

Theme IV

Religious Ideas and Visual Culture



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

Time Line

Bhakti Tradition

Vaishnava Bhakti: North India

Vaishnava Bhakti: Bengal

Bhakti Movement: Maharashtra

Sufi Tradition

Suhrawardi *Silsilah*

Chishti *Silsilah*

Art and Architecture

Temple

New Structural Forms: Arch and Dome

Islamic Calligraphy

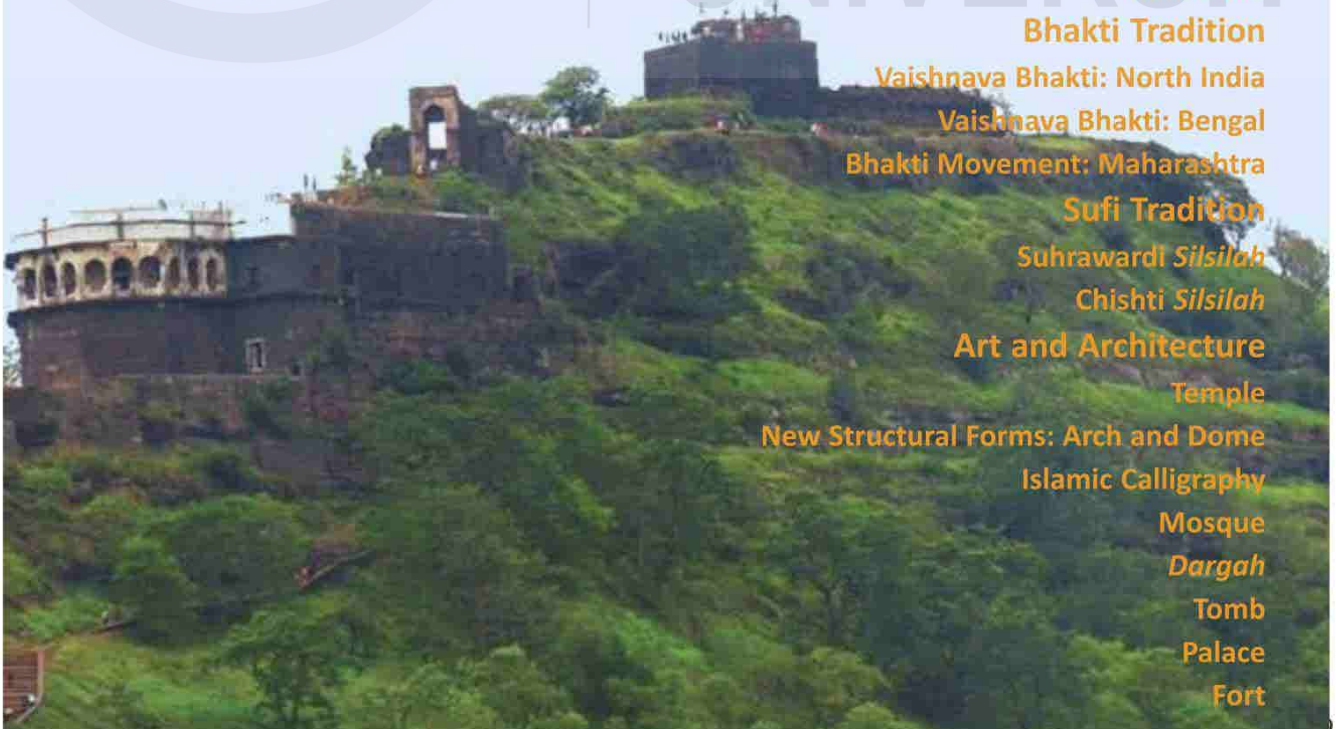
Mosque

Dargah

Tomb

Palace

Fort





ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

Daulatabad Fort

Courtesy: Aak.jain54; August 2012; CC-BY-SA 3.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Daulatabad_Fort_a_view.JPG

UNIT 14 BHAKTI TRADITION*

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Background: Bhakti Movement in South India
- 14.3 Bhakti Movement in North India
- 14.4 Emergence of Bhakti Movement
 - 14.4.1 Political Factors for the Rise of Bhakti Movement
 - 14.4.2 Socio-Economic Factors
- 14.5 Main Popular Movements and their Characteristics
 - 14.5.1 Monotheistic Movements of North India
 - 14.5.2 Common Characteristic Features
 - 14.5.3 **Vaishnava** Bhakti Movement in North India
 - 14.5.4 Vaishnava Bhakti Movement in Bengal
 - 14.5.5 Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra
 - 14.5.6 Bhakti Movement in Other Regions
- 14.6 Influence of Other Traditions and Movements
 - 14.6.1 Popular Monotheistic Saints and Ramananda
 - 14.6.2 Influence of the Nathpanthi Movement on Monotheistic Saints
 - 14.6.3 Influence of Islamic Ideas and the Role of Sufism
 - 14.6.4 Theory of Islamic Challenge to Hinduism
- 14.7 Summary
- 14.8 Keywords
- 14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 14.10 Suggested Readings
- 14.11 Instructional Video Recommendations

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand the background of the bhakti movement,
- identify the main political and socio-economic factors for the rise of bhakti movement in north India,
- list the main popular branches and the saints of this movement,
- know the main characteristic features of the bhakti movement, and
- learn about the influence of other traditions and Islam on bhakti movement.

* Prof. R. P. Bahuguna, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi. The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 8, Unit 29.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Bhakti as a religious concept means devotional surrender to a personally conceived Supreme God for attaining salvation. The origin of this doctrine has been traced to both the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions of ancient India and to various scriptures such as the *Bhagvat Gita*. But it was for the first time in South India between the 7th and 10th century that bhakti grew from a mere religious doctrine into a popular movement based on religious equality and broad-based social participation. The movement which was led by popular saint-poets reached its climax in the 10th century after which it began to decline. But it was revived as a philosophical and ideological movement by a series of wandering scholars or *acharyas*, beginning with Ramanuja in the 11th century. The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in early 13th century witnessed great outburst of many diverse and widespread socio-religious movements in various parts of the country drawing upon the concepts of bhakti. These movements have been seen as a continuation or revival of the older South Indian bhakti movement. But each one of the later movements which grew in the Sultanate period had a historical context of its own and its own peculiarities. Moreover, one of them, namely, the non-conformist monotheistic movement which is associated with Kabir and other 'low-caste' saints bears only superficial resemblance to the variants of the movement. Its social roots, its ideology, social composition of its leadership and even its concept of bhakti and God set it fundamentally apart from the older bhakti movement of South India as well as from the rest of the later bhakti movements. In view of these wide and at times even basic differences among various bhakti movements, they must be discussed individually in order to clearly bring out the characteristics of each one of them and also to discover elements of unity and diversity among them.

14.2 BACKGROUND: BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA

The Saiva Nayanar saints and Vaishnava Alvar saints of South India spread the doctrine of bhakti among different sections of the society irrespective of caste and gender during the period between the 7th and the 10th century. Some of these saints came from the 'lower' castes and some were women. The saint-poets preached bhakti in an intense emotional manner and promoted religious egalitarianism. They dispensed with rituals and traversed the region several times singing, dancing and advocating bhakti. The Alvar and Nayanar saints used the Tamil language and not Sanskrit for preaching and composing devotional songs. All these features gave the movement a popular character. For the first time bhakti acquired a popular base.

The South Indian bhakti saints were critical of Buddhists and Jains who enjoyed a privileged status at the courts of South Indian kings at that time. They won over many adherents of Buddhism and Jainism, both of which by now had become rigid and formal religions. At the same time, however, these poet-saints resisted the authority of the orthodox Brahmins by making bhakti accessible to all without any caste and sex discrimination. But the South Indian bhakti movement had its limitations as well. It never consciously opposed Brahmanism or the *varna* and caste systems at the social level. It was integrated with the caste system and the 'lower' castes continued to suffer from various social disabilities. There was no

elimination of Brahmanical rituals such as worship of idols, recitation of the Vedic *mantras* and pilgrimages to sacred places in spite of the overriding emphasis on bhakti as the superior mode of worship. The Buddhists and Jains were its main targets, not the Brahmans. This perhaps was also the reason why the Brahman dominated temples played an important role in the growth of South Indian bhakti movement.

Since the ideological and social foundations of caste system were not questioned by the South Indian saint-poets, the bhakti movement of the South in the long run strengthened it rather than weakening it. Ultimately, after the movement reached its climax in the 10th century, it was gradually assimilated into the conventional Brahmanical religion. But despite these limitations, the South Indian bhakti movement in its heyday succeeded in championing the cause of religious equality and, consequently, the Brahmans had to accept the right of the 'low-caste' to preach, to have access to bhakti as a mode of worship and to have access even to the *Vedas*.

Bhakti and the South Indian *Acharyas*

When the popularity of the bhakti movement in South India was on the wane, the doctrine of bhakti was defended at the philosophical level by a series of brilliant Vaishnava Brahman scholars (*acharyas*). Ramanuja (11th century) was first among them. He gave philosophical justification for bhakti. He tried to establish a careful balance between orthodox Brahmanism and popular bhakti which was open to all. Though he did not support the idea of the 'lower' castes having access to the *Vedas*, he advocated bhakti as a mode of worship accessible to all including the Sudras and even the outcastes. While propagating bhakti, he did not observe caste distinctions and even tried to eradicate untouchability. Nimbarka, a Telugu Brahman, is believed to have been a younger contemporary of Ramanuja. He spent most of his time in Vrindavan near Mathura in North India. He believed in total devotion to Krishna and Radha. Another South Indian Vaishnavite bhakti philosopher was Madhava who belonged to the 13th century. Like Ramanuja, he did not dispute orthodox Brahmanical restriction on the Vedic study by the Sudras. He believed that bhakti provided alternate avenue of worship to the Sudras. His philosophical system was based on the *Bhagvat Purana*. He is also believed to have toured North India. The last two prominent Vaishnava *acharyas* were Ramananda (late 14th and early 15th century) and Vallabha (late 15th and early 16th century). Since both of them lived mostly in North India during the Sultanate period and gave new orientation to the Vaishnava bhakti, they will be discussed in the Section dealing with North India.

14.3 BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN NORTH INDIA

There arose during the Sultanate period (13th-15th century) many popular socio-religious movements in North and East India, and Maharashtra. Emphasis on bhakti and religious equality were two common features of these movements. As has been pointed out, these two were also the features of the South Indian bhakti movements. Almost all the bhakti movements of the Sultanate period have been related to one South Indian Vaishnava *acharya* or the other. For these reasons, many scholars believe that the bhakti movements of the Sultanate period were a continuation or resurgence of the older bhakti movement. They argue that there existed philosophical and ideological links between the two, either due to contact

or diffusion. Thus, Kabir and other leaders of non-conformist monotheistic movements in North India are believed to have been the disciples of Ramananda who, in turn, is believed to have been connected with Ramanuja's philosophical order. Similar claims have been made that Chaitanya, the most significant figure of the Vaishnava movement in Bengal, belonged to the philosophical school of Madhava. This movement is also believed to have been connected with Nimbarka's school because of its emphasis on 'Krishna' bhakti.

There are undoubtedly striking similarities between the older bhakti tradition of South India and various bhakti movements that flourished in the Sultanate and Mughal periods. If we exclude the popular monotheistic movements of Kabir, Nanak and other 'low' caste saints, the two sets of movements can be shown to have possessed many more common features. For example, like the South Indian bhakti movement, the Vaishnava bhakti movements of North and Eastern India and Maharashtra, though egalitarian in the religious sphere, never denounced the caste system, the authority of Brahmanical scriptures and the Brahmanical privileges as such.

Consequently, like the South Indian bhakti, most of the Vaishnava movements of the later period were ultimately assimilated into the Brahmanical religion, though in the process of interaction, the latter itself underwent many changes. However, the similarities end here. Bhakti movement was never a single movement except in the broad doctrinal sense of a movement which laid emphasis on bhakti and religious equality. The bhakti movements of medieval India differed in many significant respects not only from the older South Indian bhakti tradition but also among themselves. Each one of them had its own regional identity and socio-historical and cultural contexts. Thus, the non-conformist movements based on popular monotheistic bhakti contained features that were essentially different from various Vaishnava bhakti movements. Kabir's notion of bhakti was not the same as that of the medieval Vaishnava saints such as Chaitanya or Mirabai.

Within the Vaishnava movement, the historical context of Maharashtra bhakti was different from that of the Bengal Vaishnavism or North Indian bhakti movement of Ramanand, Vallabha, Surdas and Tulsidas. During the later period, when the Vaishnava bhakti movement crystallized into sects, there arose frequent disputes between them which sometimes even turned violent. Among all the bhakti movements of the period between the 14th and 17th century, the popular monotheistic movements of Kabir, Nanak, Raidas and other 'lower' caste saints stand out fundamentally different.

Popular Monotheistic Movement and Vaishnava Bhakti Movement

Both these movements arose in Northern India at the same time, that is, in the centuries following the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and advent of Islam in that part of the country. For this reason, the rise of both the movements is quite often attributed to certain common causes such as the influence of Islam on Hinduism. However, the causes and sources of the two movements and the factors exerting influence on them were quite diverse. It will become clear from the following discussion that a cause which explains one movement may not do so in the case of the other. This is so because the popular monotheistic movements arose and reached their peak in the Sultanate period, while the Vaishnava movements began in the Sultanate period but reached their climax during the Mughal period.

1) Give the salient features of the bhakti movement.

.....
.....
.....

2) Write two lines on each of the following:

Ramanuja

.....

Nimbarka

.....

Vallabha

.....

Chaitanya

.....

Madhava

.....

14.4 EMERGENCE OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The bhakti movement which influenced large number of people during 14th-17th centuries in North India emerged due to a number of political, socio-economic and religious factors. We will discuss all these in this Section.

14.4.1 Political Factors for the Rise of Bhakti Movement

It has been pointed out that as the popular bhakti movement could not take root in Northern India before the Turkish conquest because the socio-religious milieu was dominated by the Rajput-Brahman alliance. The Turkish conquests brought the supremacy of this alliance to an end. The advent of Islam with the Turkish conquest also caused a setback to the power and prestige commanded by the Brahmans: Thus, the way was paved for the growth of non-conformist movements, with anti-caste and anti-Brahmanical ideology. The Brahmans had always made the people believe that the images and idols in the temples were not just the symbols of God but were gods themselves who possessed divine power and who could be influenced by them (i.e. the Brahmans). The Turks deprived the Brahmans of their temple wealth and state patronage. Thus, the Brahmans suffered both materially and ideologically. The non-conformist sect of the Nathpanthis was perhaps the first to gain from the declining power of the Rajput-Brahman alliance. This sect seems to have reached its peak in the beginning of the Sultanate period. The loss of power and influence by the Brahmans and the new political situation ultimately created conditions for the rise of the popular monotheistic movements and other bhakti movements in Northern India.

14.4.2 Socio-Economic Factors

It has been argued that the bhakti movements of medieval India represented sentiments of the common people against feudal oppression. According to this

viewpoint, elements of revolutionary opposition to feudalism can be found in the poetry of the bhakti saints ranging from Kabir and Nanak to Chaitanya and Tulsidas. It is in this sense that sometimes the medieval bhakti movements are seen as Indian counterpart of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. However, there is nothing in the poetry of the bhakti saints to suggest that they represented the class interests of the peasantry against the surplus-extracting feudal state. The Vaishnava bhakti saints broke away from orthodox Brahmanical order only to the extent that they believed in bhakti and religious equality. Normally, they continued to subscribe to many basic principles of orthodox Brahmanism. The more radical monotheistic saints rejected orthodox Brahmanical religion altogether but even they did not call for the overthrow of the state and the ruling class. For this reason, the bhakti movements cannot be regarded as Indian variant of European Protestant Reformation which was a far greater social upheaval linked to the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism.

This, however, does not mean that the bhakti saints were indifferent to the living conditions of the people. They used images of daily life and always tried to identify themselves in one way or another with the sufferings of the common people.

Economic and Social Changes

The widespread popularity of the monotheistic movement of Kabir, Nanak, Dhanna, Pipa, etc. can be explained fully only in the context of certain significant socio-economic changes in the period following the Turkish conquest of Northern India. The Turkish ruling class, unlike the Rajputs, lived in towns. The extraction of large agricultural surplus led to enormous concentration of resources in the hands of the ruling class. The demands of this resource-wielding class for manufactured goods, luxuries and other necessities led to the introduction of many new techniques and crafts on a large scale. This, in turn, led to the expansion of the class of urban artisans in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The growing classes of urban artisans were attracted towards the monotheistic movement because of its egalitarian ideas as they were now not satisfied with the low status accorded to them in traditional Brahmanical hierarchy. It has been pointed out that some groups of traders like the Khatri in the Punjab, who benefited directly from the growth of towns, urban crafts production and expansion of markets, were also drawn into the movement for the same reason. The popularity of the monotheistic movement was the result of the support it obtained from one or more of these different classes of the society. It is one or more of these sections which constituted the social base of the movement in different parts of Northern India. In Punjab, the popularity of the movement did not remain confined to urban classes: it acquired a broader base by the incorporation of the Jat peasants in its ranks. The support extended by the Jats of the Punjab to Guru Nanak's movement ultimately contributed to the development of Sikhism as a mass religion.

14.5 MAIN POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

In this Section, we will discuss some of the main monotheistic and Vaishnava movements in North India, including Maharashtra and Bengal during the period under review.

14.5.1 Monotheistic Movements of North India

Kabir (c. 1440-1518) was the earliest and undoubtedly the most powerful figure of the monotheistic movements that began in the 15th century. He belonged to a family of weavers (**Julaha** – who were indigenous converts to Islam). He spent greater part of his life in Banaras (Kashi). The monotheistic saints who succeeded him either claimed to be his disciples or respectfully mention him. His verses were included in the Sikh scripture, the *Adi Granth* in large numbers than those of other monotheists. All this indicates his pre-eminent position among the monotheists. Raidas (or Ravidas) most probably belonged to the generation next to Kabir's. He was a tanner by caste. He also lived in Banaras and was influenced by Kabir's ideas. Dhanna was a 15th century Jat peasant from Rajasthan. Other prominent saints of the same period were Sen (a barber) and Pipa.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) preached his ideas much in the same way as Kabir and other monotheists, but due to various developments later his teachings led to the emergence of a mass religion, Sikhism. The basic similarity of his teachings with those of Kabir and other saints and the basic ideological agreement between them makes him an integral part of the monotheistic movement. He belonged to a caste of traders called Khatri and was born in a village in Punjab now known as Nankana Sahib. In his later life he travelled widely to preach his ideas. Eventually he settled in a place in Punjab now known as Dera Baba Nanak. There he attracted large number of disciples. The hymns composed by him were incorporated in the *Adi Granth* by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan, in 1604.

14.5.2 Common Characteristic Features

The teachings of all the saints who are associated with the monotheistic movement have certain common features which give the movement its basic unity:

- i) Most of the monotheists belonged to the 'low' castes and were aware that there existed a unity of ideas among themselves. Most of them were aware of each other's teachings and influences. In their verses they mention each other and their predecessors in such a way as to suggest a harmonious ideological affinity among them. Thus, Kabir speaks of Raidas as 'saint among saints'. Raidas, in his turn, respectfully mentions the names of Kabir, Namdev, Trilochan, Dhanna, Sen and Pipa. Dhanna takes pride in speaking of the fame and popularity of Namdev, Kabir, Raidas and Sen and admits that he devoted himself to bhakti after hearing their fame. Kabir's influence on Nanak is also beyond dispute. It is, therefore, not surprising that the later traditions link Kabir, Raidas, Dhanna, Pipa, Sen, etc. together as disciples of Ramananda. The ideological affinity among the monotheists is also clear from the inclusion of the hymns of Kabir, Raidas, etc. along with those of Nanak by the fifth Sikh Guru Arjan in the *Adi Granth*.
- ii) All the monotheists were influenced in one way or another and in varying degrees by the Vaishnava concept of bhakti, the Nathpanthi movement and sufism. The monotheistic movement represents the synthesis of elements from these three traditions. But more often than not they did not accept the element of these traditions in their original form and made many innovations and adaptations which gave new meanings to old concepts.
- iii) For the monotheists, there was only one way of establishing communion

with God: it was the way of personally experienced bhakti. This was also the way of the Vaishnava bhakti saints, but there was one fundamental difference of perceptions: they all have been called monotheists because they uncompromisingly believed in only one God. Then, God of Nanak was non-incarnate and formless (*nirankar*), eternal (*akal*) and ineffable (*alakh*). The monotheistic bhakti, therefore, was *nirguna* bhakti and not *saguna* – which was the case with the Vaishnavites who believed in various human incarnations of God. The monotheists adopted the notion of bhakti from the Vaishnava bhakti tradition but gave it a *nirguna* orientation. Quite often Kabir called God by the name, Ram. For this reason, he has been called Ram-bhakta. But Kabir himself made it clear in his utterances that the Ram he was devoted to was not the one who was born as an incarnation in the house of king Dashratha of Ayodhya or who had killed Ravana, but a formless, non-incarnate God. In addition to the oneness of God and *nirguna* bhakti, the monotheists also emphasized the crucial importance of repetition of divine name, spiritual guru, community singing of devotional songs (*kirtan*) and companionship of saints (*satsang*).

- iv) The monotheists followed a path which was independent of both dominant religions of the time – Hinduism and Islam. They denied their allegiance to either of them and criticized the superstitions and orthodox elements of both the religions. They launched a vigorous ideological assault on the caste system and idolatry. They rejected the authority of the Brahmans and their religious scriptures. Kabir, in his harsh and abrasive style, uses ridicule as a powerful method for denouncing orthodox Brahmanism.
- v) The monotheists composed their poems in popular languages. Some of them used a language which was a mixture of different dialects spoken in various parts of North India. The monotheistic saints preferred this common language to their own native dialects because they considered it fit for the propagation of their non-conformist ideas among the masses in various regions. The use of common language is a striking feature of the movement considering that the saints belonged to different parts of North India and spoke different dialects. The monotheists also made use of popular symbols and images to propagate their teachings. Their utterances are expressed in short verses which could be easily remembered. Thus, for instance, Kabir's poetry is unpolished and has a rustic, colloquial quality but it is essentially a poetry of the people.
- vi) Most of the monotheistic saints were not ascetics. They led worldly life and were married. They lived and preached among the people. They had aversion to and disdain for professional ascetics. They frequently refer to professional caste groups in their verses which would suggest that they continued to pursue their family professions. They were also not like the medieval European Christian saints who were recognized as 'holy' by the Church. The expression which has been used for them and by which they themselves referred to each other is *sant* or *bhagat*. In the *Adi Granth*, Kabir, Raidas, Dhanna, Pipa, Namdev, etc. have been listed as *bhagat*.
- vii) The monotheistic saints travelled widely to propagate their beliefs. Namdev, a 14th century saint from Maharashtra travelled as far as Punjab where his teachings became so popular that they were later absorbed in the *Adi Granth*. Kabir, Raidas and other saints are also believed to have travelled widely.

- viii) The ideas of Kabir and other monotheists spread to various regions and became popular among the ‘lower’ classes. The popularity of the monotheists broke territorial barriers. This is clear from the high position accorded to Kabir in the Sikh tradition and in the Dadupanthi tradition of Rajasthan. Their continuing popularity even almost two hundred years after their time and in a distant region is clear from the way a mid-17th century Maharashtrian saint Tukaram looked upon himself as an admirer and follower of Kabir, Raidas, Sen, Gora, etc. A 17th century Persian work on comparative religion *Dabistan-i Mazahib* testifies to the continuing popularity of Kabir among the people of North India.
- ix) Despite the widespread popularity that the teachings of monotheists enjoyed among the masses, the followers of each one of the major figures in the monotheistic movement like Kabir, Raidas and Nanak gradually organized themselves into exclusive sectarian orders called *panths* such as Kabir *panth*, Raidasi *panth*, Nanak *panth*, etc. Of all these *panths*, the Nanak *panth* alone eventually crystallized into a mass religion while most of the others continue to survive till today but with a vastly reduced following and a narrow sectarian base.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Write two lines on each of the following:
 - a) Kabir
 -
 - b) Guru Nanak
 -
- 2) Discuss the factors that led to the rise of the bhakti movement.

- 3) What are the characteristic features of monotheistic bhakti movement? Give the names of three saints belonging to this movement.

14.5.3 Vaishnava Bhakti Movement in North India

Ramananda was the most prominent scholar saint of the Vaishnava bhakti in Northern India during this period. Some of his ideas have already been mentioned in **Section 14.3**. He belonged to the late 14th and early 15th century. He lived in South India in the early part of his life but later settled in Banaras. He is considered to be the link between the South Indian bhakti tradition and North Indian Vaishnava bhakti. However, he deviated from the ideology and practice of the earlier South Indian *acharyas* in three important respects:

- i) He looked upon Ram and not Vishnu as object of bhakti. To him, Ram was

the supreme God who is to be adored with Sita. In this sense he came to be regarded as the founder of the Ram cult in North India within the framework of Vaishnava bhakti tradition.

- ii) He preached in the language of the common people, and not in Sanskrit, to propagate the Ram cult.
- iii) The most significant contribution to Vaishnava bhakti, was that he made bhakti accessible to all irrespective of caste. He greatly relaxed the caste rules in respect of religious and social matters. Though himself a Brahman, he took food with his 'low' caste Vaishnava followers.

It is perhaps for the last mentioned point that some later Vaishnava traditions link Kabir and some other monotheists to him as his disciples. The innovations were probably due to the influence of Islamic ideas. It has also been suggested that he made these innovations in order to counter the growing popularity of the heterodox Nathpanthis, the 'lower' classes of the society. His followers are called Ramanandis. A hymn attributed to him was incorporated in the *Adi Granth*.

Another prominent Vaishnava preacher in the Sultanate period was Vallabhacharya, a Telugu brahman of the late 15th and early 16th century. He, too, was born in Banaras. He was the founder of **Pushtimarga** (way of grace). It also came to be known as Vallabha sampradava (Vallabha Sect). He advocated Krishna bhakti. Famous Krishna bhakti saint-poet, Surdas (1483-1563) and seven other Krishna bhakti poets belonging to the *ashtachhap* were believed to have been the disciples of Vallabha. The sect later became popular in Gujarat.

In North India, however, the Vaishnava bhakti cult acquired a more popular base. Only in the Mughal period, Tulsidas (1532-1623) championed the cause of Rama bhakti while Surdas (1483-1563), Mira Bai (1503-73) and many others popularized Krishna bhakti.

14.5.4 Vaishnava Bhakti Movement in Bengal

In many significant ways the Vaishnava bhakti in Bengal was different from its North Indian and the older South Indian bhakti. The sources which influenced it can be traced to two different traditions – the Vaishnava bhakti tradition of the *Bhagavata Purana*, with its glorification of Krishna *lila* on the one hand, and Sahajiya Buddhist and Nathpanthi traditions on the other. The Vaishnava influence was transmitted by various bhakti poets, beginning with Jayadeva in the 12th century. Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* was composed in Sanskrit. He also wrote songs in Maithili dialect which were later absorbed in the Bengali Vaishnava bhakti tradition. Various non-vaishnava cults such as those of Sahajiya Buddhists and Nathpanthis that survived in Bengal and Bihar influenced the growth of bhakti movement in Bengal.

These cults preached an easy and natural religion focussing on esoteric and emotional elements. Vaishnava bhakti poets such as Chandidas (14th century) and Vidyapati (14th to 15th centuries) came under the influence of these non-Vaishnava Cults, though the *Bhagavata* tradition was always the major source of influence. The songs of Chandidas who was the first Bengali bhakti poet and those of Vidyapati who wrote in Maithili, highlighted the Krishna-Radha relationship. These songs became part of the growing Vaishnava movement in Bengal. Chaitanya himself did not come under the direct influence of Sahajiya doctrine. It is, however, possible

that elements of esoteric cults entered into his movement through the influence of Chandidas and Vidyapati. But the most important source of inspiration was the *Bhagavata Purana*.

Chaitanya (1486-1533) was the most prominent Vaishnava saint of Bengal. He popularized Krishna-bhakti in many parts of Eastern India. His popularity as a religious personality was so great that he was looked upon as an *avatara* (incarnation) of Krishna. The advent of Chaitanya marks the shifting of the focus of the Bengal Vaishnava bhakti from devotional literary compositions to a full-fledged reform movement with a broad social base.

Chaitanya disregarded all distinctions of caste, creed and sex to give a popular base to Krishna-bhakti. His followers belonged to all castes and communities. One of his most favourite disciples was Haridas who was a Muslim. He popularized the practice of *sankirtan* or group devotional singing accompanied by ecstatic dancing.

However, Chaitanya did not give up traditional Brahmanical values altogether. He did not question the authority of the Brahmans and scriptures. He upheld the caste prejudices of his Brahman disciples against the 'lower' caste disciples. Six Sanskrit-knowing Brahman Goswamins who were sent by him to Vrindavan near Mathura established a religious order which recognized caste restrictions in its devotional practices and rituals. These Goswamins gradually distanced themselves from Chaitanya's teachings and from the popular movement that had grown around him in Bengal.

But Chaitanya's movement had a great impact on Bengali society. His disregard for caste distinctions in the sphere of devotional singing promoted a sense of equality in the Bengali life. In Bengal and in Puri, in Odisha, his movement remained popular. In these places, his followers were not always scholarly Brahmans but included common people. They wrote in Bengali, propagated his bhakti and looked upon Chaitanya as the living Krishna or as Radha and Krishna in one body.

14.5.5 Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra

Like other Vaishnava bhakti movements, the Maharashtra bhakti tradition drew its basic inspiration from that of the *Bhagavata Purana*. In addition, however, it was also influenced by the Saiva Nathpanthis who were quite popular in the 'lower' classes of the Maharashtrian society during the 11th and 12th centuries and who composed their verses in Marathi. Jnaneswar (1275-1296) was the pioneer bhakti saint of Maharashtra. He wrote an extensive commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, popularly called *Jnanesvari*. This was one of the earliest works of Marathi literature and served as foundation of the bhakti ideology in Maharashtra. He was the author of many hymns called *abhangs*. He taught that the only way to attain God was bhakti and in bhakti there was no place for caste distinctions.

Namdev (1270-1350) belonged to the tailor caste. He is considered to be the link between the Maharashtrian bhakti movement and North Indian monotheistic movement. He lived in Pandharpur but travelled to North India, including Punjab. His bhakti songs have also been included in the *Adi Granth*. In Maharashtra, Namdev is considered to be a part of the **Varkari** tradition (Vaishnava devotional tradition), but in the North Indian monotheistic tradition he is remembered as a *nirguna* saint. Other prominent bhakti saints of Maharashtra were Eknath (1533-99) and Tukaram (1598-1650).

14.5.6 Bhakti Movement in Other Regions

Saiva bhakti flourished in Kashmir in the 14th century. Most prominent of the Saiva bhakti saints was a woman, Lal Ded. In Gujarat, bhakti was preached by the Vallabha sect of Vallabhacharya and another important saint, Narsimha Mehta (1414-1481, or 1500-1580). He knew of Jayadeva and Kabir and was followed by a number of poet-saints. The Vallabha sect became popular among merchants and landowners of Gujarat. In Karnataka, the Saiva bhakti cult of the Kannad speaking Virasaivas developed during the 12th and 13th centuries. They preached a strongly radical and heterodox concept of bhakti by incorporating social criticism in their religious outlook.

In Assam, Sankaradeva (1449-1568) introduced bhakti both in the Brahmaputra valley as well as in Cooch-Bihar. He was born in the family of non-Brahman Bhuyan chiefs. He became an ascetic during the later part of his life and is believed to have visited many places of pilgrimage in North and South India. He preached absolute devotion to Vishnu or his incarnation, Krishna. He had to face persecution at the hands of orthodox Brahmanical priesthood of the Ahom kingdom and took shelter in the territories of the neighbouring Cooch-Bihar, where its king gave him the freedom to preach bhakti. Monotheistic ideas influenced his concept of bhakti which came to be known as the *eka-sarana-dharma* ('religion of seeking refuge in one'). He denounced the caste system and preached his ideas to the people in their language (an Assamese form of Brajaboli). He made some significant innovations in the devotional practice such as inclusion of dance-drama-music form in the preaching of bhakti. He also founded the institution of Satra, which means a sitting during which people of all classes assembled for religious as well as social purposes. Later the Satras grew into full-fledged monasteries. His sect is called Mahapurushiya Dharma.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Write a note on the Vaishnavite bhakti movement.

.....
.....
.....

- 2) Write three lines on each of the following:

- a) Bhakti movement in Bengal

.....
.....
.....

- b) Bhakti movement in Maharashtra

.....
.....
.....

14.6 INFLUENCE OF OTHER TRADITIONS AND MOVEMENTS

It is clear that the bhakti movement of the Sultanate period cannot be linked in any-way with the older South Indian bhakti. But they were influenced in one way or another by certain existing traditions and movements whose history goes back to the pre-Sultanate period. These included the bhakti tradition of the *Bhagavat Purana*, religious ideas and activities of scholar-saints such as Ramananda, and such heterodox movements as that of the Nathpanthis.

The doctrine of bhakti is fully developed in the most famous of the *Puranas* – the *Bhagavat Purana*, a Vaishnavite work composed around the 9th century. Its most important feature is its emphasis on the bhakti of Vishnu in his various incarnations, especially in the form of Krishna. The *Bhagavata* accepts the orthodox Brahmanical theory of the origin of the *varna* system but does not accept the superiority of the Brahmans simply on the basis of their status or birth. For it, bhakti is the main criteria. It has been pointed out that *Bhagavata Purana* is the link between various Vaishnava bhakti movements of the medieval period. However, the influence of the *Bhagavata* tradition on monotheistic saints such as Kabir and Nanak was not exerted in a direct manner. Most of these saints were illiterate and did not have any direct access to the *Bhagavata* and other scriptures. Kabir's concept of bhakti is characteristically different from that of the *Bhagavata*. Kabir and other non-conformist saints did not believe in incarnations either and rejected the Brahmanical and scriptural authority altogether.

14.6.1 Popular Monotheistic Saints and Ramananda

Ramananda's teachings are considered to be the source of popular monotheistic movement of Kabir, Raidas and others. As we shall discuss later, Ramananda was strongly opposed to caste restrictions and opened the path of bhakti to all. He also preached his ideas in popular dialect. But, on the whole, his ideas and his concept of bhakti were essentially a part of the Vaishnava bhakti. On the other hand, Kabir and other monotheists went many steps further than even the most liberal Vaishnava *bhaktas* like Ramanand and denounced the Brahmanical religion in its entirety. In fact, none of the monotheists, who are claimed to have been Ramanand's disciples, make any mention of him or any other human *guru* in their utterances.

14.6.2 Influence of the Nathpanthi Movement on Monotheistic Saints

Some of the ideas of Kabir and other monotheists can be traced to the influence of heterodox movements like that of the Nathpanthis. A large number of Nathpanthi preachers called *siddhas* belonged to the 'lower' castes – doma, tanners, washerman, oilman, tailor, fisherman, wood-cutter, cobbler, etc. With the establishment of Turkish rule in northern India the popularity of the Nathpanthi movement reached its peak during the 13th and 14th centuries. Anybody could be initiated into the sect of the Nathpanthi *yogis* irrespective of caste.

Nathpanthi influence on Kabir is clearly seen in his non-conformist attitudes, in his independent thinking, in the harsh style of his utterances in his 'upside-down' language (called *ulatbasi* containing paradoxes and enigmas) and partly in his mystical symbolism. However, Kabir and other monotheists, in their character-

istically critical and innovative manner adopted the Nathpanthi ideas on a selective basis only and even when they did so, they adapted these ideas to their own purpose. Kabir rejected their asceticism and esoteric practices and also their physical methods such as breath control. Thus, the influence of the Nathpanthis on the monotheistic saints of medieval period can be seen more in their heterodox' attitudes towards the established Brahmanical religion than in their practices.

14.6.3 Influence of Islamic Ideas and the Role of Sufism

Many scholars have argued that all the variants of the bhakti movement and the doctrine of bhakti itself came into being as a result of Islamic influence both before and after the 12th century. This claim has been made on the basis of many similarities between Islam and the bhakti cults. On the other hand, it is pointed out that bhakti and bhakti movements had indigenous origins. It has been noted above that bhakti as a religious concept had developed in the religious traditions of ancient India. The older South Indian bhakti movement also cannot be explained in terms of Islamic influence as its history goes back to the period before the advent of Islam in South India. Conceptually, a movement based on the idea of devotion or grace is not peculiar to any particular religion but could grow independently in different religions at different times depending on the concrete historical conditions. It would be more appropriate to understand the bhakti movements of medieval India in their immediate historical context rather than searching for far-fetched sources of inspiration in any particular religion. However, Islam did influence the bhakti cults and, in particular, the popular monotheistic movements in other ways. Non-conformist saints such as Kabir and Nanak picked up some of their ideas from Islam. These included their non-compromising faith in one God, their rejection of incarnation, their conception of *nirguna* bhakti and their attack on idolatry and the caste system. But they did not uncritically borrow from Islam and rejected many elements of orthodox Islam. The Vaishnava bhakti movements, on the other hand, cannot be interpreted in terms of such an influence of Islam as they neither denounced idolatry (and the caste system nor the theory of incarnation). They believed in *saguna* bhakti. The relationship between monotheistic bhakti movement and Islam seems to have been one of mutual influence and sufism provided the common meeting ground. Sufi concepts of *pir* and mystic union with the 'beloved' (God) coincided in many respects with the non-conformist saints' concepts of *guru* and devotional surrender to God. Kabir is even believed to have had affiliations with Chishti sufi saints, though concrete historical evidence is lacking. Guru Nanak's encounters with sufis are described in the *janam-sakhis*. Though the sufism and the monotheistic movement were historically independent of each other, there was remarkable similarity in many of their basic ideas, including their common rejection of Hindu and Muslim orthodoxies. The interaction between them, however indirect, must have given impetus to both of them.

14.6.4 Theory of Islamic Challenge to Hinduism

One modern viewpoint tends to attribute the rise of the medieval bhakti movements to alleged persecution of the Hindus under 'Muslim' rule and to the challenge that Islam is supposed to have posed to Hinduism through its doctrines of 'Unity of God', equality and brotherhood. According to this theory, the bhakti movements were a two-pronged defensive mechanism to save the Hindu religion by purging it of such evils as caste system and idolatry and at the same time defending its basic

tenets by popularising it. The former task is believed to have been undertaken by Kabir, Nanak, etc., and the latter project was accomplished by Tulsidas in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Such a notion of the medieval bhakti movement is not borne out by evidence.

- i) This theory of imagined Islamic threat to Hinduism is in essence a projection of the Islamic doctrine of ‘brotherhood’ had lost much of its appeal and social, economic and racial inequalities had crept into the Muslim society. The Turkish ruling class possessed a strong sense of racial superiority and looked upon ‘low caste’ Indian converts to Islam as low-born and not fit for high offices.
- ii) The Hindu population continued to observe their religious practices and to celebrate their religious festivals. In fact, the overwhelming majority of population remained Hindu, even in the vicinity of Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate.
- iii) The monotheistic saints denounced the aspects of both orthodox Brahmanism and orthodox Islam and their ritualistic practices.
- iv) To assume that all monotheistic and Vaishnava bhakti saints were reacting on behalf of the Hindus to Islamic threat is not convincing because Kabir and other ‘low caste’ saints hardly saw any unity of purpose with the saints belonging to the Vaishnava bhakti cults.
- v) Lastly, the poetry and the teachings of the Vaishnava bhakti saints or all the regions are either not concerned with Islamic influence or at best show indifference in this regard. In fact, it has been pointed out that Hindus and Muslims both stood side by side among Chaitanya’s disciples, as they had done under Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak or Dadu Dayal.

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) In what way the bhakti saints were influenced by the Nathpanthi doctrine?

- 2) Do you agree that the bhakti movement was the result of Islamic influence?
 Comment.

14.7 SUMMARY

The bhakti movement of the Sultanate period represented the most widespread constellation – both interwoven and variegated – of socio-religious movements in Indian history after the rise of heterodox movements of the 6th century BCE. They influenced the whole country at different times by propounding new socio-religious ideas and practices. Many of the current practices of popular Hinduism such as repetition of divine names, emphasis on the company of saints, and community

devotional singing can be traced to the medieval bhakti movements. They also contributed to the growth of modern vernacular languages, emergence of organized religious communities like the Sikhs, and evolution of various sects or *panths*.

In this Unit, we have studied the:

- background of bhakti movement in South India which emerged in a different form in North India,
- main political and socio-economic factors for the rise of bhakti movement,
- two main streams of bhakti movement – the monotheistic and the Vaishnava,
- main popular movements and saints of two streams of North India including Maharashtra and Bengal,
- influences of various sects and beliefs on North Indian bhakti movement, and
- influence of Islam on bhakti movement.

14.8 KEYWORDS

<i>Acharya</i>	Scholar-saint who propounded new religious and philosophical ideas
<i>Adi Granth</i>	The most important sacred scripture of the Sikhs compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan in 1604. This later came to be called <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i>
<i>Bhagat</i>	The colloquial expression for <i>bhakta</i> , a devotee
<i>Julaha</i>	Member of a Muslim weaving caste
<i>Kirtan</i>	Community singing of hymns
<i>Marga</i>	Path
<i>Mukti</i>	Salvation
<i>Nam</i>	The divine name
<i>Nirankar</i>	Without form
<i>Nirguna</i>	Without attributes, unqualified
<i>Panth</i>	Path, sect; the community of the followers of a particular monotheist saint e.g., Kabirpanth, Nanakpanth, Dadupanth, etc
<i>Parampara</i>	Lineage, tradition
<i>Sabad</i>	The divine word; the divine self-communication
<i>Saguna</i>	Having qualities or attributes
<i>Sampradaya</i>	Tradition; school of religious thought and practice
<i>Vaishnava</i>	Worshipper of Vishnu
<i>Varkari</i>	A Vaishnava devotional tradition

14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sections 14.1, 14.2, 14.3
- 2) See Section 14.2

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Section 14.4
- 2) See Sub-Section 14.5.1
- 3) See Sub-Sections 14.5.1, 14.5.2

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-Section 14.5.3
- 2) See Sub-Sections 14.5.4, 14.5.5

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) See Sub-Section 14.6.2
- 2) See Sub-Section 14.6.3

14.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Chand, Tara (2006) (Reprint), *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Nabu Book).

Iraqi, Shihabuddin, (2009) *Bhakti Movement in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Manohar).

Lorenzon, David N., (1995) *Bhakti Religion in India: Community Identity and Political Action* (New York: State University of New York Press).

Schomer, Karine, and W.H. McLeod, (1987) *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas).

Shima, Iwao, (2011) *The Historical Development of Bhakti Movement in India* (New Delhi: Manohar).

Zelliot, Eleanov, (1976) 'The Medieval Bhakti Movement in History – An Essay on the Literature in English', in Bardwell L. Smith, ed., *Hinduism – New Essays in the History of Religions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill) (Numen Series), pp 143-168.

14.11 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

Role of Bhakti Movement in Indian History | Rajya Sabha TV

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFCIKGIIYbs>

In Depth - Sant Kabir

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpAhA_CbgBQ

Role of Bhakti Movement in Indian History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFCIKGIIYbs>

Bhakti Movement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTJnn-HBoVQ>

UNIT 15 SUFI TRADITION*

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Salient Features of Sufism
- 15.3 Growth of Sufi Movement in the Islamic World
 - 15.3.1 The Formative Stage (Upto 10th Century)
 - 15.3.2 Growth of Organized Sufi Movement (10th-12th Century)
 - 15.3.3 Formation of Sufi Orders or *Silsilahs* (Late 12th and 13th Centuries)
- 15.4 Growth of Sufism in India
- 15.5 Sufi Orders in India During the Sultanate Period
 - 15.5.1 The Suhrawardi *Silsilah*
 - 15.5.2 The Chishti *Silsilah*
 - 15.5.3 Other Sufi Orders
- 15.6 The Causes of Chishti Popularity
- 15.7 Social Role of the Sufis
 - 15.7.1 The Sufis and the State
 - 15.7.2 The Sufis and the *Ulama*
 - 15.7.3 The Sufis and Conversions
 - 15.7.4 Material Life in Sufi *Khanqahs*
- 15.8 The Impact of Contemporary Mystic Ideas of Islamic Countries on Indian Sufism
- 15.9 The Sufi and Bhakti Movements and Cultural Synthesis
- 15.10 Summary
- 15.11 Keywords
- 15.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 15.13 Suggested Readings
- 15.14 Instructional Video Recommendations

15.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we will discuss sufi movement and ideas in medieval India. After going through this Unit, you would be able to:

- identify the salient features of sufism,
- learn about the growth of sufism in the Islamic World,

* Prof. R.P Bahuguna, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi. The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 8, Unit 30.

- describe its development in India during the period of the Delhi Sultanate,
- know about the main sufi *silsilahs* that flourished in India during the period,
- comprehend the reasons for the popularity of Chishti *silsilah* in India, and
- analyze the impact of sufism on the contemporary Indian Society.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Sufism or *tasawwuf* is the name for various mystical tendencies and movements in Islam. It aims at establishing direct communion between God and man through personal experience of mystery which lies within Islam. Every religion gives rise to mystical tendencies in its fold at a particular stage of its evolution. In this sense, sufism was a natural development within Islam based on the spirit of *Quaranic* piety. The sufis while accepting the *Shariat* did not confine their religious practice to formal adherence and stressed cultivation of religious experience aimed at direct perception of God.

In this Unit, we will discuss the main features of sufism and its growth in the Islamic world and its spread in India. You will study about various popular sufi sects in India. We will also discuss the impact of sufi movement on the contemporary Indian society.

15.2 SALIENT FEATURES OF SUFISM

There developed a number of sufi orders or *silsilah*, in and outside India. All these orders had their specific characteristics. However, there were a number of features which are common to all sufi orders, such as:

- Sufism as it developed in the Islamic world came to stress the importance of traversing the sufi path (*tariqa*) as a method of establishing direct communion with divine reality (*haqiqat*).
- According to the sufi beliefs, the novice has to pass through a succession of 'stations' or 'stages' (*maqamat*) and changing psychological conditions or 'states' (*hal*) to experience God.
- The sufi path could be traversed only under the strict supervision of a spiritual director (*shaikh*, *pir* or *murshid*) who had himself successfully traversed it and consequently established direct communion with God.
- The disciple (*murid*) progressed through the 'stages' and 'states' by practicing such spiritual exercises as self mortification, recollection of God's name to attain concentration (*zikr*) and contemplation.
- The sufis organized impassioned musical recital (*sama*). The practice of *sama* was intended to induce a mystical state of ecstasy. However, some sufi orders did not approve of certain forms of *sama* and the *ulama* were particularly hostile to this practice.
- Yet another feature of sufism is the organization of the sufis into various orders (*silsilahs*). Each of these *silsilah* e.g. Suhrawardi, Qadiri, Chishti, etc. were found by a leading figure who lent his name to it. A *silsilah* consisted of persons who had become disciples of a particular sufi.

- vii) The hospice (*khanqah*) was the centre of the activities of a sufi order. It was the place where the *pir* imparted spiritual training to his disciples. The popularity of the *khanqah* and its capacity to attract disciples depended on the reputation of the *pir*. The *khanqahs* were supported by endowment and charity.

15.3 GROWTH OF SUFI MOVEMENT IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

By the time the various sufi orders began their activities in India from the beginning of the 13th century, sufism had already grown into a full-fledged movement in different parts of the Islamic world. Sufism acquired distinct characteristics in the Indian environment but its growth in India, particularly in the initial phase, was linked in many ways with the developments that occurred in sufi beliefs and practice in the Islamic World during the period between 7th and 13th centuries. The growth of sufism in the central lands of Islam during this period can be divided into three broad phases.

15.3.1 The Formative Stage (Upto 10th Century)

Early sufis applied an esoteric meaning to verses in the *Quran* which stressed on such virtues as repentance (*tauba*), abstinence, renunciation, poverty, trust in God (*tawakkul*), etc. Mecca, Medina, Basra and Kufa were the earliest centres of sufism. The sufis, most of whom belonged to the 8th century, have been called 'Quietists' because they were more concerned with experiencing than with popularizing their ideas through mass contact. They believed more in guiding than in teaching. Sufism at Basra reached its height during the time of the woman mystic Rabia (d. 801).

Other regions of the Islamic world where sufism spread early were Iran, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Egypt, Syria and Baghdad. As sufism spread to Iranian regions, it tended to express greater individualism, divergent tendencies, and heterodox doctrines and practices under Persian influence. The most famous of the early sufis in the Iranian regions was Bayazid Bistami (d. 874) from Khurasan. He gave a new turn to sufism by introducing in it the elements of ecstasy and mystic doctrine of 'all is in God'. He was also the first sufi to employ the Concept of '*fana*' (annihilation of the self) which exercised influence on later sufis.

In Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid caliphate, Al-Junaid (d. 910) was the most well known of the early sufis. Al-Junaid won the approval of the Islamic orthodoxy and represented controlled and disciplined side of sufism and, therefore, those sufis who followed his line are regarded as sober. Both Junaid and Bistami exercised profound influence on their contemporary and later sufis. Two contrasting tendencies initiated by them came to be distinguished as Junaidi and Bistami, or Iraqi and Khurasani.

Another prominent early sufi from Baghdad was Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922) who started his career as a pupil of Al-Junaid but later developed the method of Bayazid Bistami. His mystical formula 'I am God' played an important role in the evolution of sufi ideas in Iran and then in India. The *ulama* considered him a blasphemer and denounced him for claiming mystical union with God. He was condemned, imprisoned and finally hanged. His ideas provided the basis for the development of the doctrine of *insan-i kamil* (the perfect Man).

Early sufi groups were loose and mobile associations, quite unlike the later sufi orders. Members of a group travelled widely in search of master. In Arab regions, the wandering sufis were attached to frontier-posts or hostels called *ribat* while in the Iranian regions they were associated with hospices (*khanqah*). There were separate convents for women sufis.

15.3.2 Growth of Organized Sufi Movement (10th-12th Century)

Sufism began to acquire the form of an organized movement with the establishment of the Turkish rule under the Ghaznavids and then under the Seljuqs in various parts of Central Asia and Iran in the later 10th and 11th centuries. The period marks the development of two parallel institutions in the Islamic world – (a) the *madrasa* system (seminary, higher religious school) in its new form as an official institution of orthodox Islamic learning and (b) the *khanqah* system as an organized, endowed and permanent centre of sufi activities.

Khanqah was no longer a loose organization of individual sufis but a more effective and institutionalized centre of sufi teaching. However, the bond between the master and his disciples was still purely personal and had not yet acquired a ritualistic and esoteric character. Moreover, sufi orders had not yet begun to take concrete form. But *khanqahs* had now developed from mere hostels for sufis into popular and well-established centres of organized sufi teaching and practice with their own spiritual masters and circles of disciples.

The *ulama* continued to show their suspicion of sufism in general and were particularly hostile to such non-conformist practices as *sama* to induce ecstasy. However, certain sufis, with their background of orthodox Islamic learning, tried to effect a compromise between the *ulama* and the sufis. Most prominent of such sufi scholars was Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (1058-1111). He was an *a'lim* (theologian) but later led the life of a sufi. He stressed on the observance of external and formal aspects of Islamic law in sufi practice. However, orthodox and sufi tendencies in Islam continued to follow separate and divergent paths.

This stage is also characterized by the appearance of sufi literary texts which argued and codified the sufi ideas and doctrines. Al-Ghazzali was the most outstanding sufi author. One of the most authentic and celebrated manual of sufism was *Kashf-ul Mahjub* written by al-Hujwiri (d. c. 1088).

Another salient feature of sufism during this period was the emergence of sufi poetry in Persian. While Arabic literature on mysticism is in prose, Persian literature is in poetry. Sufi poetry in Persian in the form of narrative poems (*masnavis*) reached its peak during the 12th and 13th centuries. Two of its greatest exponents were Fariduddin-Attar (d. 1220) and Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273).

15.3.3 Formation of Sufi Orders or *Silsilahs* (Late 12th and 13th Centuries)

- i) A few decades before sufism began to exercise influence on Indian society and religious life, organized sufi movement reached its peak in the Islamic world in the form of various *tariqa* (paths) or sufi orders. These orders began to crystallize when from the end of the 12th century each one of the sufi centres began to perpetuate the name of one particular master and his spiritual ancestry and focussed on its own *tariqa* consisting of peculiar practices, and rituals. A

sufi order (*silsilah*) developed as a lineage system or continuous chain through which successive spiritual heirs (*khalifa*) traced their spiritual inheritance to the founder of the order.

- ii) The relationship between the spiritual head of a *silsilah* and his disciples acquired an esoteric character because the disciples were now linked to the *silsilah* through various initiatory rituals and vow of allegiance. Each one of them formulated its own institutional rules to regulate the day-to-day life of the disciples in the *khanqah*. The spiritual director (*murshid*) now came to be regarded as protege of God (*wali*). The *murid* (disciple) was obliged to surrender himself completely to the *murshid*. The *murshid*, in turn, bestowed the *tariqa*, its secret *wird* (a phrase of patterned devotion), formulae, and symbols on his *murid*.
- iii) The founders of various *silsilahs* accepted the Islamic law and ritual practices of Islam. The link between orthodox Islam and *silsilah* founders is also clear from the fact that many of the latter were professional jurists. However, they gave an esoteric orientation to orthodox Islamic rituals and introduced many innovations, particularly in their religious practices, which were not always in consonance with the orthodox outlook. Though the *silsilah* founders laid emphasis on strict adherence to Islamic law, many *silsilahs* later did develop many heterodox beliefs and practices.
- iv) The *silsilahs* which became popular in Iran, Central Asia and Baghdad and played significant role in the growth of sufism in various parts of the Islamic world included the Suhrawardi founded by Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d. 1234); the Qadiri formed by Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166); the Chishti of Muinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) and the Naqshbandi first known as Khawajagan, but later came to be associated with the name of Bahauddin Naqshbandi (d.1398). The sufis who had received their training in these *silsilahs* began to establish their branches in their countries or in new countries such as India. Gradually these branches became independent sufi schools with their own characteristics and tendencies.
- v) As sufism grew through these three broad stages in different parts of the Islamic world, Iran, Khurasan, Transoxiana and India, etc. It came under the influence of various mystic tendencies in other religions and philosophies such as Christianity, Neoplatonism, Buddhism and Hinduism. These influences were assimilated within the Islamic framework of the movement.

Check Your Progress-1

1) What are the salient features of Sufism?

.....
.....
.....

2) What is the concept of *pir* and *murid* in sufi terminology?

.....
.....
.....

3) What do you understand by sufi *silsilah*?

.....

4) Write two lines on each of the following:

Khanqah

.....

Mansu al-Hallaj

.....

Al-Junaid

.....

15.4 GROWTH OF SUFISM IN INDIA

Al-Hujwiri (d.c.1088) was the earliest sufi of eminence to have settled in India (Section 15.6). His tomb is in Lahore. He was the author of *Kashf-ul Mahjub*, a famous Persian treatise on sufism. However, various sufi orders were introduced in India only after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate i.e. in the beginning of the 13th century. India not only provided a new pasture ground for the propagation of sufi ideas but also became the new home of the sufis who along with many other refugees fled from those parts of the Islamic world which had been conquered by the Mongols in the 13th century. During the 13th and 14th centuries, *khanqahs* sprang up in various parts of India. The sufis introduced various orders in India from the Islamic world, built up their own organizations and established themselves in their respective areas of influence. By the middle of the 14th century, the entire country from Multan to Bengal and from Punjab to Deogiri had come under the sphere of their activity. According to the observation of an early 14th century traveller, there were two thousand sufi hospices and *khanqahs* in Delhi and its neighbourhood.

Sufism in India originally stemmed from the sufi thought and practice as it developed in various parts of the Islamic world, especially in Iran and Central Asia. However, its subsequent development was influenced more by Indian environment than by non-Indian variants of sufism. Once the sufi orders took root in different parts of India, they followed their own phases of growth, stagnation and revival. These were determined largely by indigenous circumstances, though the influence of developments in sufism outside India cannot altogether be discounted.

15.5 SUFI ORDERS IN INDIA DURING THE SULTANATE PERIOD

A number of sufi *silsilahs* became popular in India during the Sultanate period. In this Section, we will discuss some of the important ones.

15.5.1 The Suhrawardi *Silsilah*

The Suhrawardi *silsilah* was a major order of the Sultanate period. Its founder in

India was Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262). He was a Khurasani and was a disciple of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi who had initiated the *silsilah* in Baghdad and was directed by the latter to proceed to India. He made Multan and Sind the centres of his activity. Thus, one of the oldest *khanqahs* in India was established by him at Multan. Iltutmish was the Sultan of Delhi at that time, but Multan was under the control of his rival, Qubacha. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya as critical of Qubacha's administration and openly sided with Iltutmish in his conflict against the Multan ruler's overthrow. Bahauddin Zakariya received from Iltutmish the title of *Shaikh-ul Islam* (Leader of Islam) and endowment. Contrary to the Chishti saints of his time, he followed a worldly policy and built up a large fortune. He accepted state patronage and maintained links with the ruling classes. However, during the later period many independent sufi lines stemmed from him and some of them came to be known as '*beshara*' (illegitimate orders).

In addition to Shaikh Bahuddin Zakariya, many other *khalifas* were designated by Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi to spread the Suhrawardi *silsilah* in India. One of them was Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. After his initial stay in Delhi, where he failed to establish his supremacy, he went to Bengal. He established his *khanqah* there and made many disciples. He attached a *langar* (centre for the distribution of free meals) to his *khanqah*. He is said to have played an important role in the process of Islamization in Bengal.

During the Sultanate period, Punjab, Sind and Bengal became three important centres of the Suhrawardi activity. Scholars are generally of the opinion that the Suhrawardi sufis converted Hindus to Islam and in this task they were helped by their affluence and connections with the ruling class. In this connection, a sharp contrast is drawn between their attitude and that of the Chishti sufis whose teachings did not aim at conversion.

15.5.2 The Chishti *Silsilah*

The growth of the Chishti order in India during the Sultanate period took place in two phases. The first phase ended with the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin (Chiragh-i-Delhi) in 1356. The second phase is marked by its initial decline during the later part of the 14th century followed by revival and expansion in various parts of the country during the 15th and 16th centuries.

First Phase

The Chishti order which later became the most influential and popular sufi order in India, originated in Herat and was introduced in India by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) who was born in Sijistan in c. 1141. He came to India at the time of the Ghori conquest. He finally settled in Ajmer about 1206 and won the respect of both Muslims and non-Muslims. No authentic record of his activities is available. During the later period, many legends projected him as an ardent evangelist. However, he was not actively involved in conversions and his attitude towards non-Muslims was one of tolerance. His tomb in Ajmer became a famous centre of pilgrimage in later centuries.

The successor of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Delhi was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235). Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri (d. 1274), another *khalifa* of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, made Nagaur in Rajasthan centre of his activity. Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri established the *silsilah* in Nagaur where he lived like

an ordinary Rajasthani peasant and dissociated himself from those in authority. He was a strict vegetarian. He and his successors translated many Persian sufi verses in the local language called Hindavi, these are earliest examples of translations of this kind.

Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was succeeded in Delhi by his *khalifa*, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud (1175-1265) known as Ganjshakar and more popularly as Baba Farid. Baba Farid left Delhi for Ajodhan in Punjab and lived in his *khanqah* there. He despised association with the ruling class and rich persons. Nathpanthi *yogis* also visited his *khanqah* and discussed with him the nature of mysticism. His popularity in Punjab is clear from the fact that more than three hundred years after his death, verses ascribed to him were included in the *Adi Granth* compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan, in 1604. His tomb at Pakpatan soon developed into a centre of pilgrimage.

The most celebrated disciple of Baba Farid and the greatest sufi saint of the 14th century was Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1236-1325). He made Delhi the most famous centre of the Chishti order. Two historians Ziauddin Barani and Amir Khusrau, who were his contemporaries, testify to his eminent position in the social and religious life of Northern India during the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Later, his successors spread the Chishti order in various parts of the country. His teachings and conversations (*malfuzat*) are recorded in *Fawaid-ul Fuwad* written by Amir Hasan Sijzi. This work serves more as a guide to practical aspects of sufism than as a treatise on its metaphysical and theosophical aspects.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya saw the reigns of seven successive Sultans of Delhi. But he always avoided the company of the kings and nobles and never visited the court. The *langar* (an alms-house for the distribution of free food) of his *khanqah* was open to Hindus and Muslims alike. In his *khanqah*, he had many conversations with the Nathpanthi *yogi* visitors. He adopted many *yoga* breathing exercises and was called a *sidh* (perfect) by the *yogis*. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) was a devoted disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had many spiritual successors or *khalifas*. One of them was Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib (d. 1340) who was one of those sufis who were forced by Sultan Muhammed Tughlaq to migrate to the Deccan. He made Daulatabad centre of his activities and introduced the Chishti order there.

The most famous of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's *khalifas* and his successor in Delhi was Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1356) who came to be known as Chiragh-i Delhi (Lamp of Delhi). He and some of his disciples discontinued some of those practices of early Chishtis which could clash with Islamic orthodoxy and, in turn persuaded the *ulama* to soften their attitude towards the Chishti practice of *sama*.

Decline of the Chishti Order in Delhi During the Later Tughlaq and Saiyyid Periods

Some scholars hold the view that the decline of Delhi as a centre of the Chishti order was due to the attitudes and policies of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq. However, it must be pointed out that the Sultan was not opposed to the sufis per se. Some sufis, including Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag-i Delhi, remained in Delhi though they were compelled by the Sultan to accept state service. Moreover, sufi activities in many *khanqahs* were restored after the death of Muhammad Tughlaq when his

successor Firuz Shah Tughlaq showered gifts on them. However, Delhi was left with no commanding Chishti figure after the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin in 1356. He died without appointing a spiritual successor. One of his chief disciples, Gesudaraz left Delhi for a safer place in the Deccan at the time of Timur's invasion (1398). As the Delhi Sultanate began to decline and disintegrate, the sufis dispersed to the more stable provincial kingdoms and established their *khanqahs* there. This dispersal of the Chishti order in different parts of the country during the later 14th and 15th centuries was accompanied by significant changes in the attitudes and practices of the Chishti sufis.

Second Phase

The second phase in the history of the Chishti *silsilah* during the Sultanate period began with its decline in Delhi following the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin and its subsequent dispersal in various regional kingdoms. Though the sufis had begun to arrive in the Deccan from the late 13th century, it was Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib who introduced the Chishti order there during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. Later, several Chishti sufis migrated to Gulbarga, the capital of the Bahmani kingdom (1347-1538). In Gulbarga, these sufis developed close relations with the court and accepted state patronage, thus causing a change in the attitude of the Chishti order towards the state. The Bahmani kings, on their part, purchased the political loyalty of these sufis and gave land grants to them.

The most prominent of these Chishtis was Muhammad Banda Nawaz, Gesudaraz (c. 1321-1422). He left for the Deccan and received land grant of four villages from Bahmani Sultan, Firuz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422). He was an orthodox sufi and declared the supremacy of Islamic law (*Shariat*) over all sufi stages. Gesudaraz discontinued many practices of early Chishtis which clashed with the attitudes of orthodox *ulama*. Unlike the early Chishti masters, he was a voluminous writer on *tasawwuf*. After his death, the Bahmani Sultans continued the land grants in favour of his family descendants. His tomb or *dargah* in Gulbarga later developed into a popular place of pilgrimage in the Deccan. But the transformation of his descendants into a landed elite and their indifference towards Chishti teachings led to the decline of living Chishti tradition in Gulbarga. The change of Bahmani capital from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1422 also contributed to the decline of the Chishti order in Gulbarga. It has been pointed out that the Bahmani court at Bidar, owing to its pre-foreigner and anti-Deccani bias, encouraged the immigration of foreign sufis and did not patronise the Chishtis who were considered 'too Indian'.

However, the Chishti tradition began to thrive again in the Deccan from the end of the 15th century and it continued to grow during the 16th and 17th centuries. Its new centre was a place popularly known as Shahpur Hillock, just outside the city of Bijapur – the capital city of the Adil Shahi Sultans. The Chishti tradition of Shahpur Hillock was different from most of the later Chishti traditions such as that of Gulbarga in that it maintained distance from the court and the *ulama* and drew its inspiration from local influences. The Chishti saints of Shahpur Hillock were thus much closer in their attitudes to the early Chishti sufis of Delhi, though it must be pointed out that the Shahpur Hillock Chishti tradition developed independent of both the Delhi and Gulbarga traditions.

In Northern India, the resurgence of the chishti order took place during the later 15th and early 16th century. The Chishti sufis belonged to three different branches of the Chishti orders – Nagauriya (after the name of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri), Sabiriya

(after the name of Shaikh Alauddin Kaliyari) and Nizamiya (after the name of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya). Another important Chishti centre in Northern India during the later half of the 15th century and in the beginning of the 16th century was Jaunpur – the capital of the Sharqi Sultans. From the beginning of the 15th century, a Chishti centre flourished in Rudauli near Lucknow. Later, Bahraich (in modern Uttar Pradesh) emerged as another centre during the Lodi period. Gangoh in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh became an important centre of the *silsilah* under Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi (1456-1537). He wrote many books on sufi thought and practice and also on metaphysical subjects. He also translated *chandayan*, a romantic poem in Hindawi written by Manlana Daud in Persian.

During the second phase, the Chishti centres also flourished in Malwa and Bengal. Many Chishti saints of the second phase wrote commentaries on Arabic and Persian classics and also translated Sanskrit works on mysticism into Persian. Like the early sufis of Delhi, the later Chishti sufis made followers from all classes of society but, unlike their spiritual predecessors, most of them accepted state patronage.

15.5.3 Other Sufi Orders

In addition to the Chishti and the Suhrawardi orders, there were others such as the Firdausi, the Qadiri, the Shattari, the Qalandari, etc. which were introduced in India during this period. The Firdausi order was a branch of the Suhrawardi which established itself at Raigir in Bihar towards the end of the 14th century. The most prominent sufi belonging to this *silsilah* in India was Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri (d. 1380).

The Qadiri was the important sufi order in the Central Islamic countries and was founded in Baghdad by Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166). It was introduced in India in the late 14th century and established itself in the Punjab, Sind and the Deccan. The Qadiri had an orthodox orientation and its doctrinal positions were similar to those of the orthodox *ulama*. The Qadiri sufis had close relations with the ruling classes of various provincial Sultanates, and accepted state charity. The order was urban-based and attempted to reform the religious life of Indian Muslims of what it considered un-Islamic influences.

The Rishi order of sufism flourished in Kashmir during the 15th and 16th centuries. Before the emergence of this order, a religious preacher from Hamadan, Mir Saiyyid Ali Hamadani (1314-1385) had entered Kashmir with a group of followers to spread Islam. The missionary zeal of Hamadani, his sons and disciples made little impact on the people of Kashmir. The Rishi order, on the other hand, was an indigenous one established by Shaikh Nuruddin Wali (d. 1430). It prospered in the rural environment of Kashmir and influenced the religious life of the people during the 15th and 16th centuries. The popularity of the Rishi order was due to the fact that it drew inspiration from the popular Shaivite bhakti tradition of Kashmir and was rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of the region.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) List the main characteristics of the Suhrawardi *silsilah*.

.....

.....

.....

2) List the following:

a) Names of five sufis of Chishti *silsilah*.

.....
.....
.....

b) Names of five sufis orders that flourished in India.

.....
.....
.....

3) Write a brief note on Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

.....
.....
.....

4) Write a brief note on the Chishti saints who settled outside Delhi.

.....
.....
.....

15.6 THE CAUSES OF CHISHTI POPULARITY

All the sufi orders of the Sultanate period believed in achieving the basic sufi goal of establishing direct communion with God by traversing the sufi path under the supervision of a spiritual guide. However, different sufi orders observed distinct rituals and customs of their own and differed in their attitudes to state and society. Of all the orders of this period, the Chishti emerged as the most popular, and it was also widespread. The Chishti rituals, attitudes and practices made it an essentially Indian *silsilah*.

The causes of its popularity are as follows:

- i) Many practices of early Chishtis bore close resemblance to the attributes of some of the already existing non-conformist religious orders in India such as asceticism, bowing before the master, shaving the head of a new entrant into the order and organizing spiritual musical recital. In this sense, the Chishtis came to be regarded as part of an established tradition in India.
- ii) The Chishtis adopted an attitude of religious tolerance towards the non-Muslim population of India and adjusted themselves to the needs of a predominantly non-Muslim environment. They made use of popular imagery and popular idiom to convey their ideas to their Indian followers and adopted many of their customs and rituals. Many of the Chishti saints made Hindawi the vehicle for spreading their teachings.
- iii) The egalitarian atmosphere of the Chishti *khanqahs* attracted large number of people from lower sections of Indian society. The Chishti attitude towards religion was characterized by sympathy towards the deprived sections of the society. Caste distinctions of the Brahmanical social order were meaningless in

the Chishti *khanqahs*. Merchants, artisans, peasants and even sweepers became the followers of the Chishti order. Nor did they accept the two-fold racial division of the people by the Turkish ruling class into noble-born and low-born.

- iv) The inspired leadership of the early Chishti masters, their aloofness from the court and their unwillingness to accept state patronage, their rejection of the orthodoxy and externalist attitudes of the *ulama*, and, finally, the combining of the simple precepts of Islam with the sufi teachings contributed to the popularity of the Chishti order.
- v) The popularity of the early Chishtis rose after their life time as the cult of saints began to develop in the later centuries around their shrines (*dargahs*). Later, legend-makers and writers of hagiographic literature sometimes attributed the popularity of the early Chishti sufis to their ability to perform miracles. In the subsequent centuries, traditions were invented to represent the early Chishtis as being actively involved in the conversion of the non-Muslims who were believed to have been drawn to them due to their alleged miracle-performing powers. However, the early Chishti sufis disapproved of the display of miraculous powers, though they did believe in the possibility of miracles. They did not consider the miracles of primary importance in sufi teaching and practice. Nevertheless, the miracle stories about the early Chishtis played an important role in enhancing the popularity of the Chishti shrines and the posthumous popularity of the sufis themselves.

15.7 SOCIAL ROLE OF THE SUFIS

Sufis played an important role in society and at times in polity. Here we will discuss their role in different spheres.

15.7.1 The Sufis and the State

It has already been mentioned above that with the exception of the early Chishti sufis and the Chishtis of the Shahpur Hillock in the Bijapur Kingdom, the sufis belonging to most of the other *silsilah*, including the later Chishtis, were involved in the affairs of the state and accepted state endowments. There are instances of expression of disagreement by Chishti sufis over the policies pursued by individual Sultans as during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. While the sufis belonging to other sufi groups served the state machinery by becoming an integral part of it, the early Chishtis helped the state by creating a milieu in which people belonging to different classes and religious communities could live in harmony.

The sufis, including the great Chishti masters of the early period, never questioned the existing political system and the class structure. At the most, they advised the state officials to show leniency in collecting land revenue from the peasants. On the other hand, they did not forbid their ordinary followers from seeking state favours and involvement in the affairs of the court. It was perhaps due to these limitations of the otherwise radical sufi order that the later transition within the Chishti *silsilah* to the acceptance of state patronage and involvement in court politics was a smooth process.

15.7.2 The Sufis and the *Ulama*

We have already noted that the *ulama* continued to show their disapproval of the

sufis despite various attempts made by al-Ghazzali to effect a reconciliation between the two. The attitude of mutual distrust between the two continued during the Sultanate period, though orthodox sufi orders such as the Suhrawardi, the Qadiri, etc. pandered to the *ulama*. The *ulama* were in particular hostile to the early Chishti sufis and their practices. They pronounced against the Chishti practice of *sama* and objected to the Chishti quest for religious synthesis. However, Chishti sufis, such as Shaikh Nasiruddin (Chiragh-i Delhi) and Gesudaraz gave an orthodox orientation to the Chishti order to mitigate the hostility of the *ulama* towards the Chishti practices. It appears that as the Chishtis began to involve themselves in court politics and accept state endowments, they adopted doctrinal attitudes similar to those of the *ulama*.

15.7.3 The Sufis and Conversions

The sufis of the Sultanate period have been generally considered as propagators of Islam in India. Several traditions and legends of the later medieval period also represented the sufis as active missionaries. The later hagiographic accounts of the life of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti showed him as being actively involved in the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. Similarly, the first sufis who entered the Deccan in the late 13th century and early 14th century have been portrayed in the later legends as militant champions of Islam who waged a *jihad* (war against non-Muslims). There were certain active evangelists among the Suhrawardi sufis. Mir Saiyyid Ali Hamadani and his followers who entered Kashmir in the 14th century were also imbued with proselytizing zeal though they did not achieve much success in their mission. However, it must be pointed out that conversion of non-Muslims to Islam was not a part of the activities of all the sufis. Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti was not an evangelist and was not actively involved in conversions. His attitude and that of his spiritual successors towards non-Muslims was one of tolerance. Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia on one occasion observed that many Hindus considered Islam a true religion but did not accept it. He was also of the view that every religious community had its own path and faith and its own way of worship. Also, there is little historical evidence to show that the early sufis in the Deccan were warriors fighting for the expansion of Islam.

However, large number of non-Muslims, especially from the low castes, were attracted to the sufis and later to their *dargahs* where they belonged to the wider circle of devotees. There they gradually came under the influence of Islamic precepts which eventually led to their Islamization. Later, the descendants of many groups which were Islamized claimed that their ancestors were converted to Islam by one or another medieval sufi. Such a claim seems to have been motivated by their desire to establish their long association with the *dargah* of the sufi and their long standing in Islam.

15.7.4 Material Life in Sufi *Khanqahs*

We have seen above that there are instances of prosperous *khanqahs* supported by state endowments, of sufis forging links with the state and finally of the transformation of some sufis into landed elites. Ideally, however, the sufis such as the early Chishtis lived in *khanqahs* which remained in physical separation from the court and social hierarchy, and where life was based on egalitarian principles. We have pointed out that the early Chishtis accepted the logic of the existing class structure at the broader social and political level and did not see any alternative to

it. Nevertheless, life in their own *khanqahs* was characterized by a lack of hierarchy and structure. The *khanqah* was a place where both its inhabitants and the pilgrims experienced equality. For their necessary expenses such *khanqahs* depended not on state patronage but on *futuh* (unsolicited charity).

The Chishti *khanqahs* were open to all sections of the society and to all communities. The *qalandars* and *jogis* made frequent visits to the *khanqahs* where they were provided accommodation. The *khanqahs* also contributed to economic life in various ways. Some of them undertook the cultivation of waste lands. Others were involved in the construction of buildings both of religious character and public utility and planted gardens. The institution of the *khanqah* played an important role in the process of urbanization. The annual *urs* (the festival commemorating the death of a spiritual master) gave impetus to trade, commerce and production of local handicrafts.

15.8 THE IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY MYSTIC IDEAS OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES ON INDIAN SUFISM

Although the growth and expansion of the sufi movement in India was primarily determined by the Indian environment, it continued to be influenced by various developments in sufism in the Islamic world. The sufi thought of great masters such as al-Ghazzali continued to influence successive generations of Indian sufis belonging to various *silsilahs*. The ideas and poetic imagery of the Persian sufis like Faiduddin Attar (d. 1220) and Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) also inspired Indian sufis of the Sultanate period. The Chishtis of this period are generally believed to have been influenced by the work of the Spanish-born mystic, Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) who propounded the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of the phenomenal and noumenal world) which was opposed by the *ulama* and orthodox sufis. However, it should be noted that most of the sufis, including the Chishtis, did not consider doctrines such as *wahdat al-wujud* of primary importance in the sufi way of life. For them, sufism was not so much a doctrine but a practical activity of traversing the sufi path.

The ideas of Alauddaula Simnani (1261-1336), an Iranian who opposed Ibn Arabi's doctrine, also influenced some Indian sufis. Gesudaraz came under the influence of Simnani's orthodox ideas and denounced the views of Ibn Arabi and Jalaluddin Rumi.

15.9 THE SUFI AND BHAKTI MOVEMENTS AND CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

The interaction between sufism and the bhakti movement is clear from the remarkable similarities between the two. These similarities included emphasis on monotheism, on the role of the spiritual guide (*pir* or *guru*), and on mystical union with God. Moreover, both the bhakti saints and many sufi orders were critical of the orthodox elements in Hinduism and Islam, respectively. One prominent example of the influence of the bhakti movement on sufism is offered by the Rishi order of the sufis in Kashmir. Here, the non-conformist ideas of the famous 14th century woman bhakti preacher, Lal Ded, exercised profound influence on the founder of the order Shaikh Nuruddin Wali.

The interaction between the Chishti sufis and the Nathpanthi *yogis* during the Sultanate period is a well established fact. The movement of the Nathpanthis had attained considerable popularity in Northern India, in particular among the lower sections of the society, during the 13th and 14th centuries. The Nathpanthi *yogis* frequently visited the *khanqahs* of the leading Chishti Shaikhs and had discussions with them on the nature of mysticism. The translation of the *yoga* treatise *Amritkund* into Persian from Sanskrit even before the advent of sufism in India led to the adoption of many meditative practices by the sufis. The early Chishtis approved some of the ethical values of the Nathpanthi *yogis* and their corporate way of life. Like the Chishtis, the Nathpanthis had opened their doors to all sections of society, irrespective of caste distinctions. The common outlook of the two popular movements provided a basis for mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The adaptability of the Chishtis in the non-Muslim environment of India released syncretic forces and led to cultural synthesis. Many early Chishti spoke in Hindawi and composed verses in it. Many *khanqahs* inspired the composition of mystical poetry in regional languages. Some early Hindi works such as *Chandayan* by Mulla Daud (second half of the 14th century) combined mysticism with Hindu mythology and philosophy. The sufi folk literature of the later times was a mix of the simplest precepts of Islam and sufi terminology and the existing popular imagery and idiom and, thus, contributed to the growth of eclectic religious life, particularly in the rural areas. The Chishti practice of *sama* provided the basis for a syncretic musical tradition such as the repertoire of religious songs called *qawwali* which is said to have begun with Amir Khusrau.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) What were the factors for the popularity of the Chishti order in India?
.....
.....
.....
- 2) What role did the sufi play in the state affair?
.....
.....
.....
- 3) What do you understand by *wahadat al-wujud*?
.....
.....
.....
- 4) Write a note on the interaction between sufism and the bhakti movement.
.....
.....
.....

15.10 SUMMARY

Early sufi saints came to India even before the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The basic features of sufism in India continued to be the same as they were in the Islamic World. In the Islamic world it developed into an organized movement during 10th-12th centuries. During 12th and 13th centuries there developed a number of sufi orders or *silsilahs*. Like in the Islamic world a number of sufi orders became popular in India during the Sultanate period. Of these Suhrawardi and Chishti orders were more prominent. In India, the Chishti order became most popular among the masses.

Sufis played a very important role in the social life of the period. In general, they did not get involved with the affairs of the state but we come across a number of cases where the sufis accepted state patronage and got involved with the affairs of the state. Throughout this period we witness an attitude of distrust between sufis and *ulama*. The latter disapproved of a number of practices popular with sufis.

The *khanqahs* were the centre of activity of sufis and their disciples. Sufis in India continued to be affected by the developments of mystic ideas in the contemporary Islamic world. In India, there was a regular interaction between the sufi and bhakti movement. This interaction had a positive impact on the social and cultural life during the Sultanate period. This interaction resulted in a cultural synthesis in the fields of art, music and literature.

15.11 KEYWORDS

<i>Beshara</i>	<i>Be</i> =without, <i>shara</i> = <i>Shariat</i> i.e. those who do not strictly adhere to the <i>Shariat</i> (Islamic law)
<i>Dargah</i>	Sufi shrine/tomb
<i>Futuh</i>	Income received gratuitously
<i>Khanqah</i>	Place where sufi saints lived
<i>Malfuzat</i>	Sufi literature
<i>Qalandar</i>	Muslim mendicant who abandons everything and leads a wandering life
<i>Ribat</i>	Frontier posts
<i>Sama</i>	A sufi gathering where music is played and songs are recited.

15.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 15.2
- 2) See Section 15.2
- 3) See Sub-section 15.3.3
- 4) See Sub-sections 15.3.1 and 15.3.2

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-section 15.5.1
- 2) See Section 15.5
- 3) See Sub-section 15.5.2
- 4) See Sub-section 15.5.2

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Section 15.6
- 2) See Sub-section 15.7.1
- 3) See Section 15.8
- 4) See Section 15.9

15.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

Aquil, Raziuddin, (2017) *Lovers of God: Sufism and the Politics of Islam in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Manohar).

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad, (2009 [1991]) *Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad, (2002 [1961]) *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli).

Rizvi, Athar Abbas, (1978) *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal).

Rizvi, Athar Abbas, (1983) *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. II (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal).

Siddiqi, Mohammed Suleman, (2001) (Reprint) *The Junaydi Sufis of the Deccan* (New Delhi: Primus Books).

15.14 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

Sufism in India: Rise and Growth | CEC-UGC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTmwmvnsWBA>

The Indian Story: Sufi Culture of India | DD News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8N7iDYhgVw>

A Lecture with Sufi Scholar and Teacher Pir Zia Inayat-Khan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSpsGls13Jo>

Unit 16 VEDANTIC AND SRAMANIC TRADITIONS*

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 **Sramanic Tradition**
 - 16.2.1 Buddhist Tradition
 - 16.2.2 Jain Tradition
- 16.3 **Vedantic Tradition**
 - 16.3.1 *Vishishtadvaitavad* or Srivaishnava School
 - 16.3.2 Nimbarka
 - 16.3.3 Madhavacharya
 - 16.3.4 Vallabhacharya
- 16.4 Conflict Between Sramanic and Vedantic Traditions
- 16.5 Summary
- 16.6 Keywords
- 16.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 16.8 Suggested Readings
- 16.9 Instructional Video Recommendations

16.0 OBJECTIVES

The present Unit, focuses on Vedantic and Sramanic traditions. After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of Vedantic and Sramanic traditions,
- define *Purva* and *Uttar Mimansa*,
- know about the *acharya* tradition particularly Shankar, Ramanuja, Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya,
- examine the development of Buddhist and Jain traditions during the period of our study, and
- evaluate the causes of the emergence of conflict between the Sramanic and the Vedantic traditions.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The Unit aims at throwing light on the history of ideas prevalent during the period of our study. The period was marked by the decline of the Sramanic traditions and the revival of Brahmanic ideas. This was the period, when Puranic religions emerged

* Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

as dominant 'ideological force' and '*bhakti*' and Brahmanical temples as a major 'instrument of change' (Champakalakshmi 2011: 346). You would also see that Buddhism and Jainism gradually lost their royal support in South India. Further, this is also the period when Islam left a permanent mark on Indian society and culture. We have already discussed in **Units 14** and **15** about the emergence of sufi and bhakti movements. The present Unit focuses on the contemporary Sramanic, Vedantic and other heterodox traditions.

In **Units 14** and **15** of our Course **BHIC-105** we have touched upon the early bhakti traditions and the early phase of the Vedantic tradition as developed in peninsular India. The present Unit would look into the gradual process of the decline of Jainism in South India and the gradual fading away of Buddhism from India during our period of study. This was the period when Tantricism dominated Buddhism as well as Brahmanism. You would see that Buddhism gradually got assimilated into Brahmanical religions (even Buddha was declared the *avatara* (incarnation) of Vishnu) and partly survived as distinct cults in Bengal in a modified form. However, its counterpart Jainism succeeded in retaining its identity and could survive under the patronage of Later Chalukyas and Hoysalas in the Deccan and South India. But Jainism also suffered greatly from the dominance of Vaishnavism and Shaivism in South India; though survived in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

16.2 SRAMANIC TRADITION

In the category of Sramanic traditions falls Buddhism and Jainism. In the following Sub-sections we will discuss the gradual decline of the Sramnic traditions in the Indian subcontinent.

16.2.1 Buddhist Tradition

The deep impact of Tantricism brought radical changes in the structure of Buddhism during the period of our study. For the realization of the 'ultimate truth' now the emphasis got transformed from the abstract philosophy to '*sadhana*' – the practical methods. The *Buddha Chitta* ('compassion' and 'belief' in the liberation of all) was the reason to the popularity of Mahayana Buddhism. Gradually elements like *mantras* and rituals formed very much part of Mahayana Buddhism. Thus, Mahayana Buddhism got divided into *mantrayana* or *mantra-naya* and *paramitayana* or *paramita-naya*. The *mantra-yana* may be regarded as the 'initial' stage of Tantric Buddhism when *yogic* practices got added to it 'it was full-fledged Tantric Buddhism'.

In Tantric Buddhism *prajna* (*shunyata*; void; perfect wisdom) and *upaya* (*karuna*; universal compassion) identified with female (*prajna*) and male (*upaya*) and with the 'body and spirit' the 'supreme bliss' 'the highest truth' (*nirvana*) could be achieved. Thus the *Bidhi-chitta* was no more the 'state of mind' which could be achieved through 'determination'.

Out of this stemmed out the Vajra-yana, i.e. the Tantric Buddhism. By the 10th century within Vajra-yana there arose another school known as Kalachakra-yana. Thus as for Buddhism, Hinayana got dislodged by 7th century from India by Mahayana Buddhism and by the 10th century Mahayana got dislodged by Vajra-yana which 'revolted against both the monasticism and scholasticism of Hinayana Buddhism and the intellectual pedantry of the Mahayanists' (Das 1979: 413). They

emerged influential in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, particularly in Bengal, South Bihar, and Kashmir; later their influence spread towards Nepal. During the Pala times, another revolt built up against the 'conventionalism', 'ceremonialism', and also against the chanting of '*mantras*' by the Sahajiya Buddhist in Bengal. They believed that their *path* was the 'most natural' (*sahaja*); their emphasis was on *yogic* practices.

Contrary to popular belief that during the post-Harsha period Buddhism remained confined to Bengal and Bihar, epigraphic evidence suggest its presence across India before it completely got wiped out in the 16th century; though no longer was it remained a creative force, nonetheless it lingered.

Buddhism received the liberal patronage of the Pala rulers of Bengal – Mahipala I (988-1038), and Rampala (1077-1120). The spread of Pala rulers' sway over southern Bihar brought the famous monastery of Nalanda under their patronage; even they established two more monasteries at Odantpuri, and Vikramshila (near Bhagalpur). In Bengal under the Pala rulers' patronage flourished the monasteries of Somapuri (Paharpur) where resided the famous Buddhist scholar Atisa Dipankara; and that of Jagaddala known for celebrated Buddhist monk Mokshakaragupta. These monasteries were frequented by Tibetan monks regularly who were instrumental in translating Buddhist Sanskrit texts into Tibetan which gave way to the nucleus of Tibetan Buddhist literature and today is the only surviving record on Indian Buddhist scholars of the time. Devikota (in north Bengal) and Pandita-*vihara* (in Chitagong) were two other important Buddhist monasteries and seats of Buddhist learning.

Atisa Dipankara is considered to be the most celebrated monk-scholar after Nagarjuna. He was the highest priest of Vikramshila but soon (1040-42) moved to Tibet, in between resided a year in Nepal. Remained and worked there till his death (1053). Another important monk of Vikramshila, Abhayakaragupta wielded immense influence on Tibetan thought and produced several works on Vajrayana and Kalachakra-yana besides producing a number of Tibetan translations. However, these scholars did contribute to Mahayana literature and Buddhist logic in the form of commentaries on Mahayana texts and Tibetan translations.

Another Buddhist centre of prominence was Kashmir which became the major centre of the exodus of Buddhist monks to Tibet and Central Asia and China. In 980 Udayana went to China and translated Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. The Jayendra-*vihara* of Srinagara, Raja-*vihara* of Parihasapura along with Ratnagupta and Ratnagiri-*viharas* of Anupamapura were prominent centres of Vajrayana and Kalachakra-yana learning where resided a number of *Vajrayanacharyas* and *Kalachakrayanacharya*. Inanasrimitra (1074) of Anupama-*vihara*, Buddhasrijnana and Sarvajansrirakshita were known as '*the grand Pandita of Kashmir*'. Bhavyaraja produced *Kashmira-nyaya-chudamani* on Buddhist logic. Another scholarly work *Bodhisattv-avdanakalpalata* was composed by Kshemendra and his son Somendra where he 'celebrated' Buddha as an *avatara* of Vishnu.

The presence of monasteries and remains of Buddhist images in the region speaks of the presence of a vast number of lay followers in the region. In Kashmir the influence of Buddhist philosophy can be seen in some Kashmir king's insistence on practicing *ahimsa* in their daily lives. Even the Buddhist ideas believed to have been influential in the growth of the *Spanda* and *Pratyabhijna* schools of Saivism in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The patronage given to Buddhism appears to have a positive influence on the growth of Buddhist centres in north Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Hiuen Tsang (Xuanzang) who laments the deplorable condition of Buddhist centres in the region in the 8th century, but an inscription of 1026 speaks of the restoration of Buddhist monuments at Sarnath; Bodh Gaya also records the influx of Chinese monks during 1000-1033 who are recorded to have built several stupas there; even dilapidated Kausambi (mod. Kosam) appears to have been flourishing. When Nalanda suffered a fire in the eleventh century it was monk Baladitya from Kausambi who helped to rebuild that. Similarly, at Kusinagara a stone inscription of the eleventh-twelfth century refers to a Kalachuri king who was a Buddhist. Another inscription of 1118 from Jetavana (Sahet-Mahet, ancient Sravsti) records Vidyadhara, a counsellor of Rashtrakuta king established a monastery. Further, at Sarnath, Kumaradevi, Buddhist wife of Gahadavala king constructed Dharmachakra-Jinavihara. Another inscription from Sahet-Mahet of Govindacharya's reign mentions a grant of six villages by the residents of Utkal and Choda country for the Buddhist monks who resided at Jetavana monastery. All this suggests the revival of old traditional Buddhist centres during the eleventh-twelfth centuries. In the Malwa region also we hear of one Dana/Dhari-Srijnana (resident of Dhar) who was styled as Boddhisattva Acharya who enjoyed patronage of the Paramara king. Another inscription of Malaya Simha, a feudatory of Chedi king Vijayasimha of Tripuri dated 1193 records the digging of a big tank with the effigy of Buddha. Further, several images of Avalokitesvara and Tara are unearthed from Gopalpur in Jablpur district attests to the presence of Buddhism in the region in the eleventh-twelfth centuries.

However, in South India Buddhism showed a steady decline, firstly on account of the constant popularity of Jainism and later, and more so as a result of the prominence of Vaishnavism and Saivism in the region, though it lingered in the region till around 1000 CE. In the Andhra region till the middle of the 13th century Amaravati stupa was in a good preservation state where the regular daily ritual of lamp-burning used to take place. In the region of Karnataka this period shows an amazing level of syncretism between Brahmanical and Buddhist religions, or to say the clear process of assimilation of Buddhism into the Brahmanical religion is evident. Inscriptions of Belgam (in Shimoga) and Lakhundi (in Dharwar) one finds worship of Buddha and Tara along with Brahmanical and Jain deities. Similarly, Devananda alias Dhruvananda is reported to have been both a devout Saiva as well as devout Buddhist. Here, the assimilation of Buddha worshiped as *avatara* of Vishnu completing the circle of the survival of Buddhism as part of the Brahmanical religious tradition and not as a distinct religion. From Odisha also one gets several Buddhist images dated eleventh and twelfth centuries attests to the presence of Buddhism in the region.

Buddhism did linger beyond the twelfth century in the tiny kingdom of Pattikera (Comilla; Bengal); Sapadalaksha (Siwalik Hills); and Kama (Kumaun; where we hear Purushottamasimha built some structures at Bodh Gaya). Even votive records of Bodh Gaya suggest its presence in the fifteenth century even stray references occur of Buddhist manuscripts also being copied during this period. When Abul Fazl visited Kashmir in the late sixteenth century he did find few old lay followers. We also get the reference to the presence of the Buddhist community in the sixteenth century in Bengal and South India. When Tibetan Buddhist Tathagatanatha visited India in the seventeenth century he did mention the presence of Buddhism in Bengal, Odisha, Trilinga (Trikalanga), Vidyanagara (Vijaynagara), Karnataka and South India.

Nonetheless, data indicates that Buddhism was no longer a living force. The assimilation as *avatara* of Vishnu and closed affinity between Brahmanical Tantricism and Vajra-yana and Kalachakra-yana practically completed the assimilation process and sealed the fate of Buddhism as a distinct religious tradition from the land of its origin. Thus 'it was not only fused with Saktism and other Brahmanical Tantric cults, but also survived in the guise of such medieval religious cults of Bengal as Nathism, Sahajiya, Baul, etc.' (Das 1979: 425-426). Finally, Buddhism took its last refuge in Nepal. However, Buddhist in Nepal were votaries of Pasupatinatha (Siva) as well.

16.2.2 Jain Tradition

Jainism enjoyed liberal patronage under the Chalukyan rulers of Gujarat. From the time of the founder of the Chalukyan dynasty, Mularaja, who is reported to have built a Jain temple, Mulabastika at Anhilwara, his capital, Jainism flourished in Gujarat. Sahaskirti, a Jain scholar who flourished in the Chalukya court, was regarded as 'the sinless teacher whose supreme lotus feet were worshipped by eminent kings like Gangeya [Kalachuri king of Chedi], Bhojadeva [Paramara king of Malwa], and others' (Jain 1979: 428). Bhima I's minister Vimala built the statue of Adi Natha at Abu. Jainism further flourished under the patronage of Siddharaja and Kumarapala. Kumarapala is reported to have accepted Jainism under the influence of the celebrated Jain scholar Hemachandra. In 1230 Tejpala built Neminath's temple at Abu which surpasses in magnificence all the contemporary structures of the time. On account of its fame, it came to be known as Devala-Vada (Delwada). Satrunjaya and Girnar emerged as other centres of Jain activities. The Chintamani Parsvanath temple at Cambay was built in 1108 and later got repaired in 1295. It was frequented by Jain followers from Malwa, Sapadalaksha, and Chitrakuta.

In South, both the Western Chalukyas and the Hoyasalas were great patrons of Jainism. The founder of the Western Chalukya dynasty, Tailapa, patronized Jain Kannada poet Ranna. Satyasraya is reported to have received spiritual guidance from Jain scholar Vimala Chandra Panditadeva. Western Chalukyas gave liberal grants to Jain *basadi*. Hemchandra Suri (d. 1172) converted Kumarpala to Jainism. This is also the period when Vastupala and Tejpala (1205) got erected the Jain temple at Mount Abu.

Similarly, Jain monk Vardhamandeva held a key position in the Hoysala administration during the reign of Vinayaditya. Jain scholars were Hoyasala rulers' spiritual teachers who made liberal grants to Jain monks and temples. It was Vishnuvardhana Hoysala who changed his faith to Vaishnavism under the influence of Ramanujacharya. Nonetheless, he continued his patronage to Jain temples and monks which is attested to by Belur (1129) and Dwarasamudra (1133) inscriptions. Even Vishnuvardhana's queen continued to be a staunch Jain. Her spiritual guide was Prabhachandra Siddhantadeva. A number of Vishnuvardhan's ministers and commanders were Jain. His minister Ganaraja not only ordered grants to Jain temples, but when his wife died he commemorated it by an epithet at Sravana Belagola. Hoysala rulers Vira Ballala II and Narasimha III were devout Jains and granted patronage to Jainism. Under Hoysala rulers' patronage, Jainism flourished in the South.

Apart from the Hoyasala rulers Jainism equally received the patronage of the feudatory chiefs of Karnataka (Santaras) who erected a number of temples and

gave liberal grants by Bhujabal and Vira Santara. However, Jainism suffered in the thirteenth century when Later Santaras accepted Saivism. The chiefs of Kangalavas in north Coorg and Arkalgud *talukly* who emerged prominent, in the eleventh century, were also followers of Jainism and gave liberal grants to Jain temples. We get a plethora of records that attest to the liberal patronage given to Jainism by rulers, local chiefs, nobles and merchants in South India during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

The chief centre of Jain activities and learning was Sravan Belgola. The Siddhara-basti pillar inscription of 1398 records Arhadbali and his pupil Pushpdanta and Bhutavali as the Jain scholars of repute. They are recorded to have split the Mula-Sangha Kundakundanvaya into four branches – *Sena Sangha*, *Nandi Sangha*, *Deva Sangha* and *Simha Sangha*. We get epigraphic references of the presence of *Sanghas*, *Ganas*, *Gachchhas*, *Balis* and *Sakhas* of monks flourishing in South India during the tenth to thirteenth centuries. Jain *acharya* Dharmaghosha Suri, who is considered to be the thirty-fifth Jain *acharya* from the line of Mahavira, as reported in *Pattavalis*, converted the chief minister Vimala in 1011 CE. Eleventh century South India saw the emergence of a number of Jain *acharyas* – Santi Suri (d. 1039; composed *Vadi-vetala*); Abhayadeva Suri (d. 1078; author of commentaries of nine *Angas*); Muni Chandra (d. 1121; great logician; author of *Anekanta-Jaya-Pataka-Panjika* and *Upadesh Vritti, Pakshika-Saptati*); Chandraprabha Suri (founder of *Punamiya-Gachchha* in 1102); Ajitadeva Suri and Vadideva Suri reported to have defeated Kumudachandra at the court of Jayasimhadeva at capital Anhilapattana as a result Digambara were denied entry in the capital. Svetambar sect was recorded to have split into *Kharatara-Gachchha* by Jina Vallabha from *Kurchapura-Gachchh* in 1147. In 1156 *Anchalaka-mata* was founded. Jainism in fact got branched out into several sub-groups during this period – *Sardha Pauranmiyaka-mata* (1163), *Agamiyaka-mata* (1193), *Tapa-Gachchh-mata* (1266), *Purnatala-Gachchh* (1157), etc.

Acharya Devendra Suri (d. 1270) toured vastly in Malwa and wrote *Karma-Grantha*, *Sraddhadina-kriya-vritti*. *Acharya* Dharmaghosha Suri (d. 1300) blessed merchant-chief minister of Mandapa, Pethadadeva who constructed eighty-four Jain temples.

This is also the period when a large number of Jain texts were produced in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsha. Abhayadeva wrote a commentary on nine *Angas* and Santi Suri and Devendragani (11th century) wrote commentaries on *Uttaradhyana*. Deva Suri and Manikyachandra wrote *Santinatha-charita*; *Neminatha-charita* by Suracharya and Maladhari Hemachandra; *Parsvanatha-Charita* by Vadiraja, Bhavadeva and Manikchand; Vikram wrote *Nemiduta*; Vagabhatta wrote *Nemi-Nirman-Kavya* under Chalukya ruler Jayasimhadeva's patronage; *Mrigavati-Charita* of Maladhari Devaprabha (13th century); Srichandra under Bhojadeva of Malwa wrote *Purnasara* and commentaries on *Padma Charita* of Ravishena and *Mahapurana* of Pushpadanta (Apabhramsa). Malwa Jain poet Asadhara is reported to have authored more than twenty works; most prominent among them are *Sagara Dharmamrita* and *Anagara Dharmamrita*. On account of his poetic achievements he came to be known as 'Kali-Kalidasa'. The great logician Vadiraja flourished in the court of Western Chalukya ruler Jayasimha who composed several works on logic namely *Pramana-Nirnaya*; and also *Adhyatmasataka* on meditation and spiritual practices.

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Write briefly on the nature of patronage granted to Buddhism by the Pala rulers of Bengal during the 10-13th centuries.

- 2) Mention the growth of Buddhism during the 10-13th centuries in Kashmir.

- 3) State the development of Jain tradition under the Western Chalukyas.

- 4) Enumerate the nature of royal patronage provided to Jainism by the Hoysala rulers.

16.3 VEDANTIC TRADITION

Literally, Vedantic means ‘the end [part] of the Vedas’. Vedanta, also known as *Uttara Mimansa*, emphasise more on the philosophic traditions based on Upanishadic philosophy, unlike *Purva Mimansa* where the greater emphasis was on rituals.

The chief propounder of the Vedantic philosophic tradition in the 8th century was Adi Shankaracharya who propounded the idea of *advaita* (monism) which we have discussed in **Units 14 and 15** of our Course **BHIC 105**. During our period of study in South India Vedantic philosophic tradition chiefly flourished under the aegis of Vaishnava *acharyas*. These Vaishnava *acharyas* largely questioned Shankara’s philosophy of *advait* (monism). Shankara’s *Brahm* was an ‘impersonal Being’ who ‘could not evoke any devotional emotions’ thus ‘prayers’ to Him were meaningless (Sircar 1979: 459). But people in suffering and need solace look His mercy. Men’s this yearning led philosophers’ turn towards *Vedas* for reinterpretation. This re-interpretation with an emphasis on ‘love’ and ‘*bhakti*’ got reflected in the Vaishnava *acharya*’s revisionist approach to Vedantic philosophy.

However, Vedantic philosophy attracted non-Vaishnavas as well. Thus some non-Vaishnava Vedantists did try to identify their worshipping deity with the Vedantic *Brahm*. Srikantha, a Saiva commentator of *Vedanta-Sutras* attempted to identify Siva and the Vedantic *Brahm* as ‘one’ and the ‘same’.

Here, our focus would mainly be to discuss the Vaishnava *acharya* tradition and various schools of Vedantic philosophy propounded by them.

16.3.1 *Vishishtadvaitavada* or Srivaishnava School

The founder of the Srivaishnava sect was Nathamuni. However, it was celebrated Yamunacharya, upon whom Chola queen entrusted the title *Alavander* (the victor), who was the real founder of *vishishtadvaitavad* (qualified monism) or Srivaishnavism which received its full bloom under Ramanujacharya (1017-1137). In his *Siddhitraya* Yamunacharya puts forth the argument of the ‘real existence of the Individual and Supreme soul’ thus ‘refutes the doctrine of *Advaita*’. Further, in *Gitarthasamgraha* he emphasised the importance of *bhakti* over *karma-yoga* and *jnana-yoga*.

Ramanuja succeeded Yamunacharya at Srirangam. As mentioned above, it goes to the credit of Ramanuja to develop fully the theory of *vishishtadvaita* (qualified monism). Initially, he was a pupil of *advaita* philosopher Yadava-Prakasha at Kanchipura. However, soon he got disillusioned with the philosophy of ‘monism’ (*advaita*). Ramanuja speaks about *three* ‘eternal’ principles: *chit* (the individual soul), *achit* (the insensate world) and *Isvara* (the Supreme soul). Ramanuja equated *bhakti* with Upanishadic *upasana* or meditation. However, the idea of Krishna, Radha and cowherds are absent from Ramanuja’s Vaishnavism. Shankara’s *Brahm*, who was ‘without attributes’, received criticism from Ramanuja. He argued ‘when there is knowledge, there must be a knower [thus refuting Shankar] who knows and an object that is known, and knowledge is the relation between the two’ (Sircar 1979: 460). Ramanuja argued that knowledge ‘implied a relation’. Thus *Brahm* can not be without ‘quality’ (attributes). ‘The world is his expression, his body...Brahm...having infinite qualities of goodness and purity. He is the same as Vishnu of the *Vishnu Purana* and the Vaishnavas’ (Sircar 1979: 460). Further, for Ramanuja, against Shankara, ‘knowledge alone was not enough to save a soul. It was to be followed by devotion to God (*bhakti*) which could lead man to his destination’ (Sircar 1979: 461). Thus, Ramanuja’s chief contribution was to mingle ‘Vedic Brahm’ with ‘*bhakti*’ which became the chief component of all Vaishnava movements.

Ramanuja composed several philosophical treatises. The prominent among them are: *Vedantasara*, *Vedantadipa*, and his commentaries on *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Brahma-Sutra*.

Post-Ramanuja, his followers got divided into Vadakalai (school of northern learning) and Tenkalai (school of southern learning). Though, both the groups believed in the self-surrender of God, nonetheless means to achieve that differed: while Vadakalai believed that it could be achieved through *karma*, Tenkalai considers ‘self-effort unnecessary’; for them ‘God’s love is spontaneous and brings salvation to mankind by itself’ (Sircar 1979: 439). Tenkalai were comparatively liberal for them the mantra *Om namo Narayana* was for all classes; while Vadakalai keeps *Om* exclusive to Brahmanical groups and bars its recitation for non-Brahmanical classes. Vadakalai made Kanchipuram their main centre of activities, particularly during Varadacharya/ Nadadur Ammal’s during the thirteenth century; while Srirangam emerged as the prominent centre of Tenkalai. Vadakalai *acharya* Vedantadesika (1269-1370) is considered to be next in scholarship to Ramanuja and authored more than a hundred works most prominent of which is *Vedantacharya*.

16.3.2 *Nimbarka*

Against Shankara’s philosophy of *maya* (illusion) another school developed by Nimbarka (12th century), a Telegu Brahman. Most of his time he spent at Vrindavan

in north India. Nimbarka composed *Vedantaparijatasaurabh* and a commentary of *Brahma-Sutra*. Nimbarka propounded the idea of *Dvaitadvata* (*bheda-bheda*; dualistic-nondualism). He differs from Ramanuja's idea that the 'ultimate reality is One' on two counts: his emphasis on 'bhakti in its original sense of love' and his emphasis on the importance of Krishna and cowherdesses headed by Radha. Unlike Ramanuja, Nimbarka emphasizes that the Supreme soul (God) and individual soul and the inanimate world are both 'identical' (monism) at the same time were 'distinct' (dualism). 'They are identical in the sense that the individual soul and the inanimate world are entirely dependent on God and have no independent existence'. Thus Nimbarka's philosophy is both 'monistic and pluralistic'. But what is important in Nimbarka's philosophy was, 'his Brahma was identical with Vishnu; he was a god and a person, who could be an object of devotion and love, to whom prayers could be addressed and who could show mercy and compassion when these were needed' (Sircar 1979: 439).

16.3.3 Madhavacharya

Madhavacharya or Anandatirtha (thirteenth century) was the propounder of *dvaita* (dualism) philosophy. He was initiated by Achyutaprekshacharya/Purushottamtirtha and went on pilgrimage to Badrikashrama from where he is reported to have brought the images of Rama and Vedvyasa. He travelled extensively. He sent his pupil Naraharitirtha to Jagannatha-kshetra [Puri] to bring the idols of Rama and Sita. The main area of Madhava's influence was Karnataka where were established eight *mathas* of Madhava's sect. Madhava disapproved Gopala-Krishna and Radha. According to Madhav God is 'distinct' from the 'individual soul' on account of his 'ignorance' thus believed in the philosophy of dualism (*dvaita*). He believed in the God-soul relationship equal to master-servant. He also opposed Shankar's theory of *advait*. Madhava wrote commentaries on *Brahma-Sutra* and Upanishads. For him, 'Brahma of Vedanta is not an impersonal being but is only another name for *Hari* or Vishnu. He is the one object of worship and devotion' (Sircar 1979: 462).

16.3.4 Vallabhacharya

The wheel for the opposition to Shankara's philosophy of *advaita* gets completed with Vallabhacharya (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries; 1479-1531). He propounded the school of *shuddhaadvaitavad* (pure non-dual). His is the theistic interpretation of Vedanta, thus differs from both Shankara and Ramanuja. His *Brahm* is personified as Krishna. For him, 'The world and the finite souls were all real. They were not an illusion (or *maya*). But they were not different from *Brahma* either. All things are *Brahma*. There is absolute identity among them' (Sircar 1979: 462). *Nirvana* (salvation) could be achieved only through 'Divine Grace' (*pushti*; literally 'nourishment') and not through personal efforts. He wrote commentary of *Brahma Sutra* (*Anubhashya*) and *Bhagavata* (*Bhagavata Tika Subodhini*).

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Explain Vedantic philosophy.

.....

.....

.....

2) What do you understand by *acharya* tradition.

.....
.....
.....

3) Write briefly on:

- a) Nimbarka
-
- b) Madhavacharya
-

16.4 CONFLICT BETWEEN SRAMANIC AND VEDANTIC TRADITIONS

Early medieval South India was marked by the bitter rivalries between the Sramanic and Vedantic traditions. The period saw the ascendancy of the Brahmanical order with the rise of Alvars (Vaishnavites) and Nayanars (Saivites) in South India. Sramanic religions were labelled as 'heterodox'. The Tamil Alvar and Nayanar literature is full of such stories narrating the conflict and the triumphant march of Brahmanism. Champakalakshmi views this conflict as a result of the declining trade (both inland and maritime) which was the main profession of both, the Jaina and Buddhist laity. Another factor that she finds played an important role was the emergence of the importance of land and land grant economy as the 'main' form of 'economic resource'. Thus emerged a new agrarian order that in turn led to the emergence of kin-based society which was hierarchically structured, along with the 'monarchical' polity based on 'dharmastric' ideals (Champakalakshmi 2011: 438).

The chief texts that narrate the stories of such conflicts are Saiva *Periya Puranam* (twelfth century) and *Sthala Puranas* (sixteenth-eighteenth centuries). The leading Saiva saints involved in the conflict were Tirunavukkaracar (Appar), Tirujnanacampantar and Manikkavacakar; Vaishnava saints Tirumalikai, Tirumangai and Tondaradippodi; while from the side of the Sramanas were Nami Nandi, Dandi Adigal and Murti Nayanar.

The earliest of such conflicts relates to the conversion of Dharmasena (later Appar), who was originally a Jain and was the head of the Jain monastery of Pataliputra (Tirupparippuliyur, near Cuddalore, South Arcot). Appar is reported to have accepted Saivism under the influence of her sister Tilakavati who was a devout Saiva. Kadava (? Mahendravarman I), who was a Jain, on hearing ill-treated him initially but later under his influence accepted Saivism. Upon his conversion, he built a Saiva temple of Gunadaraviccaramin Tiruvadigai. The conflict thus resulted in a change in the area from a Jain to a Saiva settlement. Jains got displaced by Saiva in the area sometime around seventh century.

Pandinadu, Madurai was another prominent Jain centre in the pre-seventh century. Pandinadu's story of Campantar is directly related to Jain dissipation in Madurai where Jains were the prominent community. Pandyan ruler Maravarman Arikesari (640-670) was initially a Jain follower. It was Campantar who influenced and indicted him to Saivism and later he is counted among the Sixty-three Nayanars.

Gradually, Jain settlements got completely faded away in the region. Madurai Hills does confirm the transition from a Jain to Saiva and Vaishnava rock-cut temples. The Jain temple dedicated to Adi Bhattaraka at Magaral is presently in a dilapidated state, one finds there defaced mutilated Jain images. Similarly, at Tirupparankunram Hills Jain settlements are recorded from the first century BCE where one gets Brahmi inscriptions, later it was appropriated by Brahmanical sects. One such cave temple was dated 773 CE dedicated to Siva, Vishnu, Skanda and Durga. As a result of the Pandya ruler's acceptance of Saivism at Peccipparai, the construction of Jain temple was abruptly stopped in the late seventh century. Similarly, Alakarmalai was earlier a Jain and Buddhist centre later got converted into a Vaishnava centre.

Another conflict is reported from Tiruvarur in Tanjore district between the Jains and the two of the Sixty-three Saiva Nayanars: Nami Nandi Adigal and Dandi Adigal. It is said that the Jain monastery at Tiruvarur was razed and a Saiva temple was constructed. Originally Tiruvarur temple was a brick structure constructed in the ninth century during Aditya I and Parantaka I's periods. Later in the tenth century it was reconstructed in stone by Chola queen Mahadevi in the tenth century.

Nagapattinam was a Buddhist centre where conflict between the Buddhist and Vaishnava Alvar Tirumangai occurred in the eighth century and the Buddha golden image was robbed. Similarly, Palaiyarai near Kumbhakonam was a Jain centre where clashes between Saiva Appar and Jains were reported. Appar is said to have built a Saiva shrine with the help of the Chola ruler. In Chidambaram, South Arcot district, Chola capital, a conflict between a Saiva Manikkavachakar and a Buddhist is reported in which prevailed the Saiva teacher.

Similarly, Vaishnava Alvars Tondaradippodi, Tirumangai and Tirumalikai are highly critical of the Sramanic customs and practices. 'Thus the Bhakti exponents almost launched a crusade against the Jains and the Buddhist, and actively sought royal support to bring about a more or less total annihilation of the non-Brahmanical religions' (Champakalakshmi 2011: 448). Champantar's debate at Bodhimangai and the ultimate defeat of the Buddhist in the Chola country and with the Jains in the Pandya country at Madurai; Appar's debate with the Buddhist at Chidambaram and the triumph of the Saivas suggests the gradual dominance of the Brahmanical order and the receding importance of the Sramanic religious orders.

However, ruling dynasties did follow a tolerant attitude towards other faiths. Rajaraja I, who himself was a Saiva but was equally tolerant towards the Vaishnavas. His sister Kundava is reported to have built temples for both Siva and Vishnu at Dadapuram (South Arcot). Rajasimha, Pallava of Kanchi is also reported to have constructed a Buddhist shrine at Nagapattinam. Similarly, the famous Buddhist *vihara* of Chudamanivarman was granted a village Anaimangalam for its upkeep by the Chola king Rajaraja I which was further confirmed by Kulottunga I. However, an inscription dated 1160 in Tanjore district records a resolution of a Mahasabha 'prohibiting the association of Saivas with Vaishnavas'.

The conflict that began as early as the sixth-seventh centuries continued over several centuries. 'In this race for supremacy and/or survival, the Buddhists seem to have rapidly lost the ground to the 'orthodox' sects, while the Jains continued to survive by turning to other avenues of support (other than trade, crafts and commerce), and by adopting the Puranic structures in their religious organization, that is temple-building and ritual worship, apart from the acquisition of land grants'

(Champakalakshmi 2011: 450). Buddhism practically got wiped away; though Jainism modified itself by adopting some Puranic forms of worship and ‘temples as instruments of change’ thus survived; nonetheless they were reduced to the background practically at all centres of power and pushed towards rural craft centres. Shirramur (Chittamur) was one such Jain centre which survived from early medieval times to the present day. Its *matha* is considered to be the chief *matha* for Tamil Jains. Sivayam high rock Jaina images and Pudur Uttamanur in the *Cholanadu*; Sittannavasal (Puddukkottai), Tiruvennayil and Tirugokarnam in *Ko Nadu*; and hills around Madurai in *Pandinadu*; Tirumurtimalai, Tingalur, Vijayamangalam and Dharmapuri in *Kongu Nadu* were other important Jain centres in early medieval period.

However, it is believed that the Saivas borrowed from the Sramanic tradition their monastic organization (establishment of Saiva *mathas*): the idea of Sixty-three Saiva Nayanars on the pattern of Jain Sixty-three *salakapurushas* (great men/*tirthankaras*). Brahmanism emerged as the mainstream tradition in the process. Through the acculturation and assimilation process several popular and folk, tribal elements also got incorporated into it. Of the Sixty-three Nayanars only twelve belonged to Brahmana castes; while thirteen were Velalas (agricultural community), four from the trading community, one was *vedar* (hunter), one *saliya* (weaver), and one was *vannar* (washerman) and one was *paraiya* (outcaste).

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) What were the factors responsible for the resultant conflict between the Sramanic and Vedantic and Saiva traditions in South India?
.....
.....
.....
- 2) Discuss the conflict between the Saiva and the Jains at Pataliputra.
.....
.....
.....
- 3) Mention briefly the Buddhist-Vaishnava conflict in South India.
.....
.....
.....

16.5 SUMMARY

In the present Unit, we have discussed the gradual fading away of Buddhism and Jainism. Though Jainism could survive in pockets in Gujarat and Rajasthan and South India by the turn of our period, Buddhism got completely wiped away from the land of its origin. The Unit also deals with the growth of Vedantic tradition in South India. The process of the emergence that begins with Shankara in the seventh century gets fillip during our period under the aegis of the Vaishnava *acharyas*. However, the Vedanta preached by Shankara (*advait* philosophy) received bitter criticism by Vaishnava *acharyas* whose idea of ‘*bhakti*’ was directly in contradiction

with Shankara's theory of 'illusion' (*maya*). Further, though these Vaishnavas largely professed *bhakti* ideals of Vishnu, *bhakti* of Rama-Sita and Krishna-Radha also received prominence. Another important feature of the period was the bitter conflict among the Sramanic (Jains and Buddhist) and the Vaishnava and Saiva *bhakti* traditions which showed the ascendancy of Brahmanical socio-religious order under the aegis of Vaishnava Alvars and the Saiva Nayanars.

16.6 KEYWORDS

Purva Mimamsa	<i>Mimamsa</i> literally means 'reflections'. <i>Purva Mimamsa</i> deals with philosophical justification for the observance of Vedic rituals pertaining to the earlier part of the Vedas
Sramanic Tradition	Buddhist and Jain traditions
Uttara Mimamsa	'Reflections' on the later part of the <i>Vedas</i> i.e. the <i>Upanishads</i> . It is also known as <i>Jnana Mimamsa</i> (study of knowledge)
Vedantic Tradition	Philosophy based on Upanishads. It largely derived its ideas from <i>Brahm-Sutra</i> and <i>Bhagavatagita</i>

16.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 16.2.1
- 2) See Sub-section 16.2.1
- 3) See Sub-section 16.2.2
- 4) See Sub-section 16.2.2

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Section 16.3
- 2) See Section 16.3
- 3) a) See Sub-section 16.3.2 b) See Sub-section 16.3.3

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Section 16.4
- 2) See Section 16.4
- 3) See Section 16.4

16.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bhattacharjee, U.C., (1979) 'General Development of Philosophy', *The Struggle for Empire* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan).

Champakalakshmi, R., (2011) *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-Colonial South India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).

Das, N.N., (1979) 'Buddhism', *The Struggle for Empire* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan).

Jain, H.L., (1979) 'Jainism', *The Struggle for Empire* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan).

Sircar, D.C., (1979) 'Vaishnavism', *The Struggle for Empire* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan).

16.9 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMENDATIONS

Three faces of Vedanta: Shankaracharya, Madhvacharya, and Ramanujacharya

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlmdRFz1DVs>

Why Jainism declined in Tamilnadu?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZQ0lnUd7g8>

INDIA: Why did Buddhism mostly disappear from India?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxEhmCc2LhQ>



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 17 TEMPLES, MOSQUES, AND *DARGAHS*: FORMS, CONTEXTS AND MEANINGS*

Structure

- 17.0 Objectives
- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Temples in India: Context and Forms
- 17.3 Temple Construction: 1200-1550
- 17.4 Mosque Building: Context and Forms
- 17.5 Structural Evolution of Mosques
- 17.6 *Dargahs*: Social Context and Meaning
- 17.7 Patterns and Forms of *Dargahs*
- 17.8 Summary
- 17.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercise
- 17.10 Keywords
- 17.11 Suggested Readings
- 17.12 Instructional Video Recommendations

17.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit deals with the cultural developments in Medieval India (1200-1550) with special reference to the buildings and their social milieu. The three distinctive building types selected for detailed treatment are Temples, Mosques and the *Dargahs*. Notably Mosques and *Dargahs* have been building types introduced in India after the Turkish conquest, while Temples have been in existence since ancient past. The reading of the Unit will help you:

- understand the architectural forms of the buildings,
- appreciate the social context of the buildings, and
- trace the structural development of the buildings.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

The onset of thirteenth century brought with it several important socio-cultural developments in India. The establishment of Turkish rule in the wake of the two Battles of Tarain (1191-1192) and the control of Delhi by Qutubuddin Aibak (1206-1210) introduced a new religion and associated new building types, the mosque and the *dargah*. These buildings differed in their composition and architectural styles and created a new social milieu. During the thirteenth century and later an interesting interplay occurred between existing and 'new' building types and associated architectural styles. It produced a marvelous amalgam of techniques, styles,

* Prof. Ravindra Kumar, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. All photographs used in the Unit are courtesy Prof. Ravindra Kumar unless otherwise stated.

compositions, and embellishments the parallel of which is rare to find elsewhere. This Unit primarily deals with the genesis of the ‘new’ building types, particularly the mosque and the *dargah*, and discusses their social context and the ‘meaning’ embedded in their composition/lay-out. The Unit also discusses, in the beginning itself, the stylistic developments in the existing building type – the temple. It also explores the possibility, if any, of an impact on the social context of the temple because of the emergence and growth of the ‘new’ religion brought by the Turks.

17.2 TEMPLES IN INDIA: CONTEXT AND FORMS

The origin of the temple in its structural form is often traced back to a first century BCE relief of a sacred tree surrounded by a *vedika* in Udayagiri (Odisha) Cave-5. The free-standing structures of temples survive from the Gupta period. Some important sites are Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh and Nachna-Kuthara, Eran and Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh. In the subsequent period temples with images of Gods/Goddesses started getting constructed on a regular basis.



Figure 17.1: Vedika, Udaygiri

Photograph: Courtesy, *Art & Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent*, J.C. Harle



Figure 17.2: Nachna-Kuthara Temple



Figure 17.3: Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh

The standard form of the Hindu temple consists of a small *garbhagriha*, where the idol is placed. This *garbhagriha* opens into a hall where worshippers gather to perform the religious rituals and offer prayer. This hall is called *mandap*. The *mandap* is often, but not always, joined to the *garbhagriha* by a short passage known as *antaral*. The *garbhagriha* is generally surmounted by a *shikhar*, while smaller *shikhar* rise from other parts of the temple building. The temple is often built on a raised platform and is surrounded by a courtyard. Two broad orders of temples in the country are known – *Nagara* in the north and *Dravida* in the south. At times, the *Vesar* style of temples as an independent style created through the selective mixing of the *Nagara* and *Dravida* orders is mentioned by some scholars. It may be noted that every region and period produced its own distinct style. The temple is generally covered with elaborate sculpture and ornamentation of the surface that form a fundamental part of its conception.

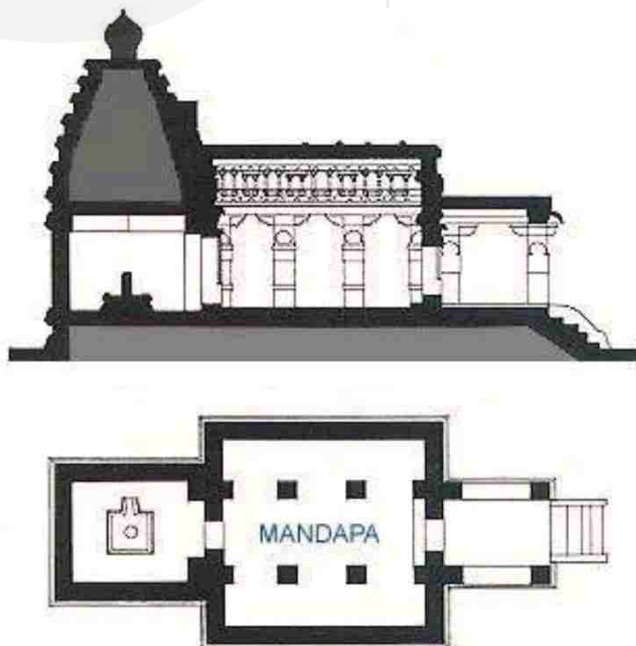


Figure 17.4: Plan of a Temple

The temple compound houses many subsidiary shrines around the main structure. These subsidiary shrines are dedicated to the family or incarnations of the main deity. The temple also uses various architectural elements of ornamentation such as *gavaksha*, *vyala/vyali*, *kalpa-lata*, *amalaka*, *kalasha*, etc. in various ways and places in the temple.

17.3 TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION: 1200-1550

The ancient Indian tradition of building temples had followed the use of wooden substances as the principal building material. As noted above, free standing stone/brick temples appear on the architectural landscape of India from the Gupta period; these early temples later developed in more elaborate form and dotted almost all parts of India as wood almost gave way to stone and brick as the main building material. As we enter thirteenth-century we find two important developments taking place in the political landscape of the country and in the field of architectural technology. Politically, the Turks wielded the political power who belonged to a different faith – Islam. At the same time the architectural technology saw the introduction of new techniques of masonry construction suitable for the new building types. We will reflect on both these developments in this Unit and first state the case of the temple construction in India between 1200-1550 CE.

A.L. Basham notes the salient features of Indian temples in the following words: “The temple was ornately decorated, often even to the dark shrine-rooms lighted only by flickering oil-lamps. Despite this ornateness the apprenticeship of his tradition in rock architecture gave the architect a strong sense of mass. Heavy cornices, strong pillars, wide in proportion to their height, and the broad base of the *shikhar* or tower, give to Indian temple architecture a feeling of strength and solidity, only in part counteracted by the delicately ornate friezes, and the many figures in high or low relief which often fill the whole surface of the temple wall.” He further states: “Considering the size of the land, Indian temple architecture is remarkably uniform, but authorities distinguish two chief styles and numerous schools. The Northern or Indo-Aryan style prefers a tower with rounded top and curvilinear outline, while the tower of the Southern or Dravidian style is usually in the shape of a rectangular truncated pyramid.”

It is somewhat ironical that very few specimens of temple structures have survived in North India from the period between fifth-thirteenth Century. Therefore, as we enter the medieval period, we count small number of sample structures from North India and far larger number from South India. In South India temple building gained most from the patronage provided by the Pallava and Chalukya kings in the 6th-8th century. Important early temples of the Pallavas are to be found at Mamallapuram. The Chalukya temples are at their capital Badami and at the nearby site of Aihole, both in Mysore. “These styles show the gradual emancipation of the architect from the techniques of carpentry and cave architecture” (A.L. Basham).

The medieval period is dominated by the Chola dynasty. The most beautiful grand temples of the Cholas are the Brihadeshwar Temple of Shiv at Thanjavur built by Rajaraja the Great (985-1014), and the temple built by his successor, Rajendra I (1014-1044), at his new capital at Gangaikondacholapuram, near Kumbakonam. The Thanjavur Shiva temple – Brihadeshwar – was one of the largest temples built in India up to that time. Both of these temples contain elaborate pillared halls and beautiful decoration.



Figure 17.5: Brihadeshwar Temple, Thanjavur

From the 12th century onward fortification of the temple complex with gates on the four sides became a common practice. The gates were later developed into soaring towers (*gopuram*), generally much taller than the modest *shikhar* over the central shrine. The walls and *gopuram* towers round many existing temples were built by the Pandyan kings, successors of Cholas. The culmination of the Pandyan style is to be seen in the mighty temple complexes of Madurai, Srirangam, and elsewhere, which are outside our period, belonging in their present form to the 17th Century.



Figure 17.6: Srirangam Temple, *Gopuram*



Figure 17.7: Meenakshi Temple, *Gopuram*

The other temples of note are in the city of Vijayanagar. The principal temples are the Vitthala and the Hazara Rama. The Vitthala temple is the most ornate building. It was begun by Raja Krishna Deva in 1513, was continued by his successor Achyuta Raja (1529-42) but owing to its elaborate character was never entirely finished. It stands within a rectangular courtyard, which is surrounded by cloisters formed of a triple row of pillars. The entrance to the temple is through three *gopurams*. The central building is dedicated to Vishnu in the form of Vitthala or Vithoba (*Pandurang*), one of the embodiments of Krishna.



Figure 17.8: Vitthala Temple, Vijayanagar



Figure 17.9: Hazara Rama Temple, Vijayanagar

In North India one notable temple tradition that exists from about the 8th-9th century and gives us a few surviving structures is from Odisha. Percy Brown says: "... the temples of Odisha provide the most logical beginning for a study of the Indo-Aryan {Northern-Nagara} style." The principal temple structures are to be found in the town of Bhubaneswar where there are over thirty such surviving examples. In addition to this there also exist two of the largest and most important structures, the Jagannath Temple at Puri (c.1100) and the Sun Temple at Konark (c.1250).



Figure 17.10: Konark Temple

Courtesy: Alopprasad84; January 2011; CC-BY-3.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Konark_Temple_Panorama2.jpg

Percy Brown finds Odishan style as indicative of an independent movement in temple architecture: "...in many of its aspects this architectural movement was very largely of an independent nature. Not only are the plans and general treatment of these religious structures of special character, but the building art has a separate and distinct nomenclature of its own. The generic name for a temple is *deul*, but as the building in the first instance consisted very often of a sanctuary only, the same word was employed for this tower like structure also. In front of the *deul* is a square building or assembly hall corresponding to the *mandapa* in other parts, but here known as the *jaganmohan*. These two edifices combined constitute the

essentials of the Odishan temple type”. Later another structure was added to this scheme and was called *bhog-mandap*. The Jagannath Temple, Puri and the Sun Temple, Konark provide the full blossom specimens of the Odisha style.

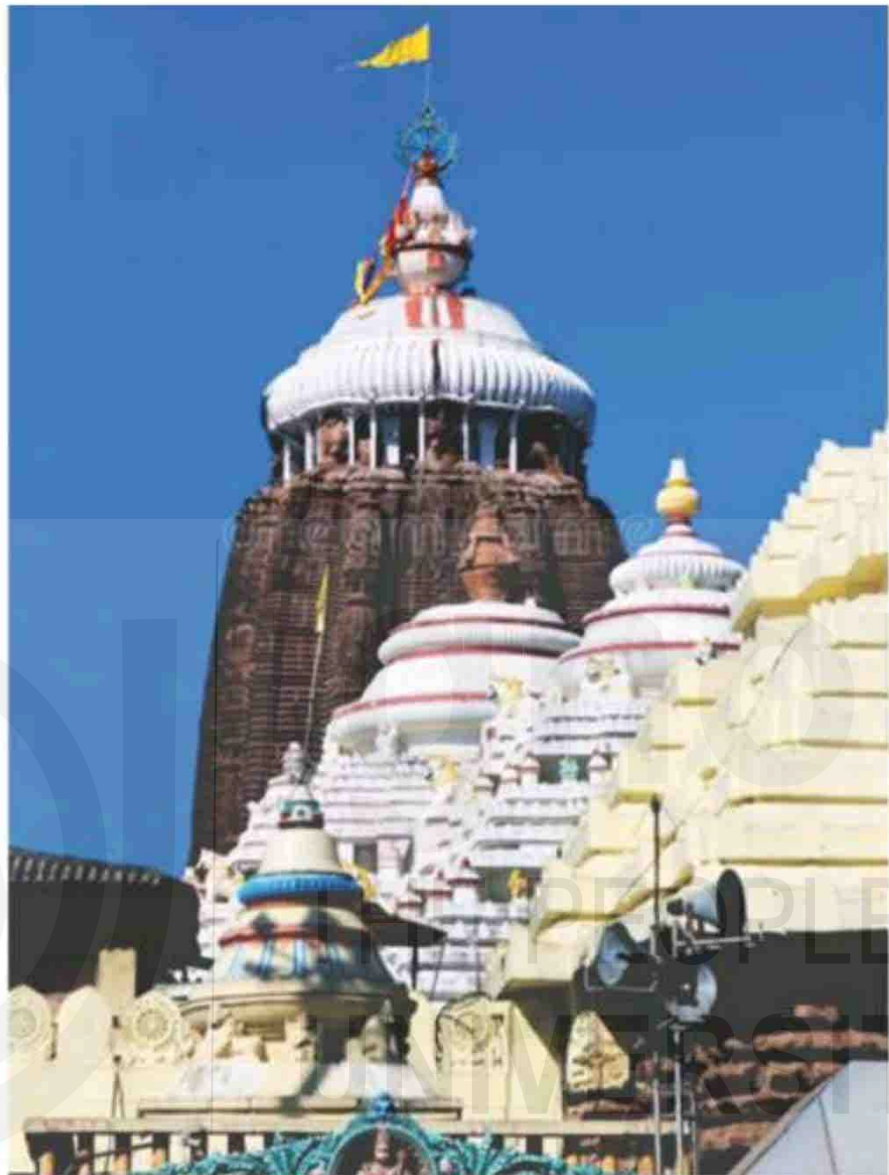


Figure 17.11: Jagannath Temple, Puri

Check Your Progress-1

1) Write about the structural form of temples in the space given below:

.....
.....
.....

2) Write about the three main differences in structural terminology used in the temples of Odisha.

.....
.....
.....

- 3) Discuss the main changes in temple structures since the 12th century.

.....

.....

.....

17.4 MOSQUE BUILDING: CONTEXT AND FORMS

The advent of Islam, with the establishment of Turkish rule in India, brought with it the most important religious structure, the mosque, and firmly rooted it in India among several other genres of Islamic structures. Mosque was considered a public structure although individually-founded or endowed mosques were also not uncommon in medieval India. Mosque is the public place where the faithful assemble and offer prayers.

The composition of the mosque in India has been elaborately described by J. Burton-Page thus: “The interior of the mosque admits of little variation outside two well-defined types. In one the western end (known in India as *liwan*) is a simple arrangement of columns supporting a roof, usually of at least three bays in depth but possibly of many more; the roof may be supported by beam-and-bracket or by the arch; the former arrangement being by no means confined to compilations of pillaged Hindu or Jain material. The *liwan* openings may be connected directly with the arcades or colonnades of other sides of the *sahn*... In the other type, the *liwan* is physically separated from the *sahn* by a screen of arches (*maqra*), which may conceal a columnar structure to the west,... More commonly, however, the arches of the *maqra* are part of a vaulting system whereby the *liwan* is composed into one or more halls; there is always an odd number of *maqra* arches, and it is common for the bay which stands in front of the principal *mihrab* to be singled out for special treatment, either by being made taller than the rest, or by being specially decorated... A staircase is commonly provided to give access to the *liwan* roof, either separately or incorporated within the walls or the base of a minaret, as this is a favourite place from which to call the *adhan*; a staircase may be provided within a gateway for the same purpose. The *liwan* roof may be surmounted by one or more domes.”

The early mosque architecture in India is constructed mainly of dressed stone. In this situation carved stone became the major medium of architectural ornament. The preference for stone both for construction and ornament lasted until the fourteenth century. In a mosque the most decorated areas were the *qibla* wall and the *mihrab*. Arabic inscriptions used as ornament became a very important form of decoration. It is notable that the outside of a mosque is generally plain.

The early Sultanate period mosques were built by local artisans. The local mason building the mosque had to work in a new set of circumstances and was therefore placed in a situation where he had to adapt to the changed designs and compositions. At the same time the new ruler (Muslim patron) was compelled to adjust his structural requirements to the masonry skills available locally; he had to utilize in a positive way the skill of the local workers. In the initial years it would have been difficult to arrive at a balanced position. A fairly good amount of give and take appears to have taken place as we look at the early mosque structures (e.g. Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque at Delhi and Arhai Din Ka Jhompra Mosque at Ajmer). The

balance seem to have been achieved by accommodating more carved surfaces and fewer soaring internal members. The composition and structural design was adopted by local masons from the prototypes provided by the new rulers. A compromise had been reached between the ability of the native builders and the requirements of the Islamic patron.

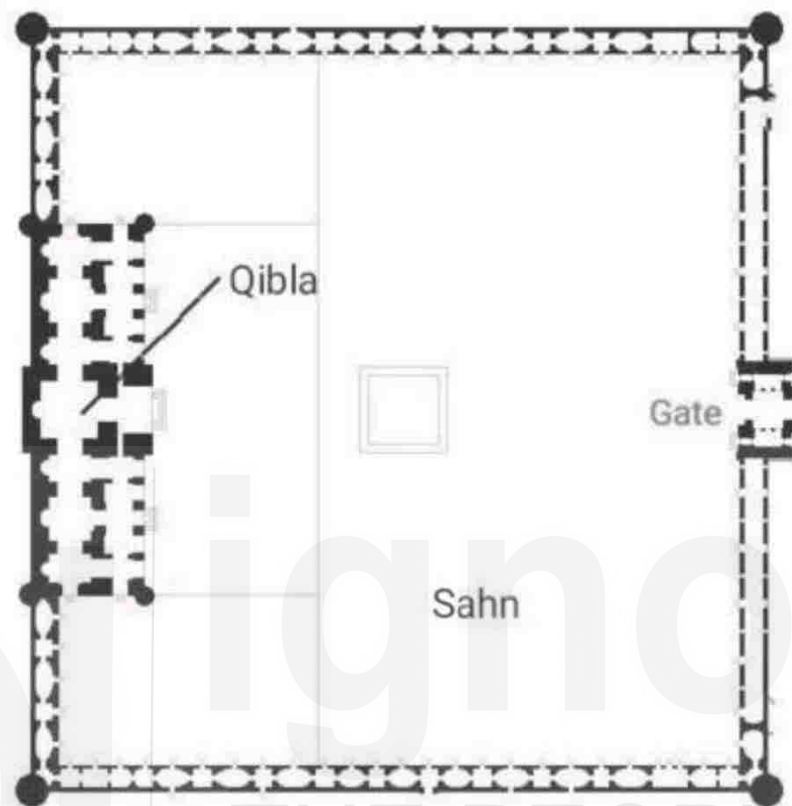


Figure 17.12: Plan of a Masque

An important and notable fact relates to the functional adaptability of Islamic structures with minimalist requirements of form. Ernst J. Grube directs our attention to this important relationship between form and function in Islamic architecture: There “is the striking and almost total absence of a specific architectural form for a specific function. There are very few forms in Islamic architecture that cannot be adapted for a variety of purposes; conversely a Muslim building serving a specific function can assume a variety of forms.”

“The paramount example of this phenomenon is the four-*iwan* courtyard structure of Central Asia and Iran, which is also found in other parts of the Muslim world. These structures function equally well as palace, mosque, *madrasa*, *caravanserai*, bath or private dwelling; at different times and in different places, in fact, they were built to serve all of these functions” (Michell 1978: 12).

During the early centuries of Turkish rule in India the mosque would have become more than merely a place for prayer. Mosques were centers of community life; often schools were attached, as were rooms for travellers serving the purpose of a *sarai*. Mosques were also used as courts of justice and were, in fact, the center of religious and secular life.

All of the above yet a mosque is primarily a religious building for the performance of daily prayers. It is thus the most important building for Muslims. The plan of the mosque as developed in the earliest mosques in India was maintained throughout the centuries with relatively minor changes.

17.5 STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION OF MOSQUES

The continuous structural history of the mosque in India begins with Quwwat ul-Islam in Delhi, founded in 1191. It was built on the ruins of Jain Temples by reusing their structural material. Interestingly, the construction of the mosque on the same plinth as that of the ruined Jain temple must have created difficult situations for aligning the direction accurately in the west as is the religious and structural injunction in the building of a mosque. Thus the *qibla* could not be accurately aligned in the west. In general, however, an effort was made to observe the correct *qibla*, “which varied between 20° north of west in the south of India to 25° south of west in the extreme north, with a conventional west used only rarely in original buildings” (Burton-Page 2008: 42).

There are however records of mosques founded earlier, e.g. under the Abbasid Caliphate in Sindh, by small communities of Muslim traders, especially in Gujarat and the Malabar coast, and by individual officers who gathered a community around them. The remains of these are mostly too exiguous to be of value in a general statement. Recent explorations by M. Shokoohy have revealed a few structures, of a century or two before the conquest, at Bhadreshwar in Gujarat.

J. Burton-Page, *Indian Islamic Architecture*, Brill, Leiden, 2008

It has been repeatedly mentioned by the experts that initial Islamic monuments in India were constructed from the material of demolished Hindu and Jain temples. (This reshuffling of demolished elements lasted about a century.) During this time the new structures adopted the locally available building techniques and mostly focussed on the new structural compositions. As construction methods improved, mosques, tombs and other monuments were planned and built with newly-quarried material, manufactured and ornamented as desired by the Turkish rulers and as per the altered design requirements. It is for this reason that in the buildings of the ‘first phase’ the hand of the local workman was much in evidence. Pointed ogee-shaped arches, built in the indigenous overlapping corbel technique appear everywhere. Spaces were spanned by means of beams laid horizontally in the trabeate or post-and-beam method. The ‘new’ architectural technique of bridging spaces with true arches was adopted only during the Khalji dynasty in the thirteenth century. This new architectural element – the arch – necessitated the use of a new cementing material, hitherto rarely used in India, the lime mortar. Once the arch had been mastered, it was only one further step to construct hemispherical domes.

Early mosques in India were generally built along traditional lines: a plan having many columns carrying the roof, a large open court surrounded by colonnades, the prayer hall facing Ka’ba (in India to the west) of greater depth than the other three. In the middle of the *qibla* wall facing Ka’ba is a niche, the *mihrab*, indicating the direction of prayer. The Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque, being the first mosque of the Turkish rulers in India, remained the pivot mosque structure for almost a century. Thus, most of the successors of Qutbuddin Aibak focussed their structural ambition on this mosque by adding to its original plan from and symmetry extensions of different sizes. It was only after the shift of capital from Mehrauli that the rulers devoted resources and attention to new mosques. The other, a mosque at Ajmer – the Arhai Din Ka Jhompra – remained somewhat isolated since its origin.



Figure 17.13: Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque, Delhi

The Khalji period, with their architecture, as revealed in the Jamaat Khana Mosque (built 1325) at Nizamuddin, Delhi, a marked change in style appears. In the evolution of Indo-Islamic architecture, this phase occupies a key position as it exhibits a distinct influence of the Seljuq architectural traditions (a Turkish tribe ruling over Central Asia and Asia Minor in 11-13 century) as also certain salient features of composition which were adopted in the succeeding styles. The characteristic features of this phase may be listed as below:

- a) Employment of true arch, pointed horse-shoe in shape,
- b) Emergence of true dome with recessed arch under the squinch,
- c) Use of red sandstone and decorative marble reliefs as new building materials, and
- d) Appearance of 'lotus-bud' fringe on the underside of the arch – a Seljuq feature.



Figure 17.14: Jamaat Khana Masque, Nizamuddin, Delhi

Here, a detailed description of the new architectural technique and other features seems useful.

New Structural Forms

We begin by noticing a distinct outcome of this 'new' style – significant increase

in the number of masonry buildings from about the 13th century. It seems very likely that the introduction of a new cementing material in the construction of buildings during this period added longer life and greater durability to the masonry structures. How did this happen and which new structural forms provided support to the longer life and greater durability, is explained below:

i) Arch and Dome: The introduction of a new architectural form i.e., the arch in raising masonry buildings was a novel feature. Additionally, an extended form of arch, called dome, was also applied as a building form to mainly provide the ceiling to the masonry building. These new techniques gave greater stability and therefore longer life to masonry buildings. It is therefore important for us to clearly understand the details of these technological and architectural devices to truly appreciate the new development in the architecture of this period.

It must be appreciated that the introduction of a new cementing material and a new architectural form were simultaneous processes as one complimented the other. Let us now examine the two features in detail – lime-mortar as cementing material and arch as an architectural technique. The building of arch required stones or bricks to be laid as voussoirs in the shape of a curve and bound together firmly by a good binding material. This binding material was lime-mortar.

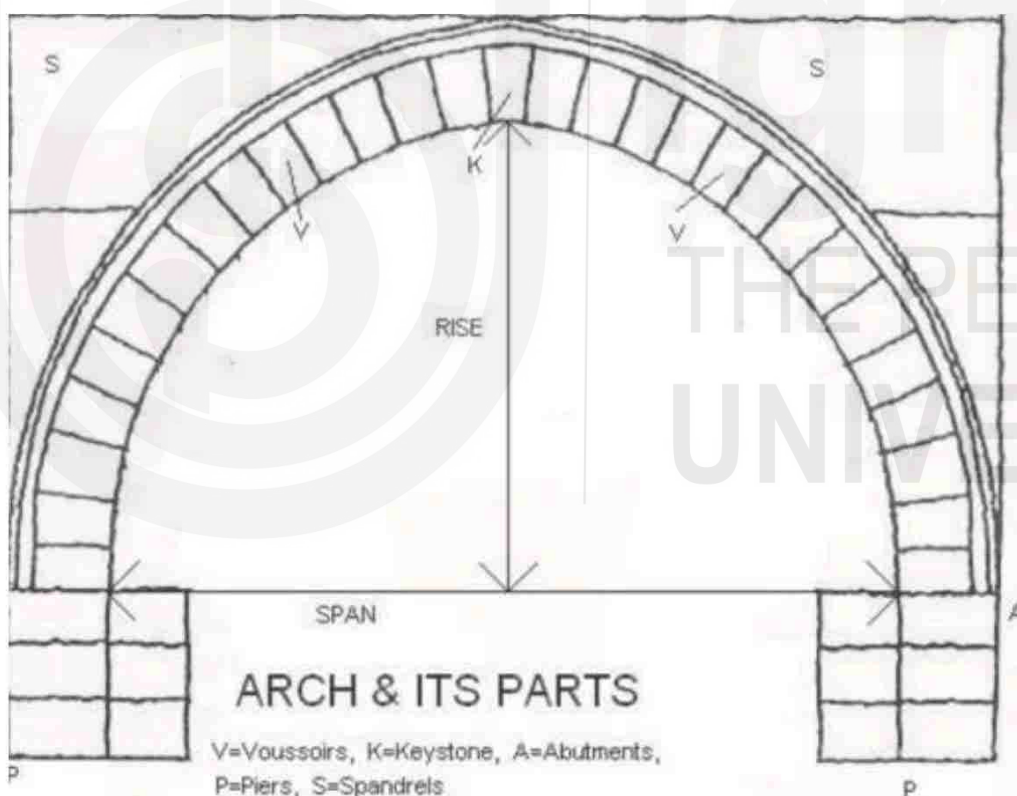


Figure 17.15: Arch

The introduction of the new technique replaced pre-Turkish forms – lintel and beam and corbelling – with true arches and vaults. Similarly, the spired roofs (*shikhara*) of the pre-Turkish period were now replaced with domes. Arches are made in a variety of shapes, but in India the pointed form was widely used in the beginning, and sometime in the second quarter of the 14th century, another variant of the pointed form, the four-centred arch, was introduced. It remained in general use till the end of the Delhi Sultanate (these forms have been illustrated in Figures 17.16, 17.18 and 17.19).

The pointed arch was adopted due to its durability and ease of construction. The usual method of raising a pointed arch was to erect a light centring and place one layer of bricks over it. This layer supported another thin layer of flat bricks over which radiating voussoirs of the arch were fixed in mortar. These two bottom layers of brick-work would, if needed, act as permanent shuttering for the arch. You will appreciate that the employment of bricks instead of an all-wood centring was a feature typical of regions deficient in reserves of wood such as West Asia and even India.



Figure 17.16: Pointed Arch

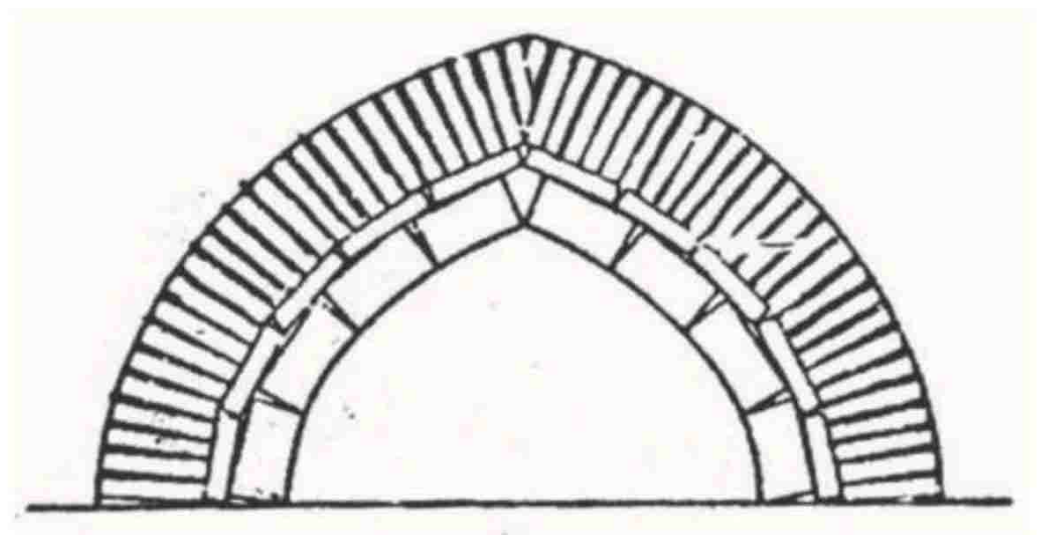


Figure 17.17: Shuttering in Arch-Brickwork

But the construction of dome demanded specialized techniques. The problem was to find a suitable method for converting the square or rectangular top of the walls of the room into a circular base for raising a spherical dome. The best way to overcome this problem was to convert the square plan into a polygon by the use of squinches across the corners. Later, in the 15th century, stalactite pendentives came to be used for the same purpose. For example, in Bara Gumbad Mosque, New Delhi.

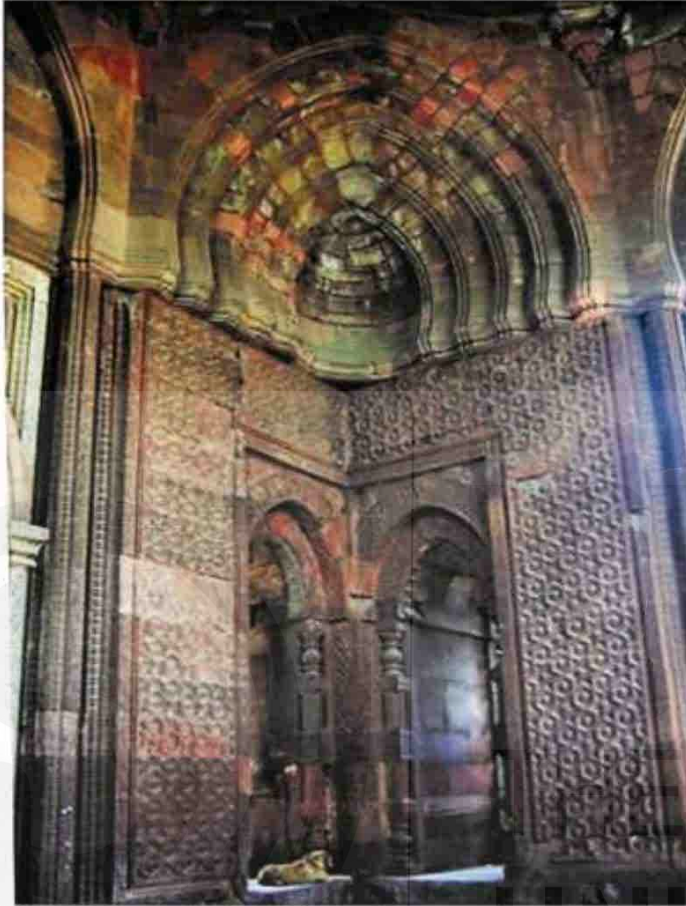


Figure17.18: Squinches



Figure 17.19: Pendentives

ii) Building Material: It is a curious fact that there are very few instances of early buildings of the “new” rulers in India where newly quarried material has been used by the architects. The usual practice was to use richly carved capitals, columns, shafts and lintels from earlier structures as the building material. In India, it was only towards the beginning of the 14th century, when the supply of such material had exhausted, that buildings were raised by using originally quarried or manufactured material.

It is no surprise that, stone, due to its strength, has been used abundantly in the masonry work. The foundations are mostly of rough and small rubble or, wherever it is available, of river boulders, while the superstructure is of dressed stone or roughly shaped coarse stonework. However, in either case, the buildings were plastered all over. Percy Brown (1968) has noted that in the buildings of the Khalji period a new method of stone masonry was used. This consisted of laying stones in two different courses, that is headers and stretchers. This system was retained in subsequent buildings and became a characteristic feature of the building technique of the Mughals.

Buildings of this period were generally plastered with gypsum. Apparently lime-plaster was reserved for places that needed to be secured against the leakage of water, such as roofs, indigo-vats, canals, drains, etc. [See **Unit-18**, Section on Public Buildings for more details]. In the later period, around 15th century, when highly finished **stucco** work became common, gypsum mortar was preferred for plaster work on the walls and the ceiling.

iii) Decorative Art: Decorative art in the Islamic buildings served the purpose of concealing the structure behind motifs rather than revealing it. Since the depiction of living beings was generally frowned upon, the elements of decoration were, in most cases, limited to:

a) calligraphy, b) geometry, and c) foliation.

It was by a careful and artistic manipulation of these techniques that a rich and sumptuous effect was obtained in the buildings. Characteristically enough no one type of decoration was reserved for a particular type of building; on the contrary, these decorative principles were used for all kinds of buildings.

Calligraphy is an important element of the decorative art in the buildings of this period. The Quranic sayings are inscribed on buildings in an angular, sober and monumental script, known as Kufi. They may be found in any part of the building—frames of the doors, ceilings, wall panels, niches etc., and in a variety of materials—stone, stucco and painting.

Geometric shapes in abstract form are used in these buildings in a bewildering variety of combinations. The motifs indicate incorporation of visual principles: repetition, symmetry, and generation of continuous patterns. It has been suggested by Dalu Jones (Michell 1978) that the generating source of these geometric designs is the circle, which could be developed into a square, a triangle or a polygon. These forms are then elaborated by multiplication and subdivision, by rotation and by symmetrical arrangements.

In foliations, the dominant form of decoration employed in these buildings, is the **arabesque**. It is characterized by a continuous stem which splits regularly, producing a series of leafy secondary stems which can in turn split again or reintegrate into the main stem. The repetition of this pattern produces a beautifully balanced design with a three-dimensional effect.

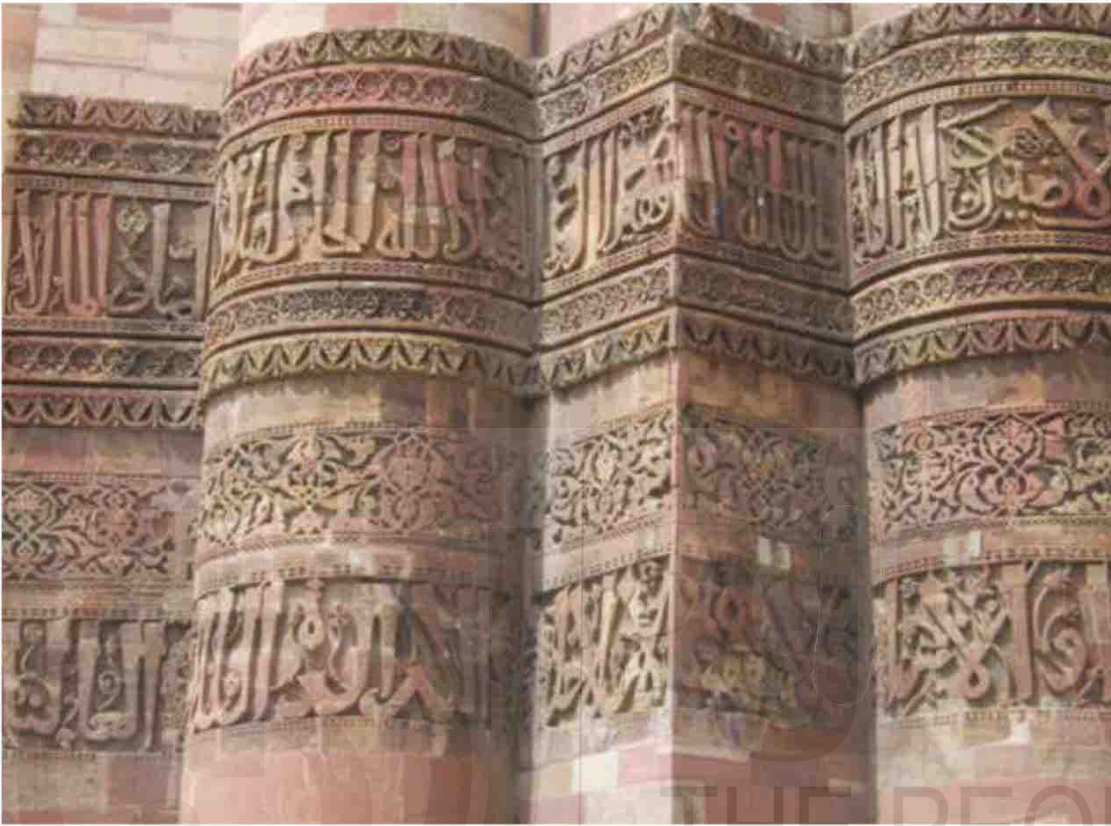


Figure 17.20: Islamic Calligraphy

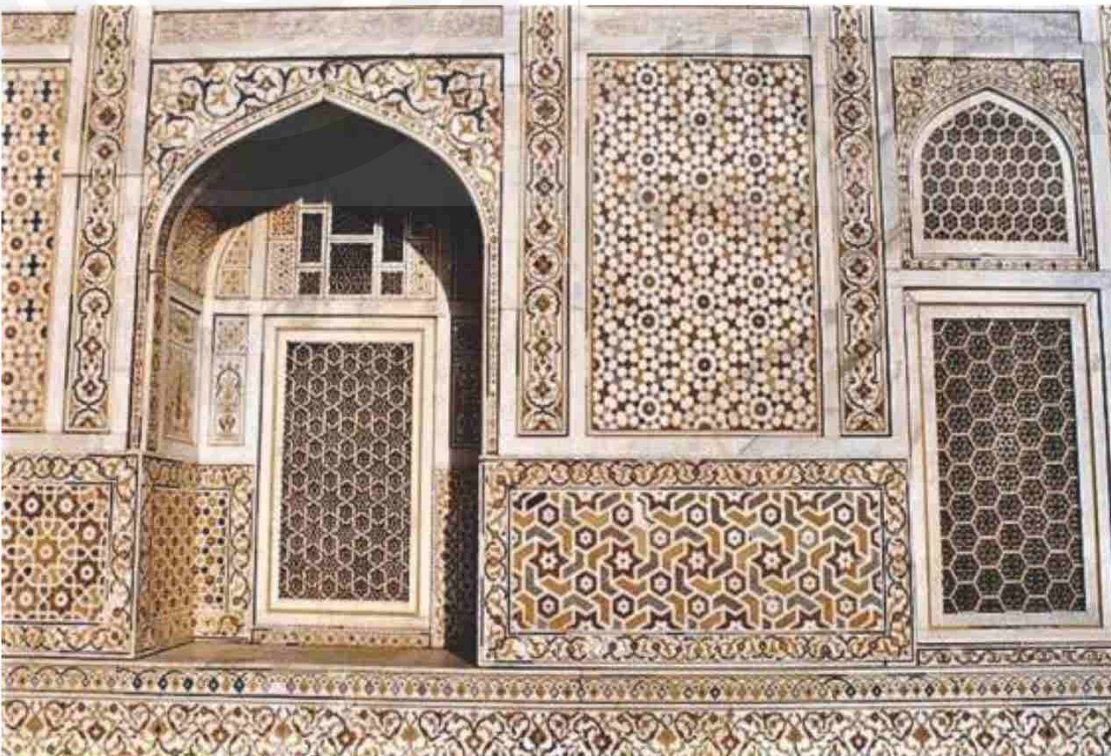


Figure 17.21: Geometric Decoration

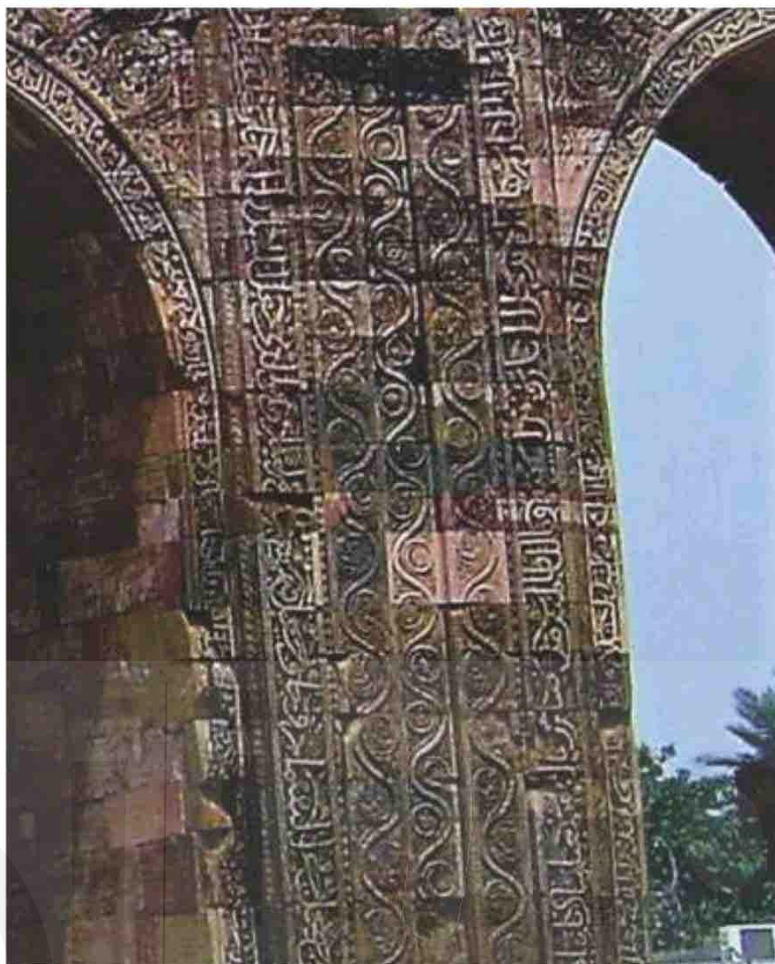


Figure 17.22 : Arabesque

We now revert to our description of the mosques. A new architectural style comes into vogue in the mosques of the Tughlaq period. The general features of the Tughluq style of architecture are listed below:

- a) Stone rubble is the principal building material and the walls are in most cases plastered;
- b) The walls and bastions are invariably battered, the effect being most marked at the corners;
- c) A hesitant and possibly experimental use of a new shape of arch, the four-centred arch, necessitating reinforcement with a supporting beam. This arch-beam combination is a hall-mark of the Tughluq style. The pointed horse-shoe arch of the preceding style was abandoned because of its narrow compass and therefore the inability to span wider spaces.

A new somewhat advanced plan was introduced during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq in the fourteenth century. While the Begampur Mosque is built in a hypostyle plan, it also has four typically Iranian *iwan*, one in the center of each courtyard side. Other mosques were built in different plans. For instance, a series of mosques remain from the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, which were the work of his minister Khan Jahan. All have high walls around the court, arcades of arches on the interior and a number of small domes. None have minarets. The stonework is rough with no ornament, only a coat of plaster. All have arch-and-beam doorways. The interior cloisters are formed of square bays each roofed by a dome.

Two mosques built for different patrons define another mosque type, the two-storeyed plinth mosque, standing on a substructure of arches, where worship took place in the upper storey. In addition to the half-ruined mosque in the Kotla Firuz Shah, the Kalan Mosque follows this plan. A third type of Tughluq mosque is in a cruciform or cross-axial plan, representing a striking, short-lived innovation. The earliest example of this type is the Khirki Mosque, a very large monument in the south-eastern part of Jahanpanah. A second mosque built in 1370-7, the Kali Mosque in the Dargah of Nizamuddin, completes this series.

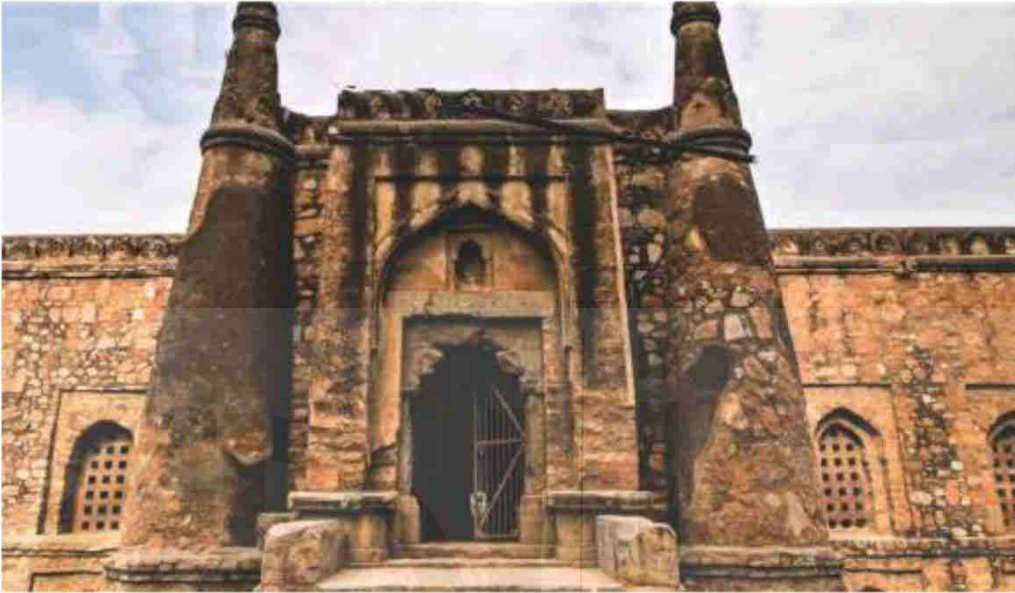


Figure 17.23: Khirki Mosque, Delhi

In the end mention may be made of an unusual plan developed in Gulbarga in 1367 where the Jami' Mosque has no courtyard, the entire structure is merely covered by a series of domes, sixty-three over the center, four medium-sized ones over the corners, and one larger stilted dome on a square clerestory over the *mihrab*. Although the plan of the Gulbarga Mosque was eventually discarded, some of its innovations were incorporated into mosques in Delhi, Bidar and Bijapur.



Figure 17.24: Gulbarga Jami Mosque

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Write about the structural form of mosques in the space given below:
.....
.....
.....
- 2) Write about the main structural and decorative techniques introduced in India in the 13th century:
.....
.....
.....
- 3) Discuss the main changes in mosque structures under the Tughlaqs.
.....
.....
.....

17.6 DARGAHS: SOCIAL CONTEXT AND MEANING

Sufism is Islamic mysticism and from about the tenth century it has led men yearning for a personal communication with God away from the strict laws of orthodox Islam. From earliest times **sufis** have gathered around men endowed with spiritual gifts to form religious orders. There are many sufi orders, all differing in name and in some customs but all agree upon the necessity of submission to a guide or *pir*. The orders through which sufism has been introduced into India have a long history. Early sufi missionaries came with the first Muslim armies over the Khyber Pass. They became very popular with the people and their rulers, serving often as both spiritual and political guides at court.



Figure 17.25: Ajmer Dargah

The oldest of the sufi orders in India is the Chishtiya which dates back to 1142. Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti of Sistan came to India with the Ghurid invaders in the last decade of the twelfth century and settled in Ajmer, in Rajasthan, where he remained until his death in 1236. His tomb is still an important attraction for pilgrims who come yearly during the time of the *'urs*, the festival which celebrates the death anniversary of the saint.

Spiritual descendants of Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti have been among the most famous saints of India. Important Chishti saints include Khwaja Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, whose shrine is near the Qutb Minar in Delhi, Chiragh-i Delhi also buried in Delhi, and Shaykh Nizamuddin Aulia buried in the *dargah* which bears his name.

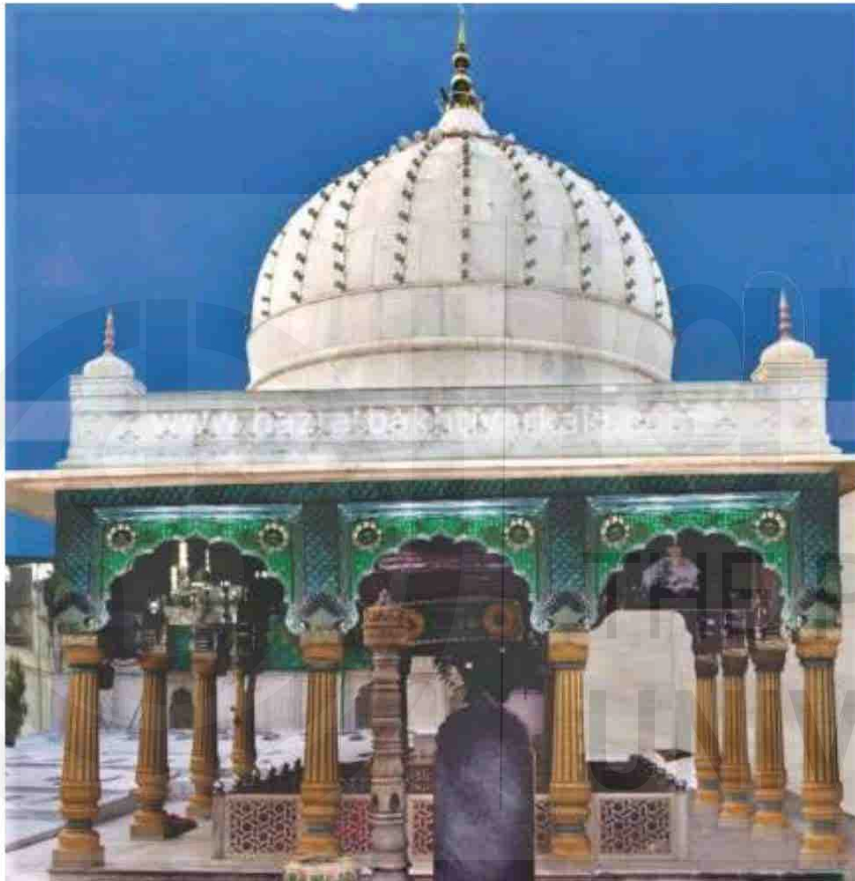


Figure 17.26: Bakhtiyar Kaki *DARGAH*



Figure 17.27: *Dargah* Chirag Delhi

It is thus evident that *dargah* was the place where a sufi saint was usually buried in an enclosure. The *dargah*, would later become a place of pilgrimage for the faithful particularly on the death anniversary of the saint. Spiritual descendants and disciples of the Shaykh sought to be buried near their master and thus one finds a clutter of tombs and graves around that of the sufi saint. Buildings are often crowded together and it is difficult to get an idea of individual monuments. Many different styles exist side by side, varying in dates. Disciples of the saint have often reconstructed the actual tomb along modern lines. When good examples of architecture do exist, as, for instance, the Jamaat Khana Mosque in the *dargah* of Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi, they are often hidden among the surrounding buildings.

It must be added here that many graves of rulers and courtiers also lie scattered about; and that many more humble graves which are generally unidentified also form the visual landscape of a *dargah*. The *Dargah* of Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi is probably one of the most famous shrines in India. The saint had a long life, from the reign of Balban to the first year of Muhammad Tughlaq (1325). The Jama'at Khana Mosque, built by Alauddin Khalji, is the earliest structure in the *dargah*. The highly ornate tomb of the saint is of much later date. In the *dargah* complex are also buried some famous historical personalities – poet Amir Khusrau, a contemporary of Nizamuddin Aulia, Jahanara Begum, daughter of Shah Jahan, and Jahangir, son of Akbar II, the last but one Mughal emperor.

17.7 PATTERNS AND FORMS OF *DARGAHS*

Dargahs are found throughout India, in recognized population centres and sometimes beyond the city walls in the suburbs. Some of these were built around the shrines of holy men, such as the *Dargah* of Shah Alam, a local Muslim saint, in Wazirabad, at the northern edge of the Ridge in Delhi. A gateway, a courtyard, a mosque, a tomb and a bridge are found here all apparently dated to the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Wazirabad was probably an important suburb in the late fourteenth century. Shah Alam was not a famous saint, and thus no rulers or their retainers sought to be buried near him. The shrine is therefore not crowded with the usual later structures added to the famous *dargahs*, such as the Nizamuddin *dargah*. The Tomb and Mosque of Shah Alam stand in their original form in near total isolation, an interesting example of an almost forgotten ensemble.

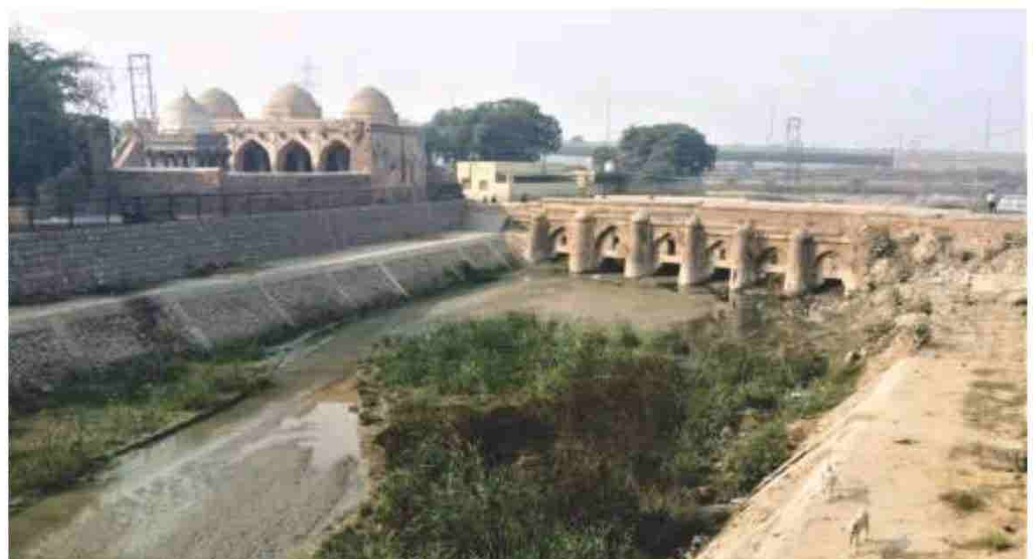


Figure 17.28: *Dargah* Shah Alam and Bridge, Delhi

“Another suburb built around the shrine of a holy man was located south of where the Lahore Gate stands today. Here Firuz Shah Tughlaq constructed the Sacred Enclosure of Qadam Sharif (1374), known as the Holy Footprint, as a final resting place for his eldest son, Fatah Khan. The tomb is surrounded by an enclosing wall, probably constructed against the attacks of the Mongols, since the shrine was outside the walls of the city of Firuzabad. There are two gateways to the arched enclosure built around the grave of the prince, over which the sacred footprint, sent by the Caliph of Baghdad to Firuz Shah Tughlaq, was placed in a trough of water.”

“A third suburb, southeast of the ruined city of Siri, within Jahanpanah, was centred around the *Dargah* of Roshan Chiragh-i Dilli, the Bright Light of Delhi, a disciple of Nizamuddin Aulia, who died in 1356 during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. The modernized tomb bears an inscription which states that Sultan Firuz built the eastern gateway in 1373.”

“Another inscription dated 1373 records the construction of the Tomb of Mirza Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri, towards the south of the Tomb of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki, indicating that at least a small suburban settlement existed around the *dargah* of this saint, south of the Qutb complex” (Merklinger 2005: 40-41).

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Write about the genesis and nature of *Dargahs* in the space given below:

.....
.....
.....

- 2) Discuss the features of any one *Dargah* described in the above Section.

.....
.....
.....

17.8 SUMMARY

The establishment of Turkish rule in India in 1191-92 brought about a significant change in the social and cultural landscape as it did in the political sphere. The socio-cultural landscape saw the emergence of a new religion and the associated architectural forms. Another important change was the introduction of new architectural techniques that were more suited to the new architectural forms viz. mosque and other functional structures. In the initial period, lasting for about a century the interaction remained restricted to the outward manifestation of the new techniques – the arch and the dome. The reason was the unfamiliarity of the local masons and workmen with the new technique. However, the resultant architecture produced an aesthetically soothing and visually impressive impact. The mosques had now begun dotting the landscape. With the passage of time the workmen perfected the new technique and beautifully combined local indigenous elements to produce a variety of interesting combo-forms. The temple structures, however, remained aloof from this new impact. During the period of our study temple structures very rarely experimented with the new techniques. The period also saw the emergence of another form of socio-cultural complex known as the

Dargah. Soon, however, the *dargah* assumed a more syncretic form and became a place of religious assembly particularly focused on the sufi order.

17.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 17.2
- 2) See Section 17.3
- 3) See Section 17.3

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Section 17.4
- 2) See Section 17.5
- 3) See Section 17.5

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Section 17.6
- 2) See Section 17.7

17.10 KEYWORDS

<i>Arabesque</i>	A term used to designate denaturalized vegetal ornament, but which also includes other features such as geometric, calligraphic and even figural
<i>Dargah</i>	Refers to a Muslim shrine or tomb of a saint
<i>Iwan</i>	A vaulted hall with one side opening directly on the court
<i>Maqsura</i>	Enclosure which protects the ruler in a mosque
<i>Mihrab</i>	A niche indicating the direction of Mecca
<i>Qibla</i>	Direction of prayer in the mosque (west in India)
<i>Sahn</i>	The courtyard of a mosque
<i>Squinch</i>	An arch placed diagonally at angles to connect the dome to the square chamber below
<i>Sufi</i>	Member of the spiritual orders in Islam

17.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

Basham, A.L., (1954) *Wonder that was India* (London: Wm. Collins Sons & Co Ltd.).

Brown, Percy, (1942) *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period* (Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co.).

Burton-Page, J., (2008) *Indian Islamic Architecture* (Leiden: Brill).

Merklinger, Elizabeth Schotten, (2005) *Sultanate Architecture of Pre-Mughal India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers).

Michell, George, (ed.) (1978) *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London: Thames and Hudson).

Michell, George, (2015) *Late Temple Architecture of India, 15th to 19th Centuries* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press)

Nath, R., (1978) *History of Sultanate Architecture* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications).

17.12 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

Architecture of the Delhi Sultanate | CEC-UGC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cv2kz6UaB5E>

The Sufi Courtyard : Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjnnfbbfyUA>



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 18 PALACES, FORTS, MAUSOLEUMS, AND PUBLIC WORKS: FORMS, CONTEXTS AND MEANINGS*

Structure

- 18.0 Objectives
- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Palaces: Context and Forms
- 18.3 Palace Building: 1200-1550
- 18.4 Forts: Context and Structural Forms
- 18.5 Mausoleums: Social Context and Meaning
- 18.6 Patterns and Forms of Mausoleums
- 18.7 Public Works: Context and Forms
- 18.8 Major Public Works: 1200-1550
- 18.9 Summary
- 18.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 18.11 Keywords
- 18.12 Suggested Readings
- 18.13 Instructional Video Recommendations

18.0 OBJECTIVES

In **Unit 17** you have read about the cultural developments in Medieval India (1200-1550) with special reference to the buildings and their social milieu. The three distinctive building types selected for detailed treatment were Temples, Mosques and the *Dargahs*. We are extending the discussion of buildings to now include four other types that also represent the cultural landscape of Medieval India. These four building types are: Palaces, Forts, Mausoleums, and Public Works. It is important to note here that the Mausoleum as a peculiar structural typology was introduced in India after the Turkish conquest, while the Palaces, Forts and Public Works have been in existence from the earlier times; only their style and configuration underwent changes as the result of new structural formations and techniques coming in to play in Medieval India. The reading of the Unit will help you:

- understand the architectural forms of the buildings,
- appreciate the social context of the buildings, and
- trace the structural development of the buildings.

* Prof. Ravindra Kumar, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

18.1 INTRODUCTION

We have already noted in **Unit 17** that thirteenth century brought with it several important socio-cultural developments in India. The establishment of Turkish rule also introduced building technologies and structural formations that were new and not in use in the preceding period. The use of the 'new' architectural formations produced buildings that differed in their composition and architectural styles from the existing building types and created a new social milieu that was different from the existing architectural landscape. We have also noted in **Unit-17** that thirteenth century introduced an interesting interplay between existing and 'new' building types and associated architectural styles, and that this tendency continued in the succeeding, at least, four centuries. It should be reiterated that this interplay produced a marvelous amalgam of techniques, styles, compositions, and embellishments the parallel of which is rare to find elsewhere. The present Unit primarily deals with the genesis of the 'new' building type, the mausoleum, and discusses the social context and the 'meaning' embedded in this new type as also in the construction of palaces, forts and public works and their composition/layout.

18.2 PALACES: CONTEXT AND FORMS

The palaces are distinctly utilitarian compositions, and often give us a small city like lay-out than a place of residence marked and created as a compact single structure. The palaces are a combination of multiple individually and collectively composed buildings. They do not generally present any symmetrical compositions which are otherwise a normal feature of most of the building types of this period. In marked contrast, the palaces are often multiform conceptions and are expressive as belonging to specific periods of architectural development in medieval India. The historical accounts record that the Turkish invaders defeated the rulers of Delhi and Ajmer but did not probably settle in the erstwhile palaces of Delhi and Ajmer. The new rulers established new capitals and built their own palace complexes. There is also little information on the reuse of some of the existing palace buildings. It seems more likely that the new rulers demolished the palaces of the vanquished and raised their capitals and palace complexes anew. Logically then the new palaces were built according to the design and lay-out plans as decided by the new rulers. From the existing structural remains it is difficult to hazard a guess about their lay-out plans, though sundry references from the chronicles of the time give us some idea of the buildings from the palace complexes of this early period and their context. There are frequent references of the royal court, the order of seating in the court and the official work conducted in the court. There also exist many references suggesting the existence of exclusive female residential areas within the palace. Some episodes refer to the existence of pleasure halls/pavilions within the palace compound. The opulent royal quarters serving the purpose of residence also find frequent mention in the chronicles. All of this information strengthens the view that the palace buildings were generally arranged in the nature of a complex of separately built and inter-connected structures with restricted entries in designated quarters, the nature of restriction varying in degree at different historical periods/reigns of Sultans.

18.3 PALACE BUILDING: 1200-1550

It is important to note that other than Tughlaqabad-Jahanpanah and Kotla Firuz Shah structural complexes, no other noteworthy palace complex survives in Delhi. Even in these places a clearly demarcated area of the palace of the respective Sultans is hard to find. Interestingly, examples and illustrations of more complete palace complexes come from Bundelkhand. Percy Brown suggests that the Bundelkhand initiative had drawn inspiration from Rana Kumbha (1428-68) as the palace built by him at his capital of Chittorgarh. Later, but in the same century, he says, “further progress was made under the patronage of the Sultan of Mandu who at Chanderi erected a number of buildings distinctive in style which became the model for the architecture of Bundelkhand. This style as it finally developed may be defined as based on the contemporary productions of the Moslems as these evolved under the Sultans of Delhi, but overlaid with elements of indigenous Indian extraction to suit the taste, mode of living, and traditions of the Rajput rulers”. The intelligent patronage accorded to them by the ruling powers brought out the genius of the local workmen, the fine flowering of which is well illustrated by these grand palaces. “In each instance the building is square in plan, and the exterior, which is several stories in height, encloses a square courtyard, or *patio*. Externally each story is defined by a wide eave and overhanging balcony, the walls are arcaded, and kiosks project from each parapet, and each angle is finished by a graceful cupola. The interior is composed of ranges of apartments alternating with open terraces, communication being obtained by means of passages and corridors” (Brown 1981).



Figure 18.1: Chanderi Palace

Photograph/Courtesy: Nishant Ranjan, September 2018; CC-by-4.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chanderi_Fort,Chanderi_M.P.,India.jpg

The other complex that is in good condition is the Orchha group of palaces near Jhansi described by Percy Brown in the following words: It is a “solid structure in one block and surmounted by a considerable number of small open pavilions, not,

sufficiently large to be in altogether pleasing proportion with the great mass of masonry of which they form the skyline". It was built under the patronage of Madhukar Shah and was completed about 1575.



Figure 18.2: Orchha Palace

Photography/Courtesy: amanderson, September 2008; CC-by-2.0
Author/Courtesy: Mandy; amanderson; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/amanderson/2414517719/in/photostream/>
Source: uploaded by Ekabhishek; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Orchha_Fort_and_Bridge.jpg

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Write about the nature of the palaces of the Delhi Sultans.
.....
.....
.....
- 2) Where in India are the palaces of Madukar Shaha located? Write about their structural form in the space given below.
.....
.....
.....
- 3) Discuss the main features of Chanderi palace.
.....
.....
.....

18.4 FORTS: CONTEXT AND STRUCTURAL FORMS

Forts and fortifications as structural typology have been in existence in India from a very early time. There are sculptural representations of the fortifications in the *Mahajanpadas* during and after the time of Gautam Buddha. These sculptures are done on the panels available from Bharhut, Amravati, Bhaja, and Karle. On several

of them are shown scenes of battle for taking possession of the relics of Gautam Buddha; and here we see the action scenes sculpted in the capitals and other towns of *Mahajanpadas* showing battlements, fortified walls, towers, etc. A close examination reveals that the architecture is a combination of wood and masonry (stone and bricks). Some idea of the layout of these fortified places may also be had from these depictions – broad streets, multi-storey pavilions, ramparts, battlements, moats, and access control slopes can be seen clearly. It is, therefore, logical to assume that this tradition may have continued in the subsequent periods by incorporating necessary additions and adjustments in the structural compositions of buildings inside the fortifications.

We get copious information from the Gupta period about their cities and fortifications in the contemporary literature. Seemingly the same tradition continued up to 10th-12th centuries. Thus, at the beginning of the thirteenth century the onset of Turkish rule and the expansionist marches of their army into the inner regions of north India beyond Delhi encountered resistance from the ruling principalities and clans from their fortified settlements of varying sizes. It is a fair assumption that these fortified settlements would have been some variant of the fortifications depicted on early sculptured panels as stated above, though it has not been possible to trace the physical remains of these fortifications so far.

It is, however, important to note that the Turkish rulers after conquering these settlements decided to establish new capitals and their own fortifications and incorporate the existing structures within the bigger configuration. The first Delhi Sultan, Qutbuddin Aibak did not have much time to pay attention to the building of a fort, but Iltutmish, his successor, devoted attention to the task and laid the fortification walls of the erstwhile capital. It is difficult today to clearly demarcate this early fortification. It is, however, clear that the newly built Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque was the centrepiece of the new city and had occupied its south quarters.

The next important phase of the establishment of a fortification began under Alauddin Khalji as the new fortified city of Siri was raised as the new capital. The city was later abandoned leaving only the traces of the moat and the rampart walls which appeared formidable and helped him thwart the threat of the advancing Mongols.



Figure 18.3: Ruins of Siri Fortification

Photography/Courtesy: Nwchar, May 2009; CC-by-3.0

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>

File: Ruins_of_Siri_Fort_wall,_New_Delhi,_India_-_20090517.jpg

The successors of the Khalji dynasty were enthusiastic builders and they set up a long fortification along their new capital. The greatest accomplishment of the new ruler, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq was the construction of a huge new garrison city which included a royal quarter and accommodation for his retainers, the army, and the administration. This garrison was called Tughlaqabad having tall cyclopean walls of rubble stone and originally plastered all over. It had the new city, the fort and a palace. The complex was in two parts, a citadel, and the city. "The ground plan was an irregular rectangle due to the rocky outcrop on which the entire compound stood. There were seven kilometre of walls with circular two-storeyed bastion and fifty-two gateways all surrounded by a moat" (Merklinger 2005: 35). The inside of the fort is today in ruins and it is difficult to accurately study the layout. The two other notable fortifications are the Jahanpanah and the fort of Adilabad built by Muhammad Tughlaq. Both are in ruin today and do not reveal their inner layout with any degree of accuracy.



Figure 18.4: Tughlaqabad Fort

Photography/Courtesy: Rangan Datta Wiki, April 2017; CC-by-4.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tuglagbad_Fort_Panorama.jpg

Finally, we have the city Firuzabad on the banks of river Yamuna established by Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Inside the city was Kotla, the fortress-palace of Firuz Shah completed in 1354. The city of Firuzabad was originally surrounded by high battlemented walls with tall bastions at intervals. It was rectangular in plan with the palaces and residences located in the east protected by the river Yamuna. The entrance to Kotla was through a gate on the north side. On entering the Kotla, courts and the *diwan-i aam* and *diwan-i khaas* were on the right side, while the large open space on the left was open to the public. The Kotla was a self-contained royal citadel.

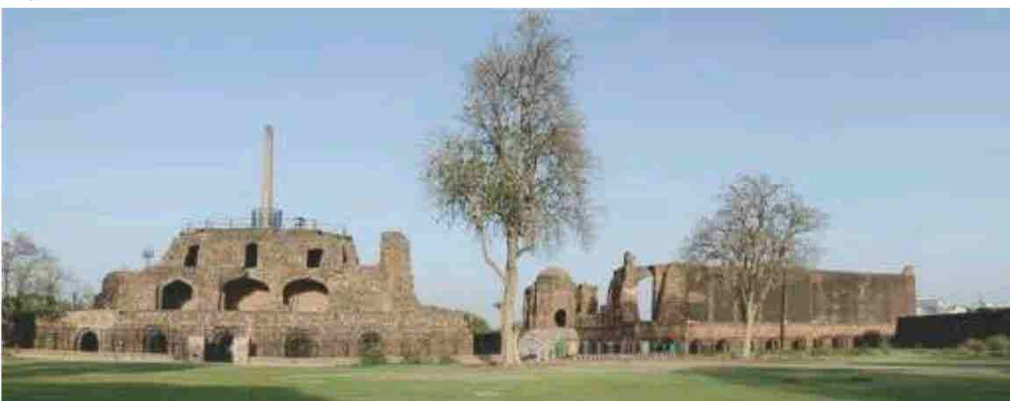


Figure 18.5: Firuz Shah Kotla

Photography/Courtesy: Rangan Datta Wiki, April 2017; CC-by-4.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ferozabad_Panorama.jpg

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Write about the nature of fortifications depicted in sculptured panels of early India.

.....
.....
.....

- 2) Write about the fortifications of Muhammad Tughlaq in the space given below.

.....
.....
.....

- 3) Describe the main features of Kotla in the space given below.

.....
.....
.....

18.5 MAUSOLEUMS: SOCIAL CONTEXT AND MEANING

The mausoleum is generally called by the word *maqbara* in India. It signifies both mausoleum and graveyard. Each mausoleum has at least one grave although it may also have more than one grave as with time more people get buried in the same building. Thus, mausoleum signifies a monumental tomb. The mausoleum may also have such other buildings as a mosque, *mihman-khana*, etc. associated with the main building.

In India there is a tendency in some regions for graveyards of the Muslim community to be situated to the south of habitations, “possibly an extension of the Hindu association of the south as the ‘quarter of Yama’, the god of death: in the Saiyyid and Lodi period the entire region of Delhi, south of Firozabad and Purana Qila down to the Qutb complex was used mostly as a vast necropolis. Khuldabad, near Daulatabad in the Deccan, was originally called simply Rauza and was a necropolis village” (J. Burton-Page).

Mausoleums may be enclosed by a low boundary wall. There may be an imposing entrance to the east. Some of the Delhi examples stand on high arcaded plinths and may have such features as substantial corner towers. The tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq is an example of this kind. In Ahmadabad the tombs of the queens of the Ahmad Shah dynasty are enclosed in a large screened chamber. In the mausoleum complexes an indication of the *qibla* may also be provided by one or more “*qibla* walls” and may also be provided with such a separate structure on the *qibla* side, or modified in such a way as to incorporate one. The tomb of Sikandar Lodi in Delhi has three arches and a raised platform in the west enclosure wall which presumably formed a screened mosque. “A mausoleum very often has openings on three sides with the west wall solid to incorporate an internal *mihrab*... The larger mausoleums may be provided with a full-scale mosque (without *minbar*),

either replacing or in addition to an internal *mihrab*; Bijapur provides many excellent examples, of which the Ibrahim Rauza is the best example with tomb and mosque of similar proportions and sumptuous decoration standing on a common platform in an elaborate enclosure” (J. Burton-Page). Some form of well is of course a common adjunct; a *baoli* is also sometimes found included (*e.g.* within the fortified enclosure of the tomb of the Sayyid Sultan Mubarak Shah at Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi).

The typology of gravestones (i.e. the stone or brick structures above ground level) in India is gender specific. In North India tombs of men are distinguished by a small stone pincase (*qalamdan*) raised on the flat upper surface. The tombs of women generally display a flat *takht*, in form like a child’s slate. The woman’s grave, given the same date and provenance, is lower than the man’s grave. In the case of the larger mausoleums, this applies to the cenotaph as much as to the actual grave. There may be, in both men’s and women’s tombs, a mere stepped surround with the internal rectangular space filled with earth (*e.g.* grave of Aurangzeb at Khuldabad) or grass (*e.g.* grave of Jahanara Begum, daughter of Shahjahan, within the *dargah* of Nizamuddin Aulia at Delhi).

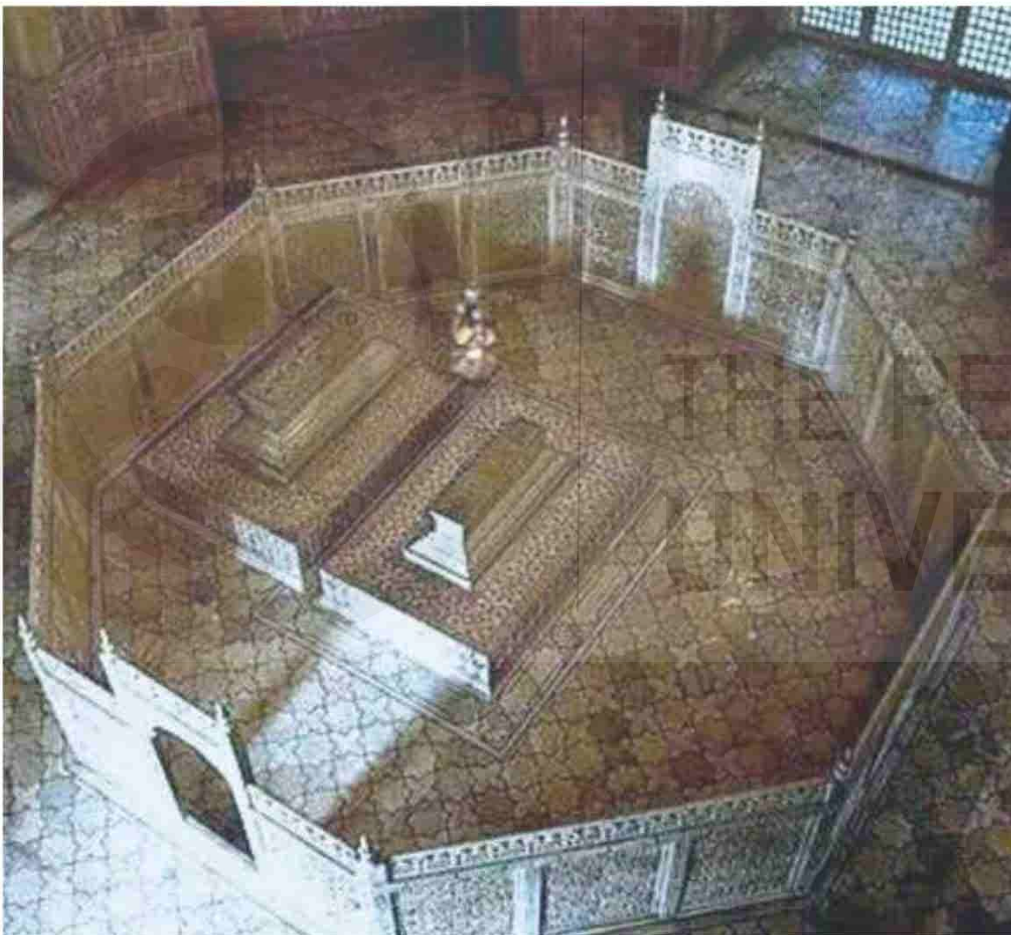


Figure 18.6: Real Graves of Shahjahan and Mumtazmahal
Photography/Courtesy: anindianmuslim.com

Source: <http://www.anindianmuslim.com/2013/03/inside-taj-mahal-seeing-replica-of-shah.html>

“A curious class of tomb, sparsely but widely distributed, is that of the “nine-yard saints”, *nau gaza pir*, usually ascribed to warrior saints of the earliest days of Islam in India. Many of these have the reputation of miraculously extending their length over the ages” (John Burton-Page). Many tombs have the reputation of curing various ailments through the power of a *pir* persisting; *e.g.* women still tie ribbons on the lattice screens on the tomb of Salim Chishti at Fatehpur Sikri as a

cure for barrenness. The virtue is not confined to Muslims: Hindu women often make oblations at the tomb of the Qadir brothers at Bijapur. Tombs may bear inscriptions; sometimes simply a name and date of decease. But so many tombstones are devoid of any information on the deceased that many obviously major mausolea cannot be now identified.

18.6 PATTERNS AND FORMS OF MAUSOLEUMS

The typology of the mausoleum, writes Burton-Page, is too complicated for any but the most summary treatment. The simplest type is the *chhatr*, a single dome supported on pillars; those covering a square or octagonal area are the commonest, although the hexagonal plan is also known. “From the use of the umbrella in both Buddhist and Hindu funerary practices, there is possibly here a persistence of an eschatological idea (but the Hindu use of the *chhatr* to mark the site of a cremation, so common with the Rajput rulers at *e.g.* Udaipur and Jaipur, is a borrowing back from Muslim forms)”. There is the possibility that a funeral building might be intended for a different purpose during its owner’s lifetime. The next type is a square roof on twelve pillars, *baradari*. It is also of wide secular use. An extension of this type is characteristic of Gujarat, whereby both an inner chamber and a surrounding *verandah* are provided with screened walls. “The preponderant form of the masonry mausoleum is a square chamber surmounted by a dome; but the octagonal form is also known from the 14th century (popular for royal tombs of the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties)”. “In two of the Sur period tombs at Sasaram the mausoleum stands in the middle of an artificial lake, approached by a gateway and causeway” (J. Burton-Page).



Figure 18.7: Sultan Ghari's Tomb
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

At the beginning of the thirteenth century there appears in the architecture of India a type of building, in form and intention hitherto unknown, as it is the first example of a mausoleum (Sultan Ghari), erected by Shamsuddin Iltutmish over the remains of his son Nasiruddin Mahmud, in CE 1231. Built in the manner of a walled enclosure, writes Percy Brown, and in rather an isolated position some three miles from Delhi, it seems not unlikely this building was regarded as a shrine to which the members of the family could repair for devotions on certain occasions. “The Sultan Ghari, as

the tomb is locally called, is so named because the cenotaph is in an underground chamber, and the entire scheme is designed in such a manner that it would provide a suitable retreat for minor ceremonials. Privacy on these occasions was assured, as the enclosure was contained within a substantial masonry arcade, the whole being raised on a high plinth with a massive portal on the eastern side. This exterior which is built of grey granite with circular bastions projecting from each angle of the square, has such a grim and martial appearance that one of its more remote purposes may have been to serve as some kind of advanced outwork to the main fortress of the capital. But immediately the gateway is passed this impression ceases, as the design of the interior is one of refinement and peace” (Percy Brown).

The next important mausoleum is that of Iltutmish built some time before 1235. Situated outside the north-west angle of Quwwat-ul Islam mosque at Mehrauli, Delhi, it is a square, compact structure with an entrance doorway on each of its three sides, the western side being closed to accommodate a series of three *mihirabs* on its inner face. “Except for certain finely inscribed patterns and borders concentrated around the pointed arches framing the doorways, the exterior is relatively plain, a condition not improbably due to most of the outside being left unfinished. As a contrast however, the interior, a cubical hall is so elaborately sculptured that it rivals some of the Hindu temples in rich decoration especially as its sandstone walls are relieved with insertions of white marble” (Percy Brown). Extracts from the *Quran* in Kufi, Tugra, and Nastaliq characters are the principal motifs, although geometrical and conventional diapers are interspersed, but as a scheme of inscriptional mural decoration this interior is an exceptionally fine example.



Figure 18.8: Iltutmish’s Tomb
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

The next in line structure is the mausoleum of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. In contrast to the ruined conditions of this ruler’s major work of Tughlaqabad, his mausoleum is in a perfect condition. It is evident that the structure has been protected and preserved. Percy Brown says that the structure originally stood within an artificial lake, and that it was a detached structure but connected with the citadel by an elevated long causeway. In appearance the mausoleum of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq takes the form of a self-contained fortress; on the other hand, it may also have been intended as a place of last resort.

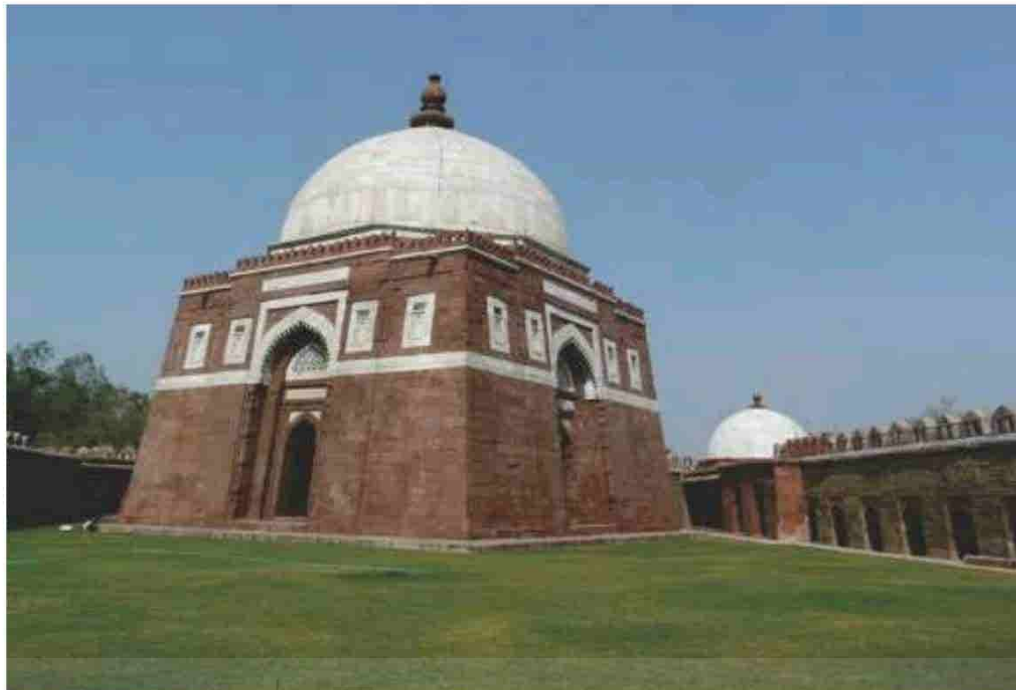


Figure 18.9: Mausoleum of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq

Photography/Courtesy: Varun Shiv Kapur, February 2009; CC-BY-2.0

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mausoleum_of_Ghiyath_al-Din_Tughluq.jpg

There are three other mausolea of note of this period at Delhi. Their merit is that all the three are of architectural significance. The first of the triad is the mausoleum over the remains of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Another had been built over the grave of Khan-i Jahan Tilangani, the Prime Minister of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. The third structure was built by Tughlaq Shah, the successor of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, as a monument to a famous saint Kabiruddin Auliya. “The extensive range of buildings of which the mausoleum of Firuz is the dominant feature, and now known as the *Hauz Khas*, consists of the tomb, and the ruins of a large and elaborate annexe, which has been identified as a college, all picturesquely situated beside an ornamental lake. Amidst the crumbling walls of this composition, with its colonnades formed of arch and lintel arcades, the tomb stands tolerably complete, and although designed and executed in the severe mode of the time, its proportions and general treatment give it an air of some distinction” (Percy Brown).



Figure 18.10: Mausoleum of Firuz Shah Tughlaq

Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

Within a decade of the death of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1388), the Sultanate became politically unstable, and in 1398 was sacked and plundered by Timur. However, some semblance of central authority remained with the two succeeding dynasties of the Saiyyids and Lodis, although they ruled over a greatly shrunken Sultanate of Delhi between 1414 and 1526. A large number of mausoleums were built in and around Delhi during this period so much so that the area around Delhi looked like a sprawling *qabristan* (graveyard).



Figure 18.11: Muhammad Shah Saiyyid's Tomb
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

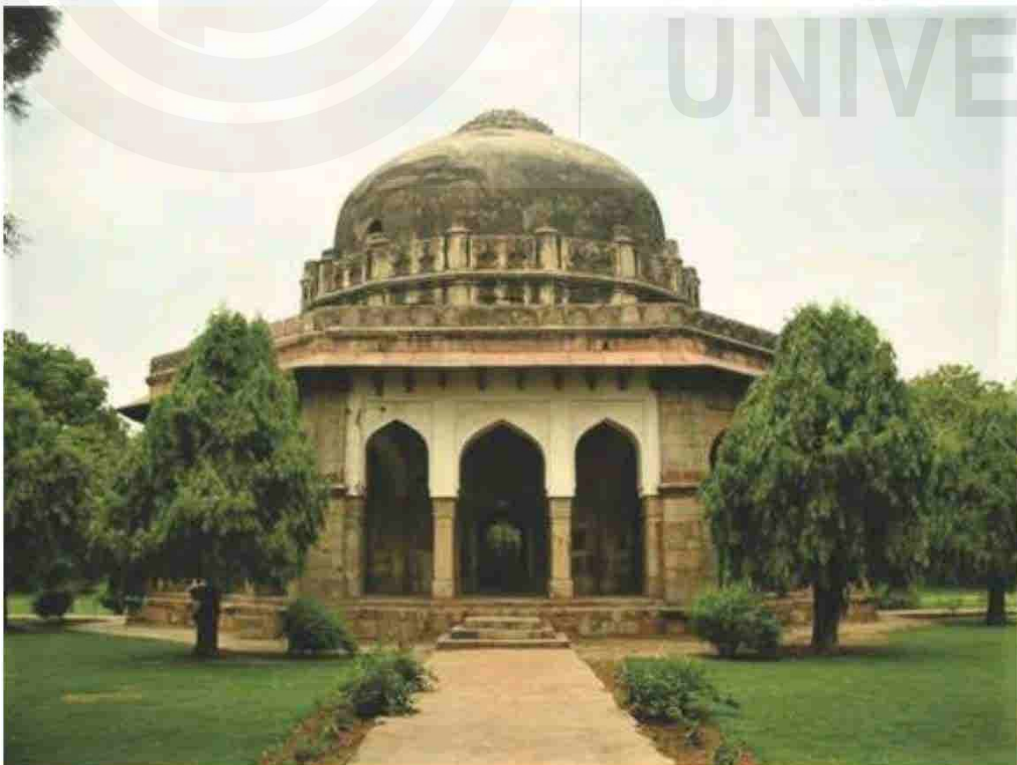


Figure 18.12: Sikander Lodi's Tomb
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

Yet some of these structures are important from architectural point of view and can be considered as heralding a distinct style. The more important of these mausolea buildings took two separate forms, the distinguishing features of which are given here:

- a) Mausoleums designed on an octagonal plan incorporating the following elements:
 - main tomb-chamber surrounded by an arched *verandah*
 - one storey high
 - *verandah* with projecting eaves supported on brackets
- b) The other type was built on square-plan. These were characterised by the following elements:
 - absence of *verandah* around the main tomb-chamber
 - exterior composed of two, and sometimes three storeys
 - absence of eaves and supporting brackets

There is an original treatment of coloured tile decoration in these buildings. It is set sparingly in friezes. In addition, there are intricately incised surfaces of plaster.

In addition to the mausolea described above, there are several other buildings of no little significance, some produced before and others after the end of the Delhi sultanate, but all maintaining in one form or another the architectural tradition of the Lodis. “Two of these at Delhi are mausolea of noblemen, that of Isa Khan built in 1547, and that of Adham Khan who died in 1561. Moreover, away from the capital, in the towns of Kalpi (Bundelkhand), and Lalitpur (Jhansi district), are also monuments in this style, at the former what is known locally as the Chaurasi Gumbaz, or “Eighty-four Domes” is a tomb believed to be of one of the Lodi kings, and at the latter there is a Jami masjid. To these may be added the tomb of Mohammed Ghaus built about 1564 at Gwalior, a building embodying the structure of the Lodi style with ornamental features derived from the architectural productions of Gujarat, a synthesis of the mode of the one and the treatment of the other brought about by its geographical position.

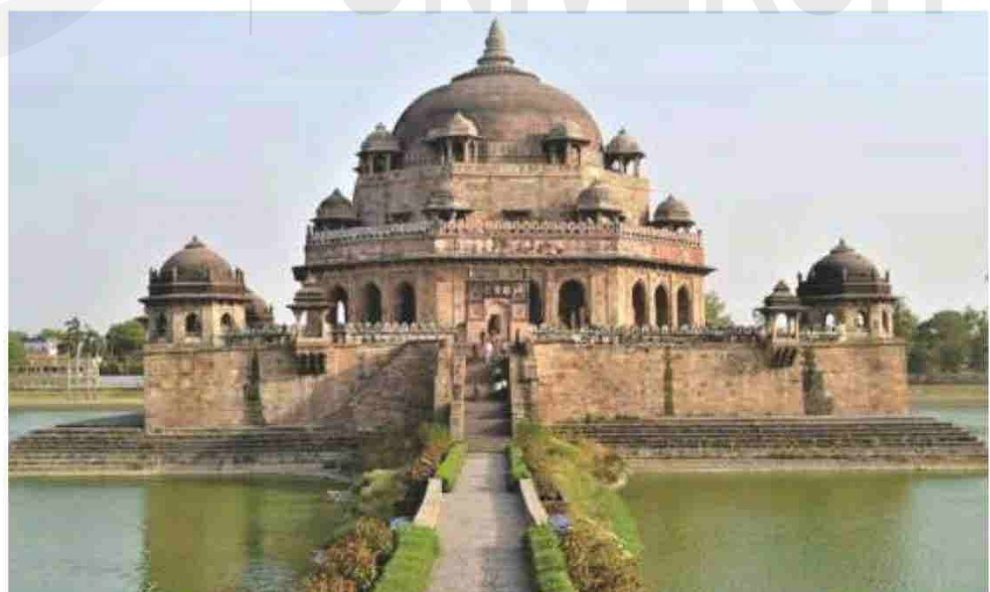


Figure 18.13 : Sher Shah's Tomb
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

Finally, and of the utmost importance there was developed as far away as in Bihar a group of tombs evolved from the Lodi type but dating from the middle of the

sixteenth century, which represents this manifestation in its latest and most imposing form” (Percy Brown). These distant and distinctive examples were produced during the interregnum of the Afghan king Sher Shah Suri, and are sufficiently independent in their character.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Write about the general nature of the mausolea in India.
.....
.....
.....
- 2) Discuss the main features of the Saiyyid and Lodi period mausolea in the space given below.
.....
.....
.....
- 3) List the mausolea buildings of the Lodi period other than the Delhi Sultans.
.....
.....
.....

18.7 PUBLIC WORKS: CONTEXT AND FORMS

The term public buildings and public works refers, in an obvious sense, to the structures which are designed to provide a variety of services to the general public or to perform different social and economic functions. Whether erected by the state or by semi-official and even private agencies, these structures seem to stand apart from other buildings in at least one essential respect, namely the money invested on them was aimed at providing social benefits and services. Broadly speaking one may take buildings used for a number of public purposes as well as for various administrative and economic tasks as representative of public works. Thus dams, canals, roads, inns, bridges, toll-posts, custom-houses, harbours, hospitals – to mention some of the more important ones – are public works. They serve the social and economic interests of the general public. An important feature of the pre-modern Europe is that the public works involved corporate, as distinct from state, enterprise on a considerable scale. By contrast, in the Orient, the initiative and investment were provided principally by the state and only occasionally and marginally by private bodies.

There is, however, enough evidence for one to assume that even in Oriental societies, especially that of medieval India, the members of the ruling groups were not utterly devoid of opportunities to collect considerable wealth. And at times a part of this wealth did find its way into the establishment of public works as well. But given the nature of the state and society in medieval India there were obvious checks to such accumulations and investments. The system of transfer of assignments, frequent recourse to escheat by the rulers and in general the heavy burden of cesses

and state control of traders and artisans tended to weaken the institution of private property in medieval India; To a corresponding degree, private investments in public works suffered.

For the period following the Turkish conquest, the evidence on the public works is more diversified. The references to public works in medieval period are also numerous. It may be suggested that this sudden increase in the number and variety of public works was on the one hand a manifestation of the appreciable increase in the available social surplus, resulting from the introduction of a number of new techniques and skills. On the other hand, this would perhaps also indicate the concentration of larger resources in the hands of the state and the ruling class. Besides, it seems the new Building technique that came with the Turks also proved to be an impetus. Perhaps large scale construction of the bridges during the subsequent period could become possible mainly owing to the new technique.

18.8 MAJOR PUBLIC WORKS: 1200-1550

During the Sultanate period, a variety of public buildings like *sarais*, bridges, tanks, dams, canals, etc. began to be built on a larger scale by the state. As we shall see in the end of this Section, the most common and numerous public works established during the Sultanate and the Mughal period were *sarais* and bridges. But the number and extent of other kind of public works listed above was by no means negligible. Among these other structures the most important were the dams and canals. We cite here the evidence relating to them which should help us to perceive that in medieval India the public works other than *sarais* and bridges, like roads, dams, canals, tank were of considerable economic significance and need to be studied in detail.

Firuz Tughlaq is hailed by the chronicles for paying great attention to the repair and the construction of public works. He repaired two great tanks built by his predecessors at Delhi, viz. the Shamsi tank and the Alai tank (*Hauz-i Khas*). Moreover he built several dams for storing water in and around Delhi. Six of these dams have been listed by Afif as *band-i Fath Khan*, *band-i Malja*, *band-i Mahipalpur*, *band-i Shukr Khan*, *band-i Salaura* and *band-i Wazirabad*. These structures were also noticed and briefly described in a comprehensive survey of the monuments of Delhi undertaken in 1919. Lately in 1967, these structures were surveyed in greater detail by the Mission for Indian History and Archaeology, University of Tokyo. The three-member team of Japanese scholars consisted of T. Yamamoto, M. Ara and T. Tsukinowa. Their report has since been published and is available in Japanese. It reproduces excellent photographs and some of the drawings of the ground plans of these structures. Firuz Shah is also credited for building a system of irrigation canals. The details of canals have been given by Shams Siraj Afif and Yahya Sahrindi. Two canals, brought from Jamuna and Sutlej 'were conducted through the vicinity of Karnal, and after a length of about eighty *kos* (nearly 200 kms), discharged their waters by one channel into the town (Hisar Firuzah)'. It is suggested that the *rabi* crops prospered after the water from the canals was used for irrigation in this region. The course of the canal brought from Sutlej, upto Safedon, was used by Akbar when he re-excavated the *Shihab Nahr*. Sahrindi attributes two more canals to Firuz Shah – one from near Dipalpur to Jahbaz and the other from Kahkhar to Harni Khera by the side of the river Sirsa. In Bengal, we are told Ghiyasuddin Khalji built embankments so that the roads going over them were not flooded during the rains.

Later, during his march against Chanderi, we find Babur taking notice of several structures of dams on the route between Agra and Chanderi, which were obviously surviving from an earlier period. At least one of these structures located between Agra and Dholpur is attributed by Babur to Sikandar Lodi.

Sarai is perhaps the most conspicuous of these public buildings. It was introduced in India by the Turks in the 13th century. The earliest mention of the existence of *sarai* is from Balban's time (1266). Among late rulers both Muhammad Tughlaq and Firuz Tughlaq are known to have built a large number of *sarais* in Delhi as also along the major land-routes of the Sultanate. The main features of these *sarais* may be listed thus:

- Square or rectangular disposition, enclosed on all four sides by masonry walls, with entry through one or sometimes two gateways;
- Series of rooms fronted by small vaulted spaces along all the four sides inside the enclosure. Warehouses in the corners of the enclosure; and
- Existence of a small mosque and one or more wells in the open courtyard within the enclosure.



Figure 18.14: Sarai-Interior Arrangement of Rooms
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

Bridges were another important category of public buildings. However, only small and medium sized rivers were provided with masonry bridges. Major rivers such as the Ganga and the Yamuna were provided with bridges made of boats. We are fortunate in having at least two masonry bridges of this period surviving even today. One is located at Chittorgarh over the Gambhiri river. The other was built over Sahibi, a tributary of Yamuna, at Wazirabad Delhi.



Figure 18.15: Bridge Near Shah Alam *Dargah* Delhi
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

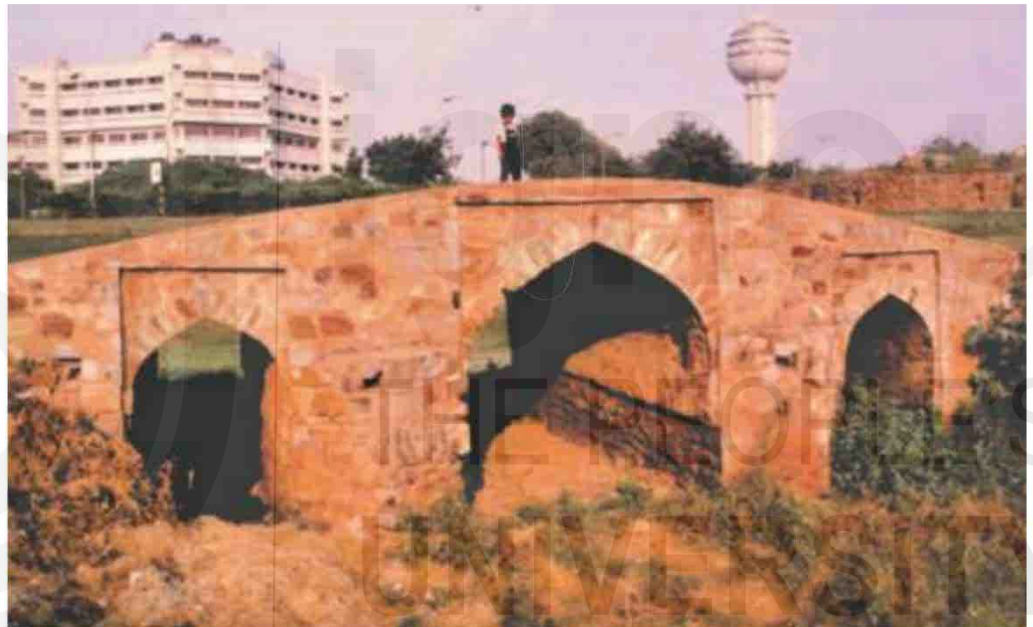


Figure 18.16: Bridge Near Siri, Delhi
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar



Figure 18.17: Bridge Over Gambhiri, Chittorgarh
Photograph: Ravindra Kumar

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) Write about the nature of the public works in medieval India.

.....
.....
.....

- 2) List four main public works referred by the medieval chroniclers.

.....
.....
.....

- 3) Discuss the main features of *sarai* architecture.

.....
.....
.....

18.9 SUMMARY

We have studied in this Unit four additional building types – the Palace, Fort, Mausoleum, and Public Works such as *sarais*, bridges, canals, dams, etc. This study has been in addition to the Temples, Mosques, and *Dargahs* discussed at length in **Unit 17**. It is evident from the details provided here that together all the seven types of buildings constitute a rich repertoire of the architectural landscape of medieval India. They also show that variety and utilitarian considerations had dominated this landscape. There is some scarcity in the count of the surviving structures of palaces but the literary evidence is strong. The early chroniclers of medieval India suggest that the new rulers favoured new constructions instead of adaptation or modification of any already existing structures of palaces. The palaces so built, conformed to the plans and designs of the new rulers. The masons used in these constructions were locals familiar with the plans and designs of pre-Turkish India. They were marshalled into the new designs and also techniques which they adopted soon and produced beautifully conceived new buildings. The forts also had a similar situation. In the case of mausoleums, it is noteworthy that it was a different typology. However, Indian masonry workers soon adapted to the new typology. Public Works were yet another category that contextualized the architecture to contemporary situation. New typology – of *sarai* also emerged and structures began to dot the landscape soon. All these building types enriched the visual culture of medieval India.

18.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 18.2
- 2) See Section 18.3

3) See Section 18.3

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Section 18.4

2) See Section 18.4

3) See Section 18.4

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Section 18.5

2) See Section 18.6

3) See Section 18.6

Check Your Progress-4

1) See Section 18.7

2) See Section 18.8

3) See Section 18.8

18.11 KEYWORDS

<i>Baoli</i>	Step-well
<i>Dargah</i>	Refers to a Muslim shrine or tomb of a saint
<i>Mihrab</i>	A niche indicating the direction of Mecca
<i>Mimbar</i>	Pulpit from where the Muezzin leads the prayers
<i>Maqbara</i>	Mausoleum
<i>Patio</i>	A square courtyard
<i>Qalamdan</i>	A small stone pencease raised on the flat upper surface of the grave
<i>Qibla</i>	The direction of prayer in the mosque (west in India)

18.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

Brown, Percy, (1981[1956]) *Indian Architecture (Islamic Buildings)* (Bombay: D B Taraporevala Sons & Co.), Seventh Reprint.

Burton-Page, J., (2008) *Indian Islamic Architecture* (Leiden: Brill).

Merklinger, Elizabeth Schotten, (2005) *Sultanate Architecture of Pre-Mughal India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers).

Michell, George, (ed.) (1978) *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London: Thames and Hudson).

Nath, R., (1978) *History of Sultanate Architecture* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications).

18.13 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

The Untold Story of Tughlaqabad Fort

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqpXnw_kC0o

Adilabad Fort-Jahanpanah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgTKcnEDNNA>

Hidden Fort in Delhi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obq5sqWbARU>

Sikandar Lodi's Tomb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHfgE-Wn3R8>



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 19 PAINTINGS*

Structure

- 19.0 Objectives
- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Painting under the Delhi Sultanate
 - 19.2.1 Literary Evidence for Murals
 - 19.2.2 The Quranic **Calligraphy**
 - 19.2.3 Manuscript Illustration
- 19.3 Painting under the Regional Kingdoms
 - 19.3.1 Western Indian Style
 - 19.3.2 *Caurapancasika* Style
 - 19.3.3 Provincial Development
 - 19.3.4 Deccani Paintings
- 19.4 Summary
- 19.5 Keywords
- 19.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 19.7 Suggested Readings
- 19.8 Instructional Video Recommendations

19.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- know the traditions of painting prevalent in the Delhi Sultanate, and
- highlight the traditions and forms of painting, mainly of manuscript illumination, outside of the realm of the Delhi Sultanate.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

Unlike architecture, the art of painting as practiced in the Delhi Sultanate is not properly documented. We know that calligraphy and book-illumination in the Islamic world had achieved supreme heights by the close of the 12th century; there also existed a developed tradition of figural **murals** in the Ghaznavi kingdom. Possibly the same tradition was carried to Delhi by the early Turkish Sultans where it flourished in the 13th and 14th centuries.

In this Unit, we will discuss the development of different styles of paintings during the Delhi Sultanate. The different Sections of this Unit will also take into account the developments in painting in Eastern, Western and Central India, and the Deccan.

* Prof. Ravindra Kumar, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. The present Unit is taken from our earlier Course EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 8, Units 31 and 32.

19.2 PAINTING UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

The history of painting in the Sultanate period is obscure compared with its architecture. This is primarily due to the non-availability of any surviving specimens for at least the first hundred years of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate.

Equally surprising is the absence of illuminated books, an art carried to supreme height in the Islamic world by 1200. However, the researches during the last 20-25 years have unearthed new and some crucial evidence, forcing the scholars to change their opinion radically. Not only book illumination but murals too were executed during the Sultanate period. The art of painting may thus be divided into the following three categories each of which will be discussed separately: a) Murals; b) Quranic calligraphy; and c) Manuscript illustration.

19.2.1 Literary Evidence for Murals

The closest view that one may have of the murals as a flourishing art form during the rule of the Delhi Sultanate is through a large number of literary references occurring in the chronicles of this period. These have been compiled and analyzed by Simon Digby (1967).

The earliest reference to murals in the Sultanate period is in a *qasida* (*Tabaqat-i Nasiri*) in praise of Ilutmish, on the occasion of the gift of *Khila't* from the Caliph in 1228. The verses in this composition make it clear that human or animal figures were depicted upon the spandrels of the main arch raised to welcome the envoy of the Caliph.

The most important single reference to painting in the Delhi Sultanate occurs in the context of un-Islamic observances of earlier rulers inviting a ban by Firuz Tughlaq (*Tarikh-i Firuzshahi* by Afif). It indicates the existence of a continuous tradition of figural painting on the walls of the palaces of Delhi, which was sought to be banned by Firuz Tughlaq.

This tradition of painting was not confined to the murals alone. In a reference relating to the entertainment parties thrown by Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji (1316-20), mention is made of a profusely painted open-sided tent: the decorations would therefore appear to be on painted cloth (*Nuh Siphir* by Amir Khusrau).

In contrast, there did survive a tradition of wall painting in the houses of the common people, especially the non-Muslims. It is testified by:

- a stanza from a 14th century Hindi poem *Chandayan* written by Maulana Daud in 1379-80, which describes the painted decoration of the upper rooms of the house where Chanda, the leading lady of this poem, sleeps with her female companions.
- an actual painting from one of the illustrated manuscripts of this poem belonging to the 15th century and showing the bedchamber of Chanda, on the walls of which are painted scenes from the Ramayana.

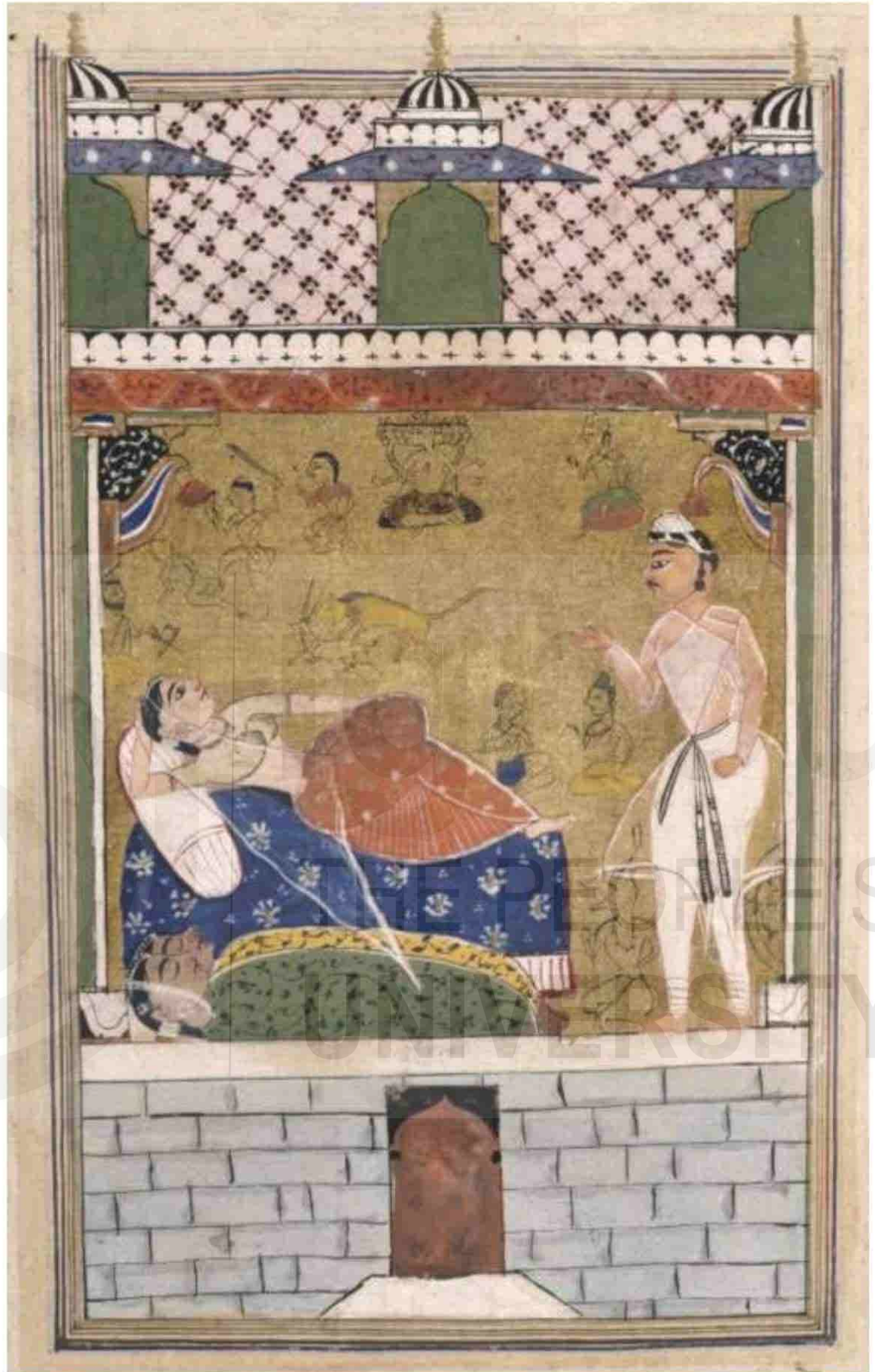


Figure 19.1: Laur-Chanda, 16th Century

Courtesy: John Rylands Library Special Collection, The University of Manchester (Hindustani Ms. 1) Under (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Source: <https://rylandscollections.com/2016/04/29/the-laur-chand-an-indian-sufi-romance/>

19.2.2 The Quranic Calligraphy

Calligraphy was the most revered art in the Islamic world and was used as a decorative feature both on stone and on paper. In the hierarchy of craftsmen, a calligrapher was placed above the illuminator and painter. However, the calligraphy

of the Quran became one of the foremost forms of book art, where copies of the *Quran* were produced on a majestic and expansive scale.

The earliest known copy of the *Quran* is dated 1399. It was calligraphed at Gwalior, and has a variety of ornamental motifs, derived both from Iranian and Indian sources. The geometrical frontispiece of this manuscript seems to be in the Sultanate style and suggests the following as prominent features of the Delhi *ateliers* in the 14th century:

- The work produced here is in line with the Iranian tradition.
- The script used in the headings and inscriptional panels of the *Quran* is invariably Kufi.
- The illumination of geometrical frontispieces was the specialty of this school.



Figure 19.2: A Folio of *Quran* in Bihari Script, *Surat al-Falaq*, India, Circa 1450-1500
 Courtesy: British Library Blog by Vivek Gupta, Historian of Islamic and South Asian Art, SOAS, University of London

Source: <https://blogs.bl.uk/.a/6a00d8341c464853ef0240a4687081200c-pi>

The state of book-art in the 15th century, under the Saiyyid and Lodi dynasties, remained a sad shadow of its former self as it became incapable of supporting artistic endeavor on a large scale. The initiative seems to have been wrested by provincial dynasties.

19.2.3 Manuscript Illustration

Manuscript illustration in the Sultanate period is a hotly debated and disputed subject. There is very little concurrence among scholars on terminology and provenance. Thus, deciding the traits of Sultanate manuscript illustrations is a cumbersome job. On the contrary, though a good number of illustrated manuscripts in Persian and Awadhi, from the period between 1400 and the advent of the Mughals, are now known some of these manuscripts appear to have been produced at the provincial courts. However, there is a distinct, although small, group of manuscripts which was probably not connected with any court. They seem to have been produced for patrons, presumably independent but located somewhere in the Sultanate. They have sometimes been termed as representing a 'bourgeois' group and are attributable to the period 1450-1500. Two of these manuscripts forming the 'bourgeois' group are *Hamzanama* and *Chandayan*.

Hamzanama (Berlin)

This manuscript is dated to about 1450 and depicts the legendary exploits of Amir Hamza, one of the companions of the Prophet (one leaf is shown below).



Figure 19.3 : The spy Zanbur bringing Mahiyya to the city of Tawariq, a Folio from *Hamzanama*, Circa 1570, Painting by Kesav Das

Courtesy: Metropolitan Museum of Art; <https://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=Hamzanama&x=12&y=0>; Credit Line: Rogers Fund, 1923

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/447743?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=hamzanama&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=6>

It is datable to 1450-1470 and illustrates the romance of two lover Laur and Chanda. It was composed in the Awadhi dialect of Hindi by Maulana Daud of Dalmau near Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh in 1379 (one leaf of 1525-1570 illustrated *Chandayan* is shown below).



**Figure 19.4: Chanda Talking to a Friend, Circa 1525-1575,
a folio from *Laur Chanda/Chandayan***

Courtesy: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai, India
Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/chanda-talking-to-a-friend/9gEqv3ApZhCQ7w?ms=%7B%22x%22%3A0.5%2C%22y%22%3A0.5%2C%22z%22%3A8.54647761448455%2C%22size%22%3A%7B%22width%22%3A3.792128017967435%2C%22height%22%3A1.2375000000000003%7D%7D>

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Describe the tradition of wall-painting in the Delhi Sultanate.

.....
.....
.....

- 2) When and where was the earliest known copy of the *Quran* made?

.....
.....
.....

- 3) Define the 'bourgeois' group of paintings.

.....
.....
.....

19.3 PAINTING UNDER THE REGIONAL KINGDOMS

The age-old tradition of painting in India continued in the regional states in the medieval period despite having suffered a setback in its growth in the Delhi Sultanate. Larger documentary material in the form of paintings survives for the regional states. However, these paintings defy geographical classification; they are best understood in terms of the stylistic evolution they follow. The following Sub-sections are therefore arranged according to various styles of painting that came in vogue in different regions.

19.3.1 Western Indian Style

- a) **Jain Painting:** The Western Indian style is generally considered to have originated in the 12th century since the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts in this style date from the early period of this century. They were discovered in Jain *bhandars* (libraries) principally in Gujarat and Rajasthan. It is, however, important to note that by no means all the texts are Jain, or even religious in nature, nor is this style isolated and regional in character. It has come to be designated Western Indian style as most of the manuscripts are discovered in Gujarat and parts of Rajasthan and Malwa. The Jains, however, were not confined to Western India; we also get some splendid illustrated manuscripts from as far a place as Jaunpur and Idar.

The early specimens of the Western Indian style are palm-leaf manuscripts. They follow the *pothi* format with two or three columns of text depending on the width of the leaf and the number of necessary stringholes to hold the leaves together. In the 13th century, the material was gradually changed from palm-leaf to paper. This opened up great possibilities of illumination in the margins. The format of the new paper manuscripts was at first kept to the proportions of the palm-leaf, before gradually increasing the height of the folio. No attempt was made, however, to abandon the *pothi* format.

The Western Indian style was fully formed by the end of the 14th century. Paper manuscripts begin to appear regularly from the middle of the 14th century, though palm-leaf as writing material was not abandoned altogether. Some commonly identifiable traits of this style are given below:

- Painting in these manuscripts is in a single plane, contained within a sometimes brilliant but always brittle line. The figures have been drawn on a red or ultramarine background.
- Paper is seen as a surface to be decorated with colours in patterns, yielding in the best examples a brilliant jewel-like surface. The number of pigments used has increased – costly pigments such as ultramarine, crimson, gold and silver are used in increasing quantities.
- Architectural elements are reduced to essentials. The hieratic little figures, and sometimes animals as well as household furniture, are little more than pictograms occupying boxes in a geometrical composition.
- Mannerisms include the extension of the further eye, the swelling torso, and a particularly tortuous arrangement of legs in seated figures. Men and women are often practically indistinguishable (see **Figure 19.5**).



Figure 19.5: Birth of Mahavira: A Folio from *Kalpasutra* Manuscript, Jaunpur, c. 1465

Courtesy: Metropolitan Museum of Art (Guy, John, 'Jain Manuscript Painting', in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000 - <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jaim.html> (January 2012)

Source: <https://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/as/original/DT6940.jpg>

A careful study of the illustrated manuscripts in the Western Indian style makes it evident that they were apparently mass-produced at the great Jain centres of Pattan and Ahmadabad and are only superficially rich. Much rarer and far more beautiful are manuscripts individually created by professional artists for discerning patrons (see **Figure 19.6** below).

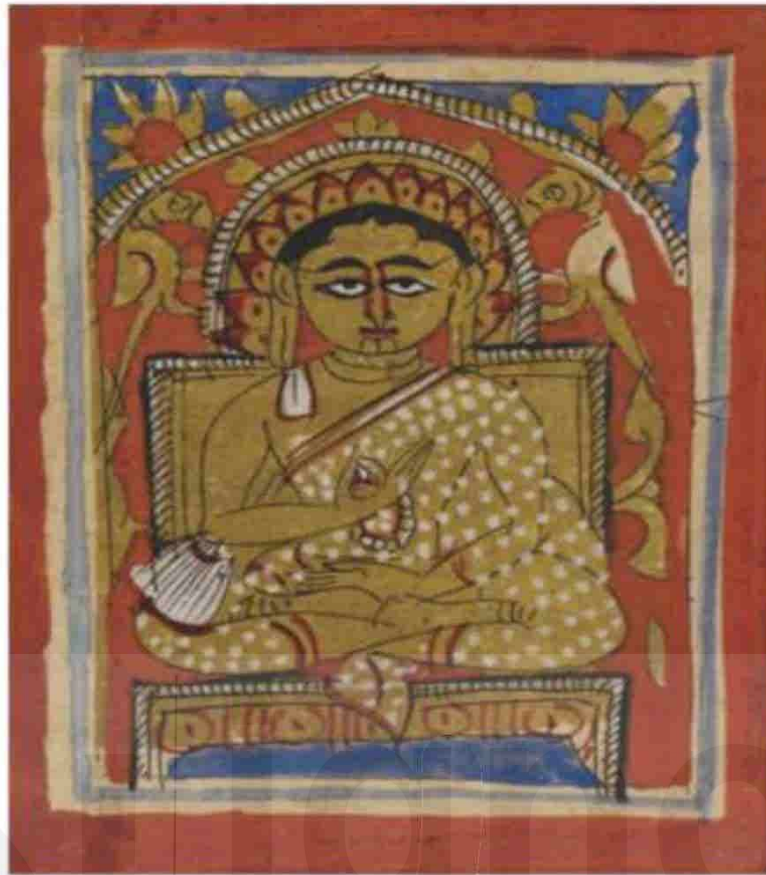


Figure 19.6: Miniature of Gautamasvamin seated, in the typical Svetambara monastic dress and holding a rosary, 15th century (British Library Or 2126A)

Source/Courtesy: <https://a4.typepad.com/6a017ee66ba427970d01b8d1a46514970c-pi>

There are very few of these manuscripts which give us information about their artists. In most cases, there are indications that the scribe and the artists were distinct identities. There are notes by the scribes in the manuscripts to instruct the illustrator about the subject to be painted in the blank space.

- b) **Hindu Painting:** The style of a typically Jain manuscript with its projecting eye, bodily distortions, and flat colour planes is also that used for certain Hindu manuscripts dating from the 15th century, and also in two instances for Buddhist manuscripts. Clearly, then, this sectarian nomenclature is inaccurate. In the absence, however, of an alternative we retain this erroneous name, keeping in mind that Jain painting was quite frequently the work of the Hindus.

We do not find any illustrated Hindu manuscripts on palm-leaf from the early centuries of Muslim rule over Northern India. But the existence of such manuscripts in Nepal argues that they must have been produced in India also.

19.3.2 *Caurapancasika* Style

The *Caurapancasika* (*Chaurapanchashika*) is a manuscript written by a Kashmiri poet Bilhana who, awaiting execution for having been the lover of the king's daughter, sings of his unrepentant passion in lyrical stanzas. Paintings designated as *Caurapancasika* are only occasionally directly related to the text.

The emergence of *Caurapancasika* style is not quite certain though it is considered to have emerged in a group of 15th and 16th century paintings in a less purely decorative and anecdotic vein. The manuscripts illustrated in this style are not

usually Jain, and where and when they were painted is a matter of debate. It seems *Caurapancasika* group of manuscripts can only have developed stylistically after it had been found possible to turn the human head around into strict profile and drop the further projecting eye.

The distinctive features of *Caurapancasika* style may be described as below:

- Almost all the paintings in this style are in an oblong format with the text written on the reverse. They are, in fact, successors to the *pothi* format of the Western Indian style.
- The protruding further eye of the Western Indian style gives way to an uncompromising side view and a single very large eye (see **Figure 19.7**).
- The paintings are still in a single plane, with backgrounds in brilliant primary colours.



Figure 19.7: Chaura Stands Before Champawati

Source/Courtesy: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/229402174748886212/> ;
<http://image.slidesharecdn.com/chaupanchsika-140422115429-phpapp02/95/chaupanchsika-paintings-2-638.jpg?cb=1398167720>

The *Caurapancasika* style is known for its beauty of expressions and its dramatic use of colour and the richness of the painters' fancy. On occasion a human being is caught in action (see **Figure 19.8**), an achievement rare in Indian paintings. Few Indian paintings can rival the vitality of the best of them.



Figure 19.8: A Folio from *Caurapanchashika* Manuscript
Source/Courtesy: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/229402174748886219/> ;
https://www.seitz-orchha-malwa.com/img/fig-1_7-vol-1-p-81.jpg

19.3.3 Provincial Development

a) Calligraphy

- i) **Jaunpur** : The Jaunpur School of calligraphy flourished in the latter part of the 15th and first part of the 16th century. The manuscripts of the *Quran* calligraphed under this school use:
 - a script known as Bihari,
 - crimson colour in the frames for the text rather heavily, and
 - much bolder designs of arabesque and creeper, with more inventive medallions in their illuminative content.
- ii) **Ahmadabad**: The Ahmadabad School owes its origin to Sultan Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat; it lasted for about half a century (c. 1425-75). The script used for writing the *Quran* in this school is known as *Suluth*. It was a serpentine, static script, used mostly in the Middle East for writing chapter-headings and inscriptions. When it came to be adopted in India in the early 15th century, it assumed the form of tall slanting uprights and onward-sweeping sub-linear curves and flourishes.

b) Manuscript Illumination

The illumination of manuscripts practiced as an art of painting flourished in Iran in the 13th-15th centuries under royal patronage.

The most important group of these manuscripts of suggested Indian provenance with Irani influence are dated during the period 1420-50. The most likely place of

their origin seems to be Bengal since Delhi may be ruled out as a provenance and there is no evidence of the provincial Sultans patronizing artists until later in the century. The picture, however, becomes much clearer by 1500. A group of manuscripts dated c. 1490-1510 is known from Mandu in which the direct influence of the Irani style is visible (see figures below). The Khalji Sultans of Malwa would seem to have imported artists and possibly manuscripts from Iran, and had the style copied by their own artists.



Figure 19.9: Manuscript Illustrations

a) Dolls (badajan), *Miftah al-Fuzala* of Shadiyabadi, Mandu, ca. 1490 5.9 x 6.8 cm (British Library Or 3299, f. 51v)

Courtesy: British Library (Vivek Gupta, PhD History of Art at SOAS, University of London; Postdoctoral Associate in Islamic Art at the University of Cambridge based at the Centre of Islamic Studies (from September 2020); and former doctoral placement at BL Asian and African Collections

Source: <https://blogs.bl.uk/.a/6a00d8341c464853ef0263ec2102ee200c-pi>

b) Yo-yo (farmuk, lattu) *Miftah al-Fuzala* of Shadiyabadi, Mandu, ca. 1490, 7.6 x 7.6 cm (British Library Or 3299, f. 212v)

Courtesy: British Library (Vivek Gupta, PhD History of Art at SOAS, University of London; Postdoctoral Associate in Islamic Art at the University of Cambridge based at the Centre of Islamic Studies (from September 2020); and former doctoral placement at BL Asian and African Collections

Source: <https://blogs.bl.uk/.a/6a00d8341c464853ef0264e2e17d95200d-pi>

The basic features of illuminated manuscripts with miniatures suggest:

- a horizontal format across the page, or sometimes squares in shape,
- text columns on either side, towards the bottom of the page, and
- a lifting of the normal viewpoint, thus affording to the painter a new world of landscape and new possibilities of spatial relationships between figures.

19.3.4 Deccani Paintings

A distinct style of painting in the Deccan emerges in the kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. It certainly predated the Mughal painting and is, in fact, known to have influenced its beginnings. The use of daring colours – purple and yellow, pink and green, brown and blue – the sophistication and artistry of their compositions, and the traditional Deccani costume argue by themselves a pre-existence for the style.

The Deccani style drew on many sources including the Irani tradition. This is clearly reflected when we identify their distinguishing features:

- The faces in this style are commonly painted in three-quarters,
- The grounds are shown as sprigged, i.e. sprayed with flowers or similar motifs,
- Another Deccani feature is the reduction of buildings to totally flat screen-like panels,
- A typically Irani influence in some paintings is the golden sky,
- And suggestive of the Chinese influence in some paintings are pink and green flowering plants, lotus and chrysanthemum.



(a)

(b)

Figure 19.10: a) Lady with the Myna Bird, Golconda, Deccan School, c. 1605

Courtesy: Chester Beatty Library http://www.harekrsna.com/sun/features/12-11/features_2319.htm

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/46/Lady_with_the_Myna_Bird.jpg

b) Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II, Bijapur, c. 1590-1595 A folio from St. Petersburg Album; Painter: Farrukh Beg

Courtesy: Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b4/Farrukh_Beg._Sultan_Ibrahim_Adil_Shah_II_Khan_hawking._Page_from_St._Petersburg_Album._Bijapur_ca.1590-95_%2828%2C7x15%2C6cm%29_Institute_of_Oriental_Studies_St._Petersburg.jpg

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Where are the repositories of the Western Indian style of painting located.

- 2) What is the major difference between the Western Indian style and *Caurapancasika* style.

- 3) Indicate two important foreign elements in the paintings of *Caurapancasika* style.

- 4) Describe the three most important features of manuscript illumination as practiced under the provincial dynasties.

- 5) Justify a pre-Islamic tradition of painting in the Deccan from the surviving paintings.

19.4 SUMMARY

A lively tradition of wall-painting deriving inspiration from the Ghaznavid kingdom survived in Delhi Sultanate upto at least 1350. It had a wide repertory, the subjects depicted ranging from the themes of the *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana* down to popular folktales. Another important tradition that grew during this period was of illuminated manuscripts. But it was independent of court patronage and for that reason the manuscripts have been termed as 'bourgeois'. Manuscript illustration and the art of writing the *Quran* flourished only till Timur's invasion. The influence of Iranian School was quite prominent. This tradition died soon after 1398 – the year of the sack of Delhi. But it sprouted and flourished in the provincial courts.

- A tradition of figural painting in the form of murals and painted cloth during the 13th and 14th centuries derived mainly from the Ghaznavid kingdom.
- A simultaneous tradition of the Quranic calligraphy in Kufi script which lasted

upto 1399 – till Timur’s sack of Delhi. This kind of painting developed with the introduction of paper in India.

- Another tradition was that of illustrated Persian and Awadhi manuscripts originating probably at the beginning of the 15th century and growing independently of the imperial court.

Unlike Delhi Sultanate, painting did not take a back seat in the regional centres of power. Architecture and painting developed at almost the same pace. In the realm of painting, a notable event is the development of paper manuscripts in the Western India and the development of illumination and made possible by the use of new material. Jain tradition of book writing and library keeping gave a tremendous impetus to a very pronounced form of painting known as Western Indian Style. Another distinct group of paintings like *Caurapançasika* developed across regional boundaries. Moreover, we also observe the growth of calligraphic art in the form of the Quranic illustration and in a few cases the emergence of manuscript illumination in provincial kingdoms. Thus, in our study of the art in the regional states, the following aspects deserve consideration:

- Structural variants and the development of regional styles,
- New forms of manuscript illumination, and
- Growth of North and South Indian styles.

19.5 KEYWORDS

Atelier	Workshop or studio of artists
Bhandars	Jain libraries
Calligraphy	The art of decorative writing
Mural	Wall painting
Pothi	An imitation of palm-leaf manuscript style on paper

19.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 19.2.1
- 2) See Sub-section 19.2.2
- 3) See Sub-section 19.2.3

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-section 19.3.1
- 2) See Sub-sections 19.3.1; 19.3.2
- 3) See Sub-section 19.3.2
- 4) See Sub-section 19.3.3
- 5) See Sub-section 19.3.4

19.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Brown, Percy, (1932) *Indian Painting*, (New Delhi: Association Press).

Digby, Simon, (1967) 'The Literary Evidence for Painting in the Delhi Sultnate', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares*, Vol. I, pp. 47-58.

19.8 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

Indian Paintings during the Sultanate Period

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELWOkLpZl40>

Paintings of India- Magic of the Deccan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jzu9DM8f0J8>

Paintings of India- The Delicate Beauty of Miniature

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzTbYkp_FRg



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY



QR Code -website ignou.ac.in



QR Code -e Content-App



QR Code - IGNOU-Facebook (@OfficialPageIGNOU)



QR Code Twitter Handel (OfficialIGNOU)



INSTAGRAM (Official Page IGNOU)



QR Code -e Gyankosh-site

IGNOU SOCIAL MEDIA

QR Code generated for quick access by Students

IGNOU website

eGyankosh

e-Content APP

Facebook (@official Page IGNOU)

Twitter (@ Official IGNOU)

Instagram (official page ignou)

IGNOU DIGI NEWS
17th Dec. 2019

NOTE:
The Venue of the examination remains the same

IGNOU DIGI NEWS
17th Dec. 2019

One-day Training Programme for Pratiyakhya Supervisor - Stage (Level 1)

LET US JOIN HANDS TO CREATE SKILLED HEALTH MANPOWER RESOURCES TO BUILD A HEALTHY NATION

Certificate in General Duty Assistance (CGDA)

- Geriatric Care Assistance (CGCA)
- Phlebotomy Assistance (CPHA)
- Home Health Assistance (CHHA)

Visit <http://stc.ignou.ac.in> for more information.

Like us, follow-us on the University Facebook Page, Twitter Handle and Instagram

To get regular updates on Placement Drives, Admissions, Examinations etc.



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

ISBN : 978-93-91229-66-5