
UNIT 2 THE SUFI MOVEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO INDIA

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit deals with the roots of Sufism, its origin and development, different orders and the interaction between saints of the two communities in India. The unit has the following objectives: - It aims at presenting the basic idea with a brief history of Sufism in and outside India.

It emphasizes the interaction with a view to making the students cognizant of the appreciable results enhancing the social unity, cultural synthesis and communal harmony. It has also attempted to apprise the pupils of the schools which have jeopardized the above mentioned outcomes.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

All religions, belonging to the Semitic or non-Semitic family, have spiritual aspect enshrined in their very nature. It is evident for the reason that every religion has some fascination for all classes of people. It must satisfy both the intellect and the spirit. Besides, it also provides some relief and contentment to the inner crave of beauty. Man instinctively desires to cherish the most significant concept of supreme beauty with profound devotion and utmost sincerity. It is evident then that the religion either revealed or otherwise is not meant for some particular group or society bound up in the particular geographical precincts. It has, as claimed, a universal appeal to satisfy spiritual, moral and aesthetic urges of different people without a discrimination of person

or place. Religion thus attracts the people of all classes living in different geographical regions. It is for this reason that we notice different shades of all practicing religions imbibing local cultural milieu. The impact can overtly be studied in the spiritual disciplines of the persisting religions. In order to substantiate our contention, we may pick up myriad examples from Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam of course, is no exception. Even cursory study of Sufism in different lands is enough to uphold our contention. We clearly observe the impact of shibboleths in the Sufism of the countries where Islam is preached and practiced.

2. 2 ROOTS OF SUFISM

The term sufi is an Arabic word generally alluding to a man having drawn to seclusion taking recourse in the path of devotion and dedication to god. The scholars are divided on the root of the term. Some orientalist, being amply influenced by the West are of the view that the term sufi has been derived from a Greek word sophia which means wisdom. Accordingly the divinely wise people were called sufis. Their view is not acceptable for, there exists no term like sufi in the Greek language. The term sufi has several Arabic roots. Some scholars believe that the term is derived from the Arabic words saf which means rank. The people engaged in worship and devotion who enjoyed the first rank in the hierarchy of Islamic Arab society, were called sufis. It is also not correct because the sufis never cared for social status; in fact they always refused such glamour. Some scholars believe that the term sufi comes out of the Arabic word safa which means purity. It is acceptable to some extent. Purity is one of the basic virtues to be inculcated by a novice. Some orientalists believe that the term sufi owes its origin to another Arabic word sof, meaning wool. The aristocrats before and after the advent of Islam wore woollen cloths as a mark of destination. The devotees also imitated them. They were therefore called Sufi's. The derivation is not correct, for the Sufis generally wore torn up cloaks. Most of the scholars have agreed that term sufi has been derived from the Arabic word suffah meaning the terrace. It has a reference to the devoted companions of the prophet who dwelt on the terrace of the prophets mosque in Madina. They led a life of prayer and penitence in the days of peace and participated in the battles against Islam in the days of war. They had no social and political responsibilities. They were addressed as the dwellers of the terrace (ahl-al suffah). It is believed to be the most reasonable derivation.

2. 3 ORIGIN OF SUFISM

Sufi movement is characteristically Islamic in nature. It originated and developed in the Arab peninsula and spread thereafter in the vast Muslim empire which was established by the rulers after conquering many alien lands in Europe, Asia and Africa. Retaining the Islamic Character the movement readily admitted the local influence and adapted to the social conditions, cultural features and spiritual needs of the native peoples. It may be explicitly understood in the case of India where spiritual interactions between the Sufi's and the Yogis resulted into the inception and growth of Bhakti movement. Many Yoga and Muslim saints led and carried forward the healthy tradition of bhakti movement. In other lands also Sufism pursued the same course ensuing similar consequences. Persia, due to its rich cultural heritage and proximity of ideas, influenced the movement most widely and profoundly. Sufism admitted several conceptual

elements from the Persian culture and religion, and practiced them in the course of prayer and penitence. Reason being, that it become an Islamic state following the Arab political legacy.

Although we could notice the mystic trends just after the advent of Islam in the life time of the prophet, yet Sufism in the fullest sense came into existence particularly in the days of Umayyad due to at least for some endurable political distress. As the people have different aptitudes, all of them could not live freely in the vitiated political atmosphere. They therefore preferred to draw themselves to isolation and chose to lead a life of devotion. Abul Hamshin Kofi is believed to be the first Muslim mystic. His way of life fascinated many people who joined him in this path and became his disciples. Sufism thus came into origin.

Since then it attracted scores of people in every age. Some of them remained on the edges; others were lost in the path. But some claimed to have transcended the obstacles of the path.

Check your progress-I

- Note: (a) Use the space provided for your answer.
(b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

- (1) What are different derivations of the term sufi?
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- (2) Which is the most agreed upon root of the term sufi?
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- (3) Who were called Ahl-al-Suffah?
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2. 4 DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM

The whole panorama of Islamic mysticism can be divided into two phases (a) Early phase (b) later phase.

Simplicity, modesty, sheer devotion and complete obedience to God are some of the basic characteristics of the early phase. Much emphasis was laid on the doctrines and the authenticity of the mystic experience in the later phase.

(a) Early phase:

The Early phase of Sufism is believed to have begun from the very inception of Islam. Mohammad, even before the declaration of his prophet-hood, led a life of an asceticism, purity and devotion which is the core of mysticism. After being declared prophet, he was the perfect man to comprehend the esoteric aspect of Islam which again is the basic spirit of Sufism. After his death the pious caliphs and Ali and his descendents continued the traditions and lived a life of devotion and obedience to God with an emphasis on the esoteric aspect of Islam. They however managed social and political affairs of the state efficiently.

Oways-Qarni, Hasan Basari, Abu Hashin Kufi are some of the important names in the early phase of sufism. Besides, Rabia Basari was the first woman Sufi who enjoyed great respect and veneration in her fellow sufis. Thus early Sufism created a spiritual milieu conducive to highlighting the essence of religion and the significance of mystic experience.

The origin and growth of every moment is possible only in the society. Similar is the case of sufism. It came into existence and grew in to some social and political developments. After the death of Prophet Mohammad Muslim society plunged into some serious controversies. The first was regarding the caliphate which resulted into factional fight. This political development gave way to many political upheavals. Many of the companions of the prophet made attempts to dissolve the political crisis. Abu-Zar-Ghaffari Ali, and his descendents tried hard to win over the sociopolitical chaos but it was in vain. Particularly in the days of Umayyad due to their tyrannical rule, the intellectual class took refuge either in the study of Greek philosophy and other sciences or in the path of devotion wherein they could find complete solace and mental satisfaction. Sufism thus is an outcome of sheer despondency and disapproval of the socio political environment. Early sufism therefore reflects a sense of condemnation towards the sociopolitical eventualities and stressed upon leading a life of asceticism, purity, obedience and love of God.

(b) Later Phase:

The later phase particularly begins with Ghazali who, after analysing the indescribable experiences of the early sufis and after having plunged himself into the realm of mysticism, founded some doctrines of Sufism. They are as follows- (1) Tauba (Repentance) (2) Beem-vrija (hope and fear) (3) Sabr-v-Tavakkul (Patience) and dependence. (4) Marfat (Gnosis) (5) Fana (annihilation) (6) Ishq (Love of God). Later on other sufis like Junaid Bhaghdadi, Shahab-ud-din Suharwardi and Bayazeed Bistami and others discovered their own doctrines like

- (1) Suhv- (Sobriety)
- (2) Noor-doctrine of light
- (3) Sukr- Intoxication.

Having analysed these doctrines carefully we may deduce the following fundamental doctrines.

- (1) Worship of God
- (2) Love of God
- (3) Knowledge of God
- (4) Obedience to God
- (5) Purification
- (6) Annihilation

They involve a variety of mystic experiences resulting into different stages ensuing several mental states. The stages are given below:

- (1) Salik (Novice)
- (2) Sabir – (Patient)
- (3) Arif – (Gnostic)
- (4) Majzoob – Charlatan
- (5) Wali – Saint
- (6) Qutub- The leader or the star etc.

There are many others but we need not go into the details.

Check your progress-II

- Note: (a) Use the space provided for your answer.
 (b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

- (1) Name the phases of Sufism.

- (2) What are the characteristics of early sufism?

- (3) What are the basic doctrines of later sufism?

2.5 SUFISM IN INDIA

With the expansion of the Muslim empire and the emergence of sectarian controversies, sufi movement spread all over the Muslim world. The Sufi movement commenced with a missionary zeal. Having conquered many lands the Muslims started preaching Islam. As a consequence people of different lands embraced Islam but did not abdicate their ancestral beliefs altogether. The stupendous task of preaching the religion was willingly taken up by the sufis in different parts of the Muslim kingdom. Similar was the case of India Although Indo-Arab Trade could be dated long before the advent of Islam, yet the Muslims, particularly the merchants, started pouring in Indian coastal areas and settled there in pockets with the purpose of the advancement of their trade. The population of the Muslims being two meagre did not attract the sufis to begin their mission. With the invasion of Mohammad bin Qasim throngs of Muslims chose India as their abode. Many of them were left behind in the Indus valley and the adjoining areas. Even after Mohammad bin Qasim was called back, some sufis and scholars came with the army and stayed here with a two- fold purpose in mind that is to guide the Muslims to the write path and to preach Islam to the natives. Although the sufis never in encouraged forceful conversion yet the rulers supported them in their mission. The sufis also did not check or discourage the local cultural elements the converts brought with them by way of inheritance. In India also we notice an amalgam of two cultures. The theologians (Ulama) considered it as an evil of proselytism and attempted to remove all impurities entering into Islam by way of ancestral beliefs. They resolved to preserve Islam in its pristine form. The sufis, however, in the pursuit of their mission interacted with the people in their dialects and persuaded them to accept Islam in their own way.

Shaikh ali Hujwari of Data Gunj was the first reputed sufi in India. Earlier some other sufies like shaikh Mohammad also visited India but their preceptors did not permit them to stay here. Shaikh Ali Hujwari on the exhortation of his guide lived here to preach Islam to the native people. He succesfully performed his task of proselytism in and around Sindh. Hujwari belonged to the early phase of sufism and emphasized the basic doctrines of sufism like worship of God ,love of God, knowledge of God, purification and annihilation. He paved the path for the future sufis in India by writing a monumental book *Kashful-ul-Mehjoob*.

2.6 ORDERS OF SUFISM:

Many sufis of different orders migrated into India from various parts of Muslim empire on the gesture of their preceptors to propagate Islamic values before the Indian natives. They presented themselves as the best example by practicing the moral values of Islam. The local people drew inspiration from their simple life and emulated their cherished higher values. The leading sufis of different orders created a social atmosphere conducive to the growth of a religions personality engaged in the pursuit of the path of devotion. Even the common man having received education from the renowned sufis readily approved the higher values and led a full moral life. The sufis wanted to create a society in which virtues were held high and the evil was completely

eschewed. The sufis of different orders established their seminaries to carry out their appointed mission. A great number of people belonging to different communities gathered there to listen to their sermons. They were so greatly impressed that they decided to follow their path. Many of them, as desired, were initiated into the orders (silsila) and were allowed to practicing mystic doctrines. Many of the Indian converts became practicing Sufis. Some of them enjoyed a leading position in the Sufi hierarchy of one or the other order (silsila).

There are many major and minor orders. Some of them were founded in India itself. The major orders are as follows.

- (1) Chishtiya order.
- (2) Qadriya order
- (3) Suharwardiya order
- (4) Naqsh bandiya order.

The minor orders emerged as the off shoot of one or the other major orders.

(a) Major Orders

(1) Chishtiya Order was founded in India by Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti. Like many of his predecessors he also migrated into India from central Asia at the behest of his guide (Peer), Khawaja Usman. He came here with a firm resolution of serving Islam and the Muslims living in India. History records that many Muslim rulers since the invasion of Mohammad bin Qasim attacked India with out having a serious concern to establish Muslim empire in this country. After every attack a great number of Muslims were left behind. Thus the Muslim population went on increasing in India slowly and gradually. This meagre minority had to be looked after. Some of the native rulers were not friendly to the Muslim immigrants. They behaved with them cruelly. Sufi is like Khwaja Moin-uddin were quite sensitive to the cause of the distressed minority. It is believed, albeit, there is no clear historical evidence, that Khwaja Moin-uddin Chisti invited Mohammad Ghauri to invade India once again and emancipate the Muslims from the cruelty of the Ajmer King Prithivi Raj who had defeated him many a time earlier. On accounts of the political antagonism of the Indian Kings Prithivi Raj was finally overcome and Mohammad Ghauri established Muslim rule by appointing his slave as the governor of India. Qutbuddin Aibak, the slave, declared himself as an independent ruler after his master's death.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti vociferously pursued the task of proselytism in the country. He travelled to Bangal and other states and converted a great number of natives to Islam. The religion Islam was greatly welcomed in the caste- ridden Indian society because of the fact that Islam in its original form admitted no barriers. The Indian sociopolitical scene was quite conducive to the fulfillment of the mission in mind. No, renowned sufi unlike the Hindu yogis or Buddhist mystics ever led a life of complete detachment. They only shunned worldly luxuries; Khwaja Moinuddin followed the legacy of the earliest sufis like Abu-zar Ghaffari. The Khwaja participated in the battles against the natives in the days of wars and offered them spiritual remedies in the days of peace. He, however, pleaded always for the communal harmony, spiritual satisfaction to all, and religious tolerance with all humility and integrity.

The Chishty teachings were carried forward and popularized by his very famous and eminent disciples like Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, Nizam uddin Auliya and Naseeruddin Charagh. All these saints served the people in the best manner. They lived a life of isolation but never deprived their fellow beings of their blessings. Amongst the chishtis Shaikh Nizamudin Aulia was the most outstanding sufi of his time. He enjoyed a great reverence in the people and the nobility. He guided the common masses and the aristocrats. The kings also paid him great respect and often sought his exhortations particularly at the time of invasion. They implored him to pray for them for their victory in the ensuing battles. His hospice always remained crowded. He offered food and shelter to all those who visited him. He never showed any discrimination on the basis of cast, creed and colour. People of all walks of life belonging to different religions came to listen to his exhortations. In brief he was the most popular and the most venerated man of his time. People offered precious gifts in the form of kinds and cash by which he managed the expenses of his hospice.

Nizamuddin as a sufi, in addition to carrying out the provisions of shariya, emphasized the love of God. He, for this reason, was commonly known even in his life the beloved of God. He also practiced the other Chishti teaching in letter and spirit. All the cryptos of his time describe him as the most eminent sufi of his age.

The next important major order of Sufism in India is the Qadriya. It was founded in the name of its precursor Abdul Qadir Jilani. The sufis of this order also migrated into India from the Persio-Arab land. Muhibullah Shah, Miyan Meer and Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shahjahan, were the representative sufis of this order.

The Qadriyas were not much different from the chistis except that they owed allegiance to their elder.

Abdul Qadir Jilani considered him to be the most perfect sufi of all times. It was an unsubstantiated claim. His spiritual stage, however, was commanded and widely acknowledged.

Qadriya order in India was introduced quite late in the medieval ages. Abdul Qadir of Badayun founded it here in the last decades of 14th century. The order became more popular in the Muslim world including India due to the initiation of Ibnul Arabi into the fold. Most of its followers, therefore, were the staunch supporters of the very controversial theory of the unity of existence Wahdat-ul Wujood. The Qadriya order however remained less significant in India as compared to other three major orders.

The suharwardi order was founded in the name of sheikh shahabuddin Suharwardi Maqtul. Like Mansoor Hallaj he was also executed on account of his heresies. He was an emanationist believing in the incarnation (Hulul) of God in man. He deemed himself to be an incarnation of God. On the basis of his mystic experience he introduced the doctrine of light (Nur) into Sufism. The theologians, who always showed resistance to all such theories considering them against

Islam, vehemently opposed his spiritual convictions and persuaded the ruler to execute him declaring him as infidel. Like his predecessor Hallaj, Shahabudin also became a victim of the court politics. He died quite young but initiated many disciples into his fold. Like Ibnul-Arabi he also believed in one existence emanating all through the world to make it organic and vibrant.

The Suharwardi order was also introduced later than Chishtiya. Bahauddin Zakarya was the first and the most important sufi of Suharwardi order in India. He spread and made it popular particularly in the Northern India. The parents of Bahauddin Zakarya migrated into India in the search of better livelihood. Bahauddin, however, had very little to do with the worldly riches. He had spiritual inclination from the very beginning. Bahauddin heard the inner voice and went to the sheikh to get mystic training. His preceptor was amused to see that Bahauddin could grasp the intensity of the mystic experience and transcend many stages in a very short period of seventeen days.

Bahauddin Zakarya was the contemporary of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. The former is believed to have visited the later at least once. Unlike the chishti saints the Suharwardis considered the accumulation of wealth as indispensable to offer better services to humanity. After Beheading Zackary some of his descendents like Sheikh Rukn-ul-din and Sheikh Sadr-ul-uddin carried forward the legacy of their preceptor. The order remained popular only for a short time.

After chishtis Naqsh bandya order became quite popular in India. Like other orders it also came into origin in the Perso Arab world. It owes its existence to the silsila of Khwajgan. The order was founded by Khwaja Baha-ul-din Naqsh band. It was preached and popularized by one of his very renowned disciples, Khawja Naseer-ul-din Ubaidullah Ahrar. He lived in the Turkish Empire in the city of Samarqand. He encouraged the Timurid princes to invade the states like Tashqand and merge them into their kingdom. His advice was carried out. He left behind a considerably big chain of disciples.

Naqsh Bandy order was introduced in India with the invasion of Babar. The King Babar and many of his soldiers owed allegiance to ubaid-ul-Ahrar. Many of other disciples also accompanied Babar in his journey to India. They settled here after the establishment of Mughal empire. The mission of the Naqsh bandi saints was similar but they emphasized the eradication of alien elements crept in Islam from the native religions. Khwaja Kalan and his other compatriots propagated the teachings of their predecessors Ubaid ulah Ahrar and Baha ul- din.

Naqsh bandya order was less tolerant as compared to the Chishties, Qadries and Suhawardies. There was another important distinction. The three above mentioned orders claimed themselves to be the descendents of Ali whereas the Naqshbandies traced their origin from the first caliph, Abu bakr. Their puritanical approach made them austere and obstinately hard liners. They wanted to convert India into a Islamic state and recommended to the Mughal kings to impose jaziya (kind of tax) on the Hindu subjects. The Mughal kings however never acted upon their advice. Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi, a noted Naqsh bandi Saint, vehemently criticized Akbar for his

policy of “Sulah-e-Kul” (compromise with all and his religion “Deen-e-Ilahi” the religion of God which he founded for the fulfillment of his mission.

The early Nakshbandies were inclined towards wahadata-ul-wadjoood the unity of existence, the theory of Ibnul-Arabi. Later on Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi propounded another theory known as the unity of appearance, wahadul-ul-shahood. All his disciples and some other noted Nakshbandis were impressed with his theory and followed it rather strictly. Since then, there arose a serious controversy between the follower of the two schools. It gave way to a severe conflict inviting harsh and bitter criticism against each other. Instead of a healthy debate it generated a controversy leading to acrimonious consequences.

Nakshbanya order received better cognizance in India. It produced many notable saints like Khwaja Khurd, Ahmad Sir Hindi, Khawaja Masoom, Shah wali-ullah his son Shah Abdul Azeez. Shiakh Abu Ahmad Sir Hindi, although an exalted saint, was quite controversial because of his alleged heresies and mystic experiences. Jahangir imprisoned him for his political interventions when he criticized his father Akbar for his policies. Shah Wali-ullah was another outstanding sufi of this order. Besides being a noted sufi he was an eminent scholar of all theological sciences. Although he was trained and initiated in the other three orders as well, yet he chose to practice Nakshbandi teachings. As sufi Shah wali-ullah tried to resolve the age old controversy between the two school, namely the unity of existence and the unity of appearance. He offered reconciliation between the two and argued that the thought content of the two schools is similar and that they express the same ideas in different words. He also asserted that the wahdut-ul-wujood and wahdut-ul-Shahood are simply two stages in the mystic journey. Ibn-ul-Arabi reached one stage and Ahmad Sir Hindi soared higher to the next stage. This argument shows his inclination to the later school.

His son Shah Abdul Azeez carried forward the movement of his father in the field of politics and Sufism. The two father and the son assume importance due to changing political scene in India. The Mughal dynasty was dying out. The British were gaining control. There was an all round decay and decline. Shah abdul-Azeez tried to inspire the Muslims for the restoration of their political power. He thus like other Nakshbandi saints attempted at reestablishing the supremacy of Islam in the realm of politics and religion. He also inherited the puritanical attitude which however proved to be detrimental for the Muslims in India.

(b) Minor orders

In addition to these major orders there are a number of minor orders. Some of them were founded outside India but many of them were initiated by the sufi saints in India. Irrespective of the place of their creation, they were basically the off shoots of one or the other major orders. The Firdausiya and Kubraviya orders owed their origin to suharwardiya order. Shattariya order came of Qadriya order. The chisties, however, remained loyal to their teachers and hence began no order in their name. Out of many, Firdausiya and Shaltariya became some what significant. The Firdausiya was founded by Sharf-uldin yahya Manyari; Phulwari near Patna in Bihar was its

centre. The order was popular in Bihar and Bangal. The Shattariyah order was founded in the name of Abdulah Shattari. It was popular in the east of Uttar Pradesh. Abdullah Shattari believed in simplicity and emphasized personal way of worship, "Tariqah". The minor orders however could not leave lasting influence on the society. Some of them existed only for a short time and died out with the death of their founders. The sufis belonging to these orders could not command much respect. They were considered only as charlatans or heretics.

Check your progress-III

Note: (a) Use the space provided for your answer.

(b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

(1) Who is believed to be the first sufi in India?

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(2) What was the basic mission of the Sufis in India and how did they carry it out?

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(3) How is the Naqshbandi order distinguished from other three major orders?

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2.7. INTERACTION BETWEEN HINDU AND MUSLIM SAINTS

We are aware that the political expansion, sectarian controversies and the growth of knowledge gave way to the origin of Sufism and dialectical and scholastic science in the Muslim world. We also know that the sufis traveled through the Muslim empire with a mission in mind that they would preach Islam to the native peoples of the conquered lands and remove the defeatist feelings from their minds without using any force or coercive measures. They were welcomed in all the countries including India. In order to fulfill their mission they interacted with the inhabitants of that country. They had to learn the local language for this purpose.

Besides, the sufis also came in contact with the mystics of other religions. In Persia for example they studied Manichean and Zoroastrian scriptures and discussed them with the mystics of the creeds and were influenced by their contents. We notice, for this reason, a profound influence of early Persian mysticism on Islamic Sufism. The devotees of the ancient civilizations left a tremendous impact in shaping the personality of the Muslim mystics. Some of the Sanskrit texts like sidhanta were translated into Arabic long before the arrival of Muslims in India in the omavvi period. Like the other scholars the sufis were also immensely influenced by the Greek philosophers particularly Plato and Plutinous whose philosophy has great mystic potential.

The sufis continued the same trends and mission when they arrived here in India. Many of them were sent by their preceptors to pursue the mission of proselytism and to preach Islam even to the Muslims particularly its moral and spiritual aspect. A number of sufis came to India with the armies of Muslim invaders. They found the Indian soil fertile for the persuasion of their mission. After their arrival, they developed contacts with the local people. They learnt their language to have meaningful dialoge with the people of the area for their work. Not only this but they also studied the literature of different languages particularly of Sanskrit which deeply affected their thought. Moreover, the Muslim travelers like Al-Baruni showed keen interest in the Indian languages and their literature. He studied the yoga of Patanjali with care and interest and referred to it at many places in his travelogue Kitab-ul-Hind. Many sufis through his translation learnt and practiced the eight fold path of yoga. The yoga theory was quite in proximity with the sufi experience of contemplation, meditation and self mortification. The other yoga schools also fascinated the Muslim sufis. Abdul Qudoos Gangohi his son Rukn-Al-din and his other disciples were deeply moved by the Nath yogis. They practiced the theory and had the desired experience. Abdul Quadoos Gangohi wrote his Alkhnama in Hinduvi, the language developed with the interaction between the Muslim and the Indian natives.

2.8. BHAKTI MOVEMENT:

The Bhakti movement was the fruitful outcome of the interaction between the mystics of the two religions. The sufis from the very outset encouraged communal harmony and tried to understand

the universal elements in the two religions. The emergence of the movement resulted into a better understanding of each other's point of view. It produced many great saints in the two communities like Nam-Dev, Kabir, Malik Mohammad Jaisi, Dadu and Guru Nanak etc. They chose the local languages to express their ideas through the vehicle of poetry. Guru Nanak in his apophthegms quoted many verses from Baba Farid-Shakar ganj. It speaks of the profound influence of Baba Farid and Islamic mysticism on Guru Nanak. The sufis and the pioneers of Bhakti movement laid emphasis on the points of agreement between the two religions. They believed that the fundamental truth, aimed at by the two religions was one and the same. Ram and Raheem are not different entities. They signify the similar truth. The founders of Bhakti movement, under the influence of Islam and Hinduism both arrive at the following conclusion. (1) God is one pure and simple He may be remembered with different names. He must be loved and worshiped. Their concept of worship is however different. They do not subscribe to the ritualistic worship. There has been a long and meaningful debate about the priority of sharia and *Tariqat*. The earlier sufis along with highipities of different orders held sharia as prior to *Tariqat*. It should be clarified here that sharia means the Islamic law which explains the obligations actions and assertions that is Farz-Sunnat and Hadith. Tareeqa on the other hand is the personal ways of worship.

Many sufies consider *Tariqat* as prior to sharia and worship God in their own way refraining from the obligatory or ritualistic prayers. The heretic (Majzoob) and the medicants (Qalander) generally followed the path of *Tariqat*. The precursors of Bhakti movement in both communities cherished this path and considered God as an immanent being, present in every thing and every where. Every object is His manifestation. They thought that there is no difference between the worshiper and the worshiped.

(2) The Bhakti saints emphasized communal harmony social integration and unification of culture. Not only the sufies but also the Muslims in general preferred to live in peace with their native brothers. They adheared to virtue of fraternity.

The indispensable interaction gave way to the social integration and unification of culture. The synthesis, if we look at the history, is reflected in the attitude of the people towards each other. Bhakti movement thus brought people close to each other.

3. The founders of the movement tried to search universal elements in both the religions. Gura Nank, for instance, was in search of a universal religion and founded Sikhism which embodied the fundamentals of the two religions. Thus Bhakti movement in short was an attempt to remove the barriers of religion and to convince people that the sprit of the two creeds was identical.

2.9. INTERACTION IN THE MUGHAL PERIOD:

The mystics of two communities continued influencing each other even after the decline of the Bhakti movement. The sufis kept on studying the religious scriptures of Hindu religion either through translations into Persian or original Sanskrit texts. The *Yoga Vashishta*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* fascinated not only the sufis but also the scholars. They were rendered into translation in Persian even in the medieval ages. Some scholars studied Vedas and quoted their hymns in their works. They also appealed to many sufis who experienced their truth. In the later medieval ages after the establishment of the Mughal rule the Hindu scriptures became still more fascinating. The Mughal kings directed the scholars having the knowledge of the two languages Sanskrit and Persian to translate them into Persian. The bulk of Translation was done in the days of Akbar. The Muslim sufies, who were cognizant earlier with the spiritual legacy of Hinduism had then a better knowledge of Vedic and Buddhist mysticism.

Among the Mughal Princes Dara Shikoh was the most outstanding scholar of Hinduism and Islam. He went through the earlier translation of the Hindu scriptures. He learnt Sanskrit in the company of Pandits. He translated himself some of the important Upanishads in the name of Sir-e-Akbar "The great secret". In his preface he acknowledged that the Upanishads are the hidden Quran (Quran-e-Maknoon). They have also predicted the arrival of Prophet Mohammad. In the same book he has equated the three principal angels Gabriel, the Mikail and Israil with Brahma, Vishnu and shiva.

He wrote another book in Sanskrit and Persian both under the title *MAJ-UL-BAHRAIN* the mingling of the two oceans in which he has described 22 points of agreements in the mysticism of the two religions. In short Dara Shkoh very closely studied the two religions and always held dear to his breast the Hindu Muslim Unity. He was of the view that mysticism alone could bring the people closer.

With the accession of Aurangzeb the policy of tolerance and fraternity was badly affected. The theologians (Ulama) gained ground and became politically more powerful. The puritanic elements desired to eradicate alien elements from Islam. This gave way to a perilous orthodoxy. The sufis baring the Nakshbandis were severely condemned. The Nakshbandi mystics were rigid in attitude and orthodox in their approach. A sufi of shah wali Ulah's stature wrote letters to the king Mohammad Shah advising him to deal with the Hindus rather sternly. Although neither Aurangzeb nor other later Mughal Kings listened to their exhortation yet they continued their efforts. Sufis like Sarmad were beheaded. Notwithstanding the growing orthodoxy the Hindu - Muslim unity was not affected until the British established their complete rule in India.

In brief the Sufis in India played a constructive role in shaping the synthetic culture of the country.

Check your progress-IV

Note: (a) Use the space provided for your answer.

(b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

- (1) What is the eight-fold Path of yoga and how has it influenced Sufis in India?

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- (2) What are the chief characteristics of Bhakti Movement?

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- (3) Give a brief account of Dara Shikuh's contribution to Sufism and communal harmony

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

In the introduction we have classified that the mysticism is not characteristically Islamic in nature. We have very briefly discussed the roots of Sufism, its origin, the sociopolitical conditions which led to the consequential growth and development of the mystic discipline in Islam. It is present in other religions as well. We have also mentioned the major and some minor orders which became rampant in India. We have deliberately emphasized the tremendous influence that the saints of the two communities in India exerted upon each other. Besides, the valuable contribution of the saints of Bhakti movement has also been acknowledged and exalted. In the end we have discussed Dara Shikuh who always stood for the synthesis of the two great religions in India, Islam and Hinduism. We have also mentioned the puritan efforts of the *Naqsh Bandi* saints to mar the social unity and the communal harmony.

2.11. KEYWORDS

Novice: One who begins the spiritual journey (traveller).

Purification: It refers to the cleanliness of body, heart, mind and soul. **Puritan:** an orthodox person.

2.12. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.13. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress-I

1. The following are the derivations of the term sufe :- (1) Sophia (2) Saf (3) Safa (4) Sof (5) Suffah
2. Suffah is the most agreed upon derivation of the term Sufi.
3. The companions, who lived on the terrace of the prophet Mosq, were called Ahl-al-Suffa.

Check your progress-II

1. There are two phases of Sufism (1) early phase (2) Later phase.
2. Simplicity, modesty, devotion to god and obedience to god were the basic characteristics of the early Sufism.
3. The basic doctrines of the later Sufism were as follows- (1) worship of God. (2) Knowledge of God (3) love of God (4) Purity (5) annihilation.

Check your progress-III

1. Shaikh Ali Hujwari is believed to be the first-Sufi in India.
2. The basic mission of Sufis was two fold (1) they aimed at keeping the muslims in India on the right path, (2) They intended to preach Islam. They carried it out by learning the local languages and by persuading the natives to embrace Islam, but under no compulsion.
3. The Naqshbandies were puritans and so emphasized to preserve the prestige character of Islam where as the sufis of other three orders never discouraged the inclusion of alien elements in Islam.

Check your progress-IV

1. The eight fold path of yoga is as follows-(1) *Yama*, (2) *Niyama* (3) *Asana* (4) *Pranayama* (5) *Pratyahara* (6) *Dharana* (7) *Dhayana* (8) *Smadhi*. The Sufis have practiced these means.

2. The love of God, social integration unification of culture and the universal religion are the chief characteristics of the Bhakti movement.
3. Dara Shikuh wrote many books and treatises on Sufism particularly Sil-e-Akbar (a commentary of Upanisads and Majma-ul-Bahrain (The Mingling of the two Oceans on communal harmony, Besides he also got the Ramaina and Mahabharta translated in Persian.

