and of man and animas battles, are naturally frequent. But chivalry and romance, the loves of Lailī and Majnūn, Shirīn and Farhād, youths and maidens dallying in the garden by the side of a stream, gorgeous receptions in princely courts, feasts and merriment where the wine passes freely round and toothsome viands are spread in plenty, are represented equally. And of piety and mysticism there is no lack, for in that curious age of self-abandonment the transformation from the intense pleasures of life to the rigorous discipline of sainthood was never difficult; the Shāh (king) and the Gādā (beggar) were the two poles between which the individual constantly moved. The Sultan of to-day may be the Darwīsh of to-morrow, nay the king was always an ascetic at heart. Hence the frequency of the scenes where Darwīsh is depicted—the Darwīsh living in wild forests and lonely caves, the Darwīsh as the miraculous master leading fierce animals like lambs, and the Darwīsh dancing in the ecstasy of mystic joy. Then like every age of romance, conquest and mystery, this age was greatly interested in the supernatural and the marvelous. Genii, goblins, monsters and fairies moved amidst men as common, well-known, familiar figures. They were the stock-in-trade equally of the story-teller and the painter.

And in every scene the mark of individualism is unmistakable. There is system and order and arrangement sometimes fatal to composition, but each man has a fixed status and recognised position, and each one is engaged in his own pursuits energetically. It is the action of each which gives action to the whole and not the movement of the whole manifested through each. Here is the picture of siege—one man is brandishing his huge axe and giving mighty blows to the closed gate, he is utterly oblivious of the missiles descending from the top, a pair of men is climbing up a ladder and never were men more self-confident and self-ceuted, the stars in heaven may stop in their revolutionary course, but nothing will deter them or daunt them, they know not how to stop; the horseman on his charger charges madly up the boards that have been thrown across the most, and so on.

33 Ibid., Plates 68, 79, 95, 96, 112.
34 Ibid., Plate 105.
35 Ibid., Plate 147.
36 Ibid., Plate 71.
38 Ibid., Plate 59.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., Plate 148.
41 Shāh Nāmah, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Bankipur, Folio 158-A.
Take the picture of a chase. The riders form round a semi-circle, in the middle in the large broken space the royal huntsmen pierce the victims with their spears, each deer is separately rendered as well as each rider; there is no mêlée, no confusion. Again the builders are busy erecting a mosque, one labourer mixes the mud plaster, two or three water carriers placed round in a circle pour water out of their skins, one man is carrying a tray of plaster, another of bricks, on the walls masons are dressing bricks or putting them in layers, the ladder occupies its individual position along the wall, there is activity all round but no hubbub. In the feasts each man receives attention separately, even the dancers and the musicians do not get mixed up. Why let the warriors fight and they will arrange themselves in a symmetrical pattern, with the horses rearing, the spears crossing and the curved swords dangling by the side. Even the leaves of the trees spread themselves out so that each may be separately counted.

This interest in individuality grows to such an extent that painting becomes merely portraiture and portraiture of such amazing cleverness that it becomes itself a marvel.

As in the case of Ajanta so here, the line is the medium of expression. Yet what a vast difference in the character of the two lines! Here the line bends and breaks, thins and broadens, makes circles and angles, in short, does all that the requirements of a fastidious calligraphist demand. The geometrical and epigraphist bias of the Muslim surely would make calligraphy his own.

The elements which combine to make these paintings are very different from those found in the work of Ajanta. Of men, not only is the racial type different, but the proportions of the body and the limbs and their rhythm, too, are different. The attitude is extremely graceful and the product of high culture. Its drapery in the simple flow of line is charming. In the rendering of animals the horse receives special attention: swiftness, lightness and slenderness are the ideals, as in depicting gazelles and antelopes; the lion is powerfully drawn. Slender flowering trees with overhanging boughs, blossoming creepers twined round them, and trees with knots and gnars and almost always bent out of the straight line, and grounds strewn with flowers, are characteristic. The clouds are usually Chinese swirling lines like those of the sea shell, the rocks have rounded cactus-like shapes, the trees and bushes and shrubs grow on the surface, the grounds are rolling, narrow streamlets are lined with stones, and a single tree stands usually in the foreground. The architecture is Persian, highly decorated with faience and geometrical patterns, and with railings separating it from the garden behind and on the sides. Architecture plays an important part in the picture, it gives a setting to the scene, but it is not intimately related with the characters.

The meeting of these two art-consciousnesses under the fostering care of the Mughal emperors was productive of a new style. Upon the plasticity of Ajanta were imposed the new laws of symmetry, proportion and spacing from Samargand and Herat. To the old pomp new splendours were added, and to the old free and easy naivete of life a new sense of courtly correctness and rigid etiquette. In the result a certain amount of the energy and dynamism of both the Hindu and the Muslim were sacrificed; and a stiff dignity was acquired, but along with it a marvellsous richness of colour and subtlety of line.

The evolution of the new style was rapid. Probably Bābur introduced the models of the Timūrid school to the Hindu and Muslim artists of India at Agra. Under Humayun the copying was continued, so that when the Dāstān of Amir Hamzah was produced in twelve volumes with illustrations...
for no less than one thousand and four hundred passages, there was a sufficient number of trained artists to commission for the work. Among them were Persians and Qalmaq, certainly, but not exclusively. The work was of prodigious volume and was probably finished in the early years of Akbar's rule. It is interesting to find even in this early school—called the school of Humâyûn by Clarke—an unmistakable Indian feeling. The manner of the Timûrâid style is dominant, in the delineation of landscape and architecture, in the rendering of clouds, rocks, water, trees, and animals; but in the selection of racial types, drapery, and attitudes there is greater freedom and in grouping still more.

The later artists of Akbar must have been trained in this school, probably under the four Muslim masters mentioned by Abûl Fazl, namely, Farrukh Qalmaq, Šâhad b. Šûrâz, Mir Sayyid Ali, and Miskîn. The pupils who were Hindus were in all likelihood painters who had acquired proficiency in traditional methods and were possessed of sufficient repute to be summoned to the Imperial court. They had only to transfer their talents to the services of their new masters and paint the pictures that pleased them. This explains why so early in Akbar's reign the new Hindu-Muslim school made its appearance fully developed. The names of Daswant, Basâwan, Rekô Lât, Mukund, Mâybo, Jagan Nâth, Mahâes, Khêm Karan, Ta râ, Sânwalâh, Harî, and Râm, are recorded in the A'in-i-Akbarî. Many other Hindu names appear on the paintings of the period, for instance, in the Timûr Nâmah, which is a history of Timur and his successors till the twenty-second year of Akbar's reign. Among the illustrators of the manuscript, now preserved in the Khudâ Baksh Library at Bânpî, occur the names of Tusî, Surjân, Sûrûs, Isâr, Sankar, Râm As, Banwalî, Nañd, Nanhâ, Jagîwan, Dharam- 


48 Timur Nâmah: Khudâ Baksh Library, Bânpî, (Photographic reproductions).

known artist and that of Āsaf Khān by Muhammad Nādir Samarakandi might be selected to show how different types of men of action were portrayed with such keen insight.

Among the scenes in the early period war and conquest received the greatest amount of attention, especially in illustrating works like Dārāb Nāmā,50 Timūr Nāmā,51 Razī Nāmā (Mahābhārata)52; hunting and forest scenes also abounded; later a taste for durbār, mythological, genre, domestic and fanciful (e.g., pictures of beauty) pictures developed. Through them all a mystic interest always remains in evidence; religious incidents, portraits of Darwishes, scenes of princes learning divine wisdom from ascetics, or prayers in mosques, or of studying the holy book by candle light, or of assemblies of saints, are scattered through the albums and picture collections from Akbar’s time onwards.

Of this Hindu-Muslim style, related on the one hand with the mural art of Ajanta, and with the true miniature painting of Samarakand and Heart on the other, there were many offshoots differing in their character as they approached the one or the other pole of this style. The Rajput and Pahādī styles of Jaipur, Kāngādā and the Hindu states of the Himalayan hills, had a greater inclination towards the ancient Hindu; the Qalam of the Deccan, Lucknow, Kashmir, Patna gravitated more towards the Muslim; the Sikh Qalam was somewhere between them. They are all, however, sub-styles derived from the parent stock which is the style of the court at Delhi or Agra.

It would not have been necessary to stress the point, but for the fact that Coomāraswāmy has unduly emphasized the difference between the Rajput and Moghul schools. The differences of technique are negligible, the processes of painting whether Persian, Mughal or Rājasthānī are alike. The choice

50 Dārāb Nāmā: British Museum, Or. 4615.
51 Timūr Nāmā.
52 Razī Nāmā: Hindley’s Jaipur Art.
53 Coomāraswāmy: Rajput Painting. Plate X, LI, LII.
54 Ibid., Plates I, II, III.
55 Coomāraswāmy: Selected Examples of Indian Art. Plates IV, CV, CXII.
56 Ibid., Plate CXLVIII.
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patronage of art and literature, and the Hindu princes imitated them. Naturally it followed that the style created by the Hindu and Musalmans of the Mughal court was copied with local variations by the court artists of Jaipur, Jammu, Chambā, Kāngda, Lahore, Amritsar, and distant Tanjore, and a common style prevailed throughout India.

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