



EVOLUTION OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN
INDIA DURING 15TH AND 16TH CENTURY

THESIS

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HISTORY

By

PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA

Under the Supervision of

Dr. (Mrs.) ROOHI ABIDA AHMAD

CENTRE OF ADVANCE STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
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Abstract

Bhakti implies the sense of a personal relation with God, there is a surge of love and intense devotionalism. It is reaction of heart versus rigid intellectualism of Vedas. It involved ethical and emotional content.

Bhakti Movement of Medieval India was shaking the social structure and challenging the privileges and authority of the custodians of religion and was trying to establish direct relation between God and men.

This movement was undoubtedly an expression of the emotional aspect of Hinduism. It took inspiration from the ancient scriptures of the Hindus, but after its contact with Islam, particularly in Northern India, its character changed considerably. In the religious terminology *Bhakti* means the worship of a personal God and is a spirit of love and the attainment of liberation

The earliest saints of *Bhakti* school belong to Tamil land, they were the follower of either Vishnu or Shiva and known as *Alvara* and *Nannyars*. These saints composed their devotional songs in vernacular. They address the people without any discrimination of castes. They made an appeal to the hearts of the masses and became very popular.

Chapter one depicts the socio-political condition of Northern India during 15th and 16th centuries. Before the Turkish conquest of India politics and society of India was dominated by the Rajput and *Brahmins*, Turkish conquests brought their supremacy to an end. The Turkish deprived the *Brahmins* of their temple wealth and state patronage, so the *Brahmins* suffered both materially and ideologically.

Chapter two is devoted to the evolution and thought of *Bhakti* through the Religious Scriptures like *The Bhagvada Gita*, *The Bhagavata Purana*, *The Bhakti Sutra of Narada* and *Shandilya*, Saints of *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva* school of *Bhakti* and thoughts of *Vaishnava acharyas*. The evolution and early development of *Bhakti* thought and ideology, both *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva*, took place in South India and it was brought to Northern India in the medieval period.

Chapter three follows the transformation of *Bhakti* movement in Northern India. Here it spread out under the leadership of Ramananda, a *Vaishnava* saint and the reviver of *Ramanandi* sect. lays stress on the concept of equality. He removed the distinction of caste and accepted his disciples from the different strata of society.

Chapter four deals with the attitude of *Bhakti* saints towards the *Bhakti* theory. Several eminent saints from various parts laid emphasis on the unity of God and surrender to His will in order to attain salvation which is goal of human life. These saints provoked people to bring changes in their life and thoughts. These saints have two different aspects of *Bhakti* i.e. *Nirguna Bhakti* and *Saguna Bhakti* Both *Nirguna* and *Saguna Bhakti* saints believed in the unity of God, importance of a *Satguru* in the life of human beings and unreality of *maya* (illusion).

Chapter five focused on the short biography of the prominent *Bhakti* saints and *Sufi* saints of India who spread their valuable preaching in India and tried to remove the discrimination in society.

Chapter six and the last chapter of the thesis deals with the interaction of thought, personal contact and common teachings of the *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints of Northern India during 15th and 16th centuries. Both gave importance to the vernacular language and used as the medium of their preaching. Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints were against the caste system and orthodoxy in society.

Bhakti saints preached universal toleration and brought about a revolution in the structure of Indian society. The main purpose of the *Bhakti* Movement was to unite Hindus and Muslims as there was a wide distance between them. So the result of *Bhakti* Movement was that the two great cultures came into close contact with each other and a healthy synthesis came about.

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY



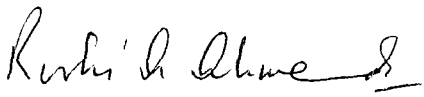
Department of History
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh-202 002

ROOHI ABIDA AHMED
Associate Professor

Dated :

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis, "***Evolution of Bhakti Movement in Northern India during 15th and 16th Century***", by **Ms. Priyanka Srivastava** is her own original work. I consider it is suitable for submission to the examiners and for the award of the **Ph.D. Degree**.


(Dr. Roohi Abida Ahmed)
Supervisor

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(PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA)

Abbreviations

<i>A.</i>	Adhyay
<i>A.G.</i>	<i>Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib</i>
<i>A.R.P.I</i>	<i>Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during Thirteenth Century</i> by K.A. Nizami
Abdullaha Srhindi	Yahiya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi
<i>Akbar the Great</i>	<i>Akbar the Great</i> by A.L. Srivastava, Vol. III
<i>Akbarnama</i>	<i>Akbarnama</i> , Abul Fazl
<i>B.S.</i>	<i>Brahama Sutra</i>
Badathwal	P.D. Badathwal
<i>Bh.G.</i>	<i>Bhagavd Gita</i>
<i>Bh.P.</i>	<i>Bhagavat Purana</i>
<i>Bhagavata Bhakti Cult</i>	<i>The Bhagavata Bhakti Cult and Three Acharya</i> by R.N Vyasa
<i>Bijak</i>	<i>Bijak of Kabir</i>
Bishnoi	Kishan Lal Bishnoi
Bishoni	Bishnoi Kishan Lal
Carpenter	J.E. Carpenter
<i>Chaitanya Mahaprabhu</i>	<i>The Mystic Saints of India (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)</i> by Premlata
<i>D.B.</i>	<i>Dadu Dayal ki Bani</i>

<i>D.G.</i>	<i>Dadudayal Granthawali</i>
Dasgupta	S.N. Dasgupta
Dinkar	Ramdhari Singh Dinkar
Dwivedi	Hajari Prashad Dwivedi
<i>E.I.C</i>	Encyclopedia of Indian Culture
<i>E.P.W</i>	Economic and Political Weekly
<i>E.R.E.</i>	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethic
ed/eds	Edited by
edn.	Edition
<i>H.I.E.D</i>	<i>History of India as Told by its own</i> <i>Historians</i> by Elliot and Dowson
<i>H.S.B.I</i>	<i>Hindi Sahitya ka Brihat Itihas</i>
<i>Hagiographies of Anantdas</i>	<i>The Hagiographies of Anantdas the Bhakti</i> <i>Poet of North India</i> , by W. M Callewaert
<i>Influence of Islam</i>	<i>Influence of Islam on Indian Culture</i>
Iraqi	Shahubuddin Iraqi
<i>J.A.S.P</i>	<i>Journal of Asiatic Society of Pakistan</i>
<i>J.B</i>	<i>Jambhoji ki Bani</i>
<i>J.R.A.S</i>	<i>Journal of Royal Asiatic Society</i>
Jaffar	S.M. Jaffar
<i>K.G. (Das)</i>	<i>Kabir Granthawali</i> by Shyam Sundar Das
<i>K.G. (Trigunayat)</i>	<i>Kabir Granthawali</i> ed .Govind Trigunayat
<i>Kabir</i>	<i>Kabir Vangamaya</i>

Keay	F.E. Keay
<i>M.</i>	Mahla
<i>M.I.C</i>	<i>Medieval Indian Culture</i> by A.L. Srivastava
<i>M.P.</i>	<i>Meera Padawali</i>
<i>Malfuzat</i>	<i>Malfuzat-i-Timuri</i> , Timur, Eng. tr. by <i>H.I.E.D</i>
Mital	Mital Prabhu Dayal
<i>Mubarakshahi,</i>	<i>Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi</i> , Yahiya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, Eng. tr. by K.K. Basu
Murthy	Sreenivasa H.V. Murthy
<i>N.Bh.Su.</i>	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutra</i>
<i>Na.Bh.Su.</i>	<i>Narada Sutra</i>
Nagori	S.L Nagori & Kanta Nagori
Nizami	Khaliq Ahmad Nizami
Orr.	W.G.Orr
<i>Pd.</i>	<i>Pada</i>
Prasad	Ishwari Prasad
<i>R.B</i>	<i>Raidas ki Bani</i>
<i>R.C.M</i>	<i>Ram-Charit Manasa</i>
<i>R.S.H.S.P.</i>	<i>Ramananda Sampraday tatha Hindi Sahitya</i> <i>par Uska Prabhav</i> by Badrinarayan Srivastava
<i>R.S.S</i>	Rajasthan Ka <i>Sant Sahitya</i>

<i>Ra.</i>	<i>Ramaini</i>
Radhakrishnan	S. Radhakrishnan
Rizvi	Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi
Rpt.	Reprint
<i>S.</i>	<i>Skandh</i>
<i>S.B.S</i>	<i>Sant Bani Sangrah</i> , Belveder Press
<i>S.S.</i>	<i>Shandilya Sutra</i>
<i>Saints of Bengal</i>	<i>Lives of the Saints of Bengal</i> ed. Netson
Saints of Bengal	Lives of the Saints of Bengal pub. by Natesan
<i>Saints of Northern India</i>	<i>Saint of Northern India (from Ramananda to Ramtirth)</i> ed. Netsan
<i>Sarbangi</i>	<i>Sarbangi</i> of Rajabdas
<i>Sb.</i>	<i>Sabad</i>
<i>Sh.Bh.Su</i>	<i>Shandilya Bhakti Sutra</i>
Sharma . S.	Suman Sharma
Sharma. K	Krishna Sharma
Sharma. S.	Suman Sharma
Shukla	Ramchandra Shukla
<i>Sk.</i>	Sakhi
<i>Sl.</i>	Sloka
<i>Tarikh-i-Daudi</i>	<i>Tarikh-i-Daudi</i> , Abdullah, Eng. tr. by <i>H.I.E.D</i> , Vol. IV

<i>The Sikh Religion</i>	The Sikh Religion by M.A. Macauliffe
Titus	Titus, T. Murray
<i>Tuzuk</i>	<i>Tuzuk-i-Babri</i> or <i>Baburnama</i> , Babur
<i>U.B.K.S.P.</i>	<i>Uttari Bharat Ki Sant Parampara</i>
Univ.	University
<i>V.S.</i>	<i>Vedarth Sangraha</i>
V.S.	Vikram Samvat
<i>Vaishnavism Saivism</i>	<i>Vaishnavism Saivism and Minor Religious System</i> by R.G. Bhandarkar
Vyasa	R.N. Vyasa
Williams	Monier Williams
Wilson	H.H. Wilson



Introduction

Introduction

The cult of *Bhakti* was first popularized in South India. When Buddhism had lost its glory and disappeared from the land of its birth. Jainism however remained in some parts of India though its ascendancy was lost. In South the *Shaivaite Nayannars* and *Vaishnavaite Alvars* spread the cult of *Bhakti* under Pallavas, Pandyas and Cholas.

These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon the love between the worshipped and worshipper. For their devotional poems they used local languages, Tamil and Telugu. Nath *Yogis* began to spread throughout northern and central India during the twelfth century onwards but their influence was visible only in 13th century.

In the course of time the wave of *Bhakti* came to North from South India, and took the form of a movement. The cause of the rapid spread of *Bhakti* Movement and its popularity in medieval India are not far to seek. Degeneration of *Vedic* religion and social structure was obviously the primary cause. But through the efforts of great *Acharyas* of that time Buddhism and Jainism received a setback and supremacy of *Brahmin* faith was revived.

The caste system spread like poison all over the Hindu society and the condition of the lower classes became miserable. *Sufis* came to India with the idea of equality and brotherhood. They attracted masses belonging to lower strata of society because they promised equal status to all. They made no distinction of caste and creed among the people. *Bhakti* saints came from

diverse background and believed in equality of all and professed that salvation could be achieved by all.

The result was that an unending war against obstinate orthodoxy and meaningless ritualism was waged by the Hindu *bhaktas* and saints of the fifteenth and sixteenth century in *Hindi* and *Punjabi* speaking regions of Northern India. They were hostile to all idolatrous practice and caste distinction and with equal vehemence ridiculed Muslim forms of worship. *Bhaktas* came from all classes of Hindu society, but their devotion was not concerned with any particular God or one of His incarnations.

The *bhaktas* used vernacular for their poems and preaching. They expressed their mystical experience in a lyrical form with local dialects which showed little adherence to conventional literary traditions of *Sanskrit*. The *bhaktas* were filled with fervent and rapturous ideas of what they believed to be Reality and Supreme and salvation the ultimate end of human life. The *Bhakti* saints were believed either in *Nirguna Bhakti* or *Saguna Bhakti*.

Historians and Scholars for many decades have been working on the *Bhakti* Movement of Medieval India. Romila Thapar¹ treats the *Bhakti* movement as an integrated phenomenon and while generalizing about it and taking it with the Tamil *Alvar* Saints of the 6th and 7th centuries reiterates the conventional approach. R.S. Sharma² describes the *Bhakti* Movement as a reflection of the medieval feudal order. D.D. Kosambi³ interpreted *Bhakti* as

¹ Thapar, Romila, A History of India, Vol. I, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1966.

² Sharma, R.S., Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval Indian History, *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. I, No. I, 1974.

³ Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, 1970.

unflinching loyalty to God similar to the loyalty that linked together “in a powerful chain, the serf and the retainer to the feudal lord”. According to him “*Bhakti* suited the feudal ideology perfectly.”

Other historians have produced a large number of works giving minute details about saints, their preaching and believes. Scholars like H.H. Willson,⁴ Monier Monier-Williams⁵ and Grierson⁶ have argued that *Bhakti* emerged in India under Christian influence. R.G. Bhandakar⁷ tries to prove that *Bhakti* in India is indigenous and supports its antiquity with the help of epigraphically and literary evidence. Jadunath Sinha⁸ says that It (*Bhakti*) blossom forth in the Epic and Literature and later devotional literature. While Ishwari Prasad⁹ says that *Bhakti* Movement started against rigidity of Vedic religion. Tarachand¹⁰ says there is Muslim influence in medieval *Bhakti* Movement.

Review of the Primary Source Material

*The Bhagavada Gita*¹¹ is a part of *Mahabhartata*, composed by Maharishi Ved Vyasa in Sanskrit. Through the *Gita* Lord Krishna gave the sermon on *Bhakti*. Chapter 12 *Bhakti Yoga* extols the glory of devotion to God. Along with this He explains the different qualities of devotee.

⁴ Willson, H.H., *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus*, Sushil Gupta, Calcutta, 1958.

⁵ Monier, Monier-Williams, ‘Indian Theistic Reformers’, *Journal of Asiatic Society*, 1881.

⁶ Grierson, George. A., ‘*Bhakti-Marga*’, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 12 Vols, Vol. II, ed. Hastings, James, Edinburgh, third print, 1953. (hereafter as *E.R.E.*).

⁷ Bhandarkar, R.G., *Vaishnavism Saivism and Minor Religious System*, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1965. (hereafter as *Vaishnavism Saivism*).

⁸ Sinha, Jadunath, ‘Bhagavad Religion: The Cult of *Bhakti*,’ *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Haridas Bhattacharya, Vol. IV, Calcutta, 1956.

⁹ Prasad, Ishwari, *History of Medieval India :from 647A.D. to the Mughal Conquest*, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1952.

¹⁰ Tarachand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, The Indian Press, Allahabad, 1946. (hereafter as *Influence of Islam*)

¹¹ Maharshi Sri Veda Vyasa, *Srimad Bhagavada Gita*, Shankaracharya, Hindi tr. Shri Harkrishna Das, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, seventh edition, V.S., 2048, 1991.

*The Bhagvata Purana*¹² also known as *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuranam*. Maharishi Ved Vyasa is known for being the author of this *Purana*. Basically it was written in Sanskrit language. There are several cantos. The canto (*skandh*) 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 10th and 11th are treasure of *Bhakti* and describe about the different kinds of *Bhakti*. The 10th canto of *Purana* is dedicated to Lord Krishna.

*Narada and Shandilya Bhakti sutram*¹³ help to elaborate the importance and the universality of the cult of devotion (*Bhakti*).

*Ram-Charit-Manasa*¹⁴ of Tulasidas was composed in Avadhi it given detailed about contemporary society, politics, culture and religion. It is in complete harmony with the patriarchal society. It nourishes family value of Upper caste, peasants and artisans.

*Vinaya Patrika*¹⁵ of Tulasidas is also composed in Avadhi. It is an important source of *Bhakti*.

*Adi Grantha*¹⁶ or *Guru Granth Sahib* is a valuable source of Sikhism. It contains the preaching of Guru Nanak and Sikh Gurus and embodies verses of the *Bhakti* Saints such as Kabir, Raidas, Dhanna, Pipa etc. Other primary sources are *Kabir Granthawali*,¹⁷ *Dadu Dayal Granthwali*,¹⁸ *Mira Padawali*,¹⁹ *Rajabdas ki Sarbangi*,²⁰ etc.

¹² Maharshi Sri Veda Vyasa, *Srimad Bhagavat Mahapuranam*, ed. Krishanshankar Shastri, Original Text with Hindi tr., 12 Vols. Ahamdabad (Gujarat), 1973. (hereafter as *Bh.P*)

¹³ *Narada and Shandilya Bhakti Sutram*, ed. Acharya Sri Baldeva Upadhyaya, Varanasi, Third edition, 1918. (hereafter as *N.Bh.Su.* and *Sh. Bh.Su.*)

¹⁴ Tulasidas, *Ram-Charit-Manasa*, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 230th edition, 2009. (hereafter as *R.C.M.*)

¹⁵ *Vinay Patrika*, Tulasidas, eds. Viyogi Hari, Sasta Sahitya Mandal, Delhi, fifth edition. 1994.

¹⁶ *Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib*, Hindi Tr., Manmohan Sahgal, 4 Vols., Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow, 1987-88. (hereafter as *A.G.*)

¹⁷ *Kabir Granthawali*, Edited Shyam Sundar Das, Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Kashi, 1956. (Hereafter as K.G (Das)); *Kabir Granthawali*, ed. Parasnath Tiwari in 2 Parts, Hindi Parishad, Allahabad, 1961.

Baburnama or *Tuzuk-i-Babri*²¹ by Babur, written in Turki. It was translated into English by A.S. Beveridge, gives a useful description of Babur's invasion on India and political condition of that time.

Akbarnama,²² written in Persian by Abul-Fazl, gives a sketch of battle of Panipat between Hemu and Akbar, and also very useful source for research work.

*Ain-i-Akbari*²³ of Abul Fazl in Persian language, gives important information about society, culture, religion, and Sufi saints as well as *Bhakti* saints of 15th and 16th century India.

Malfuzat-i-Timuri or *Tuzuk-i-Timuri*²⁴ of Tamerlane or Timur, gives a detail description of Timur's campaign against Hindustan.

Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi written by Yahya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi and translated into English by K.K. Basu, gives a detail information of political condition of India.

Secondary Source Books

Social and political history of medieval India has not been ignored by historians as well. The books written by Prof. Mohammad Habib and Prof.

¹⁸ Dadu Dayal Granthwali, (ed.) P.R. Chaturvedi, Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi, 1966. (hereafter as *D.G.*).

¹⁹ Meerabai Padawali, ed. Krishna Dev Sharma, Reegal Book Dipo, Delhi, 1984. (hereafter as *M.P.*).

²⁰ Rajjaldas ki Sarbangi, ed. Sahabuddin Iraqi, Granthyan, Aligarh, 1985. (hereafter as *Sarbangi*).

²¹ Babar, *Babarnama* or *Tuzuk-i-Babari*, Eng.tr. by A.S. Beveridge, in 2 volumes, Oriental Books, Delhi, 1979. (hereafter as *Tuzuk*).

²² Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, Eng. tr., Beveridge, Vol. II, Rare Books, New Delhi, 1972.

²³ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, (ed.) 3 Vols, Vol. 1st by H. Blochman, Oriental Books, third edit. 1977, Vol. 2nd & 3rd by H.S. Jarret, Low Price Pub., Dalhi, 2011.

²⁴ Tamerlane or Timur, *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* or *Tuzuk-i-Timuri*, Partial Eng. tr., in Elliot and Dowson's *History of India*, in 8 volumes., Vol.III. (hereafter as *Malfuzat*)

K.A. Nizami,²⁵ K.A. Nizami,²⁶ Tarachand, A. Rashid,²⁷ K.M. Ashraf,²⁸ Yusuf Husain,²⁹ M. Mujeeb,³⁰ S.A.A. Rizvi,³¹ P.N. Chopra,³² A.L. Srivastava,³³ Sirdar Ali Iqbal Shah,³⁴ Abdul Latif,³⁵ M.P. Srivastava,³⁶ Shahabuddin Iraqi³⁷ did not cover all the aspects of the social and political history of medieval India. These source materials are inadequate and scattered, the regional differences stands as a barrier to meaningful general study

Besides the Introduction and Conclusion the present thesis has been divided into six chapters. A brief resume of each chapter is as following:

The first chapter deals with **Socio-political condition of North India during 15th and 16th centuries**. It focuses as how Northern India after the establishment Delhi Sultanate was politically governed. A number of dynasties ruled and they followed the policy of discrimination. Hindus although were in majority but they were never taken into confidence. Muslims alone had upperhand. For security Muslims mostly lived in town and cities, for army and

²⁵ Habib, Mohd. & Nizami, eds., *Comprehensive History of India*, 5 Vols. People's Publication, New Delhi, 1996.

²⁶ . Nizami, K.A., *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during Thirteenth Century*, Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1961. (hereafter as *A.R.P.I.*)

²⁷ Rashid, A., *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556)*, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969.

²⁸ Ashraf, K.M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Jiwan Prakashan, Delhi, 1959

²⁹ Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1957.

³⁰ Mujeeb, M., *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1967.

³¹ Rizvi, S.A.A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in 16th & 17th Century*, University Press, Agra, 1965; also Rizvi, S.A.A., *The Wonder That was India*, Vol. II, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1987, reprint. 2005.

³² Chopra, P.N., *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age*, Shiv Lal Agarwala & Co. Ltd., Agra, 1955.

³³ Srivastava, A.L., *Medieval Indian culture*, Shivalal Agarwal, Agra, 1964. (hereafter as *M.I.C.*)

³⁴ Shah, Sirdar Iqbal Ali, *Islamic Sufism*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973

³⁵ Latif, Abdul, *The Muslim Mystic Movement in Bengal (1301-1500)*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1993.

³⁶ Srivastava, M.P., *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1707A.D.)*, Chugh Publications, Allahabad, 1975.

³⁷ Iraqi, Shahabuddin, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India : Social and Political Perspectives*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2009.

administrative jobs Muslims alone were preferred. Hindus were forced to pay *jizya* and other discriminatory taxes. Hindu Muslim communal bitterness continued to prevail in the society till we reach Mughal period. Akbar for the first time started treating Hindus and Muslims equally. He abolished *jizya*, pilgrim tax and got married Rajput women. He employed Hindus in government services. It was during his period the Hindu-Muslim communal bitterness came to an end and secularism started.

The Chapter second, **Concept of *Bhakti***, is devoted to the evolution of *Bhakti*, its nature, and the thoughts of great *acharyas*. It is believed that *Bhakti* is a passionate devotion to God and complete surrender to his Will is the most effective means of salvation. The textual study of *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Bhagavata Purana* and *The Bhakti Sutra of Narada and Shandilya* is an attempt to explain the term and nature of *Bhakti*. The history of this movement goes back to 7th century A.D. and a clear evidence of *Bhakti* is found in the hymns of twelve *Alvars* of Tamil land.

The Third chapter, deals with **The Significance of Ramananda in the Evolution of *Bhakti* Movement**, Ramananda is considered to have introduced *Bhakti* in Northern India. By his effort there was a great social revolution in North India. This chapter deals with his works, thoughts and philosophy.

The Fourth Chapter, **Theory of *Bhakti* by the Prominent Saints of Northern India** provides a detail description of the philosophy of *Bhakti* saints about the *Brahman*, *Jiva*, and *Maya* etc. The chapter has been divided into two parts. First part deals with the *Bhakti* theory of *Nirguna Bhakti* saints like

Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, and Raidas etc. Second part examines with the *Bhakti* theory of *Saguna Bhakti* saints like Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Surdas and Tulasidas. Both Nirguna and *Saguna Bhakti* saints played their vital role in the *Bhakti* Movement of medieval India.

The Chapter fifth, **A Short Biography of *Bhakti* and *Sufi* Saints**, provides a short biography of *Bhakti- Sufi* saints of Northern India during 15th and 16th centuries.

The Chapter Sixth, **Interaction between *Bhakti* and *Sufi* Saints**, examines the interaction between the thoughts, practices and teachings of *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints to analyze and showing the extent of their mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence.

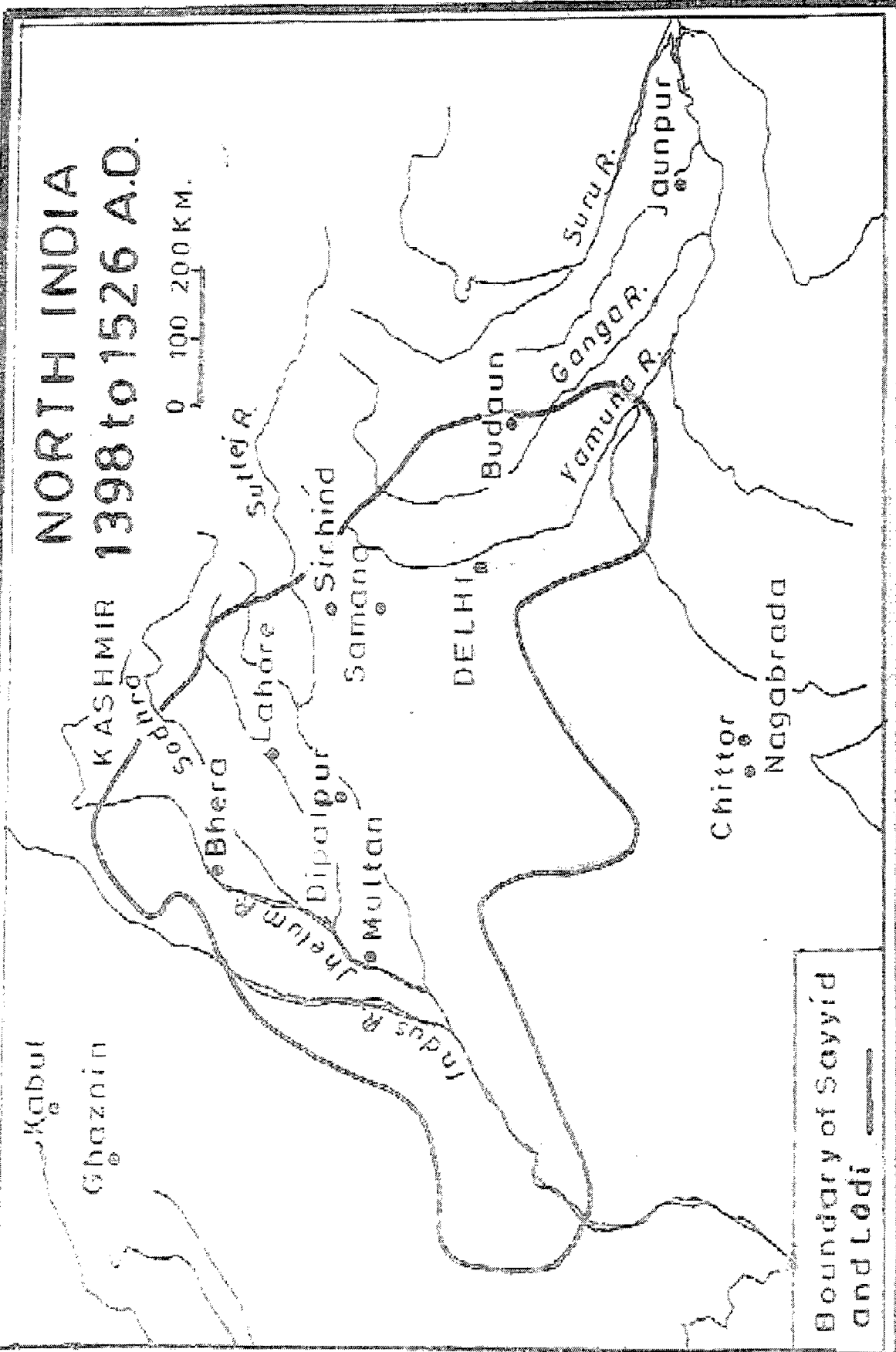
The object of the topic is to see that since India got independence why communal violence and communal feelings had increased? Communal violence during the whole of Muslim period of Indian history was almost non-existent. People used to live peacefully and in harmony. We should learn from history how *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints stood for unity. They made no difference between Ram and *Rahim*. To them religious orthodox was meaningless. *Kashi* and *Kaba* were one and the same. *Bhagwan* and *Allah* were the name of the same Almighty. We should shrink all differences of community, caste and creed and adopt unity to strengthen India to enable the secularism to rise and communalism to die.



Chapter – 1

NORTH INDIA 1398 to 1526 A.D.

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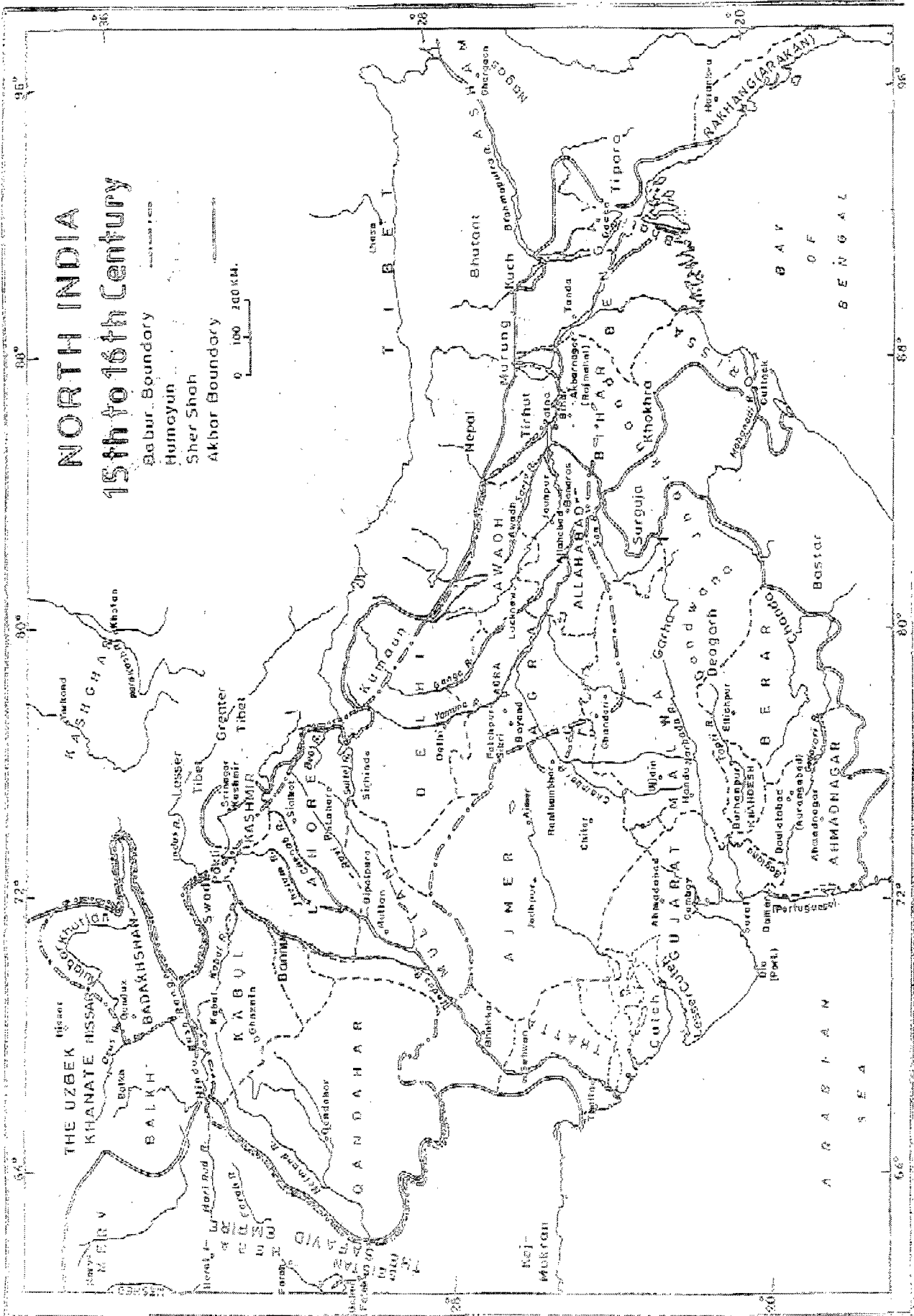
Boundary of Sayyid
and Lodi

NORTH INDIA

15th to 16th Century

Babur Boundary
Humayun
Sher Shah
Akbar Boundary

0 100 200 KM.



Socio-Political Condition of India during 15th and 16th Centuries

Political Condition

Firoz Shah was the last great Sultan of Tughlaq dynasty. He ruled over Delhi about thirty eight years (1351-1388 A.D.). He crowned his son prince Muhammad in 1387 A.D., and gave him the title of Nasiru'd-din Muhammad Shah and retired himself into seclusion. But Muhammad was overthrown by the royal slaves shortly after his accession. Then Firoz Shah raised his grandson Tughluq Shah II and died in 1388 A.D.¹

The decade that followed Sultan Firoz Shah' death was full of devastating civil wars, intrigues and murders. The weak successors of Firoz Shah who occupied the throne one after the other in quick succession played in hands of the nobles.

The disintegration of the Sultanate towards the close of Firozshah Tughluq's reign was followed by the disastrous invasion of Timur. He crossed river *Sindhu* in September 1398 A.D. and passed through the Punjab like a whirlwind plundering the cities that lay in his march. Principal cities he however avoided till he encamped near Delhi Timur sent his cavalry with orders "to plunder and destroy and to kill everyone whom they met."² They carried out his order. Delhi was at the mercy of the invader. He returned to Samarqand plundering Meerut and Hardwar and all other cities which lay by

¹ Yahiya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, Eng. tr., K.K. Basu. Karimsons, Karachi (Pakistan). 1977, p. 145-47. (hereafter as *Mubarakshahi*).

² Timur, *Malfuzat-i-Timuri*, Eng. tr. *The History of India As Told by its own Historians*, by. Elliot, H.M., and Dowson, John, 8 Vols., Vol. III, p. 432. (hereafter as *Malfuzat*).

his homeward march in 1399A.D. Timur's objects to invade Hindustan was plunder and an expedition against the infidels.³

On the eve of his departure from India, Timur held a court on March 6, 1399, and appointed Khizr Khan as a governor of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur.⁴ The invader did not completely overthrow the reigning Tughluq Sultan but shattered the economic and social life of the people almost all the cities which he captured were looted and plundered. The booty presented by the Prince Pir Muhammad Jahangir who had captured Multan was in such a huge quantity that all the scribes of Amir Timur took two days in preparing the list of goods.⁵

Besides the wealth of India, Timur carried away thousands of artisans and craftsmen to Samarqand and this was also great loss of India. Yahiya says that:

*"After the departure of Timur, the vicinity of Delhi, and all those places where his army had passed through were visited by pestilence and famine. Many died of sickness and many of hunger. For a couple of months Delhi presented a scene of desolation and woe."*⁶

Although Timur appointed Khizr Khan the viceroy of Delhi, but Khizr Khan established himself only in Multan and Dipalpur. His position was challenged by Mallu Iqbal, who rose to power in Delhi. He marched against Khizr Khan but was defeated near Ajodhan and killed in 1405 A.D. After that the throne of Delhi was transfer into the hands of Mahmud Tughluq, Firoz's

³ Malfuzat, pp. 394-395.

⁴ Mubarakshahi, p. 173.

⁵ Malfuzat, p. 419.

⁶ Mubarakshahi, p. 173.

younger son, but he died in 1412 A.D. Thereafter the nobles choose an Afghan noble Daulat Khan Lodi for the throne of Delhi. In 1414 A.D. Daulat Khan was defeated by his more ambitious rival Khizr Khan. Khizr ascended the throne but did not assume any royal title but professed to rule as the viceroy of Timur's successor Shah Rukh to whom he also sent annual tributes. Khizr Khan tried to consolidate Delhi's control from Multan to Kannauj and from the foot of the Himalayas to the Malwa frontier.⁷ Khizr Khan ruled for seven years that were mainly devoted to suppress rebellions and discover that engulfed the whole kingdom.

Khizr Khan was succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah (1421-33 A.D.). However he was challenged by the *Khokars*, under their chief Jasarat, they planned to seize Delhi Empire. Mubarak Shah defeated Jasarat and demolished some of his roots around Sialkot.⁸ The third ruler of Sayyid dynasty Muhammad Shah (1434-1445 A.D.) lost much of his small kingdoms⁹ and the last ruler, Shah Alam (1443-76 A.D.) proved more incompetent than his father and only hastened the collapse of the dynasty. In 1451 A.D. he transferred the command of Delhi to Bahlol Lodi and retired to his favorite place, Badaun where he spent the rest of his life.

The Lodi dynasty (1451-1526 A.D.) produced more energetic and talented rulers. They established their authority in the Punjab, and in the whole tract corresponding to the Modern Uttar Pradesh.

⁷ Rizvi, S.A.A., *Wonder that was India*, 2 Vols, Vol. II, Sidgroick & Jackson, London, 1987, p. 55.

⁸ For detail account of Jasarath's revolt see *Mubarakshahi*, pp. 200-234.

⁹ See *Mubarakshahi*, Chapters on Sayyids.

Bahlol Lodi (1451-1489 A.D.) before occupying the throne had possessed Sarhind, Samana, Sunam, Hisar, Firozah, Lahore, Dipalpur and perhaps some parganas of Multan.¹⁰ In 1451 A.D. he not only occupied Panipat, Hansi and Delhi but also added Sambhal, Mewat, Rapri, Etawah, Kol, Kampila, Patiali, Mewat Rapri and Bhogaon to his dominions. He had considerably revived the power and prestige of Delhi Sultanate. It has been remarked that the most outstanding event of Bahlol's career as the Sultan of Delhi was his 'life and death struggle' against the Sharqis.¹¹ For more than fifteen years, even after 1469 A.D., his primary political concern was his struggle with the rulers of Jaunpur. Only by 1486 A.D., he is said to have capture the western territories of Sharqis. On his death in 1489 A.D., he left a kingdom nearly twice as large as it was in the beginning of his reign. Sultan

In the early 16th century there was a paramount power in Northern India, strong enough to enforce its will on the numerous independent states or even to forge them into a temporary confederacy for the defense of her extensive frontier. The Lodis who held Delhi and Agra were master of limited territory and though they gave promise under the energetic Sultan Sikandar (1489-1517 A.D.) playing the role of Sultanate of Delhi.

Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517A.D.) the successor of Bahlol Lodi, crushed Husayn Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur, liquidated the Rajput uprisings in the neighboring region and the Raja of Tirhut was forced to pay tribute. Sikandar

¹⁰It is almost certain that Bahlol never possessed Multan proper as a part of his dominions. The reference to Multan might actually be to some disputed territories between the cities of Lahore and Dipalpur one the one hand and Multan on the other, Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, Eng. tr. De, B., 3 Vols, Vol. I, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1911, (rpt. 1973). pp. 334.

¹¹Pandey, A.B., *The First Afghan Empire in India*, Book Land, Calcutta, 1956, p. 69.

Lodi found the city of Agra in 1504 A.D., He exalted the prestige and power of the Sultan. Abdu-Ila says, “He was a bigoted Musalman. He destroyed many Hindu temples. He entirely ruined the shrines of Mathura, the mine of heathenism, and turned their principal Hindu places of worship into caravanserais and colleges. Their stone images were given to the butchers to serve them as meat-weights (this is specially said of the famous idol of *Nagarkot*, by Ahmad Yadgar) and all the Hindus in Mathura were strictly prohibited from shaving their heads and breads and performing their ablutions.”¹² Furthermore Abdullah the author of *Tarikh-i-Daudi* says that in Dhaulpur a garden which extended over an area of 7 *kos* was uprooted, temples were destroyed and mosque were built on their sites.¹³ In the case of a *Brahmin*, Laudhan who was put to death because one day he had asserted in the presence of Musalmans that Islam was true, as was also his own religion.¹⁴ He imposed several social disabilities on Hindus like prohibition of Hindus from bathing in Yamuna. Titus says Sultan Sikandar was given the name *But-Shikan* (idol smasher), for his destruction of Hindu idols and temples.¹⁵

Sikandar Lodi was succeeded by his eldest son Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526 A.D.). He was the last ruler of Lodi dynasty. His arrogant behavior and ill-treatment had displeased the Afghan nobles who formed secret conspiracies against him. During his reign he faced the revolt of Jalal Khan Lodi, governor

¹² Abdu-Ila, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, H.I.D.E., Vol. IV, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1964, p. 447.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 465, 467.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 464-65 .

¹⁵ Titus, Murray, T., *Indian Islam*, Oriental, 2nd edn., 1979, p. 46.

of Jaunpur. Jalal was captured and murdered in Gondwana.¹⁶ Besides it Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat and other outlying provinces had all become independent. Meanwhile another revolt provide by Rana Sanga of Mewar with the opportunity to make inroads into the Lodi territories as far as Bayan near Agra. Ibrahim marched personally against Rana. The Afghan probably fought an indecisive engagement and Rana retreated for the time being. But when Husain, governor of Chanderi, was killed Rana made a fresh attack and seized Chanderi.¹⁷

After this war position of Ibrahim became weaker. He not only defeated by Rana Sanga but also lost his control over Afghan nobles. Some of whom like Daulat Khan Lodi; governor of Lahore threw of their allegiance to the Sultan. Lodi Kingdom was therefore “a congeries of semi independent governorship mostly held by Afghans.” And in 1526 A.D. he was defeated by Babur in the battle of Panipat, and lost both his life and Kingdom. The Sultanate of Delhi came to an end.

In 1523 A.D., Babur was invited by Daulat Khan Lodi to invade Hindustan. Babur was fanatic in religion. He was against the Hindus principles of idolatry and polytheism. He felt that the duty of every pious Muslims was to spread and penetrate Islam in various parts of Asia. To fulfill this desire and ambition he selected India. Towards the close of that year Ibrahim heard of Daulat Khan’s rebellious designed and defection in Babur’s favour. Babur took his action due to the conspiracies of Daulat Khan and Alam Khan, uncle of

¹⁶ Pandey, A.B., *The First Afghan Empire in India*, op. cit., pp.177-78.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.183

Ibrahim Lodi. He defeated Daulat Khan and pardoned him. Babur had left a strong garrison in the Punjab. He made his own arrangements for the government of Punjab.¹⁸ He proceeded towards Delhi and halted at Panipat where Ibrahim was already waiting for him. A battle was fought and Ibrahim was worsted and killed. Dr Ishwari Prasad said, "The battle of Panipat placed the empire of Delhi in Babur's hand. The power of Lodi dynasty was shattered to pieces and the sovereignty of Hindustan passed to the Chaghtai Turks."¹⁹ Babur quickly occupied Delhi and Agra. In *Baburnama* he says:

*On Friday (Rajab 15th) while we remained on the same ground, Maulana Mahmud and Shaikh Zain went with few others into Delhi for congregational Prayers, read the khutba in my name, distributing a portion of money to the poor and needy and return to camp.*²⁰

Babur's next step was against Rajputana in the reign of Rana Sanga of Mewar reached at the zenith of her glory. It was controlling directly or indirectly the entire resource of Rajputana. The famous battle of Khanwah was fought between Rana Sanga and Babur in 1527 A.D. in which Babur was the victor. He also won the region of Bihar and Bengal after the battle of Ghaghra in 1529 A.D.. Like Rajputs Afghan were also defeated by Babur. He led the foundation of Mughal Empire after establishing the vast empire from river Indus to Bihar and Himalayas to Gwalior. He died in December 25, 1530 A.D.

¹⁸Daulat Khan Lodi was given only Sultanpur and Jullandhar, Babur, *Tuzuk-i-Babri* or *Baburnama*, eds. A.S., Beveridge, tr. in 2 Vols, Vol. I, Oriental Books, Delhi, 1979, p. 422; later on Babur refers to this arrangement taunting Daulat Khan with the words, "three *krors* I gave thee on Tatar Khan's lands." , Ibid, Vol. II, p.459; Erskin estimated the three *krors* as £ 75,000, Ibid, Vol. II, p. 459, n. 4. (hereafter as *Tuzuk*).

¹⁹Prasad, Ishwari, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, The Indian Press, Allahabad, 1965, p. 278.

²⁰ *Tuzuk*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 476.

He was succeeded by his son Humayun. But Political condition of that time was very miserable. Sher Khan Afghan in the east and Bahadur Shah in the west, the former in Bengal and Bihar and the later in Gujarat were maturing plans for the overthrow of the Mughals. Humayun was very generous and highly outlined man. His brothers also increased problems for him. The nobles and leader who were granted large state by him increased against him. In 1535A.D. he scored a victory against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. In 1539 A.D. he had a war with Sher Shah Sur at Chausa. In which Humayun was defeated and escaped. In the battle of Kanauj (1540 A.D.) Humayun became a fugitive and Sher Shah became the master of Agra and Delhi. Humayun fled away to Iran and took asylum there. After a long period he started to recovery of his lost empire and conquered Kabul, Delhi and Punjab. But he could not enjoy his victory as he died in January 20, 1556 A.D.

Sher Shah captured Delhi in 1540 A.D., but failed to enjoy the territory for long time he died in 1545 A.D. After Firoz Shah, Sher Shah was the first Sultan who believed that one must work unsparingly not only for the consolidation of his power and prestige, but also for securing the happiness of the subjects people. By his administrative reforms regarding land revenue system and the policy of religious tolerance were famous. Akbar started adopting the land revenue system of Sher shah.

For his civil and military achievements he was extremely praised by this line "if Sher Shah had been spared, he would have established his dynasty, and

the Great Mughals would not have appeared on the stage of History.”²¹ Although he was more constructive and liberal in his administrative system than his predecessor yet one of his learned associates, *Sheikh* Nizam, boldly recommended a *jihad*. For the *jihad* he said, there is nothing equal to a religious war against infidels. If you be slain you become a martyr and if you live you become a *ghazi*.²²

Sher Shah was succeeded by his son Islam Shah in 1545 A.D. After Islam Shah, Muhammad Adil Shah, a weak monarch and pleasure loving man was the ruler. His authorities was challenged by Ibrahim Shah, watching this chaotic situation, Humayun attacked on India in 1554 A.D., and capture the throne of Delhi.

At the age of fourteen Akbar ascended the throne after the death of his father. As soon as he got the news he enthroned himself and started rule under the guidance of Bairam Khan on February 1556 A.D.²³ Akbar's position was still precarious. This was the time of complete disorder. In 1556 A.D. anarchy and confusion reigned supreme in India and famine and pestilence were rampant in the rank and file. The fairest provinces of Delhi and Agra were visited by plague which carried away a large number of people.²⁴

The sovereignty of North West India was contested by Sikandar Sur on the one hand and Muhammad Shah Adil on other hand. Hemu, commander of

²¹Jaffar, S.M., *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb*, Ess Ess Publication, Delhi, 1936 (reprint 1974), p.66.

²²Titus, *Indian Islam*, op. cit., p. 13

²³Abul Fazal, *Akbarnama*, Eng. tr., Beveridge, Vol. II, Rare Books, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 4-12.

²⁴Ibid, Vol. II, p. 57, Abul Fzal was an eye-witness of this famine. He says that the famine lasted two years; it apparently prevailed during 962 and 963.

Muhammad Shah Adil, captured Delhi and assumed the title of Vikramaditya.²⁵ Bairam Khan advised Akbar to resist the aggression of Hemu. Both armies met on the historic battlefield of Panipat in November, 1556 A.D.. A fierce battle was fought between two armies. Hemu's victory was almost but suddenly an arrow hit Hemu's eye and he fall down unconscious. Hemu was killed and Afghans lost the battle.²⁶

Politically, when Akbar ascended the throne Bengal enjoyed independence under Afghan chiefs. Kabul was held by Muhammad Hakim virtually as independent kingdom. Rajputs of Rajasthan had recovered from shocks inflicted by Babur and now enjoyed independence. Malwa and Gujarat already refused to pay allegiance to the Mughals. Gondwana was ruled by local chieftain Orissa was independent. Kashmir, Sind and Balochistan were free from external control. The Deccan Sultanate of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur Golconda, Khandesh and Barar were ruled by their own Sultans. The Portuguese were powerful in Arabin Sea and Persian Gulf. They held sway over whole of the western sea-coast and possessed some good sea ports including Goa, Daman and Diu.²⁷ Akbar occupied Gondwana, Malwa and Chittor. He also captured Ranthambhor, Kalinjar, Gujarat, Kashmir, and Sind. The empire consisting five old provinces he inherited from his father was weak. But he established his control and authority over his vast empire. akbar

²⁵Hemu had earned for himself a unique military distinction by successfully fighting as many as twenty two pitches of battles with the opponents of Mubariz Khan, (*Akbarnama*, Vol. II, p. 45) was advancing from Chunar, the capital of his master, towards Agra with a large army , gathering strength on his march from the enemies of the Mughal cause. There was a battle between Hemu and Tardi Beg, the Governor of Delhi. Tardi Beg had been defeated and put a flight (*Akbarnama*, Vol. II, p. 48-50). Now he turned to Delhi and occupied it.

²⁶*Akbarnama*, Vol. II, pp. 58-65.

²⁷ Jaffar, S.M., *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb*, op. cit., p.74

through his efforts established a very strong empire full of resources. He followed liberal religious policy which permitted no discrimination for creed and castes His secular policy too played well. His Rajput policy played significant role in the cordial relation between Hindus and Muslims. Rajputs were the important people in India. There were many small kingdoms in Rajputana when Akbar ascended the throne. The state of Marwar, Mewar, Amer, Bikaner Jaisalmer and Ranthambhor were famous politically and socially. He adopted the policy of goodwill, friendship and liberality towards the Rajputs. Before Akbar, it is said that Babur advised Humayun to follow the policy of religious tolerance.²⁸ During Humayun's stay in Iran Shah Tahmasp also suggest that he 'rear the Rajputs', without gaining control over the *zamindars* it is not possible to rule in Hind.'²⁹ Same as Humayun advised Akbar to be kind and considerate to the Rajputs, as loyalty was ingrained in their character.³⁰ Akbar followed his advice and made a strong relation of friendship with Rajputs.

Akbar adopted a twofold policy towards the Rajputs: a) to win them over as allies by a policy of friendly persuasion i.e. by establishing matrimonial alliance, b) where the above policy proved unworkable as in the case of Chittor- to unhesitatingly indulge in warfare and ensure submission. The features of his Rajputs policy are:

²⁸ Nizami, K.A., *Akbar and Religion*, Idarah-i-Delli, Delhi, 1989, p. 13.

²⁹ Chandra, Satish, *History of Medieval India 800-1700*, Orient Blackswan, Delhi, 2009, p. 242.

³⁰ Ibid.

Establishment of Matrimonial Relation

He made matrimonial alliances with Rajputs princess, pursued for political motives. First Rajput Raja to give him his daughter in marriage was Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amer in 1562 A.D. Akbar gave complete religious freedom to his Hindu wives. Dr. Beni Prasad says, "it symbolized the dawn of a new era in Indian politics, it gave the country a line of remarkable sovereigns; it secured to four generations of Mughal Emperor the services of some of the greatest captains and diplomats that medieval India produced."³¹ Akbar married with the princesses of Jaisalmer and Bikaner too. He did not have any matrimonial relation with the Hadas of Ranthambhor.

Appointing the Rajput to High Offices:

Akbar gave high offices and *mansabs* (ranks) to the Rajputs. He appreciated and rewarded the services of his Hindu subjects, particularly the Rajputs. Raja Bharmal obtain a high rank. His son Bhagwant das reached a *mansab* of 5000 and his grandson Man Singh to the *mansab* of 7000.³² Besides them Rai Singh of Bikaner and Bhimsen of Jaiselmer were given *mansabs* Raja Todermal and Biharimal were appointed to high civil military offices.

Religious Freedom to Hindus:

The basic principle of Akbar's policy was toleration. He gave religious freedom to the Rajput. He abolished *jizyah* and pilgrims taxes on Hindus and also stopped the practice of forced conversion of prisoners of war.³³

³¹ Jaffar, *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb*, op. cit., p. 87.

³² Chandra, Satish. , *History of Medieval India 800-1700*, op. cit., p. 243.

³³ *Akbarnama*, Vol. II, pp. 159

Social reform in Rajput Society

Akbar tried to remove the evils prevalent in contemporary Rajputs society. He forbade child-marriage (*bal-vivah*), discouraged *sati* and encouraged widow remarriage.³⁴ And permission of non-Muslim along with the Muslim for further construction of religious places, proved to be a turning point in medieval Indian History. During his the reign many Hindus and Muslims came into close contact with each other and exchanged their ideas and thoughts. So Hindu-Muslims cultures developed. The Hindu studied Persian and Urdu languages and Muslims studied Sanskrit and Hindi literature. With these acts Akbar created an atmosphere of discrimination between Hindus and Muslims. Whole policy of Akbar gave a different complexion as he came to be regarded as an Indian ruler.

Social Condition of Northern India

Hindu society was divided into four *varnas* on the basis of division of labour since ancient time. These four *varnas* were *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sudras*. On the eve of Turkish invasion the *varnas* system was replaced by castes system determined by birth and in society there came to exist as high castes, lower castes and untouchables. The castes became more ramified and rigid. It was given a religious tinge. In the words of Rawlinson, "caste for the Hindu is part of divine order of Universe; a man's caste is

³⁴ Lal, K.S., *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, Ranjit Printers, Delhi, 1966, p. 14

determined by his conduct in previous existence.”³⁵ Describing the social condition of India Al Beruni wrote,

*“The Vaisyas and Sudras are not allowed to hear Vedas, much less to pronounce and recite it. If such a thing can be proved against one of them, the Brahmins drag him before the magistrate, and he is punished by having his tongue cut off.”*³⁶

Caste system gained further rigidity under Muslim rule. The Hindu population as a whole could not reconcile the idea of mixing with the Muslim invaders and tried to isolate themselves from the Muslim with scrupulous determination to save their religion and social system. The Hindu treated early Muslim as “*malechchas*” (the impure), with a social status much lower than that of the *Sudras*. Al-Beruni has also observed:

*“All their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them- against all foreigners. They call them mleccha, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship or by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted.”*³⁷

The position of *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* was materially affected by the Muslim conquest in India. Though they continue to hold this rank but they could no longer play any part in administration. The *Brahmins* who were earlier exempted from all sorts of taxes and were given a privileged treatment were deprived of this favored position. This naturally implied a change in the

³⁵Rawlinson, H.G., *India: A Short Cultural History*, cited by S.C., Raychoudhary, *A Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Earliest Times to Present times)*, Surjeet Publication, Delhi, 1984, p. 56.

³⁶ Al.Beruni, *Al.Beruni's India*, 2 Vols., Vol. I, ed., Sachu, Edward.C., Low Price Publications, New Delhi, 1910, (rpt 1989), pp.19-20.

³⁷Ibid, p. 125.

traditional duties of the *Brahmins*. They lost the opportunity to earn enough by officiating as priests; they looked to agriculture through hired laborers. Sometime they themselves cultivated the fields. As a result the *Brahmins* could not devote themselves wholly to the *Vedic* studies and spiritual pursuits as they used to do earlier. “this was a frank admission of the decline of *Vedic* studies during the Sultanate period (1206-1526 A.D.) and with it that in the importance of *Brahmin* caste.”³⁸ This affected the caste system in another way too. The *Brahmins* now came to hold the view that even the *Sudras* could listen to the recitations of the *Puranas* and take to certain trades which were earlier forbidden to them.

The legal position and formal powers of the *Brahmin* had undergone a considerable change with the fall of old time *Kshatriyas* or the ruling classes of Hinduism. They not only lost political power but also the opportunity of earning their livelihood as soldiers. According to Anil Chandra Banerjee, “except in Rajasthan Central India and the Himalayan region in the North West, many of them sank into the status of local landlords, serving as intermediaries in the revenue system organized by the Muslim rulers.”³⁹ The changed position of *Kshatriyas* had affected the whole Hindu society. K.M. Ashraf opines, with the elimination of the moral rivalry of the *Kshatriyas*, the authority and personal influence of *Brahmins* increased among the Hindu masses.”⁴⁰ However, that is not wholly true because the *Brahmins* themselves

³⁸Srivastava, A.L., *Medieval Indian culture*, Shivalal Agarwal, Agra, 1964, p. 22 (hereafter as *M.I.C.*)

³⁹ Banerjee, Anil Chandra, *The State and Society in Northern India*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1982, p. 190.

⁴⁰ Ashraf, K.M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Jiwan Prakashan, Delhi, 1959, p.79.

were weakened as they could not look at political power for support and patronage. The *Brahmins* continued to be the unofficial guides of the Hindu society.

The picture of the condition of *Vaishyas*, *Sudras* and untouchables described by Al-Beruni seems to be exaggerated and taken from the *Smritis* rather than the actual condition prevailing in 11th century A.D. *Vaishyas* had grown prosperous by increase of trade and commerce during the Muslim rule in India.⁴¹

Sudras were divided into two categories. Those of the lower category were looked down upon as inferior as the untouchables. For the *Sudras* highest duty is the service of the Brahmins, it is recognized that he can earn their livelihood by trade. The old *Smritis* rules forbid dealing in certain classes of commodities by *Sudras* engaged in trade is relaxed in times of distress. Some authorities permit them even to sell liquors and meat.⁴² In old time the *Sudras* were neither listen nor study the *Vedas* and *Puranas* and nor explain the occult meaning of that. But in Sultanate period the social and economic status of *Sudras* had considerably improved.

Untouchables, the lower categories of *Sudras*, were considered as *Chandals*. Minute rules were laid down in the medieval Hindu *shastras* and law books, prescribing penance for touching them associating with them and eating food from or detailed rules were prescribed to avoid contact with them. Purification by bathing with clothes on was prescribed for touching or seeing a

⁴¹ Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1957, p. 127.

⁴² Banerjee, *The State and Society in Northern India*, op. cit., p.127.

Chandal. Different penance were to be undertaken by a *Brahmin* for going in the company of a *Chandal*, for drinking water from a tank owned by a *Chandal*, for drinking water which had been drawn by a *Chandal* or in a *Chandal's* vessel.

Muslim Society

Muslim population in Northern India during the Sultanate had a mixed racial composition. Muslim invaders marched into India not only to conquer but also to enforce a new religion. From the time of Mahmud Ghazani to that of Timur every Muslim soldiers that marched into India and within India against a Hindu kingdom, believed and declared that his mission was to propagated Islam. From the beginning of Muslim rule it was the foreign Muslim who dominated the society, and held aloof as if to demonstrate their superiority of broth race and culture.

Muslim society was divided into three classes of which the first two, *Ahl-i-suyuf* (men of sword) and the *Ahl-i-qalam* (men of pen), and third is *Awwam-i-khalq*. Humayun also divided all the officers of his dominions into three classes first the *Ahl-i-Daulat*, comprising royal family, officers, viziers and all his soldiers; second the *Ahl-i-sa'adat*, consisting of men distinguished for their learning, mainly religious *Ulama* (theologians), *Qazis* (judicial officers), the *Sayyids*, the *Sheikh*, poets and other learned men, judge, nobles and skillful persons; third the *Ahl-i-murad*, that is, those who possessed beauty and elegance and catered to pleasures, i.e., musicians, painters and

singers.⁴³ In these categories *Ahl-i-sa'adat* or men of learning commended greater respect than the people belonging to the other two categories, but the classification is unjustified because it did not say about the producing classes.

Privileged Class

At the top of the social order were the governing class or the military aristocracy and relatives of the king. They were also called *Ahl-i-suyuf* (men of sword). The Turks established a sovereign independent of Muslim state in India; they lived a life of ease and prosperity. They have enough money to expenditure on special occasions such as feasts, festivals, marriages etc.⁴⁴ He was a despotic ruler, with no limit or restraint on his powers, except such as was dictated by consideration of a peaceful and stable government. The relatives of the Sultan enjoying great personal prestige and invidious privileges. Many of them were recipients of honors, titles, posts, landed assignments etc.

The nobles constituted the ruling bureaucracy. In the beginning the Turks formed the bulk of the ruling elite. Besides, Persians, Abyssinians, Egyptians, Afghans and converted Mongols also continued to obtain high position.⁴⁵ During the period under the majority of the nobles belonged to the various branches of the Afghans who were invited from Roh and settled in North India particularly by Bhlol Lodi; and Sher Shah. In the beginning they

⁴³ Khwandamir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, Eng. tr. by Prasad, Bains, R.A.S.B., 1940, Calcutta, pp. 25-26; the account of the division of the inhabitants of his dominions into three classes is also copied by Abul Fazl with slight alterations in *Akbarnama*, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 643-644.

⁴⁴ Majumdar, R.C., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bhartiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bombay, 196, p. 613.

⁴⁵ Lal, K.S., *Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*, Aditya Prakashan, Delhi, 1992, p. 163.

were not compromise with Indian Muslims. Babur called them rustic and tactless.⁴⁶

The nobles were mostly of foreign origin and belonged to different nationality. They were tried to live up to the standards of the emperor and had the same vices and virtues, they too spent lavishly on mistress and dancing girls.⁴⁷ Nobles bore the title of Khan which signified the upper most grade of nobility, next in rank come the title of *malik* and lastly that of *amir*.⁴⁸ The Mughal nobles were also known as *manasbdar*. The *manasbdars* were the government officers as well as the richest class in the empire.⁴⁹

Next privileged class was called *Ahl-i-qalam* or *Ulama*, they covered heterogeneous groups such as the theologians, the ascetic, the *Sayyids*, the *pirs*, and their descendants. Muslim scholars and Sufi *Shaikhs*, though not all rich, also belonged to the upper classes because of the respect they enjoyed in society. Most of them were patronized by kings and *nobles*; many were actually in their employ. Some of them were very well off. They possess the knowledge of Islamic traditions, canon law and theology, they are canonists and theologians. In medieval period they came to have the ultimate decision on all questions of constitutions, law and theology, the law of *Shariat* were enforced by them and things illegal and not sanctioned by the *Shariat* were suppressed by them. They were much superior in dignity and status to others.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Babur observes! "Biban waited on me in this camp. These Afghans remain very rustic and tactless. This person asked to sit although Dilawar Khan, his superior in following and in rank, did not sit." *Baburnama*, Vol. II, p. 466.

⁴⁷ Prasad, p. 654.

⁴⁸ Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, op. cit., p. 56

⁴⁹ Lal, *Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*, op. cit., p.164.

⁵⁰ Lunia, B.N., *Life and Culture in Medieval India*, Kamal Prakashan, Indore, 1978, p. 181

Tradition classified *Ulama* into two categories i.e., *Ulama-i-akhirat*⁵¹ (the pious) and *Ulama-i-dunya* (the worldly)⁵² in the reign of Balban, Firoz Shah Tughlaq, Sikandar Lodi and Sher Shah, *Ulamas* played important role in political and religious matters, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* says that Sher Shah has close relationship with *Ulamas* and he never take his breakfast without them.⁵³ But the rulers were not always follow the suggestion of their *Ulamas* and priest they took authority in their own hands. Sultans like Ala-du-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq led the influence of *Ulamas* under the control of the sovereign. Akbar in his reign set aside the sovereignty of *Ulamas* in religious matters by securing from them following written decision to which some of them sign willingly and rest against their conviction:

*“If therefore in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance, and His Majesty in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation, as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions, which exist on that point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation.”*⁵⁴

Though some of the *Ulamas* were liberal spiritual learned and free to express their views, and risked their lives in speaking the truth, many *Ulamas* were person of narrow views, conceived, selfish and fanatic.

⁵¹*Ulama-i-Akhirat*- kept themselves aloof from the worldly greed. They set aside their personal demands and desire to render themselves, consequently they were highly respected in society.

⁵²*Ulama-i-Dunya*- were worldly minded they were ambitious to become *mulawallis* or teachers, or *Qazis* or *sadra-i-jahan* or *Sheikh-ul-Islam* or *Mufti*.

⁵³ Abbas khan Sarawani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, Eng. tr. *H.I.E.D.*, Vol. IV, p. 408.

⁵⁴ Abdu'l-Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhabu't-Twarikh*, 3 Vols. Vol. II, tr. W.H. Lowe, *Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli*, Delhi, 1899, rpt. 1973.p. 297. (hereafter as *Muntakhab*).

Middle Class

Next two the privileged classes there was a middle class drawing modest incomes from small holdings of land, or from the royal treasury in return for their service in different capacities. They were district officers, revenue collectors, judges, secretaries, tutors, teachers etc. Some of them were attached to the households of various nobles and led fairly and prosperous and happy life, possessing their own houses in the cities and villages. Some of them cultivated the arts of calligraphy and epistolography which often provided them remunerative sources of income.⁵⁵ Very few Muslims were merchants and A.D.) stats that due to their lavishness and munificence the Muslim nobility of Delhi remained in debt and used to borrow money on interest from the *sahu*. As a result of their money lending business they become rich.⁵⁶

Even *Sufi* saints and religious divines were at times compelled to accept things from loan. We learn that Nizam-ud-din Auliya was indebted for twenty *jitals*. Some of the *Sufi* saints discouraged borrowing. They said that a *darvesh* should prefer dying of starvation to incurring debt for the satisfaction of the baser desire.⁵⁷

Sahus and merchants also provided loans to the foreigners who came to India and desired to purchase articles of presents for the Sultan. Some of the

⁵⁵ Majumdar, R.C., *The Delhi Sultanate*, op. cit., p. 614.

⁵⁶ *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, Zia-ud-din Barani, p. 120, cf Rashid, A., *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556)*, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969. p. 25.

⁵⁷ Rashid, A., *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556)*, op. cit., p. 25.

Muslims were petty shop-keepers, some were dealing in horses, a few others in slaves.⁵⁸

Lower class

Lower classes formed the bulk of the population. They were economically poor and socially degraded. The lowest stratum of society was composed mainly of shop-keepers workmen, domestic servants, cultivators, usually of Indian origin. The Muslim of the Indian origin followed handicrafts and petty trade in cities.⁵⁹ Business and trade were mostly in the hands of Hindu merchants among whom the merchants of Gujarat (usually *baniyas*) and Multan were famous for their large scale mercantile activities and fabulous wealth. Very few Muslims lived in villages, most of them were converted Hindus of low castes who worked in rural areas as daily wage earners, landless workers and cultivators. At the bottom of the society there were *qalandars* and other beggars. *Sufi* saints who had their hermitages outside the cities. Another element of Muslim population was that of slaves whose number was large. Every king and noble had plenty of slaves.⁶⁰

Position of Women

The attitude of men towards women during the period under review was not different from that of the people of earlier period. They were generally commended except in the roles of mother, sister, a faithful wife and to some extent as a daughter. Women's position in Sultanate period was not as high as

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵⁹ *M.I.C.*, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

it used to be in ancient India. No woman was allowed to enjoy an independent status. "In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead, to her son."⁶¹ A woman must never be independent. Muslim women in India also did not possess the privileged position which was occupied by Arab women. On account of women's physical disabilities, she had the status of dependence on men like Hindu women. Sultan like Firoz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi controlled the freedom of women. Firoz had restricted the visit of women to holy shrines because of evil-minded person who frequented them and waylaid the female visitors.⁶² While Guru Nanak praised her important role in the preservation and proper functioning of family and society:

*'Of a woman are we conceived,
Of a woman are we born,
To a woman are we betrothed and married,
It is a woman who keeps the race going,
Another companion is sought when the life partner dies,
Through woman are established social ties,
Why should we consider woman cursed and condemned
When from woman are born leaders and rulers?
From woman alone is born a woman,
Without woman there can be no human birth.
Without woman, O Nanak, only the True One exists.'*⁶³

Guru Nanak's tribute to women raised their social status in Sikh society and made them partners of their husbands' lives.

⁶¹ Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, op. cit., p. 134; Srivastava, A.L., *Akbar the Great*, Vol. III., Shivlal Agarwal, Agra, 1972, p. 62.

⁶² Pandey, A.B., *The First Afghan Empire in India*, op. cit., p. 204.

⁶³ Sahagal, Manmohan, *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Rag Asa, M. 1, Hindi tr., Bhuvan Bani Trust, Lucknow, 2nd edn., 1987-88.; above translation has been taken from *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, Trilochan Singh, George Allne & Unwin Ltd, London, 1960, rpt. 1965, p. 93.

Polygamy

Polygamy was prevailed among both Hindu and Muslims. It is true, before the advent of Muslims polygamy was not unknown to the ruling classes of the Hindu population, but it received encouragement owing to the impact of Muslim ideas. It was specially belonging to the richer section of the society. Abul Fazl, referring to the Hindus, writes, "Excepting in the King, it is not considered right for a man to have more than one wife, unless the first wife is sickly or proves barren, or her children die. In this case he may marry ten wives, but if the tenth proves defective, he may not marry again. If his first wife is suitable, and he desires to take another he must give the first a third part of his estate."⁶⁴

Akbar though polygamous himself, appears to have been opposed to polygamy for the general peoples. Abul Fazl writes, "nor does his majesty approve of every one marrying more than one wife; for this ruins a man's health and disturbs the peace of house."⁶⁵

Polygamy is permitted in Islam to extent of four wives at a time; no woman in a Muslim household could claim to be the mistress of her house. But generally both Hindus and Muslims practiced monogamy partly due to the religious injunction and partly due to the economic reason.⁶⁶

Almost during the 16th centuries as well as in the 16th centuries of the Sultanate rule the girls were given away in marriage at very tender age, but

⁶⁴ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, eng tr. Jarret, H.S., *R.A.S.B.*, Calcutta, 1948, p.449.

⁶⁵ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, tr. Blochman, p. 288

⁶⁶ *Akbar the Great*, Vol. III, p. 62,72.

during the last quarter of the 16th century Akbar discouraged child marriage by fixing the marriage age at 14th for girls and 16th for boys in 1582 A.D. In 1587 A.D. he legalized widow re-marriage and prohibited *sati* for *bal-vidhvas* in 1590-91 A.D..⁶⁷

Purdah

Strict veiling of women was common practice in Muslim society. The custom of *purdah* or *ghoonghat* was widespread among Hindus as well as Muslims women of Delhi Sultanate and Mughal rule. It was adopted as a protective measure to save the honour of their women and to maintain the purity of social order. In India it means curtain and when it applies to woman it means a veil. The ladies of aristocracy moved in *palkies* or *dolis* and accompanied by male attendants. The ladies who belong to the poor family went about in long garments covering their heads, which is now known as *Burqa*.⁶⁸ In Muslim society the underlying motive of *purdah* was to kept the women away from *Na-mahram* i.e., those with whom they could marry. Women continued observing its practice even to their old age. *Purdah* was adopted by the all class of Muslim society while in Hindu society it was followed by the higher classes and for them this custom was voluntary. It seems as a mark of respect for the elders and outsiders. It was spread in Rajputana, but less vigorously observed in Rajput families, where the ladies in

⁶⁷ Lal, K.S., *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, Ranjit Printers, Delhi, 1966, p. 14

⁶⁸ Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, op. cit., p. 173.

the arts of warfare, hunting and other expeditions.⁶⁹ In Mughal period it was strictly observed among high class families of both communities. Badauni writes in *Muntakhabu 't-Tawarikh*:

*“If a woman were found running about the lanes and bazaars of the town, and while so doing either did not veil herself or allowed herself to become unveiled...she was go to the quarter of the prostitutes, and take up the profession.”*⁷⁰

P.N. Chopra says that women of the lower society, such as peasant and working classes, were free from the bondage of *purdah*. They helped their husband in all external pursuits and internal economy, they take their bath at river-sides and would visit shrines travelling on foot without any restrictions.⁷¹

Sati

The act of burning of Hindu wife under certain condition after the death of the husband was called *sati*. Bernier says that it was a popular belief had gained in the minds of the people that highest virtue for a woman was to become *sati*, and therefore, if a widow expressed her unwillingness for it, the people began to doubt her fidelity and affection towards her departed husbands.⁷²

The widows who did not burn themselves with their dead husbands they were treated very unfairly by the society. Society looked down upon them.

⁶⁹ Chopra, P.N., *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age*, Shiv Lal Agarwala & Co. Ltd., Agra, 1955, p. 106.

⁷⁰ *Muntakhabu 't-Twarikh*, Vol. II, p. 405

⁷¹ Chopra, P.N., *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age*, op. cit., p. 108.

⁷² Bernier, Francois, *Traveles in the Mogul Empire AD 1655-1668*, tr, &ed, Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 310-11; Sen, Surendranath, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, Book I, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1949, pp. 119-120.

They were not allowed to have their hair long or put on ornaments.⁷³ Most of the widows performed *sati* either willingly or unwillingly. Though *sati* was common but not compulsory. This custom was specially favored by the Rajputs. Emperor Humayun was the first monarch to think of extending an absolute prohibition to all cases where a widow was past the age of child bearing, even if she offered herself willingly.⁷⁴ Badaoni says that Akbar issued an order that a woman should not be forced to *sati*.⁷⁵ Manucci says, “Mughal Emperor issued an order that in all lands under Mughal control never again should the official allow women to be burnt.”⁷⁶ The cruel practice of *sati* was prevalent and Kabir criticized it.⁷⁷ Nanak asked, “why should we consider woman cursed and condemned.”⁷⁸ He recognizes them as playing the most vital role in preservation of society as also in the proper development of family life. Third Guru Amardas puts the problem in simple words: if women ‘appreciate their husbands they undergo sufficient pain by their death’; if on the other hand, ‘they appreciate not their husbands, why should they be burnt.’⁷⁹

Jauhar

The term *jauhar* is derived from *Jatu-griha* ‘a house built of *lac* or other combustibles’ in allusion to the story in *Mahabharata* of the attempted

⁷³ Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India*, 4 Vols, Vol. III, tr. by William Irvine, Low Price, Delhi, rpt. 1907, p. 60.

⁷⁴ Altakar, A.S. and Jayasval, K.P., *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsidas, Banaras, 1956, p. 133

⁷⁵ *Muntakhab*, Vol. II, p. 388.

⁷⁶ Manucci, Niccolao, *Mogul India or Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. II, tr. by William Irvine, Low Price, Delhi, first reprint 1990, p. 90

⁷⁷ Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, 6 Vols, Vol. IV, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1909, p. 153. (hereafter as *The Sikh Religion*)

⁷⁸ Majumdar, p. 541

⁷⁹ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, p. 228

destruction of the *Pandavas* by setting such a building on fire.⁸⁰ It is the custom of Indian Rajas under such circumstances to collect wood, cotton, grass, ghee, and such like into the place, and to bring the women and burn them, willing or unwilling.⁸¹ This custom was mostly widespread in Rajputana. When a Rajput king and his champions were reduced to despair in an engagement, they usually killed their women and children by locked them in a house and set fire to the house. Then they come forth and fought bravely in the battle field till death. There are many examples of *jauhar* in the history of Rajputana. About this custom Abul Fazl says in *Akbarnama*:

*“When such a calamity has occurred a pile is made of sandalwood, aloes, etc., as large as possible and to add this dry firewood and oil. Then they leave hardhearted confidants in charge of their women. As soon as it is certain that there has been a defeat and that the men have been killed, these stubborn once reduce the innocent women to ashes.”*⁸²

He further gives another example:

*“There was also a great fire in the house of the Chauhan whose chief was Aissar Das. As many as three hundred women were burnt in the destructive fire of those refractory men.”*⁸³

In 1484 A.D. women of Champaner kingdom committed *jauhar* when Raja Jayasimha was defeated by Mahmud Begarah.⁸⁴ *Jauhar*, in fact, refers to the high standard of womanly honour maintained among the brave Rajputs.

⁸⁰ Ashraf, K.M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, op. cit., p. 192

⁸¹ *Akbarnama*, Vol. II, p. 472.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 331

⁸³ *Akbarnama*, Vol. II, p. 472.

⁸⁴ Majumdar, *The Delhi Sultanate*, op. cit., p. 165



Chapter – 2

Concept of *Bhakti*

The Holy Scriptures of Hindus reveal that the *Paramatama* or *Parbrahman*¹ created this beautiful, lovely and fascinating universe which changes every moment but dies once in millions of year to revive instantly at the will of the Creator. The body of living beings is made of twenty-three natural elements therefore it is mortal and *jiva-atma*, the twenty-fourth element which is divine and never dies, but changes forms after each death. In the whole universe the human beings alone are favored to have powerful creative mind (*buddhi*) and therefore they are held superior². All other beings are required to take rebirth as per wrong doings of their previous lives. Man too undergoes punishment of birth and rebirth. But man for having superior mind is supposed to choose and attain spiritual advantages. Man for example if chosen to lead disciplined life (*sattvik jivan*) may achieve salvation through *Bhakti*. Man perusing devotion *marga* alone first renounces the material world (*bhotik sansar*) which is overwhelmed by illusion and *maya*. He in day to day life and from *rasna*, *vasana* and *trishna* turns to God (truth). He thereafter becomes *jigyasu* (seeker behind God). During this period he strictly follows the *satsangat* (sayings of saints) of those who already either have fully attained the truth or are nearing the truth (the status of *Brahma jnani*). Following the *satsangat*, the *jigayasu*

¹ *Parabrahman*, the Supreme soul is the Creator, Ruler, and controller, by Whose will everything moves and the order of events is kept in its right place undisturbed. Any power of the nature cannot transgress His orders. He is also a bridge by which all the diverse things of the universe are connected with each other.

² Human beings mention a language or communication with the other, further more it is revel by scriptures that man has developed practice of meditation of the superior quality which creatures in the world cannot attain.

indulges in true *Bhakti* and through practicing the trifold *Bhakti* i.e. *Ekaki Bhakti*, *Ananya Bhakti* and *Nishkama Karma Yoga Bhakti* till he reaches the last stage of being introduced into *Brahmaloka* where the *jiva-atma* finally seeks union with *Paramatama*. This stage is equal to *mukti* i.e. no rebirth thereafter. Thus, true *Bhakti* finally leads to salvation.

There is no bar of caste and religion in the way of worship. All men are equal in the eyes of God. All distinction of caste, colour, creed or status becomes meaningless for those who are filled with sincere love to God. Each can attain Him by love and devotion.³ Love is the simplest way to seek the *Almighty*. Love (total dedication) is the essential quality of *Bhakti*.

According to Murthy “*Bhakti* is free from desire and is of the nature of inhibition of all desire, by which however is meant not the extinction of the desire, but the concentration of all desire and action in God.”⁴ God cannot possibly be comprehended by sense alone, he is even beyond argument. It is easy to attain him through whole hearted devotion. It is not an easy task to comprehend God by sense because he is beyond to any argument.

According to Narada, *Bhakti* is an intense love for God “The profound and immortal love for God is known as *Bhakti*, it is an intense love for God.”⁵ Therefore, we can define *Bhakti* as devotion to Supreme Being inspired by a profound love and unflinching faith.

³Nagori S.L & Kanta, *Madhyakalin Samaj, Dharm, Kala Evem Vastukala*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 156.; Murthy Sreenivasa. H.V., *Vaisnavism of Shankaracharya and Ramanuja: a comparative study*, Delhi, 1973, p. 137.

⁴Murthy, *Vaisnavism of Shankaracharya and Ramanuja: a comparative study*, op. cit., p.131

⁵*N.Bh.Su.*, 2

The Hindu scriptures such as *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Bhagavat Purana*, *Bhakti Sutra of Narada and Shandilya*, *The Ramayana* etc have spoken on *Bhakti*. But none of them is able to give the clear and uniform definition of *Bhakti*.⁶ The Hindus treat their religion from the point of view of emancipation (*moksha*), which they recognize the three ways viz. the path of action (*Karma*), the path of knowledge (*Jnana*) and the path of devotion (*Bhakti*). According to the Hindu thought salvation or the freedom from the bondage of birth and death which is the ultimate end of human life, can be attained by three means viz. *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti*.⁷

Origion of Bhakti

The origin of the idea of *Bhakti* has been traced from *Vedic* literature. The word *Bhakti* does not occur in *Rigveda*, but there are references to ardent devotion to Gods: *Indra* and *Varuna*.

*“All my thoughts, seeking happiness, extol Indra, longing for him; they embrace him as wives embrace a fair young bridegroom, him the divine giver of gifts, that he may help me.”*⁸

The *Bhakti* appears for the first time in *Svetasvatra Upanishad*.⁹ For the attainment of the word *Bhakti* is derived from the Sanskrit word “*Bhaj*” means faith, worship, attachment and adoration to God.¹⁰ *Bhakti* “signifies the nature

⁶ Sharma.Krishna , *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1987, p. 108.

⁷ *M.I.C.*, p. 53.

⁸ S, Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2 Vols, Vol. II, London, 1927, p. 704.

⁹ यस्य देवे पराभक्तियर्थं देवे तथा गुरौ।, *Svetasvatra Upanishad*, A.VI, Sl. 23.

¹⁰ Carpenter, J.E., *Theism in Medieval India*, Williams & Nargate, London, 1921, p. 244; also see Murthy, *Vaisnavism of Shankaracharya and Ramamija: a comparative study*, op. cit., p. 131.

of that person to whom and from whom the love is exchanged.¹¹ *Bhakti* is divine love illuminated by full knowledge of Lord in it. R.G. Bhandarkar says, “Thus the idea of love was associated with the word in early times though it then signifies love instead of love.”¹²

Ramdhari Singh ‘Dinkar’ says that we find the first example of *Bhakti* in *Bhagavad Gita*. Lord *Krishna* preaches about the *Bhakti*, with *Bhakti* term of *Saswat*, *Bhagavat* and *Panchratra Dharma* came into light. And finally the *Vedic* lord *Vishnu* was replaced by Lord *Krishna* and *Vaishnava dharma* came into existence.¹³

The element of *Bhakti* is clearly described in *Kath Upanishads*, that it is the feeling of heart neither get by mind nor by books.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तन्नूस्वाम्।।¹⁴

Svetasvatra Upanishad gives the glimpse of *Bhakti*. It says that one who has respect for *guru* and God only he knows the right meaning of their words. *Upasana* or devotion is the way to reach the supreme¹⁵

Before the vast discussion on *Bhakti* we have to assess different *sutras* which directly refer to the *Bhakti* Movement, as in *Srimad Bhagavat Purana Mahatmaya* there is a *sloka* about this movement:

उत्पन्ना द्राविडे साहं वृद्धिकर्णाठके गता।
क्वचित्क्वचिन्महाराष्ट्रे गुजंरे जीर्णता गता।।

¹¹Hedayetullah. Mohd, *Kabir: Apostle of Hindu - Muslim Unity*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1977, p. 68.

¹²Bhandarkar R.G, *Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Minor Religious System in India*, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1965, p. 29. (hereafter as *Vaishnavism, Shaivism*).

¹³ Dinkar, Ramdhari Singh, *Sanskriti ke Char Adhayay*, 1956, Delhi, p. 294.

¹⁴ *Katha Upanishad*, A.1, Kh.2, Sl. 22 .

¹⁵ *Svetasvatra Upanishad*, A. 6. Sl. 23.

(It became young in Karnataka, grew old in Maharashtra and Gujarat because people of these place did not give importance to *Bhakti* but when it came into the Vrindavan it became young and charming.)¹⁶

There is another couplet in Hindi which refers to birth of *Bhakti*, which shows the symptoms of *Bhakti* Movement:

भक्ति द्रविड़ रूपजी ,लाए रामानन्द।
परगट कियो कबीर ने ,ससदीप नवखण्ड।

***Bhakti* According to Religious Scriptures**

Bhagavad Gita

The trace of *Bhakti* Movement can be found in the philosophy of The *Bhagavad Gita*. According to Tarachand, “*Bhakti* is the emotional aspects of religion, its roots lie in the feeling of affective side of human consciousness, as those of *Jnana* lie in the cognitive or intellectual and those of *Karma* in the cognitive or willing” he further says, “Psychologically it is impossible that any of these three aspects should be entirely absent from any religious system, but it is possible that one aspects may be more emphasized than another.”¹⁷

The *Gita* does not deal with the simple love or faith for God but it carries the form of *Sradha* or *Bhakti*.¹⁸ *Bhakti Yoga* also deals with the three kinds of *gunas* or categories i.e. *Sat*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Bhagavata Purana*, *Mahatmaya*, Sl. 48. (hereafter as *Bh. P.*)

¹⁷ *Influence of Islam*, p. 24.

¹⁸ Sharma, Krishna, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁹ *Bhagavad Gita*, A. XIV, Sl. 5. (hereafter as *Bh. Gita*).

There is no need of costly or big thing to offer to Him because He is happy and accepts all that offered with devotion things viz: a leaf, a flower, water and a fruit, as he says:

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्रामि प्रयतात्मनः॥²⁰

Lord *Krishna* also describes the qualities of *bhakta*. *The Gita* mention four categories of *bhaktas* viz: *arta* (worship to seek remedy from calamity) *artharathi* (worship to seek material gain) *jigyasu* (one who seeks for knowledge) and the fourth is *jnani* (who is wise to seek knowledge of the self). Lord favored the *jnani bhakta* who is ever in constant union with the divine, whose devotion is motiveless.²¹

In chapter twelve another form of *Bhakti* is ‘*dhyana*’ or ‘meditation.’ Lord *Krishna* says that by it *bhakta* can get my grace by fixing their mind in me only, place thy intellect in me, they try to reach Me by “*abhyasa yoga*”

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः॥
अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शकरोषि मयि स्थिरम्।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छासुं घनंजय॥²²

He further says, “If thou are unable to practice *abhyasa yoga*, perform action for my sake, if unable to do even this then take refuge in Me.”²³ The Devotee who is completely pure (both internally and externally) is dear to God.

²⁰ *Bh. Gita, A. IX, Sl. 26.*

²¹ *Ibid, A. VII, Sl. 16-17*

²² *Ibid, A. XII, Sl. 8-9*

²³ *Ibid, A. XII, Sl. 10-11.*

“He who wants nothing and does all his work for the good of world and shake of the God and not for himself; he has no sorrow for the worldly needs, no desire, no care for good and bad, and renunciation all his fruits of action is dear to God. *Krishna* says:

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः॥
यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः॥²⁴

The Gita has spoken on the personal (*Saguna*) and impersonal (*Nirguna*) form of *Bhakti* or nature of God. About his manifest and unmanifest nature *Krishna* says, “the fools not knowing my Supreme nature that of appeared in human garb through My for the deliverance of the world, simply regard Me an ordinary mortal.”

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्॥²⁵

In other place *Krishna* makes it clear that he is not manifested to all, so the ignorant people fail to recognize Him, who is unborn and imperishable Supreme deity. According to *The Gita*, “the *bhakta* who takes refuge in God, attains Him, enters into Him, abides in Him, and lives in Him, the *bhaktas* are in Him and He is in them.”²⁶ In short, one may argue that it is without doubt that *The Gita* holds *Bhakti* in high esteem; in fact at times it appears that *The Gita* attaches more importance to *Bhakti* than knowledge.

²⁴ *Bh. Gita*, A. XII, Sl. 16.

²⁵ *Bh. Gita*, A. IX, Sl. 11; A. VII, Sl. 24.

²⁶ Sharma, Krishna, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 119

Bhagavata Purana

The cult *Bhakti* cult is fully developed in *The Bhagavata Purana* in which the legendary incidents of the life of *Krishna*, God's *purnaavatar* (complete incarnation), are described in detail to illustrate His love for His votaries and His delight in their devotion. By the *prasada* (grace) the devotee can snap the ties of *Karma* (action).

It is a *Vaishnava* text. Its main and central theme is God and devotion, According to S.N. Das Gupta, "it is in the *Bhagavata Purana*, whose date is probably the eleventh century A.D., that we first meet with the idea of devotion as the Supreme source of bliss and so completely usurps the place of wisdom or philosophical knowledge."²⁷ To quote the *Bhagavat Purana* in order stress the importance of *Bhakti*:

न ह्यतेऽन्यः शिवः पन्था विशतः संसृतानिह।
वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगो यतो भवेत्॥²⁸

Bhagata Purana again summarized *Bhakti* in these words "A surging emotion which chokes the speech, makes the tears flow and hair thrill with pleasurable excitement, and often leads to hysterical laughing and weeping by trances to sudden fainting, fits and long trances of unconsciousness."²⁹

In the eleventh *skandha* (canto) we find the importance of *Bhakti* given by the Lord Krishna. He says, "It is difficult to attain me by *Yoga* or *Sankhya*.

²⁷ Das Gupta, S.N., *Hindu Mysticism*, Frederic Ungar Publishing, Newyork, 1927, rpt. 1959, p. 125.

²⁸ *Bh. P.*, Sk.II, A. 2, Sl. 33.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Sk. XI, A. 14, Sl. 23-26.

One can attain Me easily by faith and love. It can purify all even a demon, a person who is full of sins.”

S. Radhakrishnan says that in the *Bhagavata Purana* both *Jnana* and *Karma* are described but it gives more importance to *Bhakti*.³⁰ It deals with both types of *Bhakti* i.e. *Saguna Bhakti* and *Nirguna Bhakti*. Through personality of *Krishna* it identified Him as *Purusha*, Supreme, *Paremeshvara*, knowledge and body or soul.

Lord *Kapila* explain *Bhakti* and says that there are two types of devotional service³¹ (1) *Bhakti* deals with the three kinds of *gunas* i.e. *Saguna Bhakti* because it deals with some kind of desire. (2) *Bhakti* free from all kinds of desires or *gunas* is called *Nirguna Bhakti*, it is the highest development of devotion. It is like *Ganga* water flowing towards the sea cannot be stopped.

मदगुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मायिसर्वगुहाशये।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गंगाम्भसोडबुधौ॥
लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम्।
अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥³²

Types of *Bhakti*:

Bhagavata mentions the different types of *Bhakti*. It gives three to thirty-six, but nine of them are most popular and famous kinds of *Bhakti*.³³ These are mentioned by the *bhakta* *Prahalada*³⁴ to his father *Hiranyakasipu*, as:

³⁰ Radhakrishna, *The Philosophy of Srimad Bhagavata*, Allen & Unwin, London 1960, p. VII-VIII

³¹ *Bh. P.*, Sk III, A., Sl. 29, 7.

³² *Ibid*, Sk. III, A. 29, Sl. 7-12. In *Bhagavata Purana* devotion is said to be of four kinds, viz. *Tamsika*, *Rajasika*, *Sattvika* and *Nirguna*, of the first kind viz. *Tamsika* is the devotion of those who worship God for base purpose such as satisfying their personal jealousy, pride or enmity and so forth. The *Rajasika* kind of devotion is that which seeks the Lord's devotion to attain power, fame, glory etc. The *Sattvika* devotees renounce all their works and the fruits of their works to God through a sense of religious duty and those who worship God without any motive except deep attachment to Him are *Nirguna bhakta*.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं साख्यमात्मनिवेदनम्॥³⁵

These ‘*Navadha-Bhakti*’ helps *bhakta* to lead salvation, viz. 1- *sravanam*: Hearing about the glories and the name of the lord; 2-*kirtanam*: Chanting the name, qualities and *lilas* of the God; 3- *smaranam*: Remembering the name of the Lord *Vishnu*; 4- *padsevanam*: serving the lotus feet of the Lord; 5- *archanam*: worshipping Him.; 6- *vandanam*: Offering prayers to Him; 7- *dasyam*: thinking oneself to the servant of the lord; 8- *shakhyam*: treating the lord as an intimate friend; 9- *atamnivedanam*: Total surrender (with mind, words and action).

According to Munshiram besides *archnam* and *padsevanam* of ‘*Navadha-Bhakti*’ rest the other seven may be also called the part of *Nirguna Bhakti*. The *Bhagavat Purana* classifies the *bhakta* into three categories: *uttama*, *madhyama*, and *prakrata*.³⁶

Narada and Shandilya *Bhakti Sutram*

Besides The *Bhagavta Purana* and The *Gita* there are two other text which help to elaborate the importance of *Bhakti* i.e. *Bhakti Sutra of Narada and Shandilya*. They also preached the universality of the cult of devotion.

Narada Bhakti Sutra explains all the dimensions of *Bhakti* in detail.

Shandilya’s opinions are quoted in *Narada Bhakti Sutra*. It is said that

³⁵Vyasa, R.N., *The Bhagavata Bhakti Cult and Three Acharya*, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1977, p. 53. (hereafter as *Bhagavata Bhakti Cult*).

³⁴In *Bh. P.* the Prince of devotees, Prahalada, is not desirous of heaving longevity, prosperity and wealth...grantification of sense...(or) the *siddhis* (miraculous power); all that he wants is to be placed by side of the Lord’s own servants.

³⁵*Bh P.*, Sk.VII, A. 5, Sl. 23.

³⁶Pande ,Susmita, *Birth of Bhakti in Religions and Art*, Books & Books, New Delhi, 1982. p. 151.

Shandilya was not satisfied with the Vedas then he chose the path of *Bhakti* of *Bhagavata cult*. The whole *Sutras* deal with the *Bhakti* theme. As Narada started his work to interpret the process of devotional service:

अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः।³⁷

And Shandilya started to make enquiry into devotion:

अथातो भक्तिजिज्ञासा।³⁸

Although Narada and Shandilya explain *Bhakti* in the same manner but there is a great difference between them subjectively. Whereas Shandilya shows his attention to *Nirguna Bhakti* and the classical system of *Vedanta* and *Sankhya*. Narada gives his attention to the *Saguna Bhakti* because of his disposition of the *Puranic* tradition and the sectarian characteristic of the *Bhagavata*.³⁹

Shandilya's *sutra* however seems to be an older. As:

आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शाण्डिल्यः।⁴⁰

(According to Shandilya it is the perpetual delight knowing true self or that unhindered loving union with the self is *Bhakti*.)

Narada mentions the name of so many *bhaktas* and calls them *Bhakti-acharyas*.⁴¹ He also gives the views on *Bhakti* of other saints like in the words of Parasharya:

पूजादिष्वनुराग इति पाराशर्यः।⁴²

³⁷ *N. Bh.Su.*, 1

³⁸ *Sh. Bh..Su.*, 1

³⁹ Sharma.K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 125.

⁴⁰ *N.Bh.Su.*, 18.

⁴¹ *N.Bh.Su.*, 83. the name of these *Acharyas* are Vyasa, Sukdeva, Sanak and Sanandan, Uddhava, Bali, Vibhishana, Hanumana etc.

⁴² *Ibid*, 16.

(Having faith and extreme love in God and His worshiping.)

In the opinion of *Acharya* Garga, having faith in hearing and chanting the pastime or stories of *Sri Krishna* because Lord *Krishna* purifies those who hear or recite the *lilas* of him.⁴³ After all he gave own opinion on *Bhakti*,

नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचारता तद्विस्मरणे परमव्याकुलतेति।⁴⁴

(He says that offering of all activities to him and an extreme restlessness on forgetting Him even for a moment is *Bhakti*.)

Like Narada Shandilya also give the views on *Bhakti* of the earlier interpreters. In the opinion of *Acharya* Kashyapa when the *jiva* depends on the God and realizes His omnipotence should surrender himself to Him. He believes that Supreme soul and *jiva* soul are different from each other.⁴⁵ *Acharya* Badarayana says that actually that there is no difference between Supreme and *jiva*. He says *Bhakti* has got nothing with mental or physical exercise. It is the very nature of God. By it soul can get salvation.

आत्मैकपरां वादरायणः।⁴⁶

Shandilya says that according to Vedas as well as from precepts of the exalted slaves established the *Bhakti* makes relationship between *jiva* and *Brahman*.

उभयपरां शाण्डिल्यः शब्दोपपत्तिभ्याम्।⁴⁷

⁴³ *N.Bh.Su.*, 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

⁴⁵ *Sh.Bh.Su.*, 29.

⁴⁶ *Sh.Bh.Su* 30.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 31.

Shandilya's *sutra* deals with *The Bhagavat Gita* and *The Upanishad*. He describes it as *Bhakti-khanda*.⁴⁸ And Narada's *sutras* are inspired by *The Bhagavata Purana*.

कण्ठावरोधरोमाञ्चाश्रुभिः परस्परं लपमानाः पावयन्ति कुलानि
पृथिवीं च।⁴⁹

Both Narada and Shandilya say that *Bhakti* is superior to *Jnana*, *karma* and *yoga*.⁵⁰ Both give the example of the *Gopies* of Brijā, who loved *Krishna* with devotion faith.⁵¹ Narada says that *Bhakti* is the fruit of its own self.⁵² Shandilya says that *Bhakti* and *jnana* developed by *yoga*, although *yoga* is the main part of *Bhakti*, in this case *yoga* can be the part of *Bhakti* also.

योगस्तु भयार्थमपेक्षणात् प्रयाजवत्⁵³

Both Narada and Shandilya try to present *Bhakti* in the opposition of *Jnana*. Shandilya wants to show a strong relation between *Jnana* and devotion. He says that knowledge is compulsory for devotion without it one cannot get salvation.⁵⁴ Narada give the importance to pure devotion. He says that when a person achieves the stage of pure devotion he becomes perfect immortal and satisfied, and after getting this devotional service he has no desire to get anything, he is equal in joys and sorrows.⁵⁵ He further says that Lord does not

⁴⁸ Ibid, 26; also see Sharma, K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit, p. 126.

⁴⁹ *N.Bh.Su.*, 68.

⁵⁰ *N.Bh.Su.*, 25; *Sh.Bh.Su.*, 22.

⁵¹ *N.Bh.Su.*, 21; *Sh.Bh.Su.*, 14.

⁵² *N.Bh.Su.*, 30.

⁵³ *Sh.Bh.Su.*, 19.

⁵⁴ Sharma, K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 128.

⁵⁵ *N.Bh.Su.*, 19.

like that type of man or devotee who is full of proud he loves only a humble person.⁵⁶

In Narada *sutra* eleven types of *Bhakti* is maintained.⁵⁷ Shandilya does not give more importance to his *Ekedasdha Bhakti* only two *kirtnam* and *sravanam* are described by him as a secondary source.⁵⁸ According to Krishna Sharma, “Narada sets aside *Karma*, *jnana* and *yoga* as inferior, not because they are antithetical to *Bhakti*, but because they can never be self-sufficient. Devoid of *Bhakti*, they can even generate egoism and pride.”⁵⁹

Growth of *Bhakti* in South India

We get the symptoms of *Bhakti* Movement in 7th century in South India. It is said that this was the second development of *Bhakti* Movement.⁶⁰ It started in South by *Alvar* Saints of Tamilnadu. Before the 6th century there was the supremacy of the two religions i.e. *Buddhism* and *Jainism* but after time *Vaishnava Bhakti* got position in Tamil Land. Dr. Malik Muhammad says, “*Alvars* and *Nayannars* lead a revolt against the Buddhism and Jainism. It was a vast revolt which destroys the root of these two religions from Tamil Land before 9th century.”⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 82.

⁵⁸ Sharma.K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit. p. 126.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 128.

⁶⁰ Pt., Baldeva divided the *Bhakti Movement* into three parts: (1) the first evolution from 1500 B.C to 500 A.D; (2) The second evolution from 700B.C to 1400 B.C (3) and the third evolution from 1400 to 1900 B.C. cf Pande, Ramsajan *Bhaktikalin Hindi Nirguna Kavya ka Sanskritik Anushilan*, Kavita Prakashan, Delhi, 1996, p. 220.

⁶¹ Malik, Mohammad, *Vaishnava Bhakti Andolan ka Addhyayan*, p. 94, cf Pande, Ramsajan *Bhaktikalin Hindi Nirguna Kavya ka Sanskritik Anushilan*, op. cit, p. 221.

Vaishnavism is the form of Hinduism involved the worship of *Vishnu* or *Nayannars*, a major God of the Hindu pantheon who was generally adored in the form of two of his ten incarnations. *Ram* and *Krishna* were also in the form of the worship of their consorts.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries *Vaishnavism* was revived by Nathmuni, Yamuna and most significantly by the philosopher and *bhaktas* (Hindu devotee) Ramanuja. All emphasized devotion through image worship and simple rituals rather than by means of knowledge, the antithesis of Shankaracharya's philosophy.

Alvars sung their songs in Tamil language instead of Sanskrit, and they were full of devotion. A.L. Srivastava says, "the clear evidence of *Bhakti* idea is found in the hymns of these *Alvars*, which were collected in a book entitled *Prabandanam* by Nathmuni in the 10th century A.D.⁶² The *Alvars* wandered from one town to the next singing ecstatic songs and dancing rapturously. They developed the doctrine of monotheism by their believe in Oneness of God especially in *Vishnu*. They rejected the differences of caste and creed and taught the people from every walk of life without taking any distinction between high and low class of society. The *Alvars* mostly belonged to the lower strata and menial castes. They did not believe in caste and were opposed to the *Ashrama Dharma*, According to Ayengar, "*Alvars* are the first people who gave a new to *Bhakti* School making simple, designed not for serving the purpose of worship by the elite, but sub serve the similar ends for the quite

⁶² Akbar the Great, p. 79.

ordinary folk.”⁶³ The *Alvars* said that *Bhakti path* is superior, and gave importance to complete surrender or *prapatti*.

There was also a great upsurge of *Saivism* in South India, due to the devotional poems of *Nayannars* (*Saiva* saints) written in Tamil. The traditional number of the *Saiva* saints of the Tamil country was sixty three, and their idols were also situated in the temples. Their songs were also filling with devotion, the collection of these songs called ‘*Tirumurai*’ the holy book and compiled in eleven volumes by *Namabiandar Nambi*, the great *Saiva acharya* of south.⁶⁴

Views of *Vaishnava Acharyas* on *Bhakti*

Before throwing light on the *Vaishnava acharyas* of South it is our duty not to forget the great philosopher and reformer of that time, *Shankaracharya*. *Alvars* were completely engrossed in *Bhakti* but these *acharyas* gave equal attention on *Bhakti* as well as *karma*. The main *acharyas* of the South were *Ramanujacharya*, *Madhavacharya*, *Nimbarkacharya* and *Vishnu Swami* etc.

Besides these *acharyas* **Shankaracharya (788-820 A.D.)** occupies a very unique place in the Indian history. He represented the pure *Upanishadic /Vedantic* tradition and is known for his academic exposition of the *Advaita Vedanta* and his advocacy of *Jnana*. At the time of *Shankara* there is a battle of supremacy between the two religions *Buddhism* and *Jainism*.⁶⁵ The main aim of *Shankara*’s endeavors was to remove the fatal weakness of *Hinduism* that

⁶³S. Krishnaswamy.Ayengar. *History of Tripuri*, p.73, cf. Sharma, Suman, *Madhyakalin Bhakti Andolanka Samajik Vivechan*, Vranasi, 1974, p. 9

⁶⁴ Sastri, K.A., Nilakantha, ‘An Historical Sketch of Saivism,’ *Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Haridas Bhattacharya, 5 Vols, Vol. IV, The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, Second edit., 1956, p. 74.

⁶⁵ *Bhagavata Bhakti Cult*, p.78.

fissiparous tendency of the religious sects which all claimed their authority for the same source namely the saints.

Shankara preached the theory of non dualism. He described that *Brahman* alone is absolutely real; all else is false i.e. relatively real so long as the highest truth does not dawn. In *Vivekachudamani* he says that there is no difference between *atman* and *Brahman*, *jiva* or individual self is essentially the same as *Brahman* therefore ultimate and real.

एष स्वयंज्योतिरशेषसाक्षी विज्ञानकोशे विलसत्यजस्रम्।
लक्ष्यं विधायै नमसिद्लक्षणं अखण्डवृत्त्यात्मतयानुभावय॥⁶⁶

(This atama is self-luminous, the witness of everything and ever shines in the vigyankosh. Resting your mind on it which is different from the unreal, enjoy it with your expansive unlimited consciousness.)

Shankara established a logical monistic system, had unique success. He was the follower of the path of knowledge. According to *Advaita* system *Brahman* is the only reality and the whole universe is ignorance through *maya* (illusion) it is not real. For example: as in the darkness by mistake rope appears as a snake like that the world appears attribute to *Brahman*.

Shankara assumes the law of *karma*. *Avidhya* is the cause of *karma*, to get rid from the web of *avidhya* is to be free from the law of *karma*. When a man got this freedom he became free from the cycle of human life. Shankara is described as an exponent of the path of *Jnana* or knowledge. But his *Jnana* does not exclude *Bhakti*, in fact he speaks on *Bhakti* in conjunction with *Jnana*.

⁶⁶*Vivekachudamani of Shankaracharya, Sl. 381, tr. P. Sankaranarayan, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1973, p. 388.*

By *Jnana* he means the knowledge gained through the inner spiritual experience and not the knowledge acquired by intellectual endeavor. The highest knowledge according to him is the experience of the *Brahman* (*Brahmanubhava*) which transcends all empirical knowledge.⁶⁷ He has soft corner for the cult of devotion. In *Vivekachudamani* he says that, “among all means of *moksha* (salvation) *Bhakti* is the greatest to seek earnestly of one’s essential nature, is said to be *Bhakti*.”

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी।
स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते।⁶⁸

(Among the set of means to bring about *moksha*, *Bhakti* is the greatest. Continuous contemplation of one’s essential nature (*swarupa*) is said to be *Bhakti*.)

He regarded *Bhakti* as a means as well as an end in itself. The highest form of *Bhakti* according to him is *Jnana-nishtha* or the state of abiding in the knowledge of the self. Though he gave such importance to *Bhakti* but was the follower of *Nirguna Bhakti*, Shankar’s concept of *Brahman* is *Nirguna*, he says that the term of *sat* cannot be applied in case of *Brahman* since it is without *jati*, *gunas* and cannot express through any term.⁶⁹

But it is also truth that the Shankara’s *Advaita* system is much difficult for the common people they could not understand the depth of this system. In the middle era there are many scholars and social reformers they attract these

⁶⁷ Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, 2 Vols. Vol II, Oxford Univ. Press, Delhi, 1923, 6th edn., 1993. p. 501.

⁶⁸ *Vivekachumani*, Sl. 32; *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁶⁹ *Bh. Gita*, A.XIII, Sl. 12.

people by their preaching, and the three ways of liberation they emphasize the path of *Bhakti* and propagate it everywhere.

Ramanuja (1017 A.D.) Ramanuja was the first philosopher who gave more attention on *Bhakti* against the Shankaracharya's philosophy of *Jnana*. His philosophy was based on the *Upanishads*. His *Srisampradya* was the first among the four *sampradayas* of *Bhakti*, which was established between 11th to 15th centuries.⁷⁰ Ramanuja gave the theory of qualified monism or *Visistadvaita* against the non qualified monism of Shankaracharya⁷¹. In the words of P.N. Srinivasachari, "*Visistadvaita* is neither pure philosophy nor pure religion but in really a philosophy of religion."⁷² Radhakrishnan says, "Ramanuja's theory is an *Advaita* or non-dualism, though with a qualification (*visesa*), viz, that it admits plurality, since the Supreme spirit subsists in a plurality of forms as soul and matter. It is therefore called *Visisthadvaita* or qualified non dualism."⁷³ In other words the pivot of his whole system is that he believed in the relation between God and the world of matter and souls. He recognize three ultimate realities *chit* (the individual), *achit* (the insensate world), and the Supreme soul (*Ishwara*).⁷⁴ The first two are absolutely dependent on the last one. *Brahman* is *Sat* without a second. The relation of *chit* and *achit* is eternal; and *Brahman* expresses itself in their intimate relationship. Both *chit* and *achit* cannot be

⁷⁰The *Bhakti marg*a was divided into four *Sampradayas* or *Schools*, all of which attached much importance to the observation of religious ritual. These four schools were 1. *Srisampradaya* – founded by Sri Ramanuja. 2. The *Brahama Sampradaya* – founded by Sri Madhavacharya. 3. The *Rudra Sampradaya* – founded by Sri Vishnu Swami. 4. The *Sankadi Sampradaya* – founded by Sri Nimbadiya.

⁷¹Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 9; Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 17

⁷² Srinivasachari, P.N., *The Philosophy of Visisthadvaita*, 1946, p. 1.

⁷³ Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, op. cit., p. 661.

⁷⁴ *Bhagavata Bhakti Cult*, p. 111.

Absolute and are the attributes of *Brahman*. They exist eternally, but not external to *Brahman*, the Supreme Sat.⁷⁵

Ramanuja interpret the famous *Vedantic* principle or famous *Upanishadic* sentence, “*tat tvam-asi*” in the light of his philosophy. It means according to Ramanuja that God who is the cause of the world and who is the indweller of the soul are identical.⁷⁶ Ramanuja gave more attention on *Bhakti*, for him *Bhakti* is more important than *Jnana*.⁷⁷ *Bhakti* is the only way to that *moksha* which is “direct perception” of *Narayana* ‘The Ultimate.’ Ramanuja gives emphasis on the preparation for *Bhakti* which includes different *sadhanas* or methods.⁷⁸ In *Vedarth Sangraha* he says that, “*Bhakti* is that particular kind of knowledge which is a state that educes absolute love towards itself, which is an end in itself, and discard to desire for everything else.”⁷⁹

He says the *upasana* (meditation) and *Bhakti* are equal because meditation and devotion needs the same thing and that is continuity of our attention, without any kind of break like the flow of oil.⁸⁰ On the other hand to Ramanuja the aim of *Bhakti* is to achieve salvation. Ramanuja lays out the different ways of salvation i.e. *Bhakti* and other is *prapatti* (self surrender).⁸¹

⁷⁵ Srinivasachari, P.N., ‘The Vedant of Ramanuja’, *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 302.

⁷⁶ In the words of Murthy, “the purport of the Monist text ‘*That thou art*’ according to *Vedarth Sangharya* is to affirms the glory of the Supreme as the immanent soul of the universe of nature and individual souls.” *Vaisnavism of Shankaracharya and Ramanuja: a comparative study*, op. cit., p. 77.

⁷⁷ Dinkar, *Sanskriti ke Char Adhayay*, op. cit., pp. 299-301.

⁷⁸ These *Sadhanas* include *viveka* (the purification of body the means of *sattvik* food), *vimoka* (freedom from the circle of *Karma*), *abhyasa* (continous thinking of God), *kriya* (doing good to others), *kalyana* (wishing well to all it consists *satyam*, *arjavam*, *daya*, *dan*, and *ahinsha*), *anavasada* (cheefulness and hope and freedom the sorrow of past), *anuddharsa* (is a mean between *santosha* and *asantosha*), cited from, *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 55.

⁷⁹ *Bhagavata Bhakti Cult*, pp.121-122.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸¹ There are six famous factor of *prapatti* viz: 1. *anukulasaya samkalpah* (acquisition of Qualities which would make one a fit offering to God); 2. *pratikulyasya varjanam* (avoidance of conduct not

He formulated the way of unqualified and absolute self surrender known as *saranagati* which is the simplest way of reaching to God, and for this way no need of meditation, knowledge and spiritual experience, only the act of complete surrender is sufficient for it.⁸² He pleads the complete surrender (*Prapatti*) for clearing the way for liberation.

It is said that the term of '*Prapatti*' was the influence of the Islam, but it is altogether wrong because at the time of Ramanuja Islam was yet to spread in India. *Prapatti* is the conception of surrender of *Alvars* as terminilized by Ramanuja.⁸³ It seems that he was in the favour of *varanashram* system because he erected the ritual system of *Alvars* under the *varanashram* system, and allowed the practice of reading scriptures for the upper classes. *Prapatti* consists in taking refuge in God with great faith and with the strong conviction that it is God and God is alone who can help one to attain one's end, like the fabled bird *chataka* that would rather die of thirst than drink any water other than falling from the clouds, the devotee looks to God for succor, and would seek no other help.⁸⁴

Madhavacharya (1199-1298 A.D.) was a Kanarese *Brahmin* who takes a very different position from that of Shankara. He rejected both the philosophy of unqualified monism of Shankara and the qualified monism of Ramanuja and believes in the theory of frank dualism, based mainly upon *The Bhagavata*

acceptable to God; 3. *raksisyatiti visvasah* (faith that God would always protect him); 4. *goptrtvavaranam* (seeking for the mercy of God); 5. *karpanyam sadvidha sarnagati* (a feeling of incapacity to follow the prescribed path of *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti*); 6. *atmasamarpanam* (self surrender) the last is one with *Prapatti* though the others are means of it.

⁸² Dinkar, *Sanskrti ke Char Adhayay*, op. cit., p. 299; Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, op.cit., pp.705-6.

⁸³ Dinkar, *Sanskrti ke Char Adhayay*, op. cit., p. 296.

⁸⁴ Dasgupta, S.N., *Hindu Mysticism*, op.cit., p. 127.

Purana. He accepted *The Bhagavata* as a scripture with the same authority as *Vedas*.⁸⁵ He has faith in Lord *Krishna* and *Ram* because he said that Lord Vishnu is the supreme *Brahman*. He tried to establish the duality of *jiva* and *Brahman* and pointed out their essential difference. According to him there are three eternal entities fundamentally different from the others God, Soul and world. Madhava acknowledge *Brahman* as the independent source of reality, but when he despite his '*Dvaitavad*' left some room for unity between the *Brahman* and *jiva* in his system of *Vedanta*.⁸⁶ In the opposition of Shankara and Ramanuja's system Madhava sets forth five eternal distinctions as individualities i.e. (1) difference between natural objects, (2) between souls, (3) between soul and natural objects, (4) between God and natural objects and (5) between God and souls.⁸⁷ He believes Supreme soul has number of qualities viz: creation, protection, dissolution, controlling of all things, giving knowledge, manifestation of himself, tying being down to the world, redemption. According to Tarachand, "Madhava's conception of God was that of the sovereign was ruled that world and whose grace conferred deliverance on man."⁸⁸ According to Madhava devotion is the best way for salvation. The *jiva* suffers with sorrow due to ignorance one should remember God, by his grace the *jiva* became free from the control of the ignorance and illusion and became enlighten.⁸⁹ He says that *moksha* is attainable by the direct knowledge of *Hari*, the direct knowledge which leads salvation are *vairagya*, *saranagati*,

⁸⁵ *Influence of Islam*, pp. 103.

⁸⁶ Sharma.K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 141.

⁸⁷ *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 58; S.N. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism*, op.cit., p. 57.

⁸⁸ *Inluence of Islam*, p. 103.

⁸⁹ Sharma, S. , *Madhyakalin Bhakti Andolanka Samajik Vivechan* , op.cit., p. 13.

Paramatama-Bhakti, daya, upasana, Guru-kripa etc.⁹⁰ the direct knowledge is simply mental.

Nimbarkacharya, was the founder of *Nimbarka Sampradaya*, was a younger contemporary of Ramanuja. This sect also called the *Sanakadi Sect* but it led by Nimbarka and so on his name it is called *Nimbarka Sampradaya* too.⁹¹ It is believed by his followers to be an incarnation of *Sudarshana* or discus of Vishnu.⁹² He gave the theory of ‘*Dvaita-Advaita*’ i.e. the ‘*Bhedabheda* school of philosophy or dual unity’ that is the theory of differences between *Brahman* and the world of matter.⁹³ For example as a spider spins out of its own self it web and yet remains independent of it is, in the same manner *Brahman* also exist in to numberless spirit and every mater of the world but never lost His independence.⁹⁴ Like Ramanuja and Madhava he divided being into three classes *chit, achit and Brahman* (*jiva, jagat and Ishwara*) soul and matter are dependent on the *Brahman* for their existence and are not different from God. He was hardly influenced by Ramanuja and like him he emphasis the importance of meditation.

In Nimbarka *Krishna-Radha* take the place of *Narayana* and *Lakshmi*. *Radha* is not simply the chief of *Gopies*, but is the eternal consort of Lord Krishna in his sect *Radha – Krishna* is worshiped as *Parabrahman*. Nimbarka was the first great *acharyas*, who brings *Radha* in the force front of his system.

⁹⁰ *Vaishnavism Saivism.*, pp. 60-61.

⁹¹ Sharma, S., *Madhyakalin Bhakti Andolanka Samajik Vivechan* , op.cit., p. 13.

⁹² Ahmad, Laik , *MadhayaKalin Bharitya Sanskrati*, Sharda Pustak Bhawan, Allahabad, 2006, p. 34; *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 62.

⁹³ *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 60; also see Sharma, S., *Madhyakalin Bhakti Andolanka Samajik Vivechan* ,op.cit., p. 13; *Inluence of Islam*, p.102; Sharma.K, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*, op. cit., p. 142.

⁹⁴ Dasgupta, S.N., *Hindu Mysticism*, op. cit., p. 406.

In his *Dasashloki* he states that *Brahman* is to be meditating on as *Krishna* who is adore by all.⁹⁵ He again said that *Radha* is the Supreme Being, can full fill the all desire of devotees:

अंगे तु वामे वृषभानुजां मुदा,
विराजमानामनुरूपसौभाग्यम्।
सखीसहत्रेः परिसेवितां सदा,
स्मरेम देवी सकलेष्टकामदाम्।⁹⁶

Nimbarka gives five forms of *Bhakti rasa* viz. *shant*, *dasya*, *sakhaya*, *vatsalya*, and *ujjavala*. *Gopi* and *Radha* is the follower of *ujjavala rasa*. Though he belonged from Tailanga Pradesh but his thoughts were not flourished there. The centre point of his thoughts is Vrindavan where he flourished the worship of *Radha –Krishna*. His sect became popular in North India and it became very helpful to success the *Bhakti* Movement.

⁹⁵ *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p.64.

⁹⁶ *Dasashloki*, Sl. 5, cited by Sharma Suman, *Madhyakalin Bhakti Andolanka Samajik Vivechan*, op. cit., p. 13.



Chapter – 3

The Significance of Ramananda in the Evolution of *Bhakti*

Movement

Ramananda occupies a pivotal position in the *Bhakti Movement* of Medieval India. He was a *Vaishnava* saint. He was mainly instrumental in ushering in the new epoch of Medieval Mysticism. He is considered to be the reviver of *Ramanandi* sect. The religious reforms were brought back to North India by Ramananda. Tarachand declares that, “he was the bridge between the *Bhakti* Movement of South and North”.¹ He would also indicate the working of *Bhakti* ideas in the North. He further lays stress on the concept of equality borrowed from Islam which made Ramananda embrace disciples from all walks of life. He was known for communicating in vernacular Hindi. He accepted his disciples from all castes.

Parents and Early Life

Unfortunately we don't have any authentic evidence of his birth and death. There is great uncertainty about his life, works and thought due to the lack of authentic source material. Scholars offer different dates about his birth and we can broadly divide them into three categories: (1) First theory is *Agastya Sahinta*, which gives 1299 A.D., as his date of birth. The famous scholars like Bhandarkar,² P.D. Badthwal,³ and Dr. Rama Kumar Verma⁴ agree with him. (2) Second theory argues Ramananda flourished in the end of the 14th

¹ *Influence of Islam*, p. 143.

² Bhandarkar quotes from the *Agastya Sahinta* that he was born in 4400 of the *Kali* Age equivalent to 1356 of *Vikram-Samvat* corresponds to 1299 or 1300 A.D., *Vaishnavism Shaivism*, p. 67.

³ Badthwal, P. D., *Hindi Kavya ki Nirguna Dhara: Madhyayugin Bhartiya santo ke Rahasyawad kanek Adhayan*. ed.& tr. P. R. Chaturwedi, Takshashila Prakashan, 1995, p. 67.

⁴ Verma, Ram Kumar, *Hindi Sahitya ka Alochanatmak Itihas*, Ramnarayan Lal Beni Madhav, Allahabad, 5th edn., 1964, p. 221.

and the first half of the 15th centuries. Farquhar,⁵ H.H. Wilson,⁶ Macauliffe,⁷ and Tarachand,⁸ agree with this theory. (3) The third theory is put forward by *Acharya* Rama Chandra Shukla.⁹ According to him Ramananda was born in the fourth quarter of 15th and first quarter of the 16th century by his opinion Sikandar Lodi was the contemporary of Ramananda.¹⁰

About his incarnation in 1400 to 1470 A.D, Farquhar states, “his royal disciple Pipa was born in 1425 A.D., while another disciple, Kabir seems to have lived from 1440 to 1518. It is clear that he was not Ramananda’s latest disciple. Hence we shall not be far wrong if we suppose that he lived approximately from 1400 to 1470 A.D. We may be ten years wrong either way but scarcely not more.”¹¹

Farquhar believes that south is the birth place of Ramananda. It seems that his idea is based on famous lines:

भक्ति द्रविड रूपजी ,लाए रामानन्द।
परगट कियो कबीर ने ,सप्तदीप नवखण्ड।

(Bhakti arose first in the Dravin land; Ramananda brought it to the North; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine division of the world.)

But due to lack of relevant source, he was rejected his idea and again said that, “ we have already seen that a sect which found release in *Ram* alone

⁵ Farquhar, *An outline of the Religious Literature of India*, op. cit., p. 323.

⁶ Wilson, *Religions of the Hindus*, Vol. 1, New Delhi, 1861, rpt. 1976, p. 47.

⁷ Macauliffe places his birth in South India at Malikot in Mysore and suppose him to have flourished in the end of 14th and the first half of 15th century., *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, pp. 100-101.

⁸ *Influence of Islam*, p. 143.

⁹ Shukla, Ramchandra, *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas*, Kamal Prakashan, Delhi, 1997, p. 89.

¹⁰ Srivastava, Badri Narayan, *Ramananda Sampraday tatha Hindi Sahitya par Uska Prabhav*, Hindi Parishad, Prayag, 1957, p. 71. (hereafter as *R.S.H.S.P.*)

¹¹ Farquhar, *An outline of the Religious Literature of India*, op.cit., p. 323.

had been long in existence, and that the literature tends to indicate the South rather than the North as its home. If we suppose that this *Ramaite* community lived in the Tamil country among the *Sri Vaishnavas* and that Ramananda probably belonged to it, the puzzle is completely solved. Ramananda would then come to the North with his doctrine of salvation in *Ram* alone, and with his *Ram-mantra*,”¹²

Agastya Sahinta mentions that he was born at Prayag (Allahabad). He was the son of *Kanyakubja Brahmin* Punyasadan and his wife Sushila. Scholars like Grierson, Tarachand, and P.D. Badthwal agree with this view. Dr. Bhandarkar says that the actual place in Prayag where Swamiji was born cannot be said and there is no sign of his remembrance except that it is said that in the 14th century, a prominent *acharya* was born at Prayag from *Kanyakubja* parents.¹³ Mecaulliffe argues that he was a *Gaur Brahmin*¹⁴, and most of the scholars agree with this statement. According to Dr. Grierson, “impossible or marvelous legends may grow up regarding the founder of a sect, but one thing about which we may expect a tradition to be accurate is the name of the Brahmanical sect to which he belonged.”¹⁵ When it is clear that the Prayag was his native place the statement of Farquhar does not seem to be right that he came from South to propagate *Ram Bhakti* and related it with *Ram Bhakti* of South. But it is clear that the term *Ram Bhakti* was brought by Raghavananda from South to North, but not by Ramananda as *Yog Pravah* says:

¹² Ibid, p. 324.

¹³ *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 67.

¹⁴ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 100.

¹⁵ Grierson, ‘The Home Of Ramananda’, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1920, p. 591.

वंदे श्रीराघवाचार्य रामानुज कुलोद्भवम्।
याम्यादुत्तरमागत्य राममंत्र प्रचारकम्॥¹⁶

The above couplet makes clear that Raghavananda, the successor of Ramanuja, had travelled from South to North for transmission of *Ram Bhakti*. It is famous about Raghavananda that he gave honour to the *bhakta* by leading the *Bhakti* movement, and after it he permanently settled in Kashi.¹⁷

Education

Ramananda got his early education at Prayag. At the age of twelve he was sent to Banaras for philosophical study, where, first of all he attached to “*Dvaita*” School of Shankara but soon became disciple of the “*Qualified Advaita*” under the instruction of Raghavananda and he was initiated into the companionship of *Sri Vaishnavas*. *Yoga Pravah* says that Raghavananda, was his teacher:

श्री अवधूत वेष को धारे, राघवानन्द सोइ।
तिनके रामानन्द जग जाने, कलि कल्यानमई॥¹⁸

The *Yoga Pravah* seems to clarify that Ramananda belonged to the *Vaishnava Sampradaya*. But the scholars of *Ramanandi Sampradaya* had denied it. They say that the *Ramanandi Sampradaya* is an independent and has no link with *Vaishnava Sampradaya*, because they have their own way of worship (*jap* and *mantra*) and symbols on their forehead (*chhapa* and *tilak*).¹⁹ And now they

¹⁶Badthwal, *Yog Pravah*, ed. Sampurnanand, Sri Kashi Vidhyapith, 2003, p. 2.

¹⁷Nabhadas, *Bhakt-Mala*, p. 35, cf., Prajapati, R.S., *Ramananda Sampradaya aur Sahitya*, Pragati Prakashan. Agra, 1984, p. 26.

¹⁸Badthwal, *Yoga Pravah*, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ All *Ramanandis* are said to place on their foreheads the distinguishing *Vishnu-Mark*, three upright lines, the centre one red, the other two white.

have their own scripture after the getting *Anandya Bhashya*.²⁰ Interestingly enough Farquhar is also doubtful about the relation of *Ramanandi Sampraday* to the *Vishistha-dvaita* System of Ramanuja. He says, “It has been frequently assumed that Ramananda taught the *Vishistha-dvaita* System of Ramanuja. This is one of the points with regard to the leader on which no direct evidence is available. One of the characteristics of the whole movement that springs from him is a constant use of *Advaita* phrases, a clinging to *Advaita* concept, while holding hard by the personality of *Ram*.²¹

Emergence of Sect

Ramananda undertook the pilgrimage to the Badrikashrama in Himalayas and other places including Banaras. Here, he is said to have stayed for few years at the *ghat* called *Panch Ganga Ghat*.²² When he returned to South, at the residence of Raghvananda, he was interrogated by his brethren. He had relaxed the critical culinary rules of Ramanuja, which was the vital observance of Ramanuja Sect. Consequent to this, he was expelled from the sect. His *Guru* authorized him to establish a new Sect of his own which he accordingly did.²³

He established his sect at Banaras. He found a new school of *Vaishnavism* based on the gospel of love and devotion. He introduced the cult of *Ram* and *Sita* in the place of *Narayana* and *Lakshmi* as the special object of

²⁰ Badthwal, *Ramananda ki Hindi Rachanyen*, Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi, 1955, p. 43. (hereafter as *R.H.R*).

²¹ Farquhar, *An outline of the Religious Literature of India*, op. cit, p. 326.

²² *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 102.

²³ For the detailed history of the doctrinal differences between the system of Ramanuja and Ramananda, see Farquhar, *An outline of the Religious Literature of India*, op. cit, pp. 323-25; *Vaishnavism Saivism*, p. 67; *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, pp. 100-105.

worship that was a concession to regional sentiment. *Ram* and *Sita* were far more familiar to the people of the upper Gangetic valley than *Narayana* and *Lakshmi* who commanded greater emotional allegiance in the South. The spread of *Ram* worship received impetus by Ramananda.²⁴

The *Vaishnavaites* saints and reformers in all parts of India have enshrined their fervent faith in poetry and song. These poems are full of experience and emotions. For the consideration of the philosophy of Ramananda we have to go back to Ramanuja, in Ramanuja sect *Narayana* is Supreme *Brahman* but in *Ramanandi Sampraday*, *Ram* is ascribed the place of Supreme *Brahman*.²⁵ In the same manner like *Sri Sampradaya*, *Ramananda Sampradaya* and its philosophical thought are called “*Vaisithadvaita Philosophy*” difference between both of them is only that one worships *Narayana* and *Lakshmi* and gives emphasis on the orthodoxy of rituals while other worships *Ram* and *Sita* and gave little importance to the rituals.

His Followers

The followers of Ramananda used the term of *bairagi*.²⁶ They were also called *Avadhuta* (‘Emancipated’ i.e. a person who had liberated himself from old prejudice) because they had shaken off the bounds of narrow-mindedness.

²⁴ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 103.

²⁵ *Anand Bhashya*, ed. Raghavar Das Vedanti, *cf.*, *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 238.

²⁶ It is only to the follower of Ramananda and his contemporaries that the title *Bairagi* is applied. His teaching marked a progressive popularization of Hinduism; and in particular the ascetic orders, which had been previously monopolized by *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* were now opened to the men of lower rank. James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 12 Vols, Vol. II, New York, 3rd edn., 1953, p. 337. (hereafter as *E.R.E.*).

But *Ramanandis* were never restricted like this;²⁷ his disciples were free from observing any particular rules and regulations.

Ramananda's Disciples

His twelve disciples, belonging to every strata of society, were the founder of different sects. *Acharya* Ramachandra Shukla says that *Bhakta-Mala* of Nabhadasi ji gives the list of twelve disciples of Ramananda and recounts some interesting legends about each of them. They are (1) Anantanand, (2) Sukhananda, (3) Sursurananda, (4) Narahariyanand, (5) Bhawanand, (6) Pipa, (7) Kabir,²⁸ (8) Sain, (9) Dhanna, (10) Raidas, (11) Padamawati and (12) Surasari.²⁹

Of these nos. 11 and 12 were women. Regarding **Padmawati** nothing is known. Surasari was the wife of Sursurananda.

Anantanand was Ramananda's first disciple. He is most famous as the apostle of Jodhpur country, the king of which he is converted by a miracle at Sambhar.

Sukhananda was a poet. His hymns are famous, and have been collected in a volume entitled the *Sukhasagar*.

Sursurananda, the husband of Surasri, was famous for his faith. According to legend a wicked Musalman gave him and his disciples cakes

²⁷ *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 94.

²⁸ According to legend, Kabir originally hesitated to ask Ramanand to adopt him as his disciple due to the rigid caste system of the Hindus. Ramananda stayed in his cottage all day and only left it about 3 o'clock in the morning to go down to the Ganga River to have a bath and perform his rites. Kabir had knowledge of Ramananda's daily habits and so he waited one night for Ramananda by lying on the steps of *Panchganga Ghat*. When Ramananda accidentally stepped on Kabir on his way to bath, he uttered "*Utho! Ram ko Ram bolo!*" (Rise up! Say *Ram* to *Ram!*). This becomes, for Kabir, the sacred *mantra*. Ramananda later gave him formal *diksha*.

²⁹ Shukla, *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas*, op. cit., p. 92; *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI., p.105.

secretly with flesh. He accepted them as food offered in the name of the deity, and they all ate it. Then he told the disciples of the presence of meat in the cakes. They came to their master in alarm at the defilement that they had incurred. But he replied that they had not eaten the food in faith, and bade them vomit. They did so, and meat issued from their mouths. Then he vomited, and showed them that by his faith the impure meat had been transubstantiated into leaves of the holy *Tulasi*-plant.³⁰

Nabhadas gives an interesting legend about **Narhariyananda** in his *Bhakta-Mala*. One day, due to the heavy rain he has no fuel for food at his house due to which he could not cook food for the holy men. He took an axe, and went to the temple of *Devi Durga*, to cut down sufficient wood from the temple. *Devi* promised that if he would desist from spoiling her temple, to give him a daily supply of fuel. Hearing of this his neighbour, decided to follow this example, but as soon as he applied his axe, *Devi* attacked him. *Devi* spared him only on condition that for the rest of his life he would supply fuel to Narhariyanda.³¹

Bhakta-Mala gives no particular anecdote concerning **Bhavanand**, beyond mentioning his name, nor can the present writer find anything about him elsewhere except an anonymous couplet praising his devotion to *Ram* and his wisdom.³²

Pipa was king of Gagaruangularh, who possessed every spiritual excellence and became the disciple of Ramananda. It is said that Goddess

³⁰ *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 173.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *E.R.E.*, Vol. X, p. 571.

Durga (Bhawani), whom he worshiped in every prescribed way. One day the Goddess advised him to go to Banaras and meet Ramananda and consider him as his spiritual guide.³³

Kabir was a Muslim weaver. According to Mohsin Fani, “at the time when he was in search of a spiritual guide he visited the best of the Musalman and Hindus, but did not find what he sought. At last somebody advised him to meet an old man but a bright genius, the *Brahmin* Ramananda. He lived life of a simple householder and earned livelihood by following his father’s profession of weaving. 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 were of no importance for the real spiritual welfare of the individuals.³⁴

Sena according to Nabhadass, was a barber at the court of the king of Bandhavgarh³⁵ and lived towards the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century. He was the great devotee of his time. According to Nabhadass he was the disciple of Ramananda. Parshuram Chaturvedi said that he was the contemporary of Ramananda and the previous part of his life was spent with the *Barkari Sampraday* of South and when he later came to North he came the close contact of Ramananda.³⁶

³³ Callewaert, Winand M., *The Hagiographies of Anantadas (The Bhakti Poets of North India)* Curzon, Surrey, 2000, pp. 8-9, (hereafter as *The Hagiographies of Anantadas*).

³⁴ *Influence of Islam*, p. 150.

³⁵ Chaturvedi, ed. *Hindi Sahitya Ka Brihad Itihas*, Vol. IV, Nagri Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi, 1968, p. 126.

³⁶ Chaturvedi, *Uttari Bharat ki Sant Parampara*, Bhartiya Bhandar, Prayag, 2051, (V.S 2008), p. 233. (hereafter as *U.B.S.P.*)

Dhanna one of the most prominent saints of medieval India was a *Jat* by birth. Both Nabhadass and Anantdas accepted that he was the disciple of Ramananda. From his couplet found in *A.G* it seems that he was highly influenced by the *bhakta* like Namdev, Kabir, Raidas and Sena.

Raidas belonged to the profession of a cobbler (*chamar*) of the society. He was a worker in leather, as he himself says, “my caste is low, my action are very low, and even my profession is low, says Ravidas yet the Lord has raised me high.”³⁷ He was a great saint of that time.

Remove Rigidity of Caste system

It is said that he converted many people who unwillingly embraced Islam into their previous religion (*Hindu Dharma*) by his ‘*Ram-Tarak-Mantra*.’

According to *Bhavishya Purana*:

म्लेच्छास्ते वैष्णवाश्चासन् रामानंदप्रभावतः।
संयोगिनश्च ते ज्ञेया अयोध्यायां बभूवुरे।
कंठे च तुलसीमाला जिह्वा राममयी कृता।
भावे त्रिशूलचिह्नं चस्वेतरक्तं तदाऽभवद्।³⁸

According to *Ramanandadigvijaya*:

येम्लेच्छयन्त्रबलतो यबनाबभूवु-
हिन्दून् विधायसकलानपि तान्मुनीशः।
शुद्धां मतिं हरिपदे हृदि सन्दृढय्य,
कार्शीं स्वशिष्यसहितः पुनरागतोऽसौ।³⁹

³⁷ जाति भी ओछी करम भी ओछा ,ओछा कसब हमारा।

नीच से प्रभु ऊँच कीयो है। कहै रविदास चमारा , *Ravidas Ki Bani (Jivan Charit Sahit)*, Belveder Press, Allahabad, 1948, p. 43, also see, *A.G.*, Rag Asa, Vol. 2, p. 410.

³⁸ Cited from, *R.H.R.*, p. 49.

³⁹ *Sri Ramanandadigvijaya, Sarga. 19, Sl. 79.* Sri Bhagvadacharya Maharaj, Alavar (Rajputana), 1947.

Sri Vaishnavas admitted only *Brahmins* as teachers and only people of high caste as lay members. But Ramananda never stood for castes. Ramananda says that one who has practiced the doctrine of human equality and brotherhood is admit able to God:

जाति-पाँति पूछे नहिं कोइ, हरि को भजै सो हरि का होइ।⁴⁰

(Let no one ask a man's caste or sect. whosoever worships God is God's own.)

The substance of his teaching is that: (1) perfect *Bhakti* and pure love is dear to God and (2) all devotees of God are brothers. As he admitted pupils of every caste, it is in fact, asserted in the *Bhakt-Mala* that the distinction of caste is immaterial. There is no difference between *Bhagwan* and *bhakta*, *Bhagwan* takes incarnation in inferior form such as a Fish (*Matsya*), a Boar (*Varah*), a Tortoise (*Kachchhap*) etc; so therefore the *bhakta* may be born as a *chamar*, a *chhipi*, a *koli*, or any other low caste.⁴¹ Ramanuja says that eternal joy is reserved only for the three upper class people and did not give the right to the *Sudra* to study of *Vedas* which is the important source to gain knowledge. Ramananda on the contrary removed this prohibition and opened the gate of heaven for everyone without any objection of caste, creed and colour.⁴² There was hardly pronounced difference between Ramanuja and Ramananda regarding purely theological tents. The other essential difference between both the two is on the question of caste rules. As in the early period the former

⁴⁰For this reason Goswami Tulsi Das also told by Lord *Rama*:

भगतिवंत अति नीचहु प्राणी। मोहिं प्रान सम अस मम बानी॥

(The *bhakta*, who adore to me either he belong to the lowest strata of society is as dearest to Me as My own life.)

⁴¹Wilson, *Religions of the Hindus*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1861, rpt. 1976, p. 29.

⁴²*E.R.E.*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 560.

scholar despite his good intention to enlarge the religion as far as possible, followed the caste rules strictly, and as a result they did not give permission to the lower caste people to enter in his circle, but later on, when Ramananda perceived that there is only One God who is the origin of all, all the distinctions of caste and creed vanished for him, and he saw humanity as one large family, and all men as brothers. One man is higher than another, not through birth, but only through his love and sympathy. So he started preaching to all without any reserve, and his fundamental teaching was the gospel of love and devotion.⁴³

Tarachand says that he neglected all the rules of Ramanuja about castes as well as dietary and bathing rules. He admitted in his new sect disciples from all castes, from both sex and even from among the Musalmans.⁴⁴

In the words of Macauliffe “He laid down a rule that all person of any caste who accepted the tenets and principle of his sect, might eat and drink together irrespective of birth.”⁴⁵

Lingua Franca

Ramananda’s teachings were similar to those of Ramanuja except that the former dropped the interdiction on interacts dining and the strict rule that all teaching and texts used had to be in the Sanskrit Language.⁴⁶ At his centers Ramananda taught in Hindi because Sanskrit was known only to the upper castes. He was the first to employ the vernacular language for propagation of

⁴³Sen, Kshitimohan, ‘The Medieval Mystics of North India’, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, 4 Vols. Vol. III, Haridas Bhattacharya, The Ramkrishan Mission, Calcutta, 1953 rpt. 1975, p. 379.

⁴⁴ *Influence of Islam*, pp. 144-45.

⁴⁵ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.VI, p. 103.

⁴⁶ Hussain , Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian culture*, op. cit., p. 14.

his doctrines. This revolutionized the literature of North Indian people. Before him scholars of *Bhakti* mostly wrote their preaching in Sanskrit which was the language of Elite and was understood by a few learned men. But the disciples of Ramananda were not learned men, he and his disciples therefore used vernacular language and composed hymns in various dialects of Hindi.

He himself wrote little but his disciples like Kabir and Tulsidas composed hymns in Hindi language. Their work is the masterpiece of the religious poetry and would never be fading. In the words of Dr. Bhandarkar, “the use of Vernaculars for the propagation of the new creed is the important reform of Ramananda.”⁴⁷

Hajari Prasad says, “Ramananda was the great scholar of Sanskrit but he wrote poems in vernaculars, and taught *Brahmin* to uphold the value of *Ram Bhakti* in common men’s language.”⁴⁸ At the time of Ramananda it was very difficult because of such prohibition but by the hard effort of him and his disciples this became possible. He taught everybody and everywhere before him but the *Brahmins* taught the people of their own caste in their own mutts.

In the word of Dr. Ahmad, “Ramananada was the first *Vasihnava saint*, who preached his views to the public through the medium of Hindi language.”⁴⁹ Natesan gives the great thanks to these saints (Ramananda, Kabir and Tulasi) and says, “The labor of these saints led to the development of vernacular literature. As in Europe, the Bible was made accessible to all by the

⁴⁷ *Vaishnavism Saivism* , p. 66.

⁴⁸ Diwedi, Hajari Prasad, *Hindi Sahitya ki Bhumika*, pp. 56-57; also see Prema Shankar, *Bhakti Kavya ki Bhumika*, Radha Krishan Prakashan, Delhi, 1977, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Srivastava, M.P. *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1707A.D.)*, op. cit, p. 44.

reformers, so here by in India. The sacred literature, the knowledge of *Vedas* which was sole monopoly of the *Brahmins* now found its expression in the vernacular.⁵⁰

His Works

A large number of works are attributed to him, such as: (1) *Shri Vaishnava Matabja Bhaskar*, (2) *Shri Ramarchan Paddhiti*, (3) *Gita Bhashya*, (4) *Upanishad Bhashya*, (5) *Anand Bhashya*, (6) *Siddhanta Patal*, (7) *RamRaksha-Stotra*, (8) *Yogchintamani*, (9) *Sri Guru Ramanand-Kabir ji ka gyan tilak*, (10) *Ramardhanam* (11) *Vedant Vichar*, (12) *Ramanandadesh*, (13) *Ramamantra Jog Granth*, (14) *Ramasthak*, (15) *Gyanlila*, (16) *Adhyatma Ramayana*, and (17) Number of miscellaneous couplets.⁵¹

Ramananda does not seem to have been a distinguished writer. It is unfortunate that we do not possess any collection of Ramananda's songs. We come across only one song (poem) of Ramananda corporated in the *Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. It is written in Hindi. This single poem is sufficient indication of his philosophy:

कत जाईरे रे घट लागो रंगु। मेरा चित्तु न चलै मनु भइओ पंगु।
एक दिवस मन भई उमंग। घिसि चंदन चोआ बहु सुगंध।।
पूजन चाली ब्रहम ठाई। सो ब्रहमु बताइओ गुर मन ही माहि।
जहाजाइए तह जल पाखन। तू पूरि रहिओ है राम समान।।
वेद पुरान सभ देखे जोई। ऊहाँ तउ जाईए जउ ईहो न होई।
सतिगुर में बलिहरी तोर।जिनि सकल विकल भ्रम काटे मोर।।

⁵⁰ Natesan, G.A., (publisher), *Saints of Northern India: from Ramananda to Ramtirtha, one of the Series of the World Teachers*, Madras, 1947, p. 6. (hereafter as *Saints of Northern India*)

⁵¹ R.S.H.S.P. p. 100, The first two published by Pandit Ram Tahaldas and the fifth by Raghuvardas, Ahmadabad, 1929. Hindi hymns have been edited and published by Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, 1952.

("Where shall I go? The music and the festivity are in my own house. my heart does not wish to move, my mind has folded its wings and is still. One day, my heart was filled to overflowing, and I had an inclination to go with sandal and other perfumes to offer my worship to Brahman. But the guru (teacher) revealed that Brahman was in my own heart. Wherever I go, I see only water and stones (worshipped); but it is Thou who hast filled them all with Thy presence. They all seek Thee in vain among the Vedas. If Thou art not to be found here, we must go and seek Thee there. My own true guru, Thou hast put an end to all my failures and illusions. Blessed art Thou! Ramananda is lost in his master, Brahman; it is the word of the guru that destroys all the million bonds of action.")

This poem expresses Ramananda's belief that *Ram* is a sturdy foundation in whom one should place faith, instead of the caste system. By comparing the "*Brahman* in the temple" with the *Brahman* that "dwelt in (his) own heart," Ramananda compares the highest caste to the highest spiritual figure, Lord *Ram*. In this poem, water is used as a metaphor to describe each human being on earth as a small drop of water within the ocean of *Ram*.

Like his birth there is great controversy about his death. *Agastya Sahinta* edited by *Ramnarayan* Das says that he died in 1410. A.D. Dr. Grierson,⁵³ and P.D. Badthwal⁵⁴ are agree with this date, according to given date he live the life of 111years. James Hastings says, "While we may be fairly certain that Ramananda was born in 1299 A.D., the date of his death is involved in some obscurity. The popular tradition is that he died in V.S.1467 (is equal to 1410 A.D.). This would give him a life of 111 years which is improbable.

⁵² A.G., Vol.VI, Rag Basant, op. cit., p. 247; Sen, Kshitimohan, 'The Medieval Mystics Of North India', *The Cultural Heritage of India*. Vol. III, op. cit, p.379.

⁵³ *Saints of Northern India*, p.13.

⁵⁴ *R.H.R.*, p. 42.

Philosophy of Ramananda

Concept of *Brahman* (Supreme)

Ramananda believed that *Ram* is the Supreme *Brahman*; He is omnipresent, preserver of the universe.

विश्वं जातं यतोऽदस्तदवतिनिखिलं यश्चलीनाति यस्मिन्,
सूर्यो यत्तेजसेन्दुः सकलमविरतं भासयत्येतदेषः।
यद्गीत्या वाति वातोवनिरपि सुतलं याति नैवेश्वरोसौ,
साक्षी कूटस्थ एको निखिलशुभगुणः सर्वगः सर्ववेदी॥⁵⁵

He is worshiped by Lord *Shiva*. Yogis get surrender in His lotus feet and worshiped Him.

शश्वच्छ्रीरामचन्द्रः सुमहितमहिमा साधुवेदैरशेषैर्निर्मृत्युः
सर्वशक्तिर्विकलुषविजरो गीर्मनोभ्यामगम्यः॥⁵⁶

Ramananda says that *Ram* is Almighty, sinless, eternal (*Sanatan*). Only *Sitapati Ram* (husband of *Sita*) is full of attributes and the only savior of the world. *Vishnu* Himself takes the incarnation of *Ram*. He is the son of king Dashratha and married with *Janki (Sita)*, He spent 14 years of his life in the forest for the fulfillment the will of his father, where He make His *bhakta* fearless, Sugriva again made the king of Kishkindha-Mount and he also defeated and kill the Ravana in war and make everyone happy.

हे श्री दाशरथे मुनीशमरचयश्रीजानकीवल्लभ,
ताताजापरिपालकप्रभुवरर श्रीचित्रकूटालय।
हे श्रीकाननवासिभक्तभयभित्सुग्रीवराज्यप्रद,
पौलस्त्यंविनिहत्यसर्वसुखकृच्छीराममामुद्धार।⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Jagatguru swami Sri Ramanandacharya, *Sri Vaishnava-Matabajbhashkar*, Sl. 8, Publisher. Mahant Sri Krishna Das, Alvar, (Rajputana) 2nd edition 1945; also see, *R.S.H.S.P.* , p. 24. (hereafter as *Sri Vaishnava-Matabajbhashkar*)

⁵⁶ *Sri Vaishnava-Matabajbhashkar*, Sl. 9 ; also see, *R.S.H.S.P.* ,p. 241.

⁵⁷ *Sri Ramarchanpaddhti*, eds. Ramnarayan Das, p. 2, cf., *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 24.

Ramananda's *Ram* has extreme beauty His eyes are like the blooming lotus which attracts the *Brahma* and *Shiva* also. *Ram* has supernatural power. He destroys the bow of the *Siva* and defeat *Parshuram*. Ramananda's *Ram* is the cause of world (*Sansar*). Yet He is the Lord of the Universe but he is very kind by nature. There is different relation between *Ram* and the world such as father-son, husband-wife, lord-servant, body-soul etc.

पितापुत्रसम्बन्धो जगत्कारणवाचिना। रक्ष्यरक्षकभावश्च रेणरक्षक
वाचिना॥
शेषशेषित्वससम्बन्धश्चतुर्थ्यास लुप्तयोच्यते।
भार्याभर्तृत्वसम्बन्धोप्यनन्यार्हत्ववाचिना॥
अकारेणाप्यसावेव मध्यस्थेन निगद्यते। स्वस्वामिभावसम्बन्धो
मकारेणाथ कथ्यते॥
आधाराधेयभावोत्र ज्ञेयो रामपदेन तु। सेव्यसेवकता नित्यं
चतुर्थ्या विनिगद्यते॥⁵⁸

Concept of Jiva (Soul)

Ramananda's view is similar to that of Ramanuja on the existence of *jiva* as it is dependent on *Brahman*. He is guided and enlightened by Him. The dependence of *jiva* is the bliss of Supreme power as reflected in *jiva* under the virtual shadow of His mastership.

पदेननेनात्र तु पंचमेनसंप्रकथयते वै तदनन्यशेषता।
प्रहेयमन्यार्थमथोस्वतंत्रतानिवर्त्यतेऽतः सततं स्वकीया।⁵⁹

Ram is the only means to achieve salvation. His eternalness and omnipresence help *jiva* to move forward towards the salvation. It can be attained by the spiritual concentration through the only bliss of *Ram*.

⁵⁸ *Sri Vaishnava-Matabajhashkar, Sl. 14-17.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid, p. 255.*

उपायार्थपरेणार्थं नखण्डनमसोच्यते।
सदुपायो मवाच्यस्य रवाच्यो राम एव सः॥⁶⁰

So, one should follow the *Prapatti-Marga*. Ramananda divided *jiva* into two categories one is *baddhaya jiva* (bounded soul) and other is *mukta jiva* (free soul).

Concept of Maya (Illusion)

In *Sankhya* it is believed that *maya* is the cause of *prakarti* (world). *Prakarti* is the combination of three *gunas* i.e. *sat*, *raj* and *tamas*, and by this it creates the world. It is also known as the illusion. But Ramananda never called *prakarti* as *Maya*. Nevertheless in *Sankhya Prakarti* and *Purusha* are the two separate entities and are independent from each other, but Ramananda says that they are subject to *Brahman*. In this way he follows the doctrine of Ramanuja.⁶¹

Concept of Moksha (Salvation)

Ramananda says that the abode (*divya-loka*) of Lord *Ram* as known *Saket-dham*, which is descent in this world decorated with lots of jewels. There is a throne from which thousands of sun rays have emerged and Lord *Ram* is seated on that throne.

साकेतं दिव्यं लोकंसुरतरुमतुलं तत्ररत्नालिगर्भम्।
हेमसिंहासनं तुच्छुभरूचिनिचयंभानु कोटिप्रकाशम्॥
वामं पादं प्रसार्याश्रित कलुषहरं दक्षिणकुंचयित्वा।
रामः पाणिदयेन प्रतिभटभयदः पदम गर्भारूणाक्षौ॥⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 256.

⁶¹ *Sri Vaishnava-Matabajbhashkar*, Sl. 28.

⁶² *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 270.

when a devotee gets this stage he never came back into this world, the cycle of birth and death were removed forever.

In short, Ramananda founded a school which renounced the rigidity of Hindu ritual. Though he was in the favour of devotional knowledge to all but he did not completely neglect the past traditions. Like the other *acharyas* of South he enjoined strict segregation and perfect privacy in matter of food. His views and concept of *Bhakti* were the essentially part of the *Vaishnava Bhakti*. His teachings and disciples created two distinct school of *Bhakti* among the Hindus i.e. *Nirguna Bhakti School* (represented by Kabirdas) and *Saguna Bhakti School* (especially represented by Tulasidas).



Chapter – 4

Theory of *Bhakti* by Prominent Saints of Northern India

We know that *Bhakti* Movement started in South India and it came to Northern India through Ramananda. The scholars called it *Jnana Andolan*.¹ Although *Bhakti* in Northern India had a philosophical link with *Bhakti* of South but there were great differences as far as social customs, religious ideas and rituals were concerned.² The preaching (*bani*) of the saints of Northern India like Nanak, Kabir, Dadu and others exclude the conventional *Bhakti* thoughts of the South Indian saints. Most of the former saints belonged to the lower class of the society, but they occupied high place in the history of Medieval India.

According to Hindi literature, the period from 1318 to 1645 A.D., is called as *Purva Madhya Kal* or *Bhakti Kal*.³ During this period the movement became unconventional and anti-ritualistic and ignored the old age restriction of caste and creed and *Varnashram* etc. The cause of the popularity of this movement is the use of vernacular language. All the *Bhakti* saints preached in the language of people, and they choose *Bhakti Marga* alone because it was based on love to Almighty.

The *Bhakti Marga* got bifurcated into two i.e. *Nirguna Bhakti* (God without attributes) and *Saguna Bhakti* (God with attributes). The followers of *Nirguna* and *Saguna Bhakti* have their own theory about *Bhakti*.

¹ Prema Shankar, *Bhakti Kavya ki Bhumika*, op.cit., p. 145.

² Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 107.

³ *H.S.I.*, op.cit, p. 1; Yusuf Hussain, also divided *Bhakti Movement* into two period; first from the time of *Bhagavad Gita* to 13th century, and second period is from 13th to 16th century, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op.cit, p. 6.

I. Theory of Nirguna Saints

It emphasizes mainly on the impersonal concept of God. It is a monotheistic view and gives more importance to knowledge (*Jnana Marga*) than the other path of salvation. In the beginning the worship of God is running into *Saguna* and *Nirguna* form, *Upanishadas* also told about the 'para' and 'apara' means *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. Hence, *Nirguna Brahman* cannot be described by any adjective⁴ and free from the three *gunas* (*Sat, Rraj* and *Tamas*).

In *Rigveda* there are so many hymns which are dedicated to impersonal God most of them personified as the power of nature, such as *Agni* (fire) and *Varuna* (air). No doubt that the term of *Nirguna* took place in *Vedas* but it came into light by *Upanishads*. *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says that He is only one and exists everywhere, He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscience and gave sensibility to all and completely genuine:

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा।
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च॥⁵

The Gita also gives the reference of the *Nirguna Brahma*.⁶ After that most of the *acharyas* like Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, and Nimbarka gave their views on *Nirguna Brahma* and established the philosophical doctrine of *Brahman sutra* by their commentary. In 15th-16th there was a chain of *bhaktas* (saints) who gave importance on *Nirguna Bhakti*. They gave their ideas on

⁴ Pandey, Susmita, *Birth of Bhakti in Indian Religions and Art*, Books & Books, Delhi, 1982, p. 1.

⁵ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, A. 6. Sl. 11.

⁶ *Bh. Gita*, A. 13, Sl. 14.

different sights of *Bhakti* like, their monistic thought about God (*Brahman*), doctrine of illusion (*Maya*), importance of a teacher (*Guru*), thoughts about the world (*Jagat*) and many more points are described by these them.

Concept of *Brahman* (Supreme Soul)

The *Nirguna* saints accept that the God is in the one form; they believed that the Being is one; He is eternal, the creator, the sustainer and destroyer of all. The follower of *Nirguna Bhakti* like Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Raidas, Jambhoji, Rajab etc. all have firm faith in the *Oneness of God* and the *Unity of God*.

Kabir emphasized on the unity of God and said, “He is one and there is no match for Him”⁷ he again said, and “I know Him to be one who exist everywhere.”⁸ Kabir believed in God without attributes, He is pure, immortal and beyond the limit and forms.⁹ Kabir says that, He is *Nirankar*, *Niranjan*, *Avnasi* and named *Niranjan* who exist everywhere.

ओंकार सबै कोई सिरजै ,रागस्वरूपी अंग।
निराकार निर्गुन अबिनासी, कर वाही को संग॥
नाम निरंजन नैना-मद्धे, नाना रूप धरंत।
निरंकार निर्गुन अबिनासी, अपार अथाह अंग॥¹⁰

For him God is formless and limitless but the whole universe is created by Him. He created this universe by the sound of *OM (sabada)*¹¹ it cannot be interpreted by anyone so Kabir said that when there was nothing He was still there, He is beyond the boundary of the caste and creed.

⁷ *Kabir Granthawali*, eds. Govind Trigunayat, (hereafter *K.G. (Trigunayat)*) Rag Gaudi, *Pd.* 55.

⁸ *The Adi Granth*, (hereafter *A.G.*), Vol I, Raga Gaudi, *Pd.* 3, Eng. tr. from the Original *Gurumukhi* by E.Trumpp, Munshiram Manoharlal, Second edit., New Delhi, 1970, p. 963.

⁹ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 258.

¹⁰ Jafar, Ali Sardar, *Kabir Bani*, *Pd.* 26, Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, 1999 (here after as *K.B.*)

¹¹ *Ibid*, *Pd.* 82, p. 81.

Brahman is the entire zone in which all the five elements (fire, air, water, sky and earth) are completely engrossed, and can neither be burnt nor cut:

जारयौ जरै न काट्यो सूखै उत्पति प्रलै न आवै।
निराकार अखंड मंडल में पाँचो तत समावै॥¹²

He also says that Supreme soul is worshiped by the Gods and Goddess.¹³ The Supreme is infinite, and so is His glory. No mortal can describe Him as Kabir says,

सात समंदर मसि करौ, लेखनि सब वनराइ।
धरती सब कागद करौ, तरु हरि गुण लिख्या न जाइ ॥¹⁴

(Were I to make ink of the seven ocean, and the all trees of the forest a pen, and entire earth is paper, even that I am unable to explanation the God's grace.)

Brahman is the central theme of his preaching whom he called by many names as *Khuda*, *Pir*, *Hajrat*, *Allah*, *Pritam*, *Ram*, *Sahib* and *Sai* but the most lovable name for him is *Ram*. For Kabir *Ram* is not the son of Dashratha, King of Ayodhya, neither he married with *Sita*, nor did he kill Ravana. But He is universal. His *Ram* is not the incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*; he had been used only in a symbolic sense. For Kabir God is still the Absolute, the One. Gods, men and *munis* are engaged in search of Him, but all failed to find Him.¹⁵ Kabir expounded the mystery of the one, whom all failed to find, and all the systems, doctrines and rituals serve only to obscure. Kabir himself frequently use the name *Ram* for God.

¹² Singh, Jaidev and Singh. Vasudev, *Kabir Vangamya* 3 Vol. Sb, Pd. 305., Vishva Vidhalaya Prakashan, Varanasi, 2002. (hereafter as *Kabir*)

¹³ *Kabir*, Sb, Pd. 128.

¹⁴ K.G. (Das), *Samarthai ko Ang*, Pd. 5.

¹⁵ Shah, Ahmad, *The Bijak of Kabir*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1977, p. 36.

Kabir preached the people to the *jap* of *Ram-Ram*, he says by the chanting the name of *Ram* the mind is so full of *Ram* that it becomes *Ram*, so he (Kabir) wonders whom to bow.¹⁶ He says that name save a devotee from the difficulty of life.¹⁷

Saina laid emphasis on the spirit of religion, repeating His name and meditation. He also believed that salvation can be attained by the means of devotion. Saina calls Him as *Kamalapati*, *Ram*, *Niranjana* and *Govinda*.

मदन मूर्ति भै तारि गोविन्दे। सैणु भणै भजै परमानंदे।¹⁸

For Nanak God is 'Ek', 'The One.'¹⁹ His ideas remind the *Upanishadic* ideas when he says that God is simply one without a second. For Nanak God in His original aspect is *Nirguna* – Absolute, devoid of all attributes. In other words, He is beyond the three *gunas*. In *Mul-Mantra*²⁰ he says:

१ ओं सतिनामु करता पुरखु निरभउ निबैरू अकाल मूर्ति अजूनी
सैभं गुर प्रसादि²¹

(He is the only Eternal truth, Creator of the world beyond the time (past, present and future) He is free from the cycle of birth and death, not begotten, being of His own Being, by the grace of the Guru, made known to men.)

¹⁶मन मेरा सुमिरै राम को मेरा मन रामहि आहि।

अब मन रामहि हवै रहा सीस नवावों काहि।। *Sk, Sumiran ko Ang, Pd. 8.*

¹⁷कबीरा कहता जात है, सुनता है सब कोई।

राम कहे भला होईगा, तर भला न होई।। *ibid, Pd. 1.*

¹⁸*A.G., Rag Dhanasari, Vol. II, p. 931.*

¹⁹McLeod, W.H, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1968, p.104.

²⁰*Japji* is the *Mul-Mantra* or the basic *mantra* is composed by the Nanak Dev, the *Adi Guru* of The Sikh Religion. It is read in the morning.

²¹*A.G., Vol. I, p. 33.*

He is *Niranjana*²² wholly apart from *maya* (illusion) which He creates Himself. He is *Nirankar*,²³ formless one. The stanza 16-19 of the *Japji* has an end on this:

तू सदा सत्तामति निरंकार।

Supreme is *Anadi* (without beginning), *Anant* (without end), *Avinashi* (immortal), *Akal* (beyond time), never incarnated so he is not present in the form of idol, nor revealed by an *Avtar* (incarnation). *Guru Nanak* said that all creation rest of the Universe, *Paramatama* created *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Mahesha*. This seems that his attitude towards the deities of the Hindu Religion is not different from his attitude towards the Hindu Scriptures.

Nanak says He is the creator, sustainer and the destroyer of the universe the whole creation of God is an illusion and only the God is eternal.²⁴ At one place Nanak writes, "A hundred thousands of Mohammads a million of *Brahmas, Vishnu* and a hundred thousand *Ram* stand at the gate of the Most High. These all perish God alone immortal."²⁵

Nanak gave more importance on the recitation of the name of God. He says one should love the Name, because it is not a mere repetition of words but a *sadhana* (devotion). Nanak gives more emphasis on the repetition on *Nam*, without this performance life is useless, they are lucky who find treasure of *Nam* by the help of true *Guru*. *Nam-Ras* is ambrosial.²⁶ Nanak used different

²² *Japji*. 12-15.

²³ According to Sikh thought this word *Nirankar* is the most important name of God.

²⁴ *Japji*. 27.

²⁵ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I . pp. 121; Bhattacharya, N.N., *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India*, (edited), Munshiram Manohar, New Delhi, 1989, p. 38.

²⁶ *A.G.*, Rag *Siri*, *M. 4*, Vol I, p. 146.

names for Supreme. Most of them are *Govind, Gopal, Kartar, Hari, Jagadish, Thakur, Ram, Rahim, Karim* and *Sahib* etc, but in all He alone is and there is no other.

साहिबु मेरा एको है। एको है भाई एको है।²⁷

Further:

ईकदू जीभौ लख होई लख होवहि लख बीस।
लख लख गेडा आखिअहि एकु नामु जगुदीस।²⁸

As other followers of *Nirgun Bhakti*, Jambhoji also believed in one God who pervades the whole universe. He says only He is meaningful in this meaningless world.

Raidas' cardinal doctrines are not different from the philosophy of Kabir. According to him '*Hari* is in all and all is in *Hari*'²⁹ His Lord is Absolute and identical with self. He is formless, unborn, unique, fearless, ultimate etc:

निश्चल निराकार अज अनुपम, निरमय गति गोविन्दा।
अगम अगोचर अच्छर अतरक, निरगुन अंत अनंदा।³⁰

Raidas like other saints of *Bhakti* gives emphasis on the recitation Name, he says:

हरि हरि हरि हरि हरि हरि हरि हरे।
हरि सिमरत जन गए निसतरे।³¹

Further

मुकुंद मुकुंद जपहु संसार। बिन मुकुंद तनु होई अउहार।।
सोई मुकुंद मुकति का दाता सोई मुकुंद हमरा पित माता³²

²⁷ Ibid, Rag Asa, M. 1, Vol II. p. 40.

²⁸ *Japji*. 32.

²⁹ *Influence of Islam*, p. 179.

³⁰ *Raidasji ki Bani, Pd. 53*, ed. Belveder Press, Prayag, 1948.(hereafter as *R.B.*).

³¹ *A.G.*, Rag Asa ki Var, Vol.II, p.411.

³² *A.G.*, Rag Gauda, V. III, p. 408.

He again says yet Lord has many names but He is one.³³ But according to him God cannot be identical with any of the incarnation. For this he says:

जा रामहीं सबै जग जानै, भरम भुले रे भाई।
आप आप तें कोइ न जानै, कहै कौन सो जाई।³⁴

Dadu also believes in one God like the other *Nirguna* saints, to him “He is one, unchangeable, immortal, incomprehensible being; He is brightness effulgence, light, illumination, perfection; He is within the heart of all beings.”³⁵ His power, mercy and glory are everywhere manifest. Dadu said that he is One Real in a world of unreality:

राम नाम मै पैसि करि, राम नाम ल्यो लाई।
यहु इकंत त्रय लोक में, अनत काहे को जाई।³⁶

He is beyond any explanation. Only He knows Himself. He is *Nirguna* and *Niranjana*, He is alone forever. He will never decay.³⁷ No finite mind can conceive no human tongue can utter what He truly is.³⁸ He is neither born, nor died. He is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. The secret monotheistic concept that God is one and there is no difference between ‘*Ram* and *Allah*’ is well reflected in the verse of Dadu. “To whom shall we compare *Ram*? There is no second.”

³³ कह रैदास प्रकास परम पद, का जप तप विधि पूजा।

एक अनेक अनेक एक हरि, कहौ कौन विधि दूजा॥, *R.B., Pd. 54.*

³⁴ *R.B., Pd. 9.*

³⁵ *Influence of Islam*, p. 186.

³⁶ *Dadu Dayal ki Bani*, Vol. 1. Sumiran ko Ang, Pd. 77, Belvediyar Press, Prayag, 1928. (hereafter as *D.B.*).

³⁷ भगति निरंजन राम की अविचल अविनासी,

सदा सजीवन आत्मा सहजै परकासी। *D.B., Parcha ko Ang, Pd. 224.*

³⁸ एक जीभ केता कहूँ, पूरन ब्रह्म अगाध,

वेद कितेबाँ मिति नहीं, थकित भये सय साध॥, *Ibid, Hairan ko Ang, Pd.15.*

He again says that God is the One whose very nature is to bestow. The whole universe was brought into existence for the good of His creatures. Dadu believes that God had countless names but the most loveable name of God for Dadu is *Ram*. He called Him as *Nirguna, Niranjana, Allah, Govind, Sahib* etc; but a whole collection of *sakhis* is devoted to the exaltation of the name of *Ram* had “the symbol of approach to unapproachable.”³⁹ He says that name of *Ram* is uttered by everyone but there is great difference between both of them, one *Ram* is manifested everywhere and other is the son of Dashratha contained in himself.

राम नाम सब को कहे, कहिबे बहुत बिमेक।
एक अनेको फिरि मिलें, एक सामाना एक॥⁴⁰

In short, he has faith in One God and realized the unity under different names such as *Ram, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva Allah* etc. He denounced polytheism. He preached that true religion does not mean ritualistic, but devotion and love for one God. Both Temple and Mosque got equal reverence by him. He say that Sun, Moon, Space, Earth and Water all are always busy in His service.

For Rajab *Ram* is Supreme Being present in all bodies. God is the highest truth and the Supreme goal for Rajab. He says no doubt that His nature is like looking in the mirror (*darpan*), everything is seen in Him and yet is not in Him:

सब नांही सब पाईये। दरपन हरि दीदार।
रजब असा अंग निज। तामें फेर न सार।⁴¹

³⁹ D.G., *Sumiran ko Ang, Pd. 10, 14, 21, pp. 17-18.*

⁴⁰ Ibid, *Sumiran ko Ang, Pd. 82, p. 24.*

He again says:

एक अनेकों में मुक्त अनेक एकमधि आंन।
जन रजब इस पेच कों। हेरि हुए हैरान।⁴²

He says that *Brahman* has no form and cannot be revealed by an incarnation (*avatar*), He is without origin (*nikul*),⁴³ without any names (*ninava*)⁴⁴ although he has been given many names. He says that God is unfathomable (*agadha*) and beyond the reach of human intellect (*agam*).⁴⁵ He again says that *Brahman* is *Nirguna* and beyond the three *gunas* and in this absolute aspect He is unknowable, because he is beyond the range of human comprehension. Rajab also calls God with the name *Jagadish, Parameshwara, Narayana, Jagamaur, Jagapati, Malik, Khalik* and *Ram* etc.

He says that *Brahman* is enclosed by *maya* so it is known as *Saguna Brahman* or *Ishwar*, He is the cause of this universe. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. All the action of this world is His sports. He gives at least fifty names to God.

Jambhoji believed in Supreme's eternal and ultimate nature. He says He is the creator of *Brahman, Vishnu and Mahesha*. He is all powerful; beyond the attributes. He is the One and there is no second.

लोई अलोई त्योंह तूलोई एसा न कोई⁴⁶

⁴¹ Rajabdas, *Rajabdas ki Sarbangi*, Sakhibhut ko Anga, Pd. 12, ed., Iraqi, Sahabuddin, Granthayan, Aligarh, 1985. (hereafter as *Sarbangi*).

⁴² *Sarbangi*, Pd. 14

⁴³ Ibid, Nao Nirupan ko Ang. Pd. 10.

⁴⁴ Ibid, Ajapa Jap, Pd. 4.

⁴⁵ Callewaret, W.M., *The Sarvangi of Dadupanthi Rajab*, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (Belgium) 1978, p. 289.

⁴⁶ Parikh, Surya Sankar, ed., *Jambhoji ki Bani (jivan, Darshan aur hindi arth sahit Mulbani Path) Sb.* 2, Vikash Prakashan, Bikaner. 2001. (hereafter as *J.B.*)

He was in the beginning of the universe in the middle and will be after this universe.⁴⁷ Like other saints his *Brahman* has many names i.e. *Vishnu*, *Alakh*, *Khudaya*, *Karim*, *Rahman*, *Sai*, *Gpoal*, *Parshuram*, *Chakradhar*, *Beldeva*, *Narayana* etc.⁴⁸

Concept of Jagat (World)

In *Purush Sukta* it is said that the world or *jagat* is the result of the will of *Brahman*. He is the creator of the whole universe.

The creation of the world or universe is a complicated puzzle. Number of the scholars and philosophers did their best but no one could solve it. *Guru Nanak* imagine a time when this cosmos did not exist. There was no *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, or *Shiva*; but the One God. The above explanation is seems like the description of the creation of world in the *Nasdiya Sukta* of *Rigveda*.⁴⁹ In this manner according to Sikh *Gurus* in the beginning there was nothing but the universe emanated from in it. *Parmatama* Himself in His manifest or unmanifest form created it, took action and also performed the work for others.⁵⁰ At many places we see that *Gurus* believe the lord Himself in everything of the world and universe.⁵¹ *Guru* believes that there is the only existence of God they do not deny the existence of any such external element,

⁴⁷ Ibid, Sb. 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp.118-19.

⁴⁹ *Rigveda*, Mandal 10, Sukta 129, Richa 1-2

⁵⁰ ओंकारि सभ सिसटि उपाई। सभु खेलु तमासा तेरी बडिआइ।

* * * *

सदा अलिपतु रहै गुरसबदी साचे सिउ चितुलाइदा। *A.G.*, Rag Maru Solah, *M. 3*, Vol. III, pp. 855, 908; Rag Siri, *M. 5*, Vol. I, p. 140.

⁵¹ *A.G.*, Rag Sorthi, *M. 4*, Vol. II, p. 201; Rag Majh, *M. 5*, Vol. I, p. 310.

nor does he favour the idea of creation out of nothing.⁵² They believed that the creation of the universe by the *Hukum* of the *Parabrahman* and the creator of this universe is 'Only True' and His creation is also true.⁵³ The *Guru* emphatically denies the existence of any element besides God. Nor does he favour the ideas of creation out of nothing. He believes the creation of the world by Divine Will (*Hukum*).⁵⁴

The Vedas, The Puranas and *The Gita* also accept that the God is the fundamental element of the creation of this world. At one place in the *Gita* Lord *Krishna* says that:

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिं सृजते सचराचरम्।
हतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते⁵⁵

Guru does not deny the diversity in the world. There is diversity but there is permanent unity. *Guru Amardas* said in *Rag Maru*, "My True Lord has made such an interesting world in which everything is different from the other- He created light and darkness and still there is one element in all and that is He Himself."⁵⁶ They also deny the philosophy of *Vedantist* that the world is illusion. At many place they call it real:

आपि सति किआ सभु सति।
तिसु प्रभ ते सगली उत्तपति।⁵⁷

⁵² Mishra, Jairam, *Sri Guru Granth Darshan*, Sahitya Bhawan, Allahabad, 1960, p. 101.

⁵³ Grewal, J.S., *Guru Nanak in History*, op.cit., 1969, p. 236.

⁵⁴ Sher Singh accepted this term *Hukum* as Divine Will in his work *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Sikh Univ. Press, Lahore, 1944, p. 221.

हुकमे ही सभु जगनु उपाइआ, *A.G.*, *Rag Maru Solah, M. 3, Vol. III, p.841; Japji, Paudi. 2, Vol. I, pp . 34-35;*

⁵⁵ *Bh. Gita, A. 9, Sl. 10.*

⁵⁶ *A.G.*, *Rag Maru Solah, M. 3, Vol. III, p. 843; Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, op.cit., p. 228.*

⁵⁷ *A.G.*, *Gaudi Sukhmani, M. 5, Vol. II, p. 827.*

Further:

सच तेरे खंड सचे ब्रह्मंड।
सचे तेरे लोअ सचे आकार।⁵⁸

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

बाजीगर सौं राचि रहा, जी का मरम न जाना।
बाजी झूठ साँच बाजीगर, जाना मन पतियाना।⁵⁹

About the creation of the world Dadu believes that first of all *Brahman* created *OM* and from the word *OM* arose the five elements *panch-tatva* (earth, water, fire, sky and air) and from these elements arose a pot by this pot the whole universe came into existence.⁶⁰

Dadu believes that the Almighty created this universe for the sake of His sports. By this idea he tried to describe that Supreme Being is a magician or a juggler who deludes *jiva*⁶¹ by his trick. Although he created this game but He kept Himself free from the action and fruits.⁶² Dadu was influenced by Shankara philosophy and says that this universe is untruth and unreal. It is like a dream. Different school of *Vedantic* thought have differed widely as to the degree of reality to be ascribed to the phenomenal world. The point on which all are agreed is that God is the one alone Real and that all other existence can be spoken of as real only as they find their ultimate meaning in Him.⁶³ Dadu says “love not this world for a single instant; birth, death and return consume the body every moment.

⁵⁸ A.G., *Asa ki Var*, M. 1, Vol. II, p. 348.

⁵⁹ R.B., *Pd.* 10 ; A.G., *Asa ki Var*, Vol. 2, p. 411.

⁶⁰ D.G., *Sabad ko Ang*, 7-10, pp. 227-228.

⁶¹ Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystic*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1947, p. 137.

⁶² D.G., *Samarthai ko Ang*, 27-31.

⁶³ Orr, W.G., *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystic*, op. cit., p. 151.

दादू इस संसार सौं, निमख न कीजै नेह।
जामण मरण आवटणा, छिन छिन दाड़ै देह।⁶⁴

God is one whose very nature it is to bestow. The whole universe was brought into existence for the good of His creatures. His love and compassion are shown not only in His merciful provision for the needs of all, but also exhibited in with His suffering creatures, and especially with His suffering saints.

पलक माहिँ प्रगटै सही, जे जन करै पुकार।
दीन दुखी तब देखि करि, अति आतुर तिहिँ बार।⁶⁵

Further:

आगै पीछै सँगि रहै, आप उठाये भार।
साध दुखि तब हरि दुखी, ऐसा सिरजनहार।⁶⁶

Like Dadu Rajab also says this world is not real it is untruth. And he says a person will not find liberation from this world as long as he pretends to give up even a kingdom, but in his heart remains attached to it.

ब्याज राज सब त्यागि दे। मूल मनोरथ मांहि।
जन रजब जीव जगत सौ। तब लागि छूठे नांहि।⁶⁷

Concept of *Guru* (Teacher)

The role of a true *Guru* was to be an agent between *Ram* and the believer. The *Gurus* give an important place to the *Satguru* – which meant God in the form of a *Guru*. The ultimate *Guru* is God:

गुर मेरा पारब्रह्म परमेसुरु।
ताका हिरदै धरि मन धिआनु।⁶⁸

⁶⁴ D.G., Maya ko Ang 48-50.

⁶⁵ D.G., Vinti ko Ang 38.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 39.

⁶⁷ Sarbangi, Sukhim Tyag ko Ang. Pd. 4.

God, who is full of attributes, is interested and helpful in the progress of men towards the goal. As *Guru* or enlightener, God guides and instructs man on to the right path. For the attainment of the goal it is of the utmost importance to select a teacher (*Guru*). In Kabir, *Guru* holds the highest position. He considers *Guru* as *Govinda* as he says:

गुरु है बडे गोविंद तें मन में देखु विचार।
हरि सुमिरे सौ बार है गुरु सुमिरे सो पार।⁶⁹

He further says:

गुरु गोविन्द तौ एक है, दूजा यह आकार।⁷⁰

He says that the real meditation is of the *Guru*'s form the real worship is of the *Guru*'s feet. *Guru*'s words are the real boat, in which feelings and essence are also true and in the *Triloka* (three worlds) *Navkhand* (nine regions) none is greater than the teacher or *Guru*.

तीन लौक नव खंड में में गुरु ते बडा न कोई।
करता करे ना करि सकै गुरु करै सो होई।⁷¹

He again says if the *Guru* is not of the right sort than it is a case of the blind pushing the blind and both falling into the well.

Dhanna also paid great respect to the guru. He declared that he attained salvation under the guidance of *Guru*, mediated on God, loved Him and became 'absorbed in Him.

⁶⁸ A.G., Rag Vilabalu, M. 5, vol III, p. 295.

⁶⁹ Ibid, Pd. 309.

⁷⁰ Kabir, Sk, Gurudev ko ang, Pd. 26,

⁷¹ Kabir Vachanawali, Pd. 312. ed., Ayodhya Singh 'Hariodh', Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Kashi, eneventh edition, V.S. 2015.

गियान प्रवेसु गुरहि धनु दिया धियानु मानु मन एक भए।
प्रेम भगति मनि सुखु जनिया त्रिपति अधाने मुकति भए।⁷²

Like Dhanna Pipa also believe that salvation can be attained by means of guru. He says that I have search many regions and it is only in the body I have found the name treasures with the help of true *Guru*:

जो ब्रह्मांडे सोई पिंडे जो खोजे सो पावै
पीपा प्रणवै परम ततु है सतिगुरु होई लखावै।⁷³

In the *Guru Granth Sahib* it has been stated quite a number of times that it is the innate nature of God to help the erring. There are various explanations of the meaning and the importance of the concept of *Guru*. Nanak linked *Guru* to God.⁷⁴ Without the help of the *Guru*, faith of the *Haumai* (*ahankar*) cannot be removed.⁷⁵ And it is also true that one can't get knowledge without *Guru*.⁷⁶ It is through the grace of *Guru* the supreme light (*jyoti*) in the universe and also in man, is recognized, without the *Guru* one can't get rid of from the recycle of birth and death.⁷⁷

Nanak speaks again and again of the essential role of the *Guru* as a guide in man's spiritual journey. In other words a spiritual guide is necessary for salvation. *Guru* is the provider of salvation by his preaching. He made the

⁷² A.G., Rag Asawari, Vol. II, p. 412.

⁷³ A.G., Rag Dhanasri, Vol. II, p. 931.

⁷⁴ प्रभु हरिमंदरु सोहणा तिसु महि माणक लाल।
* * *

बिनु पउडी गडि किउ चडउ गुर हरि धिआन निहाल।, A.G., Siri Rag, M. 1, Vol. I, p. 84.

⁷⁵ बिनु गुर प्रीति न उपजै हउमै मैलु न जाइ।, A.G., Siri Rag, M. 1, Asthpadi, Vol. I, p. 199.

⁷⁶ गिआनु धिआनु सभु गुर ते होई।, A.G., Rag Vilabalu, M. 1, Asthpadi, Vol. III, p. 305.

⁷⁷ गुर ते मुहु फेरे तिन्ह जोनि भवाइए।

बंधनि बाधिआ आईरे जाईरे।, A.G., Rag Vilabalu, M. 1, Asthpadi, Vol. III, p. 307.

path of his disciple for the liberation from rebirth. Guru Amardas says: whoever turned away from the true *Guru* shall not attain salvation.⁷⁸ Guru Arjan says, “by the instruction of a sad *Guru*, a woman of low caste (*chandal*) become a Brahmin and a sudra woman get the highest position.⁷⁹ Guru Arjan makes the point explicitly, “The true *Guru* is *Niranjan* (God) do not believe that he is in the form of a man.”⁸⁰ Guru Nanak says that the *Guru* is God, ineffable, unsearchable; he who follows the *Guru* comprehends the nature of the universe.⁸¹ As in *Japji* he says, “The *Guru* is *Shiva*, *Guru* is *Vishnu* and *Brahma*. *Guru* is *Parvati*, *Laxmi* and *Saraswati*.”

गुरु ईसरू गुरु गोरखु बरमा गुरु पारबती माई।
जे हउ जाणा आखा नाही कहणा कथनु न जाई।⁸²

He again said in *Rag Basant* that there is the absolute necessity of *Guru*. He says that without *Guru* there is no *Bhakti*, no love, no access to the company of saints and without *Guru* one blind engages in the futile endeavor. But with the *Guru* one's man is purified, for its dirt is purged by the word (*sabad*).⁸³

For Raidas *Guru* is a philosopher's stone, transforming the disciple:

परचै रामु रचै जउ कोई पारसु परसै दुविधा न होई।⁸⁴

By the *Guru*'s grace one can attain Supreme *Brahman* or the dominant aim of his birth.

⁷⁸ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol II, p. 124.

⁷⁹ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol III, p. 288.

⁸⁰ Macloed, *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, op. cit., p. 198

⁸¹ गुरु देवा गुरु अलख अभेवा। त्रिभवन सोझी गुरु की सेवा।, *A.G.*, *Rag Bhairu*, *M. 1*, Vol IV, p. 76; above translation by McLeod, *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, Oxford, Univ. Press, London, 1968, p. 198.

⁸² *A.G.*, *Japaji 5*, Vol. I, p. 37.

⁸³ बिन गुरु भगतिन भाउ होई कि गुरु संतन संगु देई।

बिन गुरु अंधुले धंधु रोई मन गुरुमुखि निरमलु मलु सबदि खोई।, *A.G.*, *Rag Basant*, *M. 1*, Vol. IV, p. 181.

⁸⁴ *A.G.*, *Rag Bhairao*, Vol. IV, p. 174.

Dadu gave more importance to teacher. *Guru* is the mediator of salvation, the ministrant of the word, *Sataguru*, the divine master. In the beginning of the *sakhi* he pays respect and honour to the *Sataguru*:

दादू नमो नमो निरंजनं ,नमस्कार गुरु देवतः।
वंदनं सर्व साधवा ,प्रणामं पारंगतः॥⁸⁵

Guru is the immaterial person who making plain the way of approach to God.⁸⁶ He awakens the sleeping soul of his disciple and gave instruction and guidance and by the key he opened every door.⁸⁷ He again said that the *Sataguru* can make a beast to a man; the man becomes a saint, the saint a God and the God very *Niranjana*.

दादू पसु माणस करै ,माणस थै सिध होई।
दादू सिध थै देवता ,देव निरंजन होइ॥⁸⁸

Dadu offer himself to his *Guru* who set him into the place where there is no fear of death.⁸⁹

Like Dadu, Rajab was bothered by the distinction between a true and a false *Guru*, and a true and false disciple. There was no distinction outwardly between a true and a false *Guru* except by their words. Rajab says that the *satGuru*'s word is the seed which is planted in the soil of soul. A true *Guru* did not believe in miracles (*karamat*) where as a false *Guru* tried to propagate his magic powers through his disciples. We should nurture it with great care if we

⁸⁵ D.B., *Gurudev ko Ang*, Pd. 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Pd. 57.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Pd. 6.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Pd. 12.

⁸⁹ D.G., *Gurudev ko Ang*, Pd. 19.

want to get fruits from it.⁹⁰ Rajab clearly expresses his ideas about the *Guru*, “The presence and the help of the *Guru* are essential; without the *Guru*, the disciple cannot even think of entering the path leading towards divine vision. The *Guru* has to explain and ‘reveal’ the meaning hidden in the words.

सिजदा पूरे पीर कों गुर ग्यातहि डंडौत।
रजब भै भगवंत कै सर्व आतमा नौत।⁹¹

Rajab also seems in the favor of true *Guru*. He uses the metaphor of a swan (*hansa*)⁹² for him. He says that the unity of *maya* and mind is like the unity of water and milk and like *hansa* my *Guru* can break up this union

माया पांणी दूध मन। मिले सु मुहकम जान।
जन रदब बलि हंस गुरु। सोध लई सो सधि।⁹³

Like other saints he says *Guru* is greater than God because only he is able to liberate the *jiva* from the cage of body. He further says that the recitation of the Name is useless without a *Guru*.⁹⁴ Rajab for the instance frequently refers to Dadu by name⁹⁵

Jambhoji says that *Guru* is the most adorable person according to the Indian culture. Indian society believes that *Guru* is himself *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesha*. *Guru* is greater than God. He says that the words of *Guru* destroy the web of *maya*. As the luster remove the stain from iron.

⁹⁰ *Sarbangi Guru Shishya Nidan Nirvan Ko Anga*, Pd. 38.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, *Gurudeva Ko Anga*, Pd. 2, 12; *Sanjog Vijog Mahatma Ko Anga*, Pd. 1.

⁹² According to the legend, the *hansa* bird, sporting in the Mansarovar Lake, can separate milk mixed with water. For more detail example about this symbol, see Vaudiville, Vaudeville, *Kabir*, Vol. 1, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1974, p. 206.

⁹³ *Sarbangi, Grudeva ko Anga*, Pd. 31.

⁹⁴ *Sarbangi, Sanjog Vijog Mahatma, Ko Anga Pd.* 41.

⁹⁵ *Sarbangi Guru Shishya Nidan Nirvan Ko Anga*, Pd. 14.

गुरु ध्याईयरे. जानी तोडत मोहा।
अति पुरसांणी छीजत लोहा।⁹⁶

Further

लूंकडिये को खोज फिरन्ता,
सुण सेवन्ता खोज सुरह को पायो।⁹⁷

He removes the darkness of ignorance and lead up to light of knowledge. Without *Guru* one can never attain salvation. In Jambhoji's view *Guru* deserved highest position; he believes in true *Guru* and emphasis its use in everyone's life.

Concept of Maya (Illusion)

S.N. Dasgupta says that the word *maya* was used first in the *Rig-Veda* in the sense of supernatural power and wonderful spirit, at another place he again says that in the early *Pali Buddhist* writings it occurs only in the sense of deception or deceitful conduct. In later times *Vedanta* also describe *Maya* as being made up of *Sattava*, *rajas* and *Tamas*.⁹⁸ Upanishads use it in the sense of false knowledge. *Maya* is to be understood in the sense of obstruction to the divine attainment, and not as an objective reality. The word is used in a practical sense and not understood as the cosmic illusion which makes all creation unreal.

Maya is the power over which we have no control, which holds us in its grip and making us helpless to avoid doing what we want to do. In the *Advaita* of Shankaracharya the phenomenal world of nature and all beings which have

⁹⁶ *J.B, Sb. 1.*

⁹⁷ *J.B, Sb. 55.*

⁹⁸ Dasgupta, Dasgupta, S.N., *History of Indian Philosophy*, 5 Vols. Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1975. Vol. I, pp. 96, 469, 470, 492.

no real existence emanate from *maya*. Kabir concept of *maya* was based on Shankaracharya's concept with a minor difference i.e. while Shankara believed that *maya* is not real or unreal, Kabir accept its existence. He used the term *maya* which he borrows from the Hinduism, in the sense of an evil force, which alienates man from God. Macauliffe use the word *mammon*⁹⁹ to interpret *maya*, because it impresses man that they are not released from the trap of the *karma*. *maya* is presented as an enchanter or a harlot (*papini, mohini*) who weaves a web of illusion around the soul.¹⁰⁰ Kabir says, "*maya* is the huge tree yielding the three kinds of fruits (the *gunas*). Its branches are sorrow and distress. This tree of *maya* is shadeless and the fruit it yields is tasteless and creates a burning sensation in the body. *Maya* is beyond human understanding and its nature can't be known, it is like a chameleon and keeps changing each and every moment like the blowing wind.

Kabir criticizes *maya* many times in his preaching. He uses the metaphor of woman for *maya*. Self is neither able to enjoy her fully nor reject it. The force of *maya* implies clinging to life and world. It dominates the mind and keeps the soul away from the Supreme. He says that *maya* is clever beguiler, full of charm and always in the search of her victims.

माया महा ठगिनि हम जानी।¹⁰¹

Kabir again says that *maya* is the cause of sufferings of human being. It is a greatest cheat who cheats even Gods and Goddess, saints and sages so what to say about common people.

⁹⁹ Keay, F.E., *Kabir and his Followers*, Mittal Publication, Delhi, 1931, rpt. 1995, p.77.

¹⁰⁰ K.G (Trigunayat) *Mya ko Ang*, Pd. 2, 6.

¹⁰¹ K.G. (Trigunayat), *Mya ko Ang* Pd. 2.

मीठी मीठी माया तजी न जाई।
अग्यांनीं पुरिष कों भोली भोली खाई।¹⁰²

It attracts the world and fills up it with the power of three *gunas*, and like a whore has new lover every night. Kabir says that the attraction of *maya* is very high he wants to get rid of it but he can't; only *Ram* can remove the trap of this *maya* or illusion.

माया तज् तजी नही जाइ।
फिर फिर माया मो लपटाइ।¹⁰³

Nanak did not accept *maya* as cosmic illusion like *Vedantists*. Nanak says that entire creation is God's *maya*:

सरब जोति रूप तेरा दखिया सगल भवन तेरी माया।¹⁰⁴

But in the contrast God is true and His creation is false. *Maya* is called as deceit, it is a snare:

बाबा माइया रचना धोहु अंध नामु बिसारिया ना तिसु एह न
ओहु।¹⁰⁵

Maya, basically untruth, is only a worldly affection, for the desire to find the things of the world, that man's great allurements lies yielding to this allurements and then he involve into untruth or *maya*, and the result is the separation from Truth or God and continued transmigration in this world. *maya* is a fraud (*kapat*), deceit (*chhal*), untruth (*jhooth*), a snare (*jaal*), it brings man into duality (*duvidha*) and man can't go to Truth.¹⁰⁶ Man should choose either

¹⁰² K.G. (Das), *Pd.* 232

¹⁰³ K.g., (Trigunayat), Rag Gaudi, *Pd.* 84.

¹⁰⁴ A.G., Rag Asawari, *M. 2.* Vol. II, p. 43; Rag Gauri Asthpadi, *M.1.* Vol. I, p. 626.

¹⁰⁵ A.G., Rag Siri, *M. 1.* Vol. I, p. 78.

¹⁰⁶ A.G., Rag Majh, Asthpadi *M. 1.* Vol. I, p. 327.

maya or Truth. If he choose bodily appetites like gold, silver, women, horses, sweets, meats (these are all the lust of the flesh) there will be no room.¹⁰⁷

Nanak said that by the net of *maya* man forget the name of God he only waste his time in the fulfillment of his desires.¹⁰⁸ In *A.G* there are several references which shows that *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Mahesha* are also not free from the *Trigunamai Maya*. Guru Amardas says:

ब्रह्म विसन्नु महेसु वीचारी। त्रैगुण बधक मुकति निरारी।¹⁰⁹

In short he wants to say that Gods and *maya* both are creation of *Parmatama* and these Gods are also depend on this *maya* and its *lila*. Gurus say *maya* is a servant (*dasi*) of the Supreme.¹¹⁰

Raidas believes that *maya* is the only reason for the separation of *jiva* from *Brahman*. He called *maya* as a complicate thing (*jatil*), because it attracted the whole world either they are gods, sages, or men. He emphasizes *maya* and its power in these words:

बरजि हो बरजिवी उतले माया।
जग खेया महाप्रबल सबही बस करिये,
सुर नर मुनि भरमाया।¹¹¹

To remove the trap of *maya* he says that the one should recite the name of *Ram*:

कहे रविदास राम जपि रसना, माया कैसे संग रहै रे।¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ *A.G.*, Rag Siri, *M. 1*, Vol. 1, p. 79; Siri Rag, *M. 1*, Vol. IV, p. 79; Rag Sortha, *M. 1*, Vol. II, p. 678.

¹⁰⁸ *Sant Bani Sangharh*, Khandit prati, Velvider Press, Prayag, p. 53. (here after *S.B.S.*).

¹⁰⁹ *A.G.*, Rag Maru Solah, *M. 3*, Vol. 3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p148; *A.G.*, Rag Ramkali, *M. 5*, Vol. 3, p. 524.

¹¹¹ *R.B.*, *Pd.* 33.

¹¹² *R.B.*, *Pd.* 22.

Dadu personified *maya* as a cruel tempter who lures men to their ruin, and is endowed with familiar attributes of a “personal devil.”¹¹³ It has destroyed world and making it forget the name of *Ram*, even in malicious aspects, *maya* is found to have its source in God ¹¹⁴ because *maya* is the power Supreme it sports on the desire of God. Dadu calls *maya* as a witch, because those who depart in the company of *maya* return not.

माया के सँगे जे गये .ते बहुरि न आये।
दादू माया डाकिणी, इन केते खाये।¹¹⁵

At another place he called it as a female snake and *Ram-Mantra* (name of *Ram*) as an eagle that destroys it.

दादू खाये साँपणी, क्योँ करि जीवें लोग।
राम मंत्र जन गारडी, जीवें यहि संजोग।

Like Kabir he says that *maya* subdued the God men, sages and *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* also. But it could not attract the saint because it is the slave of saints.

माया बरिणि जीव की, जिनी को लावै प्रीति।
माया देखै नरक करि, यहु संतत की रीति।¹¹⁶

Rajab also personified *maya* as woman. He says that it is of two types; one is *Vidhya Maya* (knowledge) and other is *Avidhya Maya* (ignorance) which dominate the mind of the *jiva*. It also beguiled to the sages. He says this world

¹¹³ Orr, op.cit., p.154.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, Chaturvedi, *Dadu Granthawali*, Maya ko Ang, 79, p.136.

¹¹⁵ D.B, Maya ko Ang, 24, p.129.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 102.

is real, yet it is also called *maya*; it is illusion if it is not taken by man for what it reality is: contingent, impermanent and full of snares, which lead the devotee on the path of destruction.¹¹⁷ Everything is said to be colored by *maya*:

पंच एक पचीस उभै कौमाया माषी षाड़।
ब्रह्म अगनि संजोग तापते अजरी तहां न जाड़।¹¹⁸

Man remains surrounded by *maya*; what really matters in his response to it. If he perceives God in this world, he is on the way to salvation.¹¹⁹ The true devotee, however, manages to escape from its snares.

माया मोह न राखहीं। लैहि घेसरो हाथ।
किरिया करही कपार की तिनसौं कैसौ साथ।¹²⁰

Rajab says that *maya* is very cruel, it enamors the whole. It enchanted the mind to *Brahma* and *Shiva* too. The great saints and sages also defeated by her in other words it is said that *maya* runs her monarchy on this world, only the person who follows *Ram* can defeat her. Rajab says that illusion does not leave the *rishis*, *sadhu*, and *sadhakas*. It is immortal never die and it never loses her power even it burn.

Rajab says that it has a great quality that she always mutes. *Jnanai* never existed by its attraction. They are like the sun which is always red either in the beginning, middle or in the end. Darkness never touches it; same as the saint live in this world but the ignorance never touch him.

¹¹⁷ *The Hagiographies of Anantadas*, p.314

¹¹⁸ *Sarbangi*, Brahman Agni ko Anga, 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 29.6.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*. Bikati ko Anga, Pd. 52.

Concept of Jiva (Soul)

Saints believed that Atman or soul is the part (*ansh*) of Supreme soul. There is no difference between them in spite of this that the *jiva* is to be bond with the worldly cause. Soul is formless, bondless, and beyond all changes. Soul and *Brahman* are the parts of a single force which are separated by *maya* and it is throw aside which would be reunited as such. He says:

पानी ही तै हिम भया हिम है गया बिलाई।
जो कछु था सोई भया अब कछु कहा न जाई॥¹²¹

Further

जल में कुंभ कुंभ में जल है बाहरि भीतरि पानी।
फूटा कुंभ जल जल ही समाना, यहु तत कथो गियानी।¹²²

According to Tarachand. “both Kabir and Jili seems to mean, that soul (*jiva or ruh*) is the object of divine knowledge, God as the centre of soul, is the father, yet God becomes the object of knowledge and therefore the son of soul.”¹²³ Kabir at another place says that soul is like the drop in ocean, it cannot be separated, he also gives the example of his weaving profession to describe it, he says soul is ever living it has no attachment with this body, it leaves the cage of body at a certain time, “this body is like a garment which must wear out. So why we should attach to it.”

In the *A.G* it is said that the creation of *jiva* depends on the *Hukum* or ‘Divine Will’ of *Paramatma*. In *Rag Gaudi* Nanak said that *jiva* came in the existence by the will of God:

¹²¹ K.G. (Das), Introduction, p. 38.

¹²² K.G. (Das), *Pd.* 45: खलिक खलक खलक में खलिक, सब घट रहौ समाई, *Ibid*, *Pd.* 51.

¹²³ *Influence of Islam*, p.156..

हुकुमे आवै हुकुमे जाई। आगै पाछै हुकमि समाई।¹²⁴

By His will all animals came into existence, the great and the small, the excellent and the degraded, by His command joy and sorrows were assigned to all, and by the same power future happiness was prepared for the good; birth and death and all things were appointed by Him. Soul is the part of Supreme soul which is also immortal and infinite, yet *jiva* is infinite but it is not separate existence. These are like pearls in a string as the followers of a garland.¹²⁵ Guru Amardas said that these *jivas* are like wives and He is the 'Husband' of all.¹²⁶ The Guru gives much description about the mastership of the *Parabrahman* on the *jiva*. Guru Arjan says that God is the sustainer of the *jiva*. He created and watches over the universe and fulfills the desires of human being like food; water etc. because *jiva* is notable for it itself.¹²⁷ The soul is deluded by *maya* and ruined by the demands of greed; the man spent his whole life but never get satisfaction.¹²⁸ He forgets the *Prabrahman* and does many wrong deeds and result is that he is trapped in the cycle of rebirth. Then he has born the form of snakes, trees, birds and other insects.¹²⁹ Nanak said that *jiva* is like the fish which is captured in the net and the *jiva* captured by the *maya*.

जिउ मछली तिउ माणसा पवै अचिंता जालु।¹³⁰

¹²⁴ हुकमी होवनि आकार हुकुम नकरिया जाईहुकमी होवनि जीअ हुकमि मिले बडिआई। , नानक हुकमै जै बूझे त हउमै कहै न कोई। *A.G., Japji*, Paudi 2, vol.1, p.35.

¹²⁵ *A.G., Rag Ramkali, Gheru, M.5, Vol 3, p.133.*

¹²⁶ *A.G., Rag Vadhans ki Var, M.3, Vol 3, p. 668.*

¹²⁷ *A.G., Rag Sorthi, M. 5, Vol. 2, p. 740.*

¹²⁸ *A.G., Rag jetsari, M. 5, Vol. 2. p. 960.*

¹²⁹ *A.G., Rag Gaudi Cheti, M. 1. Vol. 1, p. 451.*

¹³⁰ *A.G., Rag Siri, M. 1, Vol. 1, p. 186.*

It seems that Raidas was much influenced by the *Advaita* system Shankaracharya because his philosophy is based on the *Advaitavad*. He says that there is no different between both soul and Supreme soul. He says:

कनक कुंडल सूत पट जुजा, रजु भुअंग भम जैसा।
जल तरंग पाहन प्रतिमा ज्यों, ब्रह्म जीव द्विति ऐसा।¹³¹

Dadu also emphasizes on the unity of the human soul with the Supreme soul. He says that the soul is in the bondage; when set free it is even as Brahman. Only the cause of *maya* it seems two but in reality there is no second. The soul recognizes itself when it finds a true *Guru*.¹³² Dadu profound sense of God as the one alone real would seem to put an infinite distance between the creature and His creator:

दादू मरे सो जीव है, रमता राम न होई।
जामण मरण वे रहित है, मेरा साहिब सोई।¹³³

(That which is born and dies is the soul: it is not the omnipresent Ram. He who is immune from birth and death, the same is my master.)

W.G Orr says, "It is equally clear, however, that a real distinction is implied, not only in isolated expressions which might be freely cited from *bani*, but in Dadu's whole conception of the relation to the human soul to God. Obviously there can be no union in the sphere of absolute identity. Moral and spiritual oneness involves some kind of distinction, relative or absolute, between the two made one."¹³⁴

¹³¹ R.B., Pd. 25.

¹³² D.G., *Gurudeva Ko Ang* 125, p. 13.

¹³³ D.B., *Pichhavan ko Ang*. 15; Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystics*, op. cit., p. 158.

¹³⁴ Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystics*, op.cit., p. 157.

According to Dadu “soul” of a man as a weak mortal, easily hold by *maya*, not the divine spirit within him, which is imperishable. But behind all this idea of God as the eternal and abiding, in contrast to the feeble, perishable souls He has created.¹³⁵

Rajab used the word ‘*atam*’ to denote the human self yearning after divines self:

प्रभु प्रभाकर अंस है आतम तिनु तनि आगि।
रजब संकट सोव ते सोई मुक्त जब जागि॥¹³⁶

Rajab says *maya* is like fire, *Brahman* is like an ocean and the *jiva* soul is like a drop of water. If the drop of water fell into fire it lost its form while it fall into ocean it mixed into it and get a long life. When *jiva* is attracted by *maya*, it gets births on rebirths and opposite it if *jiva* attains Supreme by devotion it became *Brahman* itself and be free from the cycle of birth and death. Rajab refers to the whole personality of man with the terms spirit and body, as in *jiva* and *kaya*,¹³⁷ *jiva* and *sharir*¹³⁸, Rajab says that who never remember the name of God, no interest in *satsang* or *kirtan* is always stay out from the *Brahman*. Name of Ram is very important for the liberation of *jiva*. Rajab believes that ignorance is the cause of the distance between *jiva* and *Brahman*, *jiva* is the servant of the body not only in the human body but the 84 *lakh yonis*, so it forget the way which goes to the *Brahman*.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 158.

¹³⁶ *Sarbangi*, Brahma Agni ko Anga, Pd. 4.

¹³⁷ Ibid, Gurudev ko Anga, Pd. 32.

¹³⁸ Ibid, Priti akhandit ko Anga, Pd. 10.

II. Theory of *Saguna* Saints

In the *Saguna* aspect, God appears in a human form making it easier for us to come closer. There have been divine incarnations in every age to show people the path of *Nirguna God*. Lord Krishna speaks about *Saguna God* in the *Bhagavad Gita*:¹³⁹

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मनं सृजाम्यहम्॥

(“Whenever righteousness is on the decline and foul is increasing I appear in the material world. Time to time I come into being to protect good, destroy bad and consolidate righteousness.”)

There is only one God who is formless. It is the human mind that has created different images and forms of God. God is known as: Holy Father, Allah, *Īshvara*, Divine Will, Cosmic Principle, Universal Consciousness, Love, Supreme Self, etc. There are probably as many images and names for God as there are people on the planet. Each person has an impression of God according to their own level of spiritual development, and form ones own mental image of God. Everyone expresses their worship for the Divine in their own way.

Concept of *Brahman* (Supreme Soul)

Vallabhacharya’s philosophy centered round the conception of one God, *Krishna*. He looked upon *Krishna* as the *Purushottama* and *Paramananda*. Interpreting with the almost literalism the ancient formula “All this is *Brahman*,” Vallabha emphasizes on the relation of both soul and world with

¹³⁹ *Bh. Gita* .A. 4, Sl. 7.

the Supreme Spirit. *Krishna* is the highest *Brahman*. His hand and feet are not made of ordinary matter (*Aprakrika*), but celestial. His body consists of *sat* (existence); *chit* (Intelligence); *ananda* (joy). He is called *Purushottama*. As the most excellent of all beings and has all attributes which are not ordinary but celestial. *Krishna* is therefore the highest joy.¹⁴⁰

The idea of *Akshara Brahman* received full treatment for the first time from Vallabha. *Akshara Brahman* is lower than *Prabrahman*. He appears in various forms according to different aspects of the *Brahman*. When the Lord wants to give *moksha* through *jnana*, He manifests four forms viz. *Akshara*, *Kala* (time), *Karma* (action), and *Suabhava* (nature). *Akshara* then appears in the forms of *Prakti* (primal matter) and *Purusha* (soul); and this *Prakti* develops through different stages into the universe, and is therefore called the causes.

Chaitanya's *Krishna* is Supreme Being. He believed in one personal God and called him as *Bhagwan*, *Hari*, *Vasudeva* and *Krishna* etc. He is eternal without a beginning and without an end. He is infinite in nature, power and attributes. All His supernatural powers and attributes are eternally developed in Him in the highest degree, as implied by the word '*Brahman*' which means absolute greatness.¹⁴¹ We can see Chaitanya's doctrine by this *sloka*:

अराध्यो भगवान् ब्रजेशतनयस्त दाम वृंदावन-
रम्या काचिदुपासना व्रजवधूर्वर्गेण या कल्पिता।
श्रीमद्भागवतं प्रमाणमयत्नं प्रेमा पुमर्थो महान-
श्री चैतन्यमहाप्रभोमर्तमिदं तत्राग्रहो ना परः।¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *Saints of Northern India*, p. 88.

¹⁴¹ Nath, Radha Govind, 'A Survey Of The Chaitanya Movement', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, op. cit, p. 190.

¹⁴² Mital, Prabhu Dayal, *Chaitanya Mat Aur Brij Sahitya*, Sahitya Sansthan, Mathura, 1962. p. 110.

(“Lord Krishna is only for adoration, Vrindavan is his abode, and devotion (upasana) is the ideal of His worship. Srimad Bhagavata is the authorized scripture and love is the only action (purusharth) of jiva.”)

He is *Sat* (absolute existence), *Chit* (absolute intelligence and non-materiality) and *Ananda* (absolute bliss). From *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*, the last seems to be the substance of *Brahman* or Krishna, and other two of His attributes.¹⁴³ He is source, support and end of the world, the material and the efficient cause of the universe. He is both *Saguna* and *Nirguna* and beyond the influence of time, shape and relativity.¹⁴⁴ His Philosophy is based on *Bhagvata Purana*.

Surdas followed the philosophy of *Suddhadvaita* of Vallabhacharya.

Surdas's *Krishna* is *Parabrahman*.

परब्रह्म तुं कृष्ण हि...

He was incarnated in different forms. According to Surdas He is in three forms as *Sat*, *Chit*, *Anand*. That is why his lord is called *Sachidananda*, *Sadananda* and *Krishna* also. In *Vedanta*, He is called *Bhagwan* or *Nirguna*, and in *Suddhadvaita* He is called *Purushottama*, *Krishna* or *Saguna*:

करनी करुनासिन्धु की कछु कहत न आवै।
कपट हेतु परसै बकी जननी गति पावै।।
वेद उपनिषद जस कहै निर्गुण ही बतावै।
सोईन सगुण होई नन्द के दांमरी बंधवावै।।¹⁴⁵

Surdas's *Brahman* is minute the atom and greatest among great. *Gop* and *Gopies*, trees and vines, cows and oxes of the Brij are the parts of *Krishna*.

¹⁴³ Nath, Radha Govind, 'A Survey of the Chaitanya Movement', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, op. cit, p. 190.

¹⁴⁴ Bhagi, M.L., *Medieval Indian Culture and Thought*, The Indian Pub., Ambala Cantt., 1965, p. 181.

¹⁴⁵ *Sur Nirnaya*, op.cit, p. 186.

Radha is Supreme among them. *Krishna* can't get his *Paramananda Swarupa* (highest joy) without *Radha*.

According to Tulasidas *Ram* is the light of the universe; He is *Parmananda*. *Ram*, the son of King Dashrath is the incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*. Tulasi used the name *Ram* both for *Saguna* and *Nirguna Brahman*. God, he states, is not only of the *Nirguna* but also *Saguna*, by nature and attributes. "Both the *Nirguna* and the *Saguna* are vary forms of *Brahma*."¹⁴⁶ So in the words we can call *Ram* as *Saguna Ram* and *Nirguna Ram*.

ब्रह्म अनामय अज भगवंता। व्यापक अजित अनादि अनंता।¹⁴⁷

Bhushundi describe *Ram* to Garuna as:

ब्रह्म निरीह बिरज अबिनासी।¹⁴⁸

Since the beginning of philosophical thought of how the *Nirguna Brahman* became *Saguna* baffled man's intellect. This impotent metaphysical problem is presented by in the form of a dialogue between God *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvati* in *Balkanda* in *Ram-Charit-Manas*:

Mata Parvati asks:

"O Lord, sages say that *Ram* is *Brahman* without origin; is he the same *Ram*, who is the son of the king of *Ayodhya*, or is he same other unborn, unqualified, and invisible Being? If he is the king's son, how can he be *Brahman*? The prince is distracted by the loss of his wife. Seeing his conduct, and greatness, My intellect is confused."

¹⁴⁶ Tulsidas, *Ram-Charit-Manasa*, Balkand, Cho. 23/1. Gita Press Gorakhpur, 230th edition, 2009. (hereafter as R.C.M.).

¹⁴⁷ R.C.M., Sundarkand, Doha. 38/1.

¹⁴⁸ R.C.M., Uttarkand, Cho. 72/4.

Lord *Shiva* replies:

“There is no difference between the qualified and unqualified Brahman, say the sages, the Puranas, the learned and the Vedas. He, who is formless and invisible, takes form through the love of his devotees. As water is identical with ice and hail-stone.”¹⁴⁹

Ram is the cause of the existence and the corrosion of the Universe:

उमा राम की भुक्ति बिलासा। होइ बिस्व पुनि पावि नासा।¹⁵⁰

Concept of *Jiva* (Soul)

According to Vallabhacharya *jiva* is the part of *Brahman*. The one primal soul was not joyful because he was alone and desiring to be many, He Himself became the inanimate world, the individual soul, and the inward controlling soul. These sprang from him like sparks from a burning fire and are his parts.¹⁵¹

विस्फलिंगा इवाग्नेर्हिर जडजीवा विनिर्गताः
संदशेन जडा पूर्व चिदंशेनेतरे परं।¹⁵²

The soul is neither created, nor does it ever die. It is only the body which is created and destroyed. As Lord *Krishna* says in *The Gita*:

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यःशाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे।¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹Handoo, Chandra Kumari, ‘Tulasidas And His Teachings’, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol.4, p.399; The Place of Tulsi Das in North Indian Devotional Tradition, F. R. Allchin, *JRAS*, Oct.1966, no 3/4., p127.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, Lankakand, 34/4, p.790.

¹⁵¹ *Vaishnavism Saivism.*, p. 77.

¹⁵² Above distich has been cited by Dr. Roop Narayana, *Brajbhasha ke Krishna Kavya main Madhurya Bhakti*, Youngman & Compnay, Delhi, 1962, p. 107.

¹⁵³ *Bh. Gita.*, A. 2, Sl. 20.

Soul is atomic – it is neither omnipresent nor does it vary in size according to the body it inhabits. The lord, in order to bring about variety, which is essential for the sake of pleasure, makes the souls can be grouped into three classes viz. (i) those that are busy with worldly matters, (ii) those that follows the Vedic path according to the letter of the Vedas, and (iii) those that worship the Lord engendered only through divine grace. These three types are generally described by Vallabha as *pravah*, *maryada*, and *pusti* respectively.¹⁵⁴ Yet soul is atomic in size and infinite but the slave of *maya*. By the influence of *maya* it forgets *Brahman* and this is the cause of its suffering. But when he appeals to *Krishna*, His *Bhakti* destroys his impediments and love appears in him as the result of chanting of *Krishna's* name.

Chaitanya says that soul is of two kinds: (i) first is free soul which is ever free called *nitya-mukta* and other (ii) which is ever in bondage called *nitya-sansari*. The soul which is free from eternity enjoys the grace of God. The soul which is under the influence of *maya*, turned away from God and so not enjoying His grace.¹⁵⁵

Surdas also seems to follow the thought of Vallabha and Chaitanya about the emergence of *jiva* from the *Brahman*. By the will of *Ishwara jiva* came in the contact of *maya*, it oblivions the God and become dependent, wicked, and forlorn. And when it realizes Him (*Brahman*), by His *Bhakti* and

¹⁵⁴ Bhatt, Govindalal Hargovind, 'The School Of Vallabha', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, op.cit., p. 352.

¹⁵⁵ Premlata, *The Mystics Saints of India Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, Ess Ess publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. 164. (hereafter *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*).

grace it (*jiva*) gets his real stage. Like Vallabha Surdas is also says that *jiva* is the part of *Brahman* and emerged from the sparks from a flam:

ज्ञानी सदा एक रस जाने, ज्ञानी जी अलिप्त कर माने।
आत्म जनम सदा अविनासी, ताको देह मोह बड फाँसी।¹⁵⁶

Surdas divided the kinds of soul into three categories, *Nitya*, *Sansari* and *Mukkta*. He says all the *jiva* are the part of *Krishna*:

सकल तत्व ब्रह्माण्ड देव पुनि माया सब विधि काल।
प्रकति पुरुष श्रीपति नारायण सब हैं अंस गोपाल।।

For Tulasi *jiva* is immortal, blissful and pure in nature. But when *jiva* forgets *Brahman*, it comes under the control of *maya* it transforms like a parrot or a monkey:

ईश्वर अंस जीव अविनासी, चेतन अमल सहज सुखरासी।
सो माया वस भयऊ गुसाई, बँध्यो कीट मरकट की नाई।¹⁵⁷

jiva is under the control of *maya*, which is under the control of God. Tulasi's view on the relationship between God, *jiva* and *maya* becomes clear from the followings verses:

जौं सब कैं रह ग्यान एकरस। ईस्वर जीवहि भेद कहहु कस।।
माया बस्य जीव अभिमानी। ईस बस्य माया गुन खानी।¹⁵⁸

Maya is the cause of the detachment of *jiva* from Almighty. All the description about *jiva* seems that Tulasidas's conception is near to the philosophy of Shankaracharya. Having faith in the philosophy of Shankara, Tulasi says that as pure water becomes impure when it fell down on the earth,

¹⁵⁶ Surdas, *Sur-Sagar.Pd.* 411. ed. Nanddulare, Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi, V.S. 2021.(hereafter as *Sur sagar*).

¹⁵⁷ R.C.M., Uttarkand, *doha* 116/1.2, p. 1010.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 77/3, p. 964.

jiva too becomes impure when it comes in the contact of *maya*.¹⁵⁹ It is like the waves of the ocean which emerge from the ocean and merge into it.

Concept of Maya (Illusion)

Maya is the power of *Ishwar*, it is under the control of Almighty. According to Vallabha, it is the power of Supreme, who brings about the evolution and dissolution of the world. This *maya* is different from *avidhya*, which is responsible for the obscuration of the unity of things and the production of the consciousness of difference.¹⁶⁰

Surdas accept its existence. He says *maya* is the jugglery of three qualities (*Sat*, *Raj* and *Tamas*). It is unreal and the whole universe is also unreal. It is the cause of suffering when *jiva* destroys its bond, he became free from the recycle of birth. Sur called *maya* as *Mohini* (delusion) and *Bhujangni* (female snake):¹⁶¹

Mira represented *maya* as the generalized and classical sins of lust, anger, and greed using animal images. *Maya* as a licentious, greedy, unfaithful woman is an exception rather than the rule¹⁶²

Tulasi did not look upon world as pure illusion as his predecessors did. Tulasi also believes that *maya* is the power of *Brahman*, hence *Ram* is *Mayapati*:

मायापति कृपाल भगवान्।¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ R.C.M., Kishkindhakand, *Cho.*14/3, p. 680

¹⁶⁰ Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 759.

¹⁶¹ *Sur sagar*, Pd. 375.

¹⁶² *Economic and Political Weekly*, 'Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of Bhakti', Vol. 25, 1990, p. 1541. (hereafter as *E.P.W*)

¹⁶³ R.C.M., Uttarkand, *Cho.* 82/3, p. 969

He says everything of this world is affected by *maya* like gods, sages, demons, snakes, and human beings.¹⁶⁴ He identifies *maya* with *Sita*, the inseparable energy of *Ram* which takes incarnation along with Him. He defines *maya* in two forms: 1. *Avidhya Maya* (ignorance) is the cause of illusion and bondage of the *jiva*, and 2. *Vidhya Maya* (knowledge) is the cause of creation and liberation of *jiva*. It creates the world under the impulse of *gunas*. It is inspired by the Lord and has no power of itself.

एक दुष्ट अतिसय दुखरूपा। जा बस जीव परा भवकृपा॥
 एक रचइ जग गुन बस जाके। प्रभु प्रेरित नहिं निज बल
 ताके॥¹⁶⁵

Tulasi says that *Ram* Nam is the only way to get freedom from the trap of *Maya*. *Maya* follows *Ram* because he is the Lord of *maya* which has no capacity of disobedience to Him:

अस कछु समुझि परत रघुराया
 बिनु तब कृपा दयालु, दास-हित मोह न छूटै माया।¹⁶⁶

Concept of *Moksha* (Salvation)

Moksha or salvation can be getting by devotion of *Krishna*. According to Hindu thought liberation is the goal of *jiva* or human soul. The *jiva* trapped by *maya* cannot attain salvation except through the grace of God. Vallabha says that devotion of *Krishna* is the chief means of salvation, though *Jnana* is also useful. By the destruction of *ahanta*, *mamta jiva* became liberal and attain

¹⁶⁴ देव, दनुज, मुनि, नाग, मनुज, सद्य,माया-बिबस बिचारे।, Tulsidas, *Vinaya Patrika*, Eds. Viyogi Hari, Sasta Sahitya Mandal, Delhi, 5th edition, 1994, , Pd. 101, p. 174, (here after as *Vinaya Patrika*).

¹⁶⁵ R.CM, Aranyakand, *Cho*. 15/3, p. 623.

¹⁶⁶ *Vinaya Patrika*, p. 200.

salvation. Vallabha deprecated all kinds of self mortification. The body is the temple of god, and there is no meaning in attempting to destroy it.¹⁶⁷

According to *Vaishnava* liberation can be attained by man when he turns away from outward things, and realizes God (*Krishna*). The goal of a *Vaishnava* of the Chaitanya School is to serve *Krishna* at Vrindavana on attaining salvation. Chaitanya was very close to the greatest importance of the chanting the Lord's name which may take the highest goal.¹⁶⁸

Concept of Jagat (World)

Vallabhacharya says that *jagat* or world is the effect of *Brahman* it is real and non different from Him. It is also created by Him from His own self for the sake of sport (*lila*) like the spark from fire and at last it will merged into Him.¹⁶⁹ The world is therefore as eternal and real as *Brahman* Himself, and its creation and destruction are due to the power of *Brahman*. The world cannot be regarded as an illusory appearance: or it is essentially different from *Brahman*. The relation of cause and effect is one of absolute identity.¹⁷⁰ In *Subodhini* he says as the *Brahman* is the cause of this world, it depends on it, without Him the existence of it as false as the heavenly flower.¹⁷¹

According to the theory of Shankaracharya, the world is an illusion. it has the only existence of God, but the theory of *Gaudiya Sampradaya* the

¹⁶⁷ Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, op.cit. p.760.

¹⁶⁸ Nath, Radha Govind, 'A Survey Of The Chaitanya Movement', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, op. cit p.195.

¹⁶⁹ कृष्णादेव समुदभूतम् लीनं तत्रैव तन्मयम्। *Subodhini* on 10th canto of *Vedastuti*, cited by Roop Narayana, op.cit., p. 108.

¹⁷⁰ Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, op.cit, p. 758.

¹⁷¹ खपुष्पादिसमत्वाद्धि मिथ्याभूतं जगद्यतः, *Subodhini* on 10th canto of *Vedastuti*, cited by Roop Narayana, op.cit., p.108.

world is not illusion. Chaitanya's view is that, despite the world's transitoriness, it is not false; if it was illusion, what would be the purpose of human endeavour which beings to rise themselves. When emancipation is achieved, the world is not destroyed. Only the illusory notion is no more.¹⁷²

Mira says this world is an illusion: everything is impermanent¹⁷³, perishable and meaningless. This world is a turbulent ocean of sorrows and human beings find themselves entrapped from all sides.¹⁷⁴ Like Tulasidas, she says that the happiness of the world offers us is like a mirage, so she abandoned this worldly business and turned to *Hari*. Without Him nothing delighted her.¹⁷⁵

हरि म्हरा जीवण प्राण अधार।

In several verses of *Ram-Charit-Manas*, Tulasi says that animate and inanimate world is a manifestation of *Rama*. and the universe is the cosmic form of *Rama*. In these verses Tulasi seems to follow the *Vishithadvaita* philosophy of Ramanuja. However, at some places, he compares the world with a night or dream. He says that it is *mithya* (false or unreal). Probably, Tulasi called this universe is a mirage (*mrigajala or mrigatrishan*), Here, he seems to follow the philosophy of Sankaracharya. For Tulasi the entire world is the *Lila* of *Ram*:

कोठ कह सत्य झूठ कह कोठ, जुगल प्रबल कोठ मानै।
तुलसिदास परिहरै तीनि भ्रम, सो आपन पहिचानै।¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Premalata, *The Mystic Saints Of India (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)*, Ess Ess Publication, Delhi, 1989, p. 157.

¹⁷³ जग में जीवन थोडा रे, राम कुण करे जंजरा। Sharma. Krishna Dev, *Meerabai-Padawali*, Pd. 196, Reegal Book, Delhi, 1984, p. 262. (hereafter as Meera Padavali)

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, Pd. 195, 197.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, Pd. 3-4.

¹⁷⁶ *Vinaya Patrika*. Pd. 111, p.135

And this world is as transient as smoke palace in sky:

जग नभ-बाटिका रही है फलि-फूलि रे।
धुवाँ कैसे धौरहर देखि तू न भूलि रे।¹⁷⁷

Several Stages of *Bhakti*

In Indian *Bhakti* tradition, there have been various forms in which God is visualized, worshipped and approached by his devotees. These *bhavas* and *rasas* of *Bhakti* are: *Shanta* (quietism), *Dasya* (servitude), *sakhya* (essence of friendship), *vatsalya* (devotee realizes God as his child), *Madhurya* (highest degree of affection). These are five principal *Rasa*.

According to Chaitanya, all methods of worship have worthless result without *Krishna Bhakti*, they can never give strength. God who is all love and joy can be adored only by love. All the rituals of fast and ceremony are useless unless they lead to His love. The fruit of love is the enjoyment of the beatitude of loving. He was the follower of *Krishna* cult with *Radha* and *Krishna*; he became a singer in passionate love of God. He believed that *Bhakti* is the only way to get salvation. Chaitanya's love is based on high spiritual plane. Although he has no faith in rituals, he did not denounce the worship of images.¹⁷⁸ Etymologically, *rasa* means anything that may be tasted or enjoyed. In *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*, it means a thing which is attained with delicious astonishment on account of its heightened sweetness.

Shanta Rasa implies discipline and self control and the cessation of desires; in *Dasya Rasa* devotee believes himself to be a servant of *Krishna*. He

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, Pd. 66, p. 134.

¹⁷⁸ Akbar the Great, p. 88.

constantly gratifies *Krishna* by serving Him with a sense of divinity, honor and glorification. He serves *Krishna* with his restless soul as one serves his master. *Sakhaya Rasa* has the merit of *Shanta Rasa* with *Dasya Rasa* so, it has three merits. It means loving *Krishna* as one would his friend. In the relation of friend there is no distance but in the relationship of master and servant that distance still exists. The fourth *rasa* is *Vatsalya Rasa* in which a devotee realizes God as his child. It has merit of above three qualities. In this a devotee regards himself the patron and as a portage; his service take the form of paternal care. In *Madhurya Rasa*, all the four qualities are present. It is resemble to the love of a man for a woman. Just as in the case of five elements (sky, air, light, water and earth) the qualities of the first fourth are united in the fifth one. Here, the devotee is ever ready to serve, give companionship and complete love to him or her beloved or lover, it is a divine rapture which binds together the worship and the worshipped.¹⁷⁹ Natesan further says, “it is the *Madhurya* love – as embodied in the passionate love of *Radha* and *Krishna* that deserves mention. This according to the *Vaishnava* mystics it is the highest mood of *Bhakti*, implying, as it does, all the great elements of true God-love-faith, absolute trust, service and the abandonment of all notions of self.”¹⁸⁰ As Mira is not a votary of *Madhuryabhava* only. Her devotion to *Krishna* encompasses all *bhavas* except *Vatsalya*.

Shant Bhava is the stage when the devotee, detached from worldly relationship and a calm fixing of mind upon the lord. Mira saw one in all and

¹⁷⁹ *Lives of the Saints of Bengal (Chaitanya To Vivekanand)*, 2nd edn., Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1949. p.27, (hereafter *Saints of Bengal*); *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, p. 201.

¹⁸⁰ *Saints of Bengal*, p. 27.

all in one. For her the entire world is *Krishna* and *Krishna* is the entire world.¹⁸¹ *Dasya Bhava*, the love for a humble servant for the master and the undertones of slavery that pervades her couplets however should not be misunderstood as female submission. Mira most humbly addresses herself as *dasi* (servant) of *Krishna*:¹⁸²

म्हाणै चाकर राखांजी, गिरधारी लाला चाकर राखांजी।

Shakhya Bhava is cultivation of friendship with the lord. In this *bhava*, the relationship between the devotee and the lord is trustful and comradeship; the example is seen as the cowherd boys of Vrindavan and *Krishna*. In her poems, Mira expresses *Krishna* on terms of equality born of a feeling of intimacy as a friend: ¹⁸³*Madhurya Bhava*¹⁸⁴ is the stage of emotional devotion in which the devotee considers him/herself as one of the *gopis* of Vrindavan taking part in the love sport with Lord *Krishna*. Mira attained the true stage of devotion. She loved her Lord with feminine passion:

चुणि चुणि कलियाँ सेज बिछायो, नखसिख पहरयो साज।¹⁸⁵

Further:

स्याम मिलण सिंगार सजावाँ सुखरी सेज बिछावाँ।¹⁸⁶

She visualizes *Krishna* in varied forms- as a lord creator, saviour of the people of Briaj, beloved of the women of Briaj, a cowherd, a flute player, a companion

¹⁸¹ *Meera-Padawali, Pd.* 140.

¹⁸² *Ibid, Pd.* 153.

¹⁸³ *Ibid, p Pd.* 7-8.

¹⁸⁴ Kabir and Dadu the follower of *Nirguna Bhakti* also advocates *virah*, an aspect of *Madhurya Bhava* or *Bhakti*, as the supreme path of devotion. He not only uses the voice of the *virahini* himself but generalizes femaleness to God. God is the only male, all humans are female. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 'Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of *Bhakti*', Vol. 25, 1990, p.1538.

¹⁸⁵ *Meera-Padawali, Pd.* 150.

¹⁸⁶ *Meera-Padawali, Pd.* 15.

and a lover. She lost herself in the ecstasy of Krishna's devotion. Her acquaintance with music and dancing gave her songs a divine fervour¹⁸⁷. But in her pomes we find the touch of separation, she identifies herself as *viraha diwani*, the woman who has become mad by the suffering because of separation from her lover.¹⁸⁸

Tulasi emphasized the nine types of *Bhakti* in Aranyakanda, when Lord Rama meets Sabri, a woman ascetic of forest tribes, who greatly devoted to Him. To Sabri he describes nine kinds of *Bhakti*.

*“The first kind of Bhakti is association with Saints and a love for the stories of my life is the second the third kind of Bhakti is service in all humility to the guru, and the fourth is to sing my glories with a pure heart. Firm faith in Me with the repetition of Mantra is a path well known to the Vedas and is the fifth category; control the saints conduct, aversion to too much activity, and the sixth is treading in the path of holy once make up. to see the world as pervaded by me, While looking upon Sadhus as greater than Me, is the seventh to the satisfied with what one gets and never to see faults of others make up the eight. And simplicity of heart guileless behavior towards all, trust in Me and to be neither elated nor depressed, whatever, constitute the ninth.”*¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ EPW, p.1547.

¹⁸⁸ Meera-Padawali, Pd. 130, 95.

¹⁸⁹ R.C.M., Aranyakanda, Do. 35/1-3, p. 652. प्रथम भगति संतन्ह की सेवा। दूसरी रति मम कथा प्रसंगा गुरु पद पंकज सेवा तीसरि भगति अमान। चौथी भगति मम गुन गन करइ कपट तजिगान। मंत्र जाप मम दृढ बिस्वासा। पंचम भजन सो वेद प्रकासा। छठ दम सील विरति बहु करगा। निरत निरंतर सज्जन धरमा। सातवाँ सम मोहि मय जग देखा। मोर्ते संत अधिक करि लेखा। आठवें जथा लाभ संतोषा। सपनेहुँ नहि देखइ परदोषा। नवम सरल सब सन छलहीना मम भरोसहिँय हरष न दीना।



Chapter – 5

A Brief Biography of *Bhakti* and *Sufi* Saints of Northern India during 15th an 16th Centuries

Kabir

The personality of Kabir is very interesting and mysterious. There has been a great deal of controversy around the question of his date, but most probably he was born in 1398 A.D. It is a well known tradition of legendary account¹ that he was born to a *Brahmin's* daughter who was a virgin widow. But she left her child on a lotus flower near a pond known as *Lahar Talao*, near Banaras,² from where he was found by Niru and Nima a Muslin weaver couple, who adopted him³ gave him the name of Kabir, “great” an epithet of Allah.⁴

He was married and had two children, a son named Kamal and a daughter Kamali. He lived life of a simple householder and earned livelihood through following father's profession of weaving. Like his date of birth, there is also controversy about his death. A Legend says that he died in Maghar in 1518 A.D. He was a disciple of Ramananda.⁵ It is said that after his death, there was a dispute among Hindus and Muslims over disposal of his body. Hindus wanted to burn it and Muslims wished to bury it. But when the sheet covering the dead body was removed, nothing was found but the heap of flowers; the

¹ For more legendary accounts about his birth see Hedaytullah Khan, *Kbir: Apostle of Hindu Muslim Unity*, op. cit., pp. 157-162.

² As regards the *Lahar Talao*; or Talab, Macauliffe told this place is about a mile and a quarter long, and an eighth of a mile broad. At the time of his visit in December, it was, except for some rushes here and there, covered with a russet weed on which aquatic birds alighted and sported. On the margin of the lake is a small temple sacred to Kabir. It is maintained by some monks, who according to Macauliffe, are proud of their knowledge of *Sanskrit* Literature. Hard by is the tomb of Niru, Kabir's foster father, see *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 123.

³ Keay, F.E., *Kabir and his Followers*, p. 9; *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, pp. 122-23.

⁴ From the same root as Akbar, cited by Carpenter, J.E., *Theism in Medieval India*, Williams & Norgate, London, 1921, p. 457; also see *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, pp. 123-124

⁵ Fani, Musin, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib or School of Manners*, tr. Sheba and Troyer, Paris, 1943. p. 187.

Hindus took half were burnt in Banaras and remaining half was taken by Muslims to bury at Maghar.

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 were of no importance for the real spiritual welfare of the individuals.⁶ His sayings are collected in the *Bijak* and most of them are also found in *Adi Granth* of the Sikhs.

Dhanna

Dhanna, one of the most prominent saints of medieval India was a *Jat* by birth. He himself says:

इह विधि सुनि कै जाटरो उठि भगति लागी।
मिलै प्रतखि गुसाईआ धन्ना बडभागा।⁷

Both Nabhadass and Anantdas accepted that he was the disciple of Ramananda. From his couplet found in *A.G* it seems that he was highly influenced by the *bhakta* like Namdev, Kabir, Raidas and Sena. He also chose the path of *bhakti* and to attain the God.⁸ It showed that he came in contact of Ramananda.

He was born in 1415 A.D. in Dhaun in Tonk territory, about 20 miles from the Deoli cantonments in Rajputana.⁹ Dhanna was the great devotee of God at the very early age. He worshiped with fully devotion a black stone (*Saligram*), which he got from a Brahmin. It is said that God Himself appeared

⁶ *Influence of Islam*, p. 121.

⁷ *A.G.*, Rag Asa, Bani Dhanna Bhagat ji ki, Vol. II, p. 413.

⁸ *H.S.B.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 147.

⁹ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 106.

to him and urged him to satisfy his appetite.¹⁰ According to Anantdas's *Parchai* it seems that Lord *Krishna* appeared before him for taking food on his obstinacy.¹¹ Thus we see that in the beginning, he was the follower of *Saguna bhakti* but later on became the follower of *Nirguna Brahman*.

He was a hard working farmer but spent most of his time in devotion and serving the saints by hook or crook. Once he bestowed his wheat-seeds which he had for the ploughed field for the satisfaction of the some holy men. In return God flourished his field without seeds, so much better than the fields of his neighbors. His neighbors came to congratulate him but he thought that it is only jeers and jest, but when he visited the field he found that people had rightly said. Since then, his field is still called *Dhanna Bhagat ka Khet*¹²

Sena

According to Nabhadass, he was a barber at the court of the king of Bandhavgarh¹³ and lived towards the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century. He was a great devotee of his time. One day when he was going to do his duty for the king, he met some holy men on the way, he thought that his first duty is to serve them, and he gave them consecrated and secular food to relieve their body and soul. In such activities he forgot his royal duty, but the Lord save him from the anger of the king. When he came to the king and began to apologize for his delay, the king was surprised and said, "Thou hast only just

¹⁰ For more detail see *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.VI, p. 107.

¹¹ *Hagiographies of Anantdas* p. 109.

¹² *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, p. 108.

¹³ *H.S.B.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 126.

gone after the usual service to me; why apologize?” Sena replied, ‘I have not been here. Perhaps thy Majesty sayest so to excuse my absence.’ When the king came to know all that, he at once fell into the feet of the saint and called him as his *Guru*.¹⁴

According to Nabhadass he was the disciple of Ramananda. Parshuram Chaturvedi said that he was the contemporary of Ramananda and the previous part of his life was spent with the *Barkari Sampraday* of South and when he later on came to North he came in the close contact of Ramananda.¹⁵ In *Adi Grantha* he himself said that Ramananda was his *Guru*.¹⁶

Pipa

Pipa was king of Gagaruagarh, he possessed all spiritual excellence and became the disciple of Ramananda. Parshuram Chaturvedi accepts that he was born between V.S. 1465 – 1475,¹⁷ but it does not seem right because he himself said that Ramananda died in V.S. 1467, thus it is clear that Pipa was the contemporary of Kabir. It is said that he was devotee of Goddess *Durga* (*Bhawani*) whom he worshiped in every prescribed way. He worshipped her twelve years, till one day the Goddess advised him to go to Banaras and meet Ramananda and considers him as his spiritual guide,¹⁸ When Swami came to

¹⁴ Ibid., *U.B.S.P.*, p. 233; *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI., p. 121.

¹⁵ *U.B.S.P.*, p. 233.

¹⁶ राम भगति रामानन्दु जानै। पूरन परमानन्द बखानै।, *A.G.*, Vol. II, Rag Dhanasri, p. 931.

¹⁷ *U.B.S.P.*, p. 234.

¹⁸ *Hagiographies of Ananddas*, pp. 8-9.

know about Pipa's arrival he sent him a message, "my house is a place of faqirs what business have kings here?"¹⁹

On hearing this, Pipa denoted his palace and wealth and became a faqir with his youngest queen Seeta. After some time Ramananda wished to travel to Dwaraka on the western coast of Kathiawar, Pipa joined him with his queen. During journey they faced many adventures.²⁰ On their return from Dwaraka, some Afghan troops wanted to snatch his wife, she trembled with fear and fixed her mind on Govinda, and suddenly there appeared man who struck the Afgans and saved her.²¹ The author of *Bhakta-Mala* States that there is no difference between God and his saints, since the glory of Pipa might be attained to God.

Raidas

Raidas was the most important saint of the *Bhakti* Movement. But unfortunately we have no exact information about his date of birth and death. *Sant Bani Sangrah* says that he was born between end of the 15th and middle of the 16th century.²² Like his birth there is much controversy about his name too. He was called as Raidas, Ravidas, Rohidas etc. but most popularly he is named Raidas or Ravidas. He belonged to the low caste (*chamar*) of the society. He was a worker in leather, as he himself says, "my caste is low, my action are

¹⁹ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.VI, p. 112.

²⁰ *Hagiographies of Anantdas*, pp. 8-9; *R.S.H.S.P.*, p. 180.

²¹ *S.B.S.*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 28; *Hagiographies of Anantdas*, p. 13.

²² *S.B.S.*, Vol. I; *Hagiographies of Anantdas*, p. 64.

very low, and even my profession is low, says Ravidas yet the Lord has raised me high.”²³ His father’s name was Raghu and mother was Ghurbiniya.²⁴

When he grew matured he loved to serve the saints and their company. His father did not like this attitude and he gave him a separate residence where he lived with his wife, and for their living he was making shoes. It is said by the *Bhakt-Mala* that seeing his hard life and poverty Lord had mercy on him, He appeared in the form of a *sadhu* and showed him a philosopher’s stone, explained its qualities and urged him to take it but Ravidas replied that he did not require it. But he insisted him so Ravidas told him to put it into the roof of his hut (*chhappar*). After thirteen month the same saint came again and asked about the stone Ravidas answered, “It must be where thou didst put it. I have been afraid to touch it.”

Another legend tells that Jhali, the queen of Chittor, became his disciple. The *Brahmins* could not bear this and blamed the queen that she had lost her sense. The queen arranged an assembly between *Brahmins* and Ravidas in which Ravidas defeated the *Brahmins*.²⁵ He was a great saint of that time. His several hymns are compiled in *A.G* of Sikhs, and other collection of them had lastly been printed by Belveder Press, Allahabad under the title of *Raidas ki Bani aur Jivan Charit*.

²³ जाति भी ओछी करम भी ओछा, ओछा कसब हमारा।

नीच से प्रभु ऊँच कीयो है, कहै रविदास चमारा। *R.B.*, p. 43, also see, *A.G.*, Rag Asa, Vol. II, p. 410.

²⁴ *Influence of Islam*, p. 179.

²⁵ For detail story see *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, pp. 318-19.

Nanak

Nanak was born at Rai Bhoie ki Talwandi²⁶ in Sheikhpura district of West Punjab on 15th of April 1469 A.D. but the most accepted date of Nanak's birth is full moon day of *Kartik* month Of Hindi calendar in 1469 A.D. His father Kalu Mehta belonged to the Bedi branch of Khatri. He was the *Patwari* of the village under land-lord Rai Bular.²⁷ Nanak was the only son of his parents and their other child was a daughter Nanaki born a few years earlier.

Nanak was a prodigious child. Soon he gained knowledge in every subject. He gained good knowledge of The *Quran* and *Brahmanical Sastras*.” He also gained knowledge of *Persian* and *Arabic*. In *madarsa* Nanak surprised his new teacher Ruknu`d-din like his earlier teacher with the manner he picked up *Persian* and *Arabic* so quickly.²⁸

Nanak was married to Sulakshni, daughter of Mulchand Chona Khatri of Pakhoke Randhawa near Batala in 1487 A.D.²⁹ He had two sons Sri Chand born in 1491 and Lakshmi Chand born in 1496 A.D.³⁰

Mardana, a Muslim and Bhai Bala, a Hindu joined him and they commenced their wandering over many lands, Bala Bandhu had given picturesque description of the whole journey of Guru Nanak to Guru Angad Dev. It is said that Nanak had long intercourse with *Shaikh* Saraf of Panipat,

²⁶ Talwandi – Modern Nankana Sahib, the holy city of Nanak it is located about 15 km to the North West of Lahore, the capital of West Punjab in Pakistan., Khushwant Singh, *A History of The Sikhs*, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 29; *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. 1; Grewal, J.S., *Guru Nanak In History*, op.cit. p. 1; *H.S.K.B.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 152 .

²⁷ Rai Bular was originally a high caste Hindu of Bhatti Rajput clan, recently converted into Islam.

²⁸ Duggal, K.S., *The Sikhs Gurus*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1980. p. 8.

²⁹ Gupta, H.R., *History of Sikh Gurus*, U.C Kapur & sons, New Delhi, 1973, p. 37.

³⁰ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I; p. 29; *Influence of Islam*, op. cit., 167.

the *pir* of Multan, Sheikh Ibrahim, the successor of Baba Farid at Pakpattan, and several others.³¹

During his wandering wherever he went, he tried to remove the sorrows of people and gave the message the name of *Ram*, *Govind* and *Wahguru*. He regards himself as the prophet of God, who had come from the divine court and “received from His door-step the signs (*a'itan*), the chapters (*surahs*), and the traditions (*hadith*) of the prophet.” He taught that “There is one God in the world and no other, and that Nanak the *Caliph* (or son) of God speak the truth.”³² At last, the day arrived when the earthly journey was to end. Nanak drew a sheet over him, uttered *Wahguru*, made obeisance to God, and blended his light with *Guru Angad's* and declared him as his successor. *Guru* remained the same. There was only a change of body produced by a Supreme miracle.³³

There was a controversy against Hindu and Muslim disciples over the disposal of body, like Kabir, when the sheet was lifted, the body has disappeared and there were only flowers. Both took the half, the Hindus erected a shrine and the Muslims a tomb over them, but both were washed away by the flood of the Ravi river.³⁴

Dadu Dayal

Dadu Dayal a *Nirguni Bhakti* saint was Akbar's contemporary. He was one of the prominent saints of the Indian society. According to Chandrika Prasad he was born in 1544 A.D., at Ahmadabad and Pt. Sudhakar Diwedi said

³¹ *Influence of Islam*, op. cit., p. 167.

³² *Influence of Islam* p. cit., p. 168.

³³ *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p. 190.

³⁴ *Influence of Islam*, p. 168.

that Jaunpur is the place where this great saint was born.³⁵ But he spent most of his time at Naraina and Bharaina in Rajasthan.³⁶ Dadu's father Lodhi Ram was a merchant of Ahmadabad.³⁷ According to some account Dadu was a *mochi* by caste.³⁸ In the *Sarbangi of Rajab*, he has been mentioned as a son of *dhuniya* (cotton cleaner).³⁹

In the search of knowledge he left home town and visited many places of pilgrimage and Northern India. He enjoyed the company of learned, pious and devoted person. At the age of 25, he took up abode at Sambhar, in Ajmer province.⁴⁰ Dadu had two son Garibdas and Miskin and two daughters Hawwa and Shabbo. At Sambhar he had many followers; two of them were Banwaridas and Haridas.⁴¹ Here at Sambhar, Dadu established his sect named *Brahma Sampradaya* later known as *Dadu panth*, and the followers of this *panth* were known as *Dadupanthi*. He tried to unite people of different faiths into bond of love.

At the age of 35, Dadu went to Amber where he got a warm welcomed by the Raja Bhagwandas.⁴² This was the time when Akbar also wanted to meet him. Akbar requested him to come daily so that he could be benefited by his

³⁵ H.S.B.I., Vol. IV, p. 184.

³⁶ *Influence of Islam* . p. 183.

³⁷ Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystics*, op. cit., p. 27.

³⁸ Sudhakar Diwedi, *Dadu Dayal ki Bani*, Introduction, cited from *Influence of Islam* , p. 182.

³⁹ धुनिग्रहे समुत्पन्नो, दादूयोगेन्द्रो महामुनि।

उत्तमयोगधारणम् तस्मात् क्व जातिकारणम्।।, *Sarbangi*, Sadh Mahima Ka Ang.

⁴⁰ Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystics*, op. cit. p. 28.

⁴¹ Banwaridas founded the Northern section of *Dadupanth* and Haridas came from Punjab and also a prominent leader in after years, Ibid., p. 30.

⁴² Raja Bhagwandas was the brother of Akbar's Rajput queen, Jodha Bai and he was the commander in the imperial force. Ibid, p. 30.

discourse. Rajabdas in his *Sarbangi* mentions about Dadu-Akbar's meeting.⁴³

Dadu passed his last time in a cave which was at Naraina and he died in 1603 A.D.⁴⁴

Rajab Das

Rajab was the dearest disciple of Dadu Dayal and a prominent mystic poet of the *Dadupanth*. He occupies a very important place in the socio-religious history of the North India. But like other saints of that time the history of his life too has been clouded with mystery. His full name was Rajab Ali Khan. He was the son of a 'Pathan.' His father was a subordinate officer in the army of Raja Bhagwandas and later in the army of Raja Man Singh.⁴⁵ However, traditional account speaks that he was born in 1567 A.D. and died in 1689 A.D. at Sanganer. He is said to have lived for 122 years. It is significant to note that Rajab started his career as a military army man and later he came under the influence of Dadu Dayal. He was a religious by nature and had interest in meditation and *satsang*. He enjoyed the company of saints and *faqirs* and discussed with them his quarries about knowledge thus became stronger in faith day by day.⁴⁶

On the eve of his marriage, it is said that, while, he was going to Amber, he came to know that Dadu was staying in *Mahavat Sarovar* at Amber, he wished to meet him and left the idea of his marriage. On seeing him Dadu said:

⁴³ *Sarbangi*, Sant Sahai Rakshaya Ko Anga, Rag Gaudi, Pd. 5,

⁴⁴ *H.S.B.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 187.

⁴⁵ *H.S.K.B.I.*, Vol. IV, p.195; Sharma, Vraja Lal, *Sant kavi Rajab*, Kanpur, Rajasthan Prachyavidhya Pratisthan, 1965, pp. 7-8; Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystics*, op. cit., p. 186.

⁴⁶ Sharma, Vasumati and Kamal, *Rajasthan ka Sant Sahitya*, Rajasthan Prachayavidhya Pratisthan, Jodhpur, 2002. p. 297.

कीया था कुछ काज को, सेवा सुमिरण साज।
दादू भूल्या बन्दगी, सरया न एको काज।⁴⁷

After this he became the disciple of Dadu with permission of his spiritual teacher he never put off his bridegroom's costume as the symbol of his first meeting.⁴⁸ He was a devoted disciple of Dadu. He could not live without him. He spends much of his time with his *Guru*, and he was with Dadu at Naraina when he took his last breath in 1603 A.D.

Jambhoji

Jambhoji was born in 1451 A.D., in village Pipasar at Nagaur, Rajasthan. He was belonged to famous *Panwar (Parmar)* clan of Kshatriya caste. His father *Lohat Ji* was the eldest son of *Rolaji* who is believed to be the 40th descendent in the family of Maharaja *Vikramaditya*.⁴⁹ And his mother *Hansaji* (popularly known as *Kasarbai*) belonged to a respectable *jagirdar* family of *Chapar* village. We do not have any reliable information about the education of Jambhoji. From his childhood he preferred to live a life of an ascetic and did not marry in his whole life.

After the death of his parents in 1483 A.D., Jambhoji left Pipasar and went to live at *Samarthal Dhore*,⁵⁰ where a great famine occurred in 1485 A.D. He provided as much relief as much he could to the famine strikes people, and in the same year he found his sect named '*Bisnoi Panth*' with a simple

⁴⁷ Sharma, Vasumati and Kamal. *Rajasthan ka Sant Sahitya*, op. cit., p. 297.

⁴⁸ *U.B.S.P.*, pp. 503-504.

⁴⁹ *J.B.*, pp. 30-32; Bishoni, Kishanlal. *Guru Jambhoji avom Bishoni Panth ka Itihas*, Harayana, 2000, p. 48.

⁵⁰ *J.B.*, p. 50.

ceremony.⁵¹ He took his bath, put a pitcher (*kalash*) of fresh water on a small wooden platform, held a rosary in his hand, uttered a few *mantras* and delivered his first sermon. Pulho Ji, his uncle was the first to listen to his sermon and was initiated in the *Bishnoi Panth*. Tantu his aunt was the first lady who became his follower.⁵² The number of his followers increased very soon and the sect spread far and wide. It became popular mainly in the region of Rajasthan. Besides this, it also gathered a large number following in Saurasthara, Maharashtra, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Jambhoji believes in incarnation of God but deprecates idolatry. He is more inclined towards the *Gita* among the sacred texts. Jambhoji was the propagator of *Sagunonmukh-Nirguna Bhakti*. He was a great thinker who expressed his ideas over birth, death, heaven, hell, soul, God etc. Jambhoji was known for his charitable works. He helped people at the time of famine and made ponds and wells at many places for the easy availability of water. In 1488 A.D. he constructed a pond at Jambhsar near Falodi in Jodhpur⁵³ Rajasthan which is known as ‘Jambhsar’ or ‘Jambhsarover’. Another pond had constructed by him at Sauhjani in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh which is called ‘*Vishnu Talab*’.⁵⁴ Besides this, he was an advocate of environmental balance and promoted plantation and conservation of animals and trees. He constructed special protected areas and had prohibited the killing of animals in such areas.⁵⁵ Plantation and conservation of animals and trees had made obligatory by him for every follower of *Bishnoi Panth*.

⁵¹ Bishoni, Kishanlal, *Guru Jambhoji avom Bishoni Panth ka Itihas*, op. cit., p. 63.

⁵² Gupta, Beni, ‘Vishoni Sect’, *Journal of Rajasthan Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. IX, No. 4. Jaipur, 1972, p. 35.

⁵³ *J. B.*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Bishoni, , *Guru Jambhoji avom Bishoni Panth ka Itihas*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 65.

Saints of Saguna Bhakti

Vallabhacharya

Vallabhacharya, the founder of *Pustimarga*, was the great devotee of *Krishna cult* of *Vaishnavism*. He was born in Banaras 1479 A.D.⁵⁶ He was renowned for his saintly character and intense love of God and for Divine incarnation of Sri Krishna. He took birth when his father Lakshman Bhatt, was on a pilgrimage along with his wife Elamangara to the holy Kashi. He was the second son of his father.⁵⁷ According to Bhandarkar, he was born in 1478 A.D. He belonged to the South Indian family known for its learning, scholarship and deep devotion. He was a extra ordinary child and it is said that his birth was followed by some miraculous happening.⁵⁸

At the age of 6 or 7, he was placed under the guidance of Narayana Bhatta. The legend, written in *Brija Bhasha*, goes on to describe the rapidity of his apprehension, which enable him in the course of four months, to the four *Vedas*, six *Sastras* (schools of philosophy), and the eighteen *Puranas*.⁵⁹ He lost his father when he was hardly eleven years old. Having finished his education, he started his travels from Gokul to South India. Damodar, a rich merchant of South India followed Vallabha in his travels and they reached at the court of Krishan Dev Raya, of Vijayanagar Empire.

⁵⁶ *ERE.*, Vol. 12, p. 580; Anonymous. *Saints of Northern India (from Ramananda to Ramtirth)*, one of the Series of the World Teachers, Madras, G.A. Natesan & co.,(n.d.), p. 73. (hereafter as *Saints of Northern India*)

⁵⁷ Srivastava, M.P. , *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 57.

⁵⁸ According to *Nijvarta* belonging to the Vallabha Sect states that, when Vallabha was born in Champaranya, a place of gold sprang up on the spot, and the gods from the heaven showered flowers, the *Kinnaras* and *Gandharvas* sung and Gods themselves descended in their *Vimanas* to see the blessed child.

⁵⁹ *E.R.E.*, Vol. 12, p. 580.

At Vijayanagar, he defeated the *Saivas* in public discussion and established the supremacy of *Vaishnavism*. His success in dispute led him to be elected by the *Vaisnavasas*, their chief with the title of *acharya*.⁶⁰ After a long journey of South India, he came back to North by the way of Maharashtra and Rajasthan. He started again his second pilgrimage to the Himalayan Valleys, Haridwar and Badrinath. The atmosphere of mountains gave him sufficient spiritual strength. He returned after a period of 9 years and settled in Vrindavan, where he started preaching *Krishna* cult. He worshiped Lord Krishna under the title of *Srinath Ji*.⁶¹ Like Kabir and Nanak, he did not consider married life a hindrance to spiritual progress and he himself married a Brahmin girl named Mahalakshmi, at Banaras. He had two sons Gopinath and Vitthalnath to whom he made learned scholars.⁶²

Vallabhacharya was the author of many books in *Sanskrit* and *Braja-bhasha*. The well known books among them are *Subodhini* and *Siddhant Rahasya*.⁶³ He spent last years of his life in Banaras. At the age of fifty two he took his last breath in 1531 A.D. During his life time he made 84 devotees proselytes to his doctrines.

Chaitanya

Srikrishna Chaitanya was the saint of Krishna Cult of *Saguna Bhakti*. He was born in A.D. 1485, on a full moon day in Spring (the month of *Falgun*)

⁶⁰ *E.R.E.*, Vol. 12, p. 581, also see Prasad, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, op. cit., p. 583; *Saints of Northern India*, p. 76.

⁶¹ *Saints of Northern India*, p. 77.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 79.

⁶³ *Subodhini* also called as *Bhagavata Tika Subodhini*, a commentary on the first four Addhyayas of the 10th Skandha of The *Bhagavata Purana*, and *Siddhanta Rahasya* embodying the principles and doctrines of the sects. *Ibid*, pp. 80-81.

when there was a lunar eclipse, *Hari* name was chanted all over the village and this was taken a pious omen that he would prove a teacher of Vishnu faith and *Bhakti*.⁶⁴ His father Jagannath Mishra migrated from Sylhet to Navadwip, a town in the district of Nadia in Bengal.⁶⁵ He was the 10th child of his parents.⁶⁶ His childhood name was Vishambhar but he was also known as Gaurang and Nimai⁶⁷

He received his early education in Sanskrit school of Sudarshana Pandit. He was a brilliant student, soon he got mastering in all branches of Sanskrit especially in Grammar and Logic. After his education he opened a *tol* (school) at Navadwip in A.D.1501.⁶⁸ In the same year he was married to Lakshmi, but she died soon.⁶⁹ He married again with Vishnupriya, daughter of Rajpandit Shastri.

In 1505 A.D., he went to Gaya for performing *Saraddh* (post funeral rites) of his father, where he met Ishwar Puri, Disciple of Madheendra Puri a monk of Madhavacharya's order. He initiated him in the cult of *Bhakti*. This initiation had a marvelous effect on him. "A complete change was come over his spirit. His intellectual pride was gone, he became a *bhakta*; whatever subject he lectured on, the theme of his discourse was love of *Krishna*. Indeed

⁶⁴ Dasgupta, S.N., *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. IV, op.cit., p. 385; *Saints of Bangal* p. 1. (hereafter as *L.S.B.*)

⁶⁵ *L.S.B.*, p. 1.; Mital, Prabhu Dayal, *Chaitanya Mat Aur Brij Sahitya*, Sahitya Sansthan, Mathura, 1962, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Among the first nine children eight of them were daughters, they had died in infancy and the ninth one a boy named Vishvarupa, abandon the world at the age of sixteenth and became an ascetic, *L.S.B.*, p. 1; Carpenter, J.E., *Theism in Medieval India*, op. cit, p. 438.

⁶⁷ The neighbors called him Nimai-short lived-in pitying anticipation, doubtless, of the fate which had overtaken his baby sisters. see Kennedy, M.T., *Chaitanya Movement*, Oxford University Press, London, 1925, p. 14

⁶⁸ Mital, *Chaitanya Mat Aur Brij Sahitya*, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶⁹ Chaitanya made a scholastic tour at East Bengal. When he returns to Navadwip, he found in his absence his wife had died of snake bite, see *Saints of Bangal*, p. 4; Bansal, Naresh Chandra, *Chaitanya Sampradaya: Siddhant Aur Sahitya*, Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, 1980, p. 26.

he developed religious ecstasy and for some time behaved like a mad man: he laughed, wept, incessantly shouted *Krishna's* name; climbed up trees or ran in abstraction imagining he to be *Krishna*.⁷⁰ He realized himself and relation to God. He realized that it was a misfortune to be deprived of the ecstatic joy of communication with God, and that it was a sheer waste of life to be engrossed in the pursuit of worldly enjoyment.⁷¹

At the age of 24, he became *Sanyasi*⁷² and assumed the name of *Krishna Chaitanya*. After that he went to Jagannath Puri with Nityananda Goswami, Jagatananda Pandit, Damodar Pandit and Mukundatt.⁷³ He wandered many places as Pandharpur, Somnath and Dwarika etc.⁷⁴ and finally he returned to Puri. He again traveled to Mathura and Vrindavan and again he came back to Puri and settled down where he died in 1533 A.D.⁷⁵

His approach to religion was not merely theoretical but practical. He tried to unify society by introducing *Nam Samkirtan*, *Nagar Samkirtan*, *Mahotasva*, *Rathyatras*. thus bring about social equality of a rare type.⁷⁶

Surdas

Surdas was the most important saint of *Krishna Bhakti* cult, but little is known about his life, not even the dates of his birth and death. So there is controversy among scholars about the place of birth and the details of his early

⁷⁰ *L.S.B.*, p. 4.

⁷¹ Nath, Radha Govind, 'A Survey of The Chaitanya Movement', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol.IV, op. cit., p. 186.

⁷² *Akbar the Great*, Vol. III, p. 88.

⁷³ ;Mital, *Chaitanya Mat Aur Brij Sahitya*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁷⁴ *Vaishnavism Saivism* , p. 84.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Lalitavati, 'Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu : A Great Social Thinker in India (1486-1533 A.D.)', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress (51st Session)*, Calcutta, 1990, p. 364.

life. It is however certain that he was not the same Surdas who is mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as a blind bard of Agra and a poet and musician of Akbar's court.⁷⁷

He was born in a *Saraswat Brahmin* family in the year 1478 A.D., at a village named Sihi, a small village about 10 miles from Delhi on the Delhi Mathura Road. Surdas was blind by birth. As he says:

नाथ मोहि अब की बेर उबारौ।
करमहीन, जनम कौ अन्धौ मोते कौन नकारो॥⁷⁸

He spent his childhood and early youth at Gau Gahat, a place between Mathura and Agra, on the banks of Yamuna where he met Vallabhacharya in 1509 A.D., and became his disciple. He initiated Surdas in *Pushti Marga* and advised him to sing *Bhagavat Lila*. It was the turning point of his life.⁷⁹ Seeing his mastership in poetry and true devotion, Vallabhacharya gave him the duty of conducting *Kirtan* at the temple of *Srinathji* at Govardhan mount.⁸⁰ He did his job with full devotion. He sung *Kirtan* along with other devotees. While he was at Govardhan, he frequently visited Mathura and Gokul. He died at the age of over one hundred years in Parsoli village near Govardhan.

Surdas was not only a saint but a poet also. His most prominent works are *Sursagar*, *Sursarawali*, and *Sahitya Lahri*. In his works he presented

⁷⁷ *Akbar The Great*, op. cit., p. 84.

⁷⁸ Parikh, Dwarika Prasad & Mital, Prabhu Dayal, *Sur Nirnaya*, Sahitya Sansthan, Mathura, Third edition. 1962, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Shukla, *Surdas*, eds., Mishra, Vishvanath, Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi, 9th edn., 1987, p. 81; Ralhan, O.P., *Surdas The Blind Saint*, Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁰ It is clear from *Chaurasi Vaishnavi Ki Varta*: औरहु पद गाए, तब श्री महाप्रभु जी अपने मन में विचारे जो श्रीनाथ जी के यहाँ और तो सब सेवा को मंडान भयो है, पर कीर्तन को मंडान नाही कियो है, तातें अब सूरदास जी को दीजिए। cited by Shukla, *Surdas*, op. cit., p. 81.

himself as a sincere devotee of the Almighty. His works opened the door of *Bhakti* to many *bhaktas*.

Mirabai

Mirabai was the saint of 16th century, who was the follower of *Krishna* cult of *Saguna Bhakti*. She holds a very high position among the *Vaishnava Saints*. Though she was a princess of the royal dynasty of Chittor, she renounced the world for the sake of *Bhakti* to Lord Krishna. She was considerably influenced by the reformer saints of *Bhakti* cult.⁸¹

Mira was the granddaughter of Rao Jodhaji, the founder of Jodhpur. She was born at the village of Kudki in the Merta district in 1498 A.D.⁸² she was the only daughter of Rao Ratan Sen of Merta and a cousin sister of Raja Jaimal, the famous hero and defender of Chittor against Akbar's invasion in 1567-1568.⁸³

It is said that Mira had devotional attitude from her tender age. At the age of five years, she got an idol of *Krishna*, and since then she kept it always with her till the end of her life. On the occasion of a marriage, she asked her mother about her own bridegroom. Her mother replied, "*Girdhar Gopal (Krishna)* is her husband," since then Mira recognized *Girdhar* as her husband and devoted herself for *Krishna* throughout her life.

हो तेरी ही सारी चीज मेरी।
तू मेरा है प्यारा मैं हूँ तेरी।⁸⁴

⁸¹ Luniya, *Education and Culture*, p. 398.

⁸² Srivastava, M.P. *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 56.

⁸³ M.I.C., p. 51.

⁸⁴ Roop Narayana, *Brajhasha ke Krishna Kavya main Madhurya Bhakti*, Navayuga Prakashan, Delhi, 1962, p. 438.

Although she was born in a royal family, she had suffered a lot in her childhood. Her mother died very soon and father was busy in the wars so her grandfather Rao Duaji took her Merta. After Duaji's death, his elder son Rao Viramdev nurtured her.⁸⁵ She was married with Bhojraj the eldest son of Rana Sanga of Marwar in 1516 A.D. She took the image of *Krishna* with her. Rana built a temple for her in which she danced in ecstasy. She soon became widow.

She was highly religious since her childhood, like her father and grandfather who were the follower of Krishna cult of *Vaishnavism*. After her husband's death she devoted herself entirely to religious pursuits.⁸⁶ After some time, Mira's father and Father-in-laws died. Such hardships made her heart away from worldly life and she spent most of her time in singing hymns and in the company of *sadhus*. Rana Vikramaditya younger son of Rana Sanga did not like Mira's devotion and attachment with *sadhus* and other peoples. Then he tried to get rid of her at any cost. He sent poison and snake for her; this was described by Mira in her song:

मीरा मगन भई हरी के गुण गाय।
 सांप पिटारा राणा भेज्यो, मीरा हाथ दियो जाय।।
 न्हाय धोय जब देखण लागी, सालिगराम गई पाय।
 जहर प्याला राणा भेज्यो. अमृत दीन्ह बनाय।।
 न्हाय धोय जब पीवण लागी होय अमर ऊंचाय।।⁸⁷

It is believed that when Rana Vikramaditya began to torment her unceasingly, she consulted Tulasidas as her spiritual guide, by addressing a letter to him. And Tulasi replied, "He or she whom the deity – Almighty Power – in the form

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 439.

⁸⁶ *M.I.C.*, p. 51.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

of Ram – is not dear, must be abandoned, however closest in the relation he or she may be.”⁸⁸ To all this Mira’s heart was entirely agreed; hence she went to reside with her uncle Bairam Deva who was the chief of Merta, and there she continued her daily routine.⁸⁹ But soon the city Merta was captured by Mal Dev of Jodhpur, so she went to pilgrimage of Dwarika, where she spent whole life in the devotion of Lord *Ranchhordas* (Lord *Krishna*). She died in 1546 A.D.⁹⁰ There is a controversy regarding the date of her death and still the exact date is not known.

Mira is said to have written numerous poems all of them being devotional songs. Some of them are *Narsiji – Ro Maharo*, *Git Govind Ka Tika*, *Rag Govind*, *Mirabai Ki Malar*, *Sortha Ke Pad* etc., no principal work of Mira has come down to us. The songs are composed in *Brajbhasha* and partly in Rajasthani and some of her verses in Gujarati.⁹¹ These lyrics are full of love and devotion and so much melodious.

Tulasidas

Tulsidas was *Saguna Bhakti* saint, who believed in the worship of *Rama* an incarnation of God. He propagated *Rama Bhakti* over North India. He was the contemporary of Akbar and born during the reign of Humayun. The contemporary author of *Bhakta-Mala*, who himself met him, was content to

⁸⁸ जाके प्रिय न राम-वैदेही ।

सो छँडिये कोटि बैरि सम जधपि परम सनेही, see, *Vinaya Patrika*, p. 275.

⁸⁹ *M.I.C.*, p. 51

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 50; Roop Narayana. *Brajbhasha ke Krishna Kavya main Madhurya Bhakti*, op, cit., p. 440

⁹¹ *Ibid* p. 440

record that “for the redemption of mankind in this perverse *Kali Age* Valmiki has been born as Tulasi.⁹²

He was born at Raipur (Banda district), about 1532 A.D. He was abandoned by his parents immediately after birth and was picked up by a *Sadhu* named Narharidas.⁹³ His father’s name was Atma Ram Sukla Dube while his mother’s was Hulasi they named Rambola. Narharidas was his *Guru* or spiritual guide, with whom he wandered all over Northern India. From his *Guru* he learnt the story of *Rama*. But owing to his ignorance in Sanskrit he could not grasp its importance at that time.

When he grew up he was married to Ratnavali and got a son named Tarak, who died at an early age.⁹⁴ After the death of her son, she left Tulsidas and returned her father’s home, and gave herself to the worship of Lord *Rama*. When Tulasi went to her, she reproached him for following her, this changed words of detachment spoken by his wife opened his eyes, he decided to do as she suggested. He became a *Vairagi*, started his pilgrimage from Ayodhya to distant parts of India and preaching the faith of Rama. At the first he met with considerable opposition, but his holy life and his attractive personality overcame all obstacles, and even in Banaras, at the head quarters of Shiva Worship, he won universal respect. His fame as a poet spread far and wide and gathered many friends and followers. The most famous of among them were, Raja Man Singh of Amber, Abdu’r-Rahim Khankhana (1556-1627) and Toder

⁹² Carpenter, J.E., *Theism in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 507.

⁹³ “Narharidas was the disciple of great *Vaishnava* saint and teacher, Ramananda who gave a new impetus to the *Bhakti Movement* of the middle age and left behind a band of eminent disciples like Raidas and Kabir.,” Handoo, Chandra Kumari, ‘Tulsidasa And His Teachings’, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 395.

⁹⁴ *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, p. 470.

Mal, a wealthy land owner of Banaras.⁹⁵ After his pilgrimage he finally settled down at *Asi Ghat*, Banaras.

He is known to be the author of more than a dozen books. *Gitavali*, *Kavitavali*, *Vinayapatrika*, and *Ram-Charita-Manasa* are his most famous works. *Ram-Charita-Manasa* is the best known among his works. In his works and during his preaching he used common language.

Famous Sufi Saints

***Shaikh* Abdu'l Quddus Gangoh (d.1543 A. D.)**

Shaikh Abdu'l Quddus son of *Shaikh* Ismail, was a native of Rudali (Dist. BaraBanki, U.P.). Abul Fazl says, "He asserted himself to be descendant of Abu Hanifah. He was the disciple of Muhammad-b-Shaykh Arif-b-Shaykh Ahmad Abd'ul Haqq. He acquired secular and spiritual learning and became eminent in theology. Many of his mystical sayings are recorded.⁹⁶ Emperor Humayun visited him for the discussion on religious matters.⁹⁷

When he attained youth he was married and lead married life happily, and had several sons and daughters.⁹⁸ A few years later political disturbances broke out in Rudali and *Shaikh* decided to migrated to Shahabad on the invitation of Umar khan, where his son Ruknu'd-din was born to him who was the author of *Lataif-i-Quddusi* and prepared commentary on *Rushadnama*. In Shahabad his influence grew rapidly and he gained a large following among the Afghans. After the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi he went to Gangoh (Dist.

⁹⁵ *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, p. 470.

⁹⁶ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 417.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*; Md. Haq, Enamul, 'The Sufi Movement in India', *Indian Culture*, Vol. I, No. 3, 1935. P. 341.

⁹⁸ Mujeeb, M., *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1967, p. 297.

Saharanpur). After settling in Shahabad *Shaikh* visited Ajodhan and Multan.⁹⁹ He was written two most important works, the *Anwar al-'Uyun* and *Rushadnama*. Among his disciples *Shaikh* Abd-ul-Kabir, *Shaikh* Nizam-ud-Din of Thenesar and *Shaikh* Abd-ul-Ahad were become famous.¹⁰⁰

Shaikh Salim Chishti (d. 1571-72 A.D.)

Shaikh Salim Chishti was a descendent of *Shaikh* Farid-i-Shakarganj, and his native place was Delhi (he lived in Fatehpur Sikri highly honoured by Akbar. Jahangir was called after him Salim).¹⁰¹ He was one of the greatest saints of the age. His distinguished for religious exercises and enthusiasms and had sublime habits of working miracles and having revelations. In 1524-25 A.D., *Shaikh* began a pilgrimage to *Mecca* there to perform the duties of the pilgrimage.¹⁰² He set forth on his travels journey to Asia Minor, Baghdad, Syria and the other countries of the western region, returning to the glorious city at *Mecca* at the time of the pilgrimage and then again setting out on his travels.¹⁰³

In 1554-55 A.D., he made another *hajj* and again was abroad for some years. On this trip h was accompanied by his friends and a number of disciples.¹⁰⁴

In 1563-64 he returned to Sikri. In 1569 A.D., Akbar visited to *Shaikh*, and by the blessing of *Shaikh* Jahangir was born to Akbar in 1570 A.D.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 344.

¹⁰⁰ Hasan, Narul, 'Lataif-i-Quddusi-A Contemporary Afghan Source for the Study of Afghan Mughal Conflict', *Medieval India Quarterly*, 1950, Vol. I, No. I, p. 49.

¹⁰¹ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, tr. Rogers, Alexander, ed. Beveridge, Henry, 2 Vols. Vol. I, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1909-1914, rpt. 2006, p. 2; *Muntakhab*, Vol. II, p. 112; *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 609.

¹⁰² *Muntakhab* Vol. III, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Rizvi, *A History of Sufims in India*. Vol. II, op. cit., p. 280.

Akbar believed the place was particularly fortunate one for him and led to the founding of the new capital town at Fatehpur Sikri.¹⁰⁶ Out of respect to *Shaikh*, Akbar used to call his son *Shaikh*u Baba.¹⁰⁷

Shaikh died in 1571-72 A.D. at Sikri where he was buried.¹⁰⁸ In the country *Shaikh* Salim Chishti was known as *Shaikh-i-Hind* or holy man of India. He reached the age of ninety-five and travelled always in the path of holy law delivered by the Prophet.¹⁰⁹

***Shaikh* Muhammad Ghaus (1500-1563 A.D.)**

Shaikh Phul's younger brother *Shaikh* Abu'i-Muyyad Muhammad, who bore the title of Ghaus, and was popularly known as *Shaikh* Muhammad Ghaus, was tenth in succession from Abdul-Qadir, the famous saint of Sattari order, who introduced this order in India. In the garb of a *Saikh* he had a great rank and splendor. His majesty the *Khalifa-i-illahi* had a very high opinion of him and he once gave him a sum of one karor.¹¹⁰

Shaikh Muhammad spent thirteen years in meditating on the lower slopes of the hills of Chunar,¹¹¹ under severely austere condition on emerged to spend the remainder of his life teaching to most ascetic variety of *Sufism*.

Shaikh Ghaus at the age of 22 wrote *Jawahir-i-Khamsa*, a book which he has given a sketch of his early life. He presented it to his teacher Haji Hamid

¹⁰⁵ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 12 Vols. Vol. II, eds. Lewis, B, Pellai, Ch, and Schacht, J., Luzac & co., London, 1964, pp. 379.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 840.

¹⁰⁷ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. I, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. II, op. c it., p. 281.

¹⁰⁹ *Muntakhab*, Vol. III, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 701.

¹¹¹ Nizami, 'Sattari Saints and their Attitude towards the State,' *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1950, p. 58.

Husur. *Shaikh* has an attractive personality and his method of teachings were very attractive by this soon he acquired great influence. He studied Sanskrit and wrote another book, *Khalid-i-Makhazin*, combining Sufi doctrine with astrological theories and another *Bharat Hayat* on the method of self discipline and breathes control as practiced by yogis. Emperor Humayun had great reverence for *Shaikh*.¹¹² *Shaikh* Muhammad Ghaus established a famous Sattari centre in Gujarat at Ahmadabad and Broach. *Shaikh* had many disciples and followers. The most important among his followers in Gujarat was Shah Wajid-al-Din Alawi of Ahmadabad is remembered for having some three hundred tracts and the founder of a great *madarsa* at Ahmadabad.

In early period of Akbar's reign *Shaikh* visit to Agra where he his became a spiritual guide of Tansen. He also renewed his association with Mughal court.¹¹³ He early left Agra and went to Gwalior, and remained there till his death.

***Khwaja* Baqi Billah (1563-1603A.D.)**

Khwaja baqi Billah was the eminent *Sufi* saint of Naqshbandia order. He introduced this order in India, and under his leadership *silsila* gained more popularity. *Khwaja* was born in 1563-64 A.D. at Kabul.¹¹⁴ His father was a Alim and a prominent Sufi. "*Khwaja* was educated and brought up in Kabul and Samarqand where he came in the contact of Naqshibandi school of thought and admitted himself to that school. Being imbued with the teaching of that

¹¹² Ibid, p. 68.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Md., Haq, Enamul, 'The Sufi Movement in India,' *Indian Culture*, Vol. I, No. 3, 1935, p. 341.

school of *Sufi* thought, he returned to India and preached his new idea in this contrary. Though he was not very successful in his mission. He settled in Delhi.¹¹⁵

From his childhood *Khwaja* lived a very pious life, he spent most of his time in meditation. He always used to visit *Sufis* and *Deavesh* and did practice devotional exercises. He visited to Kashmir where he met *Shaikh* Baba Wali, who influenced him. He spread the teachings of Naqshbandi order in Kashmir. When he came back to India he stayed in Lahore for some time and then proceeded to Delhi where he took up his residence in Firuzi fort and settled their till death.¹¹⁶

***Shaikh* Ahmad Sirhindi (1563-1624 A.D.)**

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was another famous saint of Naqshbandi Silsila. His full name was Imam Rabbani Mahbub-i-Subhani *Shaikh* Ahmad Faruqi. He was popularly known as *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* because he believed that he was the man of the second Millennium.¹¹⁷ He was born in Sirhind and educated in his early days.¹¹⁸ He was a descendent of Umar-al-Khattab, second *Khaiifa* of Islam. *Shaikh* Ahmad was proud of his descent. His father was Abdul Haq.

He received his mystic training from *Shaikh* Abdul Quddus Gangohi. He got his early education at home and got the highest inspiration from his father.

Shaikh was initiated in both the Chishti and Qadiri orders and got *Khilafat* of

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 342.

¹¹⁶ Rizvi, *Muslim revivalist Movements in Northern India in the 16th and 17th centuries*, Agra University Press, Agra, 1965, p.

¹¹⁷ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 91; Md., Haq, Enamul, 'The Sufi Movement in India,' *Indian Culture*, Vol. II, No. I, 1935, p. 18. ; Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 80.

¹¹⁸ Md., Haq, Enamul, 'The Sufi Movement in India,' *Indian Culture*, Vol. II, No. I, op. cit., p. 18.

both. After his father's death *Shaikh* visited Delhi where he joined the Naqshbandi order. Later on *Shaikh* received *khilafat* of this order from Khawaja Baqi Billah who had introduced this order in India. Enamul Haq says that *Shaikh* was most learned man of India in 16th century.¹¹⁹

Shikh Ahmad's writing is called *Majmu'atu-t-Tasawwuf*. There is very long account of him and of his interviews with Jahangir in the *Khazinatu-l-Auliya*.¹²⁰ Since *Shaikh* Ahmad was a man of conviction and preached whatever he thought correct, without any fear, resulted into Emperor Jahangir displeasure. Emperor Jahangir imprisoned him for two years. And then released, and that he died on the last day of Safar 1625 A.D.¹²¹

Shaikh Nizamu'-Din of Ambethi

Shaikh Nizam was the saint of Chishti order who avoided courts and countries, omitted all praise of all king in the *khutba* read on Friday at the mosque near his *khanqh*.

*"Shaikh Nizamu'-Din was possessed of personal and spiritual perfection and high rank in religious exercises and devotion."*¹²²

Ambethi is the chief village of the pargana in the district of Lakhnawi. Shaikh Nizam was the disciple and pupil of Shaikh Ma 'ruf-i-Chishti, the line of whose spiritual descent goes back to Shaikh Nur Qutub-i- 'Alam. He followed the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 92.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 92.

¹²² *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 701.

ordinary of life but was at the same time drawn towards God in a mysterious manner.¹²³

Although he was at first one of the student of remunerative branches of knowledge¹²⁴ he exalted disposition yet led him to turn much towards the things of the next world. His eyes ever fixed on the page and his heart fixed on God, nor was he neglected the service of *zikar*¹²⁵

In short time he obtain from his spiritual guide permission to impart religious instruction going nowhere except to the principal of *masjid* of the Living God in that place and sometimes to Khairabad to walk round the illustrious tomb of the venerable *Shaikh*.¹²⁶ The *Shaikh* Nizam was having high opinion and a great respect about God. He would often say,:

*“there was a servant of God whom I used sometimes to teach the word of God and he used to understand it. Now that he is gone to whom shall I speak of it?”*¹²⁷

He generally observed the continued first and spent his time in reading the glorious *Quran* in reciting God’s praise, the exorcism and in works of supererogation, so that not one hour of his precious life was wasted or was passed in idealness as mine has been.

¹²³ *Muntakhab*, Vol. III, p. 27.

¹²⁴ The branch of knowledge by means of which one gains a livelihood.

¹²⁵ “Remembrance” and “recital” ; a form of religious exercise adopted by *darvishes* .it may be physical as well as mental exercise, being the recital of God’s praise, attributes, etc. either with the tongue of flesh or with the tongue of heart. *Muntakhab*, Vol. III, p. 27.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.



Chapter – 6

Interaction between *Bhakti* and *Sufi* Saints

Sufism

According to Dabistan, “*Sufism* belongs to all religions; its adherents are known under different names among the Hindus, Persian and Arabians, it appears to be nothing else but rationalism of any sort of doctrine. It could never be the religion of the whole nation; it remained confined to the precincts of schools and societies.”¹

During the 12th century a large number of *Sufi* saints came to India with the Muslim conquest and took shelter especially in Multan, Punjab and Sind. *Sufism* in India underwent a considerable change till the end of the 17th century. It is the branch of Islamic Mystics as Yusuf Husain rightly said “*Sufism* was born in the bosom of Islam.”² *Sufism* and *Bhakti* tradition are a particular type of mysticism which has many traits in common, including the centrality of Divine Love in their approach of the ultimate Reality, God.³ In India it was completely influenced by the Hindu thought, belief and practiced the best conception of a loving God the relation between God and soul as the relation between beloved and lover is very unique in Hinduism and it was too adopted by the *Sufi* saints in India.

Generally scholars trace its origin by the Arabic root ‘*Safa*’ (purity) says those who keeps their heart pure with God are *Sufis*.⁴ The *Sufi* Mystics who had the doctrine of universal brotherhood and a definite way of community life

¹Fani, Musin, Dabistan-i-Mazahib or School of Manners, tr. Sheba and Troyer, Paris, 1943 p. CLVIII,

²Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 33.

³Ghaffurova, Ninel, ‘Divine Love in *Sufism* and *Bhakti-Marga* (Kabir Das and Sri Ramkrishna)’ *Sufi and Sufism*, (ed.) Neeru Mishra, Manohar, Delhi, 2004, p. 83.

⁴Nicholson, R.A., *Literary History of Arabs*, Curzon, Richmond, rpt.1993, p. 228.

were generally wearing a particular kind of woollen garment, known as *Sufi*.⁵ Abu Nasar Sarraj the author of Arabic treatise on *Sufism* declared that in his opinion the word *Sufi* is derived from Suf (wool)⁶ after the Muhammad Sahib those saints who used to wear woollen garb, became famous by the name of *Sufis*.

Advent of *Sufism* in India

With pious mission of love to all many *Sufis* and Dervishes from Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Samarqand and Bukhara came to India during (1000 A.D. to 1150 A.D.). For example *Shaikh* Ismail of Bukhara came to Lahore in about 1005 A.D., Shah Sultan Rumi with his spiritual guide Syed Shah Surkh Khul Auliya arrived at Madanpur (Bangladesh)⁷ Hazarat *Shaikh* Abdullah came from Yemen. *Shaikh* Hussain Zanjani of Azarbajjal settled at Lahore. Ali Hujwiri came to Lahore (d.1072 A.D.). Another saint was Nuru'd-din Ismail. Nur Satagar came to Gujarat during the reign of Siddharaya (1094-1193 A.D.).⁸ *Khawaja* Muinud-Din Chishti of Ajmer came to India and settled at Ajmer long before the Muhammad Ghuri. There was also a warrior saint during the reign of Ballala Sena (d.1119 A.D.), Baba Adam Sahib in east Bengal (Bengladesh). From 1150 to 1400A.D. the advent of *Sufism* was continue in India.

⁵ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. .4, part 2, London, 1964, p. 681.

⁶ *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, p. 10

⁷ It is said that Koch King of the region tried to poison him in 1053 A.D., but the effort failed then the king was influenced by the miraculous power of the saint gave out a whole village to the revered memory of the saint for the advent of Islam.

⁸ Ishwari Prasad describes in *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* that Nuru'd-din known as Nur Satagar came to Gujarat during the reign of Siddharaja (1094-1143 A.D.) and converted to Islam such castes as the Koris, Kunbis, Karwas, p. 14; *Influence of Islam*, op. cit., p. 46.

Thus it is clear that *Sufism* came in India many years before the extension of Turkish political power. The Muslim trades, merchants, saints and mystics peacefully entered into India⁹ and settled down; these Muslim immigrants lived outside the fortified town amongst the lower section of the Indian people because of caste taboos. The Muslim settled down in India before the Ghurid conquest and they have settled their permanent stay in India. Ibn Asir writes in *Kamilu-i-Twarikh*, “there were Musalmans in that country since the days of Mohammad Bin Subuktigin.”¹⁰

Thus the advent of *Sufism* continued in India from 1150 to 1400 A.D. and organized their *silsila*. Abul Fazl in his *Ain-i-Akbari* gives a list of fourteen *silsilas* in Hindustan.¹¹ Among them four gained to more fame i.e. The Chishti *Silsila*, The Suharwardi *Silsila*, The Naqshbandi *Silsila*, The Qadiri *Silsila*.

The Chishti Order

The Chishti *Silsila* or Order played an important role in India; the chief centres of Chishti *silsila* were in Ajmer, Narnaul, Suwal, Nagaur, Hansi, Ajodhan in Punjab and other towns of U.P., the whole Bengal including Bangladesh and Assam. In India it was introduced by *Khawaja* Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti. *Shaikh* was born in 1141 A.D. and died in 1236 A.D. He came in India in the beginning of the year 1193 A.D. and settled at Ajmer. The *Khawaja*

⁹ Habib, Mohd. & Nizami, K.A., eds, *Comprehensive History of India*, 5 Vols. Vol. V, People's Publication, New Delhi, 1996, p. 138.

¹⁰ *H.I.E.D.*, Vol. II, p. 251.

¹¹ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 393.

adopted the catholic attitude in his dealings with the Hindus. His doctrine of devotion was that to consist of doing service of mankind.

Khawaja had number of disciples to propagated his philosophy two of them *Shaikh* Hamidu'd-Din Nagori and *Shaikh* Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Delhi. He was the distinguish Khalifa of *Shaikh* Moinu'd-Din, was native of Ayush.¹² Both saint settled in different parts of India, Nagori Settled in Nagor and Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki settled at Delhi. He was succeeded by Faridu'd-Din-Ganj-i-Shakar, popularly known as Baba Farid. Baba Farid was settled at Ajodhan. He gave to Chishti *Silsila* an organized form for the spiritual movement. He was much popular among the Sikh Community so that many of his hymns are collected in *Adi Granth*.¹³ Sheikh Farid's most outstanding *Khalifa* was *Shaikh* Nizamu'd-Din Auliya (1236-1325 A.D.). Under his the Chishti order reached its highest watermark¹⁴ for nearly half a century he worked in Delhi, gained a great fame at his time and also known as *Mehbub-i-illahi* (the beloved of God). His religious activities had a great deal to do with the popularity of Chishti Order in India.

The last great *Sufi* of the *silsila* was *Shaikh* Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud popularly known as *Chirag-i-Delhi*,¹⁵ settled down at Lahore. At the age of 45 he became the disciple of Nizamu'd-Din Auliya and died in 1336 A.D.

¹² Ayush is a town in Farghanah, south east of Andijen , Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics in India during Thirteenth Century*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 2nd edn.1974, p. 188.(hereafter as *A.R.P.I.*)

¹³ Nizami in his work *Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shakar*, (Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973. pp. 121-22.) derives it and said that Farid was other person whose hymn are in *Adi Granth* not Baba Farid of Chishti *Silsila*.

¹⁴ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 208.

¹⁵ *E.R.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 63.

The Suharwardi Order

After Chishti order the next popular order of India was Suharwardi, the founder of this *silsila* was *Shaikh* Shihabu'd-Din Suhrawardi; who directed his disciples to work in India, within very short time it gained marvelous popularity.¹⁶ No doubt there were many saints in Suhrawardi order but for the organized form of this *silsila* in India the credit goes to Bahau'd-Din Zakariya of Multani, he settled in Multan till his death in 1262 A.D.¹⁷ he was the most influential mystic of the 13th century. His *Sufi* ideology differed from Chishti Order. He did not believe in poverty and torturing of the body. He was against the Hindu practice of bowing against the sheikh and too much fasting like *Chill-i-Ma'kus*, he also took part in the political affairs of rulers and administration of that time.¹⁸ He was succeeded by his son Sadrau'd-Din Arif in Multan and his disciple Jalalu'd-Din Surkh Bukhari established a strong Suhrawardi centre at Uch, he came from Bukhara, and settled at Uch and Sindh, and within very short time he gained popularity and converted many Hindus of Uch in Islam.¹⁹

The Suhrawardi *Sufis* took greater care of their families and devoted more time to the upbringing and training of their sons than the Chishti saints. There is a long list of *Sufis* of the Suhrawardi *silsila* after these saints among

¹⁶ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 362-63.

¹⁷ For detail see *A.R.P.I.* pp. 220-229.

¹⁸ Srivastava, M.P., *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁹ Prasad, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, op. cit., p. 14.

them Jalalu'd-Din Makhdum-i- Jahanian (1308-1383)²⁰ *Shaikh* Husain Amir Husain Suhrawardi, *Shaikh* Sharfuddin Yahya Maniazi.²¹

Qadiri Silsila

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077-1166 A.D.) a great *Sufi* saint of Islam found a new order in Baghdad after whom the order was named. It was introduced in India by Shah Ni'amatullah and Makhdum Muhammad Jilani who lived towards the middle of the fifteenth century. Makhdum Jilani settled in Uch in Sindh. He was succeeded by his son Abdul Qadir. Abdul Qadir used to say his prayers in the Audience Hall of Fatehpur Sikri and when asked by Akbar to perform them at home, he answered, "My King, this is not your kingdom that you should pass orders." Akbar cancelled his grant of land, and he went back to Uch.²² Other famous mystics of this order were *Shaikh* Daud Kirmani, *Shaikh* Abdul Ma'ali Qadiri of Lahore, *Shaikh* Mir Muhammad also known as Mian Mir.²³

Naqshbandiyya Order

Naqshbandiyya order was one of the oldest *Sufi* orders, and flourished in Transoxiana also known as *silsia-i-Khawajgan*, under the leadership of *Khawaja* Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (d.1389 A.D.).²⁴ In India it was introduced

²⁰ He was the grandson of *Shaikh* Jalalu'd-Din and was appointed *Shaikh-ul-Islam* by sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, M.P. Srivastava, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 29.

²¹ Yahya was the prominent leaders of the Firdausiya which is the another branch of *Suhrawardi Silsilsh* he was a learned man and left behind a good number of letters known as "*Maktubat*" in which he tried to recognized the doctrine of *Wahadat-ul-Wajud* (Unity of Being).

²² Husain Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 54.

²³ Prince Dara Shikoh, son of Shahjahan became the disciple of Qadiri order and visited Mian Mir (1550-1635 A.D.) at Lahore.

²⁴ Basham, A.L., *A Cultural History of India*, Oxford Univ. Press, Delhi, 1983, rpt. 1984, p. 289.

by *Khawaja* Baqi Billah of Kabul (1563-1603 A.D.), seventh in the lines of succession to the founder of the *silsila*. *Khawaja* did most to make this order outstanding in India. In A.D. 1599 he moved to Delhi and settled there.²⁵ From the beginning the *Sufi* of this order paid great attention on the observance of law of *Shariat* and had emphatically denounced all innovation which had sold the purity of the Islamic doctrine.²⁶ *Shaikh* Ahmad Sirhindi, most talented disciple of *Khawaja* Baqi Billah, was another great mystic saint of this *silsila*. He was popularly known as *majaddid-Alif-Saani*.²⁷ Other important *Sufis* of this order were Shah Abdur Rahim, Shah Waliullah of Delhi, and *Khawaja* Mir Dard.

Interaction between *Bhakti* and *Sufi* Saints

The *Sufis* of the several orders were impressed by the Indian thought and practices that some adopted these ideas. When similar features are found in two places it becomes difficult to say that are they borrowed from each other or they both are original. It is quite possible for Hinduism and Islam to develop similar features theories independently of each other. There is a great possibility of give and take between the two when they come into the close contact with each other.²⁸ The *Sufi* saints who settled in India influenced Indian

²⁵ Rizvi, *The Wonder that was India*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 268.

²⁶ Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 57.

²⁷ He expounded the philosophy of apparentism (*Wahadatu'l Shuhud*) also known as the doctrine of "Unity of Witness," instead of the doctrine of "*Wahadatu'l Wujud*." He says that the relation between man and God is that of slave and master, or that of worshipper and worshipped and not that of lover and beloved as the *Sufis* generally think. Due to his object was to harmonize the doctrine of mysticism with the teachings of orthodox Islam; he was called "*Mujaddid*," the renovator and reformer of Islam. See *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 57.; Chitnis, K.N., *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, Delhi 1990, p. 289.

²⁸ Chitnis, K.N., *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 192.

masses with their teaching and the way of life in the same manner they are affected by the philosophy and teachings of *Bhakti* saints of India.

As the missionaries of Islam and as liberal leaders of its spirituality, the *Sufis* were the first among the Muslims to come in the contact with the Hindu masses, and thus also with Hindu mystics saints.

Their Contacts with each others

Bhakti and *Sufi* saints developed close contact with other. The abodes of the *Sufi* saints were visited by peoples of that time without any discrimination of caste and creeds. We find such evidence that *Bhakti* saints also used to go to the abodes of *Sufi* saints. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* mentions that when Kabir was in the search of a spiritual guide he visited the best of the Musalmans and Hindus.

²⁹ It is possible that among the best Musalmans, he might have visited some *Sufi* saints too. The method of Kabir's teachings was shaped by that *Sufi* saints.

As he says in a *Ramaini*:

*“Manikpur was the dwelling place of Kabir, where for long he listened to Shaikh Taqi. The same teaching he heard at Jaunpur, and Jhusi (near Allahabad) he learnt the names of pirs. In that place they have a record of twenty-one pirs who read the prayers (khutba) in the name of the Prophet.”*³⁰

The same teaching he heard at Jaunpur and Jhusi (near Allahabad) he learnt the names of *pirs* (Muslim preceptors).³¹ He must also hear the poems of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi and Sa'di besides other *Sufis*. He speaks about cup of love of the

²⁹ *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p.186.

³⁰ *Influence of Islam*, p. 148.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

lover (*ashiq, habib*) and the beloved (ma 'shuq, mahbuba), of the path of its station (muqam) which were proved that he was greatly indebted with *Sufis*.³² *Sufis* considered Kabir to be a “*Muwahhid*” (follower of the *Wahadatu'l Wujud*). The author of *Ain-i-Akbari* writes that Kabir “*Muwahhid*” lived during the reign of Sikandar Lodi. At other place he writes that due to his catholicity of philosophy and charismatic personality he was the friend of both Hindus and Musalmans.³³

Like Kabir, Guru Nanak also said to enjoy the company of *Sufi* saints; among them were Shah Bu 'Ali Qalandar of Panipat, *Shaikh* Ibrahim and Mian Mitha.³⁴ It is said he had a long discussion with *Shaikh* Sharaf of Panipat, the pirs of Multan and *Shaikh* Ibrahim. At Ajodhan and Multan Guru Nanak was reported to have had discussion with Baba Farid and *Shaikh* Baha-ud-Din Zakariya.³⁵ He also travelled to Baghdad to visit the famous Qadiri order of *Pir-I Dastgir* *Shaikh* Abdul Qadir Jilani.³⁶ Dadu another *Bhakti* saints manifest great knowledge of *Sufism* than his predecessors, probably he was the disciple of *Shaikh* Kamal.

Like *Bhakti* saints' *Sufi* saints also seems to have an urgent desire to meet the *bhaktas*. *Shaikh* Bahau'd-Din Saharanpuri³⁷ claims to have visited Jadrup Gosain. *Shaikh* relates that it was Jadrup Gosain who told him that the

³² Ibid., p. 123.

³³ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, 2 Vols. Vol. I, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1978, reprint. 2003, p. 313.

³⁴ Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*. op. cit., p. 28.

³⁵ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 389.

³⁶ Ibid,

³⁷ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. . II, op. cit., p. 410.

Mujaddid was superior to all other spiritual guides.³⁸ Yet we do not find much evidence about personal contacts between *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints but interaction between their thoughts shows that both movements affected each other very much. Chishti order was the most popular order in India; its popularity was due to its saints who understood the condition and the religious attitude of India. They gave respect to the Indian practices and customs and many of them were adopted by the *Sufis*. The practice of bowing before the *Shaikh*,³⁹ presenting water to the visitors,⁴⁰ shaving the head of a new disciple⁴¹ was common practices of the saints of India.

Concept of God

As we know that both movements flourished in India at the same time so it was natural that they reflected each other. And the output of this reflection was the adoption of different practices. Indian *Sufis* like *Shaikh* Mohd. Ghaus, *Shaikh* Abdul Quddus Ganghoi, *Shaikh* Salim Chishti etc. were believed that God is Real (*al Haqq*) and he is the Creator, Bestower, and Provider of the masses of sufficiency. The early mystics *Sufi* have followed the sayings of Holy Quran and orthodox belief about the conception of Godhead.⁴² God is self-existent from eternity, Infinite, having no relation to space or time, His attributes is unchangeable, He is all powerful, merciful, and omniscient. He alone had the power of predestination, both of good and evil, and He is the only

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Nizami, *A.R.P.L.*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 178.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 178.

⁴² Smith, Margaret, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, The Sheldon Press, London, 1931, p. 198.

One who is worthy to inspire either hope or fear.⁴³ *Sufis* believed that, the conceive of any other Real existence beside Him would be polytheism. Such a doctrine of God as the Only Reality led to the conception of pantheism which is the characteristic of the later *Sufis*.⁴⁴ Duality, according to the *Shaikh* Abdul Quddus is a false concept and the idea of anything beside God is misguided. People should believe only in the Unity of Being (*wahadat-al-wujud*):

अलखदास आखै सुन जोई। दुई दुई मत कहो भाई कोई।
जल थल म्हेल सरब निरन्तर। गोरखनाथ अकेला सोई।⁴⁵

Further

एक अकेला साईयाँ, दुई दुई कहो न कोय।
बास फूल है एक ही, कहु क्यों दूजा होय।⁴⁶

In the same way the philosophy of Bhakti saints led emphasis on One Personal God and loving God. The idea of god hidden in everything of the universe is found in the theory of Abdul Quddus is very similar to the Nanak's conception of God. For nanak He is the One "EK", *Nirguna*, devoid of all attributes and *Nirankar*:

साहिबु मेरा एको है। एको है भाई एको है।⁴⁷

He is absolute, unconditional. Kabir says that, "He is one and there is no match for Him"⁴⁸ he again said, and "I know Him to be one who exist everywhere."⁴⁹

Dadu says that the Supreme is Omnipresent. He is the only Real in the world of

⁴³Ibid, p. 198.

⁴⁴Ibid, p. 200.

⁴⁵Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, op. cit., p. 340.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ A.G., Rag Asa, M. 1, Vol. II, p. 40.

⁴⁸ K.G. (Trigunayat), Rag Gaudi, Pd. 55.

⁴⁹ A.G., Vol. I, Raga Gaudi, Pd. 3, Tr. from the Original *Gurumukhi* by Dr. Earnest Trumpp, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 2nd Edition, 1970, p. 963.

unreality. He is the treasure house of all Excellencies from which all beings comes forth.⁵⁰ Chaitanya says He is eternal, without a beginning and an end. Supreme Being by him is called Sri Krishana or Hari. He is infinite and *Sat* (absolute Existence) *Chit* (absolute Intelligence) and *Ananda* (absolute Bliss).⁵¹

Concept of *Hukum* or *Riza*

Guru Nanak's conception of *Hukum* (Divine Will) had also very close resemblance with the *Sufi* interpretation of *Riza*. In *Adi Granth* some hymns use *Hukum* and *Riza* as interchangeable terms.⁵² The teachings of Guru Nanak on *Hukum* and *Riza* are comprehensive and broadly based. Mcleod observes, "In Islam the Divine Will, if not actually capricious is at least "unpledged," where as the *Hukum* of Guru Nanak's usage is definitely pledge and dependable."⁵³

Concept of *Guru* or *Pir*

Importance of a *guru* or *pir* is also a common practice among *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints. According to Hinduism if a person has a desire to lead a life of religious man must seek a *guru* for him. As *Svetasvatra Upanishad* says:

वेदान्ते परमं गुह्यं पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम्।
यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ
तस्यैत कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मन
इति॥

⁵⁰ *Influence of Islam*, op. cit., p. 186.

⁵¹ Nath, Radha Govinda, 'A Survey of Chaitanya Movement', *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, op. cit., 190.

⁵² Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, op. cit., p. 393.

⁵³ McLeod, *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, op. cit., p. 201.

“The Supreme mystery of Vedanta ...should be given to one who has the highest devotion for God, and for his guru as for God.”⁵⁴

Mundaka Upanishad says:

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम्

“Let him, in order to understand this, take fuel in his hand and approach a guru who is learned and dwells entirely in Brahman.”⁵⁵

In *Sufism* a guide is always recommended between God and disciple, because they believed that no one can become a *Sufi* without the help of a *pir*. But according to orthodox, no one could be intercessor except the Prophet.⁵⁶ They also believe that those who had no human *pir* were the disciple of a devil, in a Hindi verse *Shaikh Abdul Quddus* says that if a blind man led another blind man both bound to fall into a well:

जागा गुरु जो डूबना चेला काय तिराना।
अंधे अंधा ठेलिया दोऊ कूप पराना।⁵⁷

In India many Muslim *pirs* had Hindu disciples; and similarly, some Hindu saints have had Muslims disciples (*chelas*).

Use of vernacular

The popularity of the *Sufi* saints was also due to the adoption of Hindawi as their language of preaching and communication with the masses of society. The term Hindawi was used by the Persian speaking people for the all

⁵⁴ *Svetasvatra Upanishad*, A. VI. Sl. 23, above translation has been taken from Muller, F. Max, *The Upanishads*, 2 Vols. Vol. II, Dover Publications, New York, 1884, p. 267.

⁵⁵ *Manduka Upanishad*, A.1, Kh. 2, Sl. 12, Ibid, p. 33.

⁵⁶ Tasadduq, Husain, ‘*Sufism and its Path: Reflection of Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, 14th Century*,’ *Indian History Congress*, 62nd Session, 2001, p. 216.

⁵⁷ Rizvi, A History of *Sufism* in India, op. cit., p. 341

Indian regional dialects. In the Chishti *khanqahs*, from the time of *Shaikh* Farid Hindwai came to be used. *Shaikh* Farid's verses are also known as Hindwai poetry. A large number of Hindwai verses of Baba Farid are included in the *Guru Granth* of Sikhs.⁵⁸ The Hindwai couplets are very common in musical assemblies of *Sufis* during thirteenth and fourteenth century. For some *Sufis* the Persian poetry no longer created the same level of ecstasy as in Hindwai.⁵⁹ *Shaikh* Abdul Quddus Ganghoi composed his verses under the pen-name Alakhadasa (Invisible servant) in his *Rushadnama* he used Hindi *doha*.⁶⁰ For example in a particular couplet, he used Persian for the first line and Hindi for the second line:

सिद्ध रहबर सबर तोशा दोस्त मंजिल दिल रफीक
सत्त नगरी धर्म राजा जोग मार्ग निर्मला

(Sincerity is the guide; patience the provision for the journey; the friend our destination; the heart our companion; Truth is the city; righteousness its king; yoga the pure road.)⁶¹

Besides, a number of love stories (*Premakhyan*) were written by the *Sufi* poets in Awadhi dialects. As Qutub Ali Alias Qutuban wrote his *Mrigawati* in Awadhi dialect and he compare his hero with the Hindu mythology not with Rustam, Naushirawan or Hatim. Mir Manjhan, the author of *Madhumalti* and *Mugdhawati* also wrote stories in pure Awadhi language.⁶² *Padmavat* of Malik Muhammad Jaisi, The greatest *Sufi* poet of Hindi, will ever remain a jewel in

⁵⁸ Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India: Social and Political Perspectives*, op .cit., p. 242.

⁵⁹ Aquil, Raziuddin, *Sufism, Culture and Politics: Afghans and Islam in Medieval North India*, Oxford Univ. Press, Delhi, 2007, p. 225.

⁶⁰ Halim, A., 'Growth and Development of Hindi Literature', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, Dacca, 1957, p. 88.

⁶¹ Aquil, Raziuddin, *Sufism, Culture and Politics: Afghans and Islam in Medieval North India*, op. cit., pp. 225-26.

⁶² Halim, A., 'Growth and Development of Hindi Literature', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. II, Dacca, 1957, p. 86.

Hindi literature. Like *Sufi* saints bhakti saints also gave emphasis on the local dialects of the time. Ramananda was the great scholar of Sanskrit wrote in Hindi as well. His *Ram-Raksha-Strota* is partially in Sanskrit and partially in Hindi, and one of his padas quoted in *Adi Granth* is in *Hindi*. Kabir the chief priest of *Nirguna Bhakti* wrote in Purbi dialect of Hindi, yet Braja, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Arabic and Persian are all manifest in his speech.⁶³ Nanak on the whole wrote in the Hindi idioms with Punjabi dialects. Vallabhacharya was also a great scholar of Sanskrit but his *Vanayatra* and *Vishnupada* were written in chaste Braja Bhasha. Persian dialects were also adopted by the Hindus. It is said during the time of Sikandar Lodi, a Brahmin is reported to have been so well-versed in Islamic learning that he taught Islamic precepts to Muslims.⁶⁴

Sama and Kirtan

The mystic music becomes a tool for ecstasy. The audition party *samas* aimed to attain *hal* (ecstasy) it is similar to the *kirtan* or devotional songs of Chaitanya. Chaitanya was the exponent of *kirtan*, he believed that through *sankirtan* and dances a state of and ecstasy could be produced in which one can realize the personal presence of Lord Krishna.⁶⁵ In the same manner Chishti mystics believed in spiritual value of music and they patronized the talent of professional singers. *Shaikh* Nizam-ud-Din was found of music and talks of ecstasy and rapture (*surur*).⁶⁶ *Khawaja* Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki was very

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 72-73

⁶⁴ Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 241.

⁶⁵ Latif, Abdul, *The Muslim Mystic Movement in Bengal (1301-1500)*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1993, p. 99.

⁶⁶ Tasadduq, Husain, 'Sufism and its Path: Reflection of Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, 14th Century,' *Indian History Congress*, 62nd Session, 2001, p. 212.

fond of music. It is said in musical parties he was over taken by ecstasy.⁶⁷ Hindi mystical songs were recited in these *samas* and many of them musicians were newly converted Muslims. For this purpose *padas* were equally popular among *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints. However, the popularity of *Vaishnava* themes in *Sufi samas* of Hindi-speaking regions was the most significant development of the time.

Adoption of Yogic practice: *Chillah-i-ma'kus*

The ascetic practices which involved starving and torturing the body, such as *chillah-i-ma'kus* has close resemblance to Hindu and Buddhist practices and consequently the appeal of Chishti *silsila* in the non-Muslim environment. One who wants to practice of *chillah-i-ma'kus* ties a rope to his feet and gets his body lowered into a well and offers prayers in this posture for forty nights. Some of the Chishti saints are reported to have practiced this inverted chillah. Shah Wali Ullah, however remarks, "We could not find any authority for it in the tradition of the Prophet or in the sayings of the Jurists.... Its legality or otherwise is known to God alone."⁶⁸ This practice was probably borrowed from the *sadhus* who are known as *urdhamukhi*, about them it is said that they hang their heads downwards suspended from the branch of a tree, for perhaps half an hour at a time.⁶⁹ *Shaikh* Farid Chishti and later *Shaikh* Abdur Rahman Qadiri practiced the arduous *chilla-i-makus*.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 326.

⁶⁸ *A.R.P.I.*, p. 179.

⁶⁹ Oman, John, Campbell, *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1973, p. 46.

⁷⁰ Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 86.

In the contrast of Chishti order *Sufis* of Suhrawardiyya order didn't believe in such hard practices. They believed in a life which both their body and soul received equal pleasure. Neither they fasted perpetually nor did they recommend a life of starvation. The Chishtis believed in the control of emotional life as a prerequisite to the control of external behavior.⁷¹ Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints had common approach towards the way of life. Almost all these saints believed in living a balanced life. For example, Nanak and Dadu opposed to torture of body to get salvation. Like Suhrawardiyya saints many *Bhakti* saints did not believe in fasting.

Wandering of the Holy Places

Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints laid emphasis on the wandering of the holy places. In fifteenth and sixteenth century a number of *Sufis* are known to have visited Ceylon to pay homage to the legendary foot-prints of Adam.⁷² Guru Nanak also visited to Ceylon, Macca and Baghdad. *Bhakti* saints largely performed pilgrimage to holy cities like Kashi, Prayag, Vrindaban, Mathura, Dwarika, etc. likewise the *Sufi* saints used to pilgrimage to Macca.⁷³

Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints of India influenced the mass of India by their thoughts and teachings. No doubt that the principle of universal brotherhood and human equality are the basis of Islamic society.⁷⁴ Social equality and love for the one *Nirguna Brahman* is the characteristic feature of *Sufism*. This was

⁷¹ A.R.P.I., p. 179.

⁷² According to Ibn Battuta, Adam was known in Ceylon as Baba (father) and Eve as Mama (mother), cited by Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 387.

⁷³ Shah, Sirdar Iqbal Ali, *Islamic Sufism*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973, p. 63.

⁷⁴ Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, op. cit., p. 1.

adopted by the Bhakti saints. Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints opposed the caste system. According to them all men were equal in the eyes of God. They took their disciples from all strata of society without any distinction of castes and creeds. By their act they tried to bring reconciliation and unity among Hindu and Muslims. Many untouchables became the follower of Bhakti cult. Famous saint Raidas was a *Chamar* by caste and Kabir was a weaver. It is due to their preaching the condition of *Sudras* improved. *Sufis* also abolished all invidious class distinctions. *Sufis* lay down the concept of brotherhood in which everyone are equal and treat each other as the member of the same family.⁷⁵ Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, and Dadu did not believe in caste system. Chaitanya was against the class distinctions. Most of the saints preached the gospel of unity and friendliness, Nanak and Chaitanya for instance emphasized the fact that Hinduism and Islam were two different paths leading to the same destination and *Ram* and *Rahim*, *Krishana* and *Karim*, *Allah* and *Ishwar* were different names of the same Almighty. However, the main object of the saints to bring compromise between Hinduism and Islam.

The concept of *ahinsa* (non-violence) which has been one of the essential features of Indian philosophy was adopted by the *Sufis*. They lived as vegetarians.⁷⁶ Kabir gave more emphasis on the non-violence.

⁷⁵ Shah, Sirdar Iqbal Ali, *Islamic Sufism*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁷⁶ Iraqi, *Bhakti Movement in medieval India*, op. cit., p. 252.



Conclusion

Conclusion

Since the establishment of Muslim rule in India (1206 A.D.) a feeling of communal bitterness emerged. Hindus who were the majority felt *deceived*. Those who invited Muslim conquerors thought that the invader would go back after invasion. After Ghurid victory over Prithivi Raj (1193 A.D.), the Turks decided to establish kingdom and moved into India to live permanently. This further aggregated Hindu-Muslim relations to bitterness. During sultanate period none of the rulers took Hindus into confidence. *Jaziya* was imposed. No Hindu was overtaken in state service. The ruler and non-Muslims' relation continued tense till we reach the period of Akbar who through abolishing *Jaziya*, pilgrimage tax, marrying Rajput princesses and appointing Rajputs and other Hindus in state service tried to diffuse the tension.

Along with the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, it is said a large number of *sufi* saints entered into India and built their centers in the interior of the country. The *Sufi* saints gradually tried to contact the local people with message of love and co-existence. In course of time won over the Hindus and succeeded to ease tension. *Bhakti* saints who had similar philosophical, spiritual and cultural feelings came in contact with *Sufis* and communal tension gave way to love, affection and peaceful co-existence. The condition of 15th and 16th century created a suitable atmosphere for the *Bhakti* Movement North India. It is obvious that *Bhakti* movement was an indigenous movement and had nothing to do with Islam. This movement has two aspects one to love to a personal God and total surrender to Him, it was not due to the impact of Islam

because the philosophy of total surrender and love to God was in India before the advent of Islam. The second aspect which believe in the worship of a formless God, has the aim not only harmony but religious reform of society also.

Bhakti movement was first appeared in South around the sixth century onwards by the *Alvar* and *Nayannars* saints. The idea of preaching *Bhakti* through hymns and stories was traditionally done by these saints of Tamil devotional cult. There was a chain of *Acharyas* in South like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya and Nimbarkacharya, they were great scholars of Sanskrit and defined *Bhakti* in different way.

Bhakti came to North from South by the effort of Ramananda. He founded his own sect and preached his principles in Hindi at Banaras and Agra. Simplification of worship and emancipation of people from the traditional caste rules were his two important contributions to the *Bhakti* Movement. From the fifteenth century onwards there appeared a large number of *Bhakti* saints in Northern India, belonging both *Nirguna* and *Saguna Marga*. *Nirguna* school of *Bhakti* was representd by Kabir, Nanak, Dadu Dayal, Raidas etc. and Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Surads, Tulasidas, Mirabai etc belonged to *Saguna Bhakti*.

These saints believed in the Unity of God. He is One, and there is no second. *Nirguna Bhakti* saints give the theory of *Nirakar, Niranjan, Brahm*n. They denounced idol worship and the doctrine of incarnation. They pointed out that in *Bhakti* it is the Almighty the main object of a devotee's worship. While

the follower of *Saguna Bhakti* believe in personal God who has a human form. They believe in the doctrine of incarnation. And the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as *Ram* and *Krishna* was very popular among them. The basic feature of this movement was surrender to God, who is all pervasive and capable of solving the problems of devotees. He saves His devotee from the web of *maya* (illusion). They (saints) believe that the chanting the name of God purified the soul and prepared one for His grace by this the trap of rebirth is removed.

These *Bhakti* saints showed a new way of life to the people which could be followed by them without any difficulty. In medieval period Hindu society was divided into two classes- the upper and the lower. *Brahmins* were the priest of the society they occupied the superior position. The untouchables were not allowed to attain religious ceremonies. They could not enter into the temples and not listen the religious words of *Vedas* or Scriptures. Only the people of upper classes could do so. Most of the saints belonged to the lower class of society. These spiritual leaders of lower strata challenged the religious system of Hinduism but also took over the leadership in their own hands and broke the religious monopoly of the Brahmins. They saved the masses from the exploitation by the priest class. The religious idea of the saints was neither to Hinduism nor to Islam but simply gave expression of universal religion with unity of Divinity.

The main aim of this movement was unity of Hindus and Muslims. There was a wide gap between both communities in India. The *Bhakti* saints tried to fill this gap by their philosophy and preaching. These saints led to the

growth of mutual harmony. The saints like Kabir proclaimed that “*Allah* and *Ram* were names of one and the same God that He was to be found neither in temple nor in Mosque, neither in Banaras nor in Mecca, but only in the heart of His devotee.”¹

पूरिव दिसा हरि का वासा पछिम अलह मुकौमां।
दिल ही खोजि दिलै दिल भीतरि इहां राम रहिमांनं।

Dadu says: “No Hindu am I, nor yet a Musalman. I follow none of the six systems (of Hindu philosophy). I am a devotee of a Merciful.”²

ना हम हिंदू होहिगे ना हम मूसलमान।
षट दरसन में हम नहीं हम राते रहिमान।।

Nanak and Chaitanya for instance emphasize the fact that Hinduism and Islam are two different paths leading to the same destination, and *Ram* and *Rahim*, *Krishana* and *Karim*, *Allah* and *Ishwar* are the different names of Supreme Being. These teachings were able to remove hatred and suspicion from the minds of Hindu and Muslims. So the result of the *Bhakti* Movement was that two great cultures came into close contact with each other and the process of give and take took place.

In the same time *Sufis* movement was also flourished in the country. The various trends and thoughts of both movements drew much from each other either consciously or unconsciously. The *Sufis* theory of *Wahdat-ul Wajud* (unity of Being) was remarkably similar to *Upanishadic Advaita* of

¹ K.G. (Trigunayat), Rag Asawari, Pd. 259.

² D.B, Madhi ko ang, Pd, 46.

Hinduism. Many *Sufis* saints preferred Hindi dialect rather than Persian. Indian Musical forms like *Khyal* and *Thumri*, and the recitation of Hindi verses have been very much in use in the *Sama* of the *Khanqahs*. Hindu religion was influenced by the *Sufis*. *Sufis* believed in the doctrine of monotheism (*Ekeswarwad*), they always condemned idol-worship. Like Nirguna *Bhakti Sufis* also believe in self-surrender unto Him. *Bhakti* saints tried to reform Hinduism to that extent that it may combat the spread of Islam. In these processes the *Bhakti* saints was influenced by the *Sufis*. Both *Sufis* and *Bhakti* saints created a new atmosphere which continued to affect the social, religious, cultural and political life of India even the later centuries.

To sum up, it is apparent that the saints had different perceptions regarding the type of society they considered ideal : Kabir believed above all in an egalitarian social order where there would be no differences on the basis of rank, birth, caste or creed, wealth or race or religion; for Tulasi the greatest of the time was social stability which could only be established on the basis of a reformed *Varnashram Dharma*, and the cooperative efforts of a just ruler and a true saint, both imbued with a sense of discrimination between right and wrong. For Surdas, Brij was an idyllic land of love and beauty which overcame all social distinctions. This present work offers an analysis of different trends of *Bhakti* thought and movement and their impact on the society. Through the interaction between *Bhakti* and *Sufis* saints it analysed their mutual understanding and co-existence reached in the country not only during medieval times but since then till today.



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Glossary

Glossary

<i>Acharyas</i>	Scholars
<i>Achit</i>	Matter, world
<i>Adi Granth</i>	‘The original volume’ the sacred book of the Sikhs called <i>Adi Grantha</i> to distinguished it from a letter volume known as the <i>Granth</i> of tenth <i>Guru</i> .
<i>Adi</i>	Original; first; primary.
<i>Advaita</i>	Absolute monism.
<i>Agyan</i>	Ignorance; spiritual blindness.
<i>Akal</i>	Timeless; eternal; immortal.
<i>Allah</i>	The Muhammadan name for God.
<i>Alvars</i>	<i>Vaishnava Bhakti</i> Saints of Tamilnadu.
<i>Amar</i>	Immortal.
<i>Amrita</i>	Un-dying; nectar.
<i>Ananta</i>	Infinite.
<i>Ansha</i>	The portion, a part, used for the human individual soul as a portion of the universal soul.
<i>Atma</i>	The self; the soul.
<i>Avadhut</i>	Mendicant; Follower of Ramananda (the detached).
<i>Avatara</i>	Descent of deity; an “incarnation” theory of Hinduism.
<i>Bairagi</i>	One who is free from all passions.
<i>Bani</i>	Utterance of <i>Gurus</i> and <i>bhagats</i> recorded in <i>Adi Granth</i> .
<i>Bhagat, (bhakta)</i>	A provincial form of <i>bhakta</i> ; devotee; saint.
<i>Bhakti</i>	Worship; loving faith; devotion.
<i>Bhjana</i>	A hymn sung as an act of worship.
<i>Bhotik sansar</i>	Material world.

<i>Bhotik</i>	Materialistic.
<i>Brahama</i>	The name of the Supreme God of Hindu theology, generally regarded as impersonal and all pervading.
<i>Brahmin</i>	Member of upper class of Hindu society.
<i>Buddhi</i>	Mind.
<i>Chamar</i> worker.	A member of the low caste of Hindu society; leather worker.
<i>Chandal</i>	A sweeper.
<i>Chaupai</i>	A verse of four lines in hindi of a special metre.
<i>Chit</i>	Soul.
<i>Chitta</i>	Mind; heart.
<i>Dan</i>	Charity.
<i>Dargah</i>	A sacred place; the presence of God.
<i>Dar-ul-Harb</i>	'The Abode of War'. A term used by Muslims with reference to a country belonging to infidels which has not been brought under the rule of Islam.
<i>Dar-ul-Islam</i>	'The Abode of Islam'. A country where the law (Shariat) of Islam is in full force.
<i>Darvesh</i>	Muslim faqir.
<i>Dharma</i>	Law, custom, duty.
<i>Dharshana</i>	A vision, also used of the six schools of Hindu Philosophy.
<i>Dhram Raj</i>	<i>Yama</i> , the God of the death who determines man's fate according his acts in life.
<i>Dhyan</i>	Meditation.
<i>Doha</i>	A couplet; distich.
<i>Doha</i>	A Hindi couplet of a special metre.
<i>Dwija</i>	Twice born; a man of one of the three upper castes of Hindus.

<i>Ek (Ik)</i>	One.
<i>Ekadashi</i>	The eleventh day of half month observed as a fast by Hindus.
<i>Faqir</i>	Poor; a mendicant; muslim ascetic.
<i>Gaddi</i>	Literally a pillow; the place where a religious leader has his seat of honour.
<i>Ghazi</i>	A warrior. One who fights in the cause of Islam.
<i>Girumukhi</i>	The sacred “ <i>Guru tongue</i> ” of the Sikhs.
<i>Gopis</i>	Milk-maids.
<i>Gops</i>	Milkmen.
<i>Gunas</i>	Qualities; attributes; three gunas according to Hinduism i.e. <i>sattva</i> (purity, tranquility), <i>rajas</i> (passion, aggressiveness), <i>tamas</i> (inertia).
<i>Guru</i>	A religious teacher and guide.
<i>Gurudwara</i>	Sikh place of devotion and charity.
<i>Hadith</i>	Traditions; sayings of Mohammed.
<i>Hajj</i>	The pilgrimage to Mecca, which occurs annually in the month of Dhi;1-Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar.
<i>Hari</i>	A name of the Lord Vishnu.
<i>Hatha Yoga</i>	A variety of yoga practiced by <i>Gorakhpanti</i> .
<i>Hukum</i>	Judgment; a judicial decision; will of God.
<i>Ishwara</i>	God.
<i>Janam Sakhi</i>	Birth record; life story.
<i>janana</i>	Religious knowledge.
<i>janani</i>	One who expounds religious lore.
<i>Jap</i>	Praise; telling one’s beads; saying prayers.
<i>Jigyasu</i>	Seeker behind God.

<i>Jihad</i>	Holy war.
<i>Jiva</i>	An individual soul.
<i>Jizyh</i>	Poll-tax.
<i>Jnana</i>	Knowledge, conscious, a way of salvation.
<i>Kal</i>	Mystic being, personifying time and death, which figures very prominently in the <i>Kabir-panthi</i> mythology.
<i>Kalash</i>	An earthen pot.
<i>Karma</i>	Path of action; destiny determined by deeds in different exercises.
<i>Kashi</i>	An old name for Banaras.
<i>Kayastha</i>	Writer.
<i>Khand</i>	Portion.
<i>Khanqah</i>	A hospice or monastery of the Sufis.
<i>Khatri (Kshatriya)</i>	Warrior.
<i>Khuda</i>	Muhammadan name for God.
<i>Khutba</i>	An address <i>or a</i> Sermon on Friday in the mosque.
<i>Khwajah</i>	A respectable man. A title of honour to the name of a <i>pir</i> .
<i>Krishna</i>	Out of the ten incarnation of Vishnu.
<i>Lahar Talao</i>	The pond (talab) near Banaras where the infant Kabir was said to have been found by Niru and Neema.
<i>Lakh</i>	A hundred thousand.
<i>Lakshmi</i>	The consort of Vishnu and goddess of good fortune.
<i>Lobh</i>	Greed.
<i>Loka</i>	One of the division of the universe.
<i>Madarsha</i>	'A place where teaching is done.' Particularly a school where the Islamis 'snce' are taught.
<i>Man</i>	Mind: soul.

<i>Mantra</i>	A secret phrase or password.
<i>Marga</i>	Road; way (e.g., <i>bhakti marga</i>).
<i>Math</i>	A monastery.
<i>Maya</i>	Cosmic illusion in (Vedanta); the idea of <i>maya</i> plays a great part in Hindu Philosophy and theology; the veil covering the Reality and drawing man's mind to the impermanent world.
<i>Moksha (Mukti)</i>	Liberation; salvation; <i>nirvana</i> .
<i>Moksha</i>	Salvation.
<i>Muni</i>	A sage.
<i>Nam</i>	Divine name; the spirit of God.
<i>Narda</i>	A divine sage of Hindu Mythology.
<i>Nath</i>	Master in the hierarchy of Gorakhpanthi yogis.
<i>Nirankar</i>	God as according to Nanak.
<i>Nirguna</i>	Without attributes or qualities.
<i>Om</i>	<i>Onkar</i> ; name of God .
<i>Panth</i>	Literally 'a <i>panth</i> ', a sect.
<i>Paramatama</i>	Supreme soul.
<i>Paramatama</i>	The Supreme soul or reality.
<i>Path</i>	Road; way of life; a community following or common <i>panth</i> .
<i>Patwari</i>	Village revenue officer.
<i>Pir</i>	A term used for a murshid (spiritual director).
<i>Prapatti</i>	Self-surrender.
<i>Prasada</i>	God's grace.
<i>Quran</i>	The name of the sacred book of the Muslims.

<i>Sabad</i>	Word; the divine self communication; a hymn of the <i>Adi Granth</i> , writings of Kabir.
<i>Sadhan</i>	<i>Method.</i>
<i>Sadhana</i>	Spiritual effort for realization of God.
<i>Saguna</i>	With attributes or qualities.
<i>Sampradaya</i>	Sect.
<i>Sannyasi</i>	One who has abandoned all worldiness; a yogi.
<i>Sansar</i>	World.
<i>Sant</i>	Saint; ascetic; <i>bhagat</i> (such as Kabir and Raidas).
<i>Sat (Sach)</i>	Truth.
<i>Satguru</i>	True Guru.
<i>Sati (suttee)</i>	Widow-burning.
<i>Satsang</i>	Association with holy men; fellowship of true believers.
<i>Satsangat</i>	Sayings of saints.
<i>sattvik jivan</i>	Disciplined life.
<i>Shaikh</i>	A man of authority, a religious teacher.
<i>Sharadh</i>	Ceremonies performed after death by Hindus.
<i>Shiva</i>	The third member of the Hindu triad whose function is destruction.
<i>Shraddha</i>	Faithful.
<i>Shruti</i>	Revelation, the Vedas.
<i>Siddhi</i>	Occult power.
<i>Silsilah</i>	Order of Sufi teachers.
<i>Skandha</i>	Canto.
<i>Sloka</i>	Stanza.
<i>Smriti</i>	Rememberance, Hindu Law.

<i>Sradha</i>	Faith.
<i>Sufi</i>	A person who professes the mystic doctrines known as <i>tasawwuf</i> , Islamic mysticism.
<i>Sufism</i>	The mystic doctrines, principles and practices of Islamic mystics.
<i>Sunya</i>	Void; the state when creation ceases and nothing but exists.
<i>Taahid</i>	A term used to express the unity of God.
<i>Tantra</i>	Hindu sacred text concerning of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.
<i>Tarikh</i>	Date, History.
<i>Tasawwuf</i>	The term used to signify Islamic Mysticism.
<i>Ulama</i>	Plural of <i>Alim</i> , the learned doctors of Muslim society.
<i>Vaishnava</i>	Worshipper of Vishnu.
<i>Vishnu</i>	The second member of the Hindu triad whose function is preservation .