The Civilizational Role of Islam in The Indian subcontinent: The Delhi Sultanate

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Muslim presence was manifest in the coastal regions of Southern India from the earliest days of Islam, as evidenced by the establishment of Arab trading settlements, with minor political impact prior to the conquests in Northern India from the beginning of the 8th century, which solidified the influence of Islam leading to tangible political and socio-cultural impacts in the region. The history of India furnishes an amazing picture of the syntheses of many divergent cultural trends which were gradually transformed by a process of mutual adjustment and assimilation. Islam played a significant role in this by contributing to India's multi-cultural and multi-religious ethos, embedding the subcontinent in the Arab-Islamic maritime civilization, stretching from southern Africa to China, particularly in connecting Africa as well as the great Turkic empires of Central Asia. It offers a pertinent example of the interaction of human minds and the effects of cultural and civilizational contacts on indigenous customs, religion, literature and arts. This paper examines the impact of Islam in the Indian Peninsula from three different angles: its political predominance, its intellectual and cultural impact, and finally, its influence on art and architecture. Based mainly on Arabic and Persian sources, the article focuses on the intellectual legacy, achievements and the role that the Indian Muslims played in the Indian subcontinent during the Delhi Sultanate, the first major Islamic political authority to govern large parts of South Asia.

Introduction

Sind has always been a major route for communication and trade between India and the Silk Route; also serving as the gateway of Islamic and Turkic political and immigrant incursion into India (Nadvi, 1932, pp. 13-14; Andre Wink, 1990, p. 513). Muhammad ibn Qasim al-Thaqfi (d.716) was the first to facilitate dialogue between Islam and India, leading to many local conversions as recorded by Al-Baladhuri (d. 892) and Buzurg ibn Shahriyar (d. 955) (Al-Baladhuri, 1932, p.446; al- Ramhurmuzi, 1883-86, p.3). The strategic and commercial importance of Sind was immense - economy- wise it produced large quantities of grains and other crops as well as livestock from mountainous regions (Ansar Zahid, 1980, p.196; Arshad Islam, 2001, p. 194).

The present study does not seek to recount the historical events of various conquests and invasions of the Indian north, which are extensively documented in the historical literature (e.g. the *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* by Tara Chand, and *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* by Annemarie Schimmel), nor does it aim to discuss the antiquity of the Muslim presence in India, which is also well known from the legends of Raja Bhoja of Ujjain and the Arab Muslim settlers in coastal ports. Historically, the advent of Islam to the Indian Subcontinent began with the conquest of Sind in 711-12 (Chand, 2011, p. 32; Schimmel, 1980, pp. 3-4). The Sind and later the Delhi Sultanate formed the springboard of Islam's spread southward, which is the main concern of this discussion related to the civilizational role of Islam.

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In this paper, we delimit the civilizational role of Islam to its impact on the social structure, organization and culture of native Indian societies, comprising a majority of Buddhist and Hindu populations within the geographical limits of the Delhi Sultanate. Islam's civilizational impact may be broadly divided into two interrelated categories: the early period associated with the Arab-Islamic, Umayyad and Abbasid powers in West Asia; and the later period consisting of the Delhi Sultanate, characterized mainly by Turkish and Afghan rulers from Central Asia and Afghanistan.

This paper postulates that the increasing autonomy and independence of the rulers from the early central authority of the Arab caliphates led to the emergence of a local civilizational dynamic, distinct from the *initial* civilizational influence of the Muslim conquest of Sind.

As the Abbasid power and authority waned and the Turkic world assumed a more vigorous role in Islamic affairs, Indian rulers continued to claim legitimacy from the institution of the caliphate, while exercising increasing autonomy. As a result, the pattern of tolerance of the early religio-social impact gradually changed and made way for the forceful imposition of political domination by the early Turkic conquerors seeking to legitimize their rule by appealing to Islamic commitment (al- Biruni, 1964, p. 116; *Hudud al-Alam,* 1970, p. 89; Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p.100).

Features of Islam's Civilizational Impact

The Consolidation of The Delhi Sultanate

The expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate happened during what for the purpose of this paper could be called the later reign, particularly the period of the thirteenth century onwards. The Ghurids, the Mumluks, the Tughluq and the Khalji dynasties were at the forefront of this reign.

Muizz al-Din Muhammad Ghuri (r.1202-1206), born as Shihab al- Din Ghuri, was one of the greatest rulers of the Ghurid dynasty, who laid the foundation of Muslim rule in South Asia. He captured Multan in 1175, and the following year he took Uchh and assigned the area to Ali Qirmaj. Within a short time Shihab al-Din conquered the regions of Sind and Punjab and defeated Rae of Ajmer in the famous battle of Tarain in 1192. Ajmer and the entire region of the Siwalikh territory including Hansi, Sarsuati, Samnah and other areas were incorporated into Ghuri dominion. After completing his mission, Sultan Shihab al- Din returned to Ghazni assigning the territories of Kuhram and Samnah to his vassal, Malik Qutb al-Din, who captured Meerut, Delhi and Koil in 1193. He ruled over these territories on behalf of the Sultan as his viceroy in India. After the murder of Muizz al-Din Muhammad by an Ismaili, Fidai at Damik in 1206, Qutb al-Din became Sultan of India, laying the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. He ruled the territories of India till his death in 1210.

As a frontier region, the city of Multan was vulnerable to Mongol attack from 1220 onwards, and it also received refugees migrating to India to escape the Mongol invasions of Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan. During the Mongol occupation of Khurasan, a large number of fleeing Muslim scholars, administrators and Sufis took shelter in Sind, and many of them settled in Multan, then the gateway to India, making it a great centre of Islamic learning and culture (Minhaj, 1954, p. 419; Awfi, 1906, p. 551). In 1221, Qubacha faced the Mongol assault by Chingiz Khan (d. 1227) who penetrated deep into the region of Sind in pursuit of the Khawarizmian Sultan Jalal al-Din Minkobarni (r. 1220-

1231), son of Sultan Ala al-Din Muhammad Khawarizm

Shah (r. 1200-1220), who was responsible for the initial provocation of Chingiz Khan to begin his westward campaigns. The Mongol army pressed down hard upon Jalal al-Din, who advanced toward Debal to regroup. He was intercepted while crossing the Indus, where Chingiz Khan instructed his forces to advance and capture Minkobarni alive, but Jalal al-Din evaded capture and successfully crossed the Indus in August-September 1221 (Juwayni, 1912, p. 147; Minhaj, 1954, p. 419; Najeebabadi, 2001, p. 580).

Iltutmish's accession to the throne of Delhi was a challenge to the authority of Qubacha; even though both were sons-in-law of Qutb al- Din Aibak, their relationship had never been cordial. After controlling Delhi, Iltutmish consolidated his power over the adjoining regions, and ultimately took full advantage of Qubacha's problems by occupying Lahore in 1217 and crushing his adversary in battle. In 1228 Iltutmish decided to make a final assault to oust Qubacha from Multan and Uchh and succeeded in achieving his objective (Minhaj, 1954, I, p. 445).

Notable intellectuals of this period included Sadid al-Din Muhammad Awfi, Shams al-Din Muhammad al- Khatib Balkhi, Fadili Multani and Zia al-Din Sijzi. Shams al-Din was an outstanding calligraphist of his age, whom Awfi equated with Ibn al-Bawwab and Ibn Muqlah. In 1226 the renowned historian Minhaj al- Siraj was received in the court of Qubacha and consequently appointed the *mudir* (principal) of the Madrasa-i-Firozia in Uchh, and the *qadi* of his son's army. Nasir al-Din Qubacha was a benefactor of scholars, while his Prime Minister, Ain al-Mulk Husain Ash'ari, was a patron of art and literature and his house was a centre for intellectuals. Sadid al- Din Muhammad Awfi joined Qubacha's court in 1220 as the imperial *imam* and *wa'iz* (preacher), and was consequently confirmed in the position of chief *qadi* (Minhaj, 1954, I, pp. 420, 446).

Awfi translated into Persian the well-known Arabic tome *al-Faraj ba'dal-Shiddah* of Qadi Abu al-Hasan ibn Ali Muhammad ibn Daud (d.

994) and dedicated it to Qubacha. He also composed *Lubab al-Albab,* commonly assumed to be the earliest known compilation of *(Tazkirah)* biographies of the Persian poet, and the one that laid the foundation for this genre of literature sponsored by Ain al-Mulk Husain al-Ash'ari.

Qubacha's dynamic drive to encourage literary and intellectual activities could be gauged from his choice of Minhaj as the principal *(mudir)* of Madarsa-i-Firozia in Uchh and the establishment of another institution and *sarai* (inn) in Multan for Maulana Qutb al-Din Kashani, one of the most reputed intellectuals of the age. Qubacha's keen interest and patronage of scholars created a positive atmosphere in the region for the writing of significant works on the religious and literary sciences (Minhaj, 1954, I, p. 420; Farishta, 1884-85, II, p. 400; Schimmel, 1980, p. 11).

After the death of Muizz al-Din Muhammad ibn Sam, his slave Qutb al-Din Aibak (r. 1206-1210), (whom he had manumitted) ascended the throne of Delhi, and he formally laid the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. Qutb al-Din Aibak died at Lahore while playing *chaughan* (polo), and was buried at Anarkali Bazar, Lahore (Minhaj, 1954, p. 55; Quraishi, 1977, p. 5; Hamadani, 1992, p. 45). Aram Shah succeeded him but was soon replaced by Shams al-Din Iltutmish, Aibak's son- in-law. A fight erupted between Muizz al-Din's slaves and Iltumish but the latter with great tact and courage succeeded in establishing his authority (Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 6; Schimmel, 1980, p. 11). Iltumish tactfully averted the Mongol danger to India that had arisen because of Jalal al-Din Minko-

barni's advancement in Sind, while Chingiz Khan had already pursued him and crossed the Indus. Minkobarni sought help from Iltumish who politely declined. Through his diplomatic acumen, Iltumish successfully resolved the issue by killing two birds with one stone. Within a short time, he established a powerful sultanate commanding vast areas of northern India, from Bengal to the frontier of Afghanistan, and he was the first Indian ruler to receive investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad.

Balban followed the policy of consolidation rather than expansion. He was succeeded by his youthful grandson, Kayqubad (r. 1287-1290), who indulged himself in wine and venery and as a result was struck with paralysis. His infant son, Kayumars, was placed upon the throne (Barani, 2005, pp. 126, 167; Lal, 1980, pp. 1-5). The Mamluk dynasty came to an end when it was replaced by Jalal al-Din Firoz Khalji (r. 1290-1296), the founder of the Khalji dynasty. At the time of accession he was over seventy years old. Partly due to his advanced age he was mild natured and restrained himself from taking severe action against rebels (except for Sidi Maula) and he displayed great leniency to renegades such as Malik Chajju. However, he was murdered by his ungrateful nephew and son-in-law 'Ala'al-Din Muhammad Khalji, in 1296 (Barani, 2005, pp. 218-9, 176-78; Lal, 1980, pp. 6-7, 55-7, 61).

'Ala'al-Din left a great mark upon the history of India. He secured his regime and the subcontinent from the Mongol attack, and united vast areas of the region. He maintained a huge army by introducing his famous concept of market control, by which he fixed the price of all commodities, making it possible for him to recruit a huge army at low cost. He was the first among the Sultans to have taken interest in rural India and introduced reforms of far-reaching consequence in revenue system. His reign was marked by peace and prosperity, and the great expansion of the Sultanate from north to south. It also witnessed great intellectual and literary activity. 'Ala'al-Din died in 1316, but after his death his reforms fell into disuse (Barani, 2005, pp. 295-97, 369; Isami, 1948, p. 336). He was succeeded by his son Qutb al-Din Mubarak Shah (r. 1316-1320), who was unable to control the vast sultanate, and rebellions broke out in the far-flung regions. He was murdered by Khusrau Khan, a slave from Gujarat, who seized power. Khusrau gave free reign to his Hindu tribesmen to offend and malign Islam (Barani, 2005, pp. 369, 390; Lal, 1980, pp. 271, 286, 309-12, 322).

Hearing about the murder of Qutb al-Din and the insults heaped on Islam, Ghazi Malik Tughluq marched from the Punjab and punished the usurper by killing him in battle in 1320. This victory was a prelude to the founding of the Tughluq dynasty (Amir Khusrau, 1890, p. 77; Ibn Battuta, 1953, pp. 47, 49; Barani, 2005, pp. 417-18, 440). The first concern of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320-1325) was to restore law and order in the kingdom. He enhanced agriculture by planting gardens and giving incentives to cultivators (Barani, 2005, pp. 420, 440-1, 542). He was succeeded by Muhammad Shah, an energetic, highly qualified and brilliant ruler. He is said to have moved the imperial capital to Devagiri in southern India, which he named Daulatabad in 1327. Muhammad Tughluq's intention was to entrench a Muslim presence in the south to prevent frequent rebellions. Apparently Muhammad Tughluq did not transfer his capital but established a second capital. The project did not fail as is generally believed; rather it was a great success as he succeeded in planting a sizeable Muslim presence in the South so much so that the new settlers succeeded in a few years to found the Bahmani Empire (1347-1527) during his lifetime itself. However, Muhammad Tugluq's reign facing turbulence due to the great distance from the northern frontier regions and the continuous Mongol threat,

compounded during the last years of his rule by famine and rebellions throughout the Sultanate (Barani, 2005, pp. 478-9, 491-3; Hardy, 1966, pp. 3-8).

Before his departure, Timur appointed Khizr Khan, one of the former governors of Firoz Shah, as a governor to the region of Punjab and upper Sind (Barani, 2005, p. 333). Soon he gained power and extended his control over Delhi and became the founder of the Saiyid dynasty (r. 1414-1421). This dynasty was replaced by the Lodis who came to power in 1451, when Bahlul Lodi, an Afghan chieftain, ascended the throne, supported by the Afghans (Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 10). Bahlul Lodi was a visionary ruler who treated the Afghan nobles with honour, dignity and (what they considered as) due respect. His successor Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489-1517) was a capable ruler who extended the boundaries of his kingdom and made Agra his capital in 1504 (Quraishi, 1977, p. 23). Due to Sikandar Lodi's encouragements and continuous support, Hindus acquired proficiency in Persian and it became a distinction for them; a Hindu poet of Persian composed verses under the pen name 'Brahmin' in the language (Farishta, 1884-85, p. 344; Badauni, 1868, I, p. 323; Lal, 1980, pp. 27; Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 235).

Sikandar Lodi died in 1517 and was succeeded by his son Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517-1526). Due to his youthful age, he was at odds with senior Afghan nobles, and Daulat Khan, his own uncle, invited Babur, Mughal ruler of Kabul, to invade India. Alam Khan Lodi, a rebellious Afghan noble, and Dilawar and Haji Khan, sons of Daulat Khan, jointly launched an unsuccessful attack on Delhi (Haravi, 1986, p. 196; Babur, 2007, pp. 226-29). The uprising and turbulence encouraged Babur to wage a crucial war at Panipat, in which Ibrahim Lodi lost his life, and Babur emerged victorious and founded the famous Mughal dynasty of India in 1526 (Babur, 2007, pp. 236-7).

The Intellectual and Cultural Impact of Islam on India

To understand the cultural and intellectual impact of Islam on India, this paper will focus on the cultural role of the Sufis and scholars, the development of art and architecture and welfare institutions such as hospitals.

Importance of Sufi Orders

The evolution of traditional Sufism and the formation of the Sufi orders coincided with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Among the Sufi orders that flourished during that period, the Chishti and Suhrawardi orders are relatively more well-known on Indian soil. Both orders set up their organizations concurrently with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Within a short period, Sufis belonging to these orders succeeded in establishing their sway in the entire country and built up their centres in various Indian cities by founding *jama at khanah* and *khanqah* (Sufi hospices) (Nizami, 2002, p. 187).

The Chishti Silsilah

It was established by Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami (d. 940) in Chisht, a small village near Herat, Afghanistan (Khurd, 1885, pp. 39-40; Nizami, 2002, p. 61, Rizvi, 1986, p. 114). The Chishti Silsilah was introduced in India by Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Sijzi (d. 1236), who hailed from Sijistan. After staying sometime in Lahore, he arrived at Delhi and after a short stay there moved on to Ajmer.

The SuhrawardiSilsilah

Najib al-Din Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi (d.1168), a resident of Suhraward, was the founder ofthis Silsilah, but his nephew Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d.1234) consolidated the order. A number of his followers, including Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya

Multani (d.1262), Hamid al-Din Nagori, Najib al-Din Buzghush, Zahar al-Din Mahmud, and Muhammad Yamini moved to India due to the Guzz and Mongol incursions. Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani, one of his most prominent disciples, achieved great success in building a strong foundation of the Silsilah in Multan and Sind (Dehlavi, 1891, p. 36; Nizami, 2002, pp. 61, 236). A few of the disciples tried to establish followings in Delhi, Awadh and Bengal, but they could not make much headway due to the Chishti influence there. Indeed, the Suhrawardis failed to extend their influence in Awadh. Their main centres remained in Uchh and Multan. Since the latter was a frontier town, located on the direct caravan route from the Muslim world to Delhi, the fame of Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani spread to the Turkish lands and his *khanqah* was exceptionally well known for meeting the spiritual needs of the masses (Ibn Battuta, 1953, p. 145). Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari (d. 1291) was very popular under the Tughluqs and his khanqah at Uchh became a centre for spiritual guidance (Kamboo, 1893, p.171; Nizami, 2002, p. 236), while Shaykh Shihab al-Din' s*'Awarif al-Ma'rif* enjoyed great repute in Sufi literature, becoming popular in all Sufi circles across the Muslim world, crossing the borders of the Silsilahs (Arshad Islam, 2001, p. 170).

Contribution to Society

Since the establishment of his *Khanqah* in Multan under Qubacha'a rule, Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya and his heirs took a keen interest in the welfare and security of the people, and there are numerous examples oftheir concern for the local populace (Sijzi 1894, pp. 119-20; Farishta, 1884-85, II, p, 406). They used their influence with the Sultans of Delhi to represent the interests of the people of Multan, even to the extent of effecting regime change; when Qubacha failed to satisfy the demands of the people for a fairer and more transparent socioeconomic and political system, Shaykh Zakariya used his influence to invoke the intervention of Iltutmish to re-establish Shariah (i.e. the rule of law) in Multan (Farishta, 1884-85, p.406). Similarly, when in 1246, the Mongol commander Sali Nuyin was harassing the city of Multan, the Shaykh mediated through Malik Shams al-Din with the Mongol leader, persuading the Mongols to pull out by paying them 100,000 dinars from his own resources (Harvi, 1986, pp. 157-58).

Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari used to frequently visit the royal court in Delhi and he used such opportunities to present the grievances of both the residents of Multan and the inhabitants of Delhi, who sought to get their accumulated problems resolved through his good offices. The problems that he brought to the notice of Sultan were complex and diverse, and far beyond the scope of a modern government welfare system. For example, he is known to have remarked that he had not taken the trouble of travelling to Delhi to seek favour from the Sultan for himself but to secure assistance for the marriage of the daughters of one of his deceased teachers (Husain, 1983, p. 334). On every occasion Shaykh Rukn al-Din Multani visited Delhi, petitioners gathered around him and packed his *dola* (palanquin) with petitions for the Sultan's assistance through his good offices. Since the Sultan gave personal attention to such requests, it is said that the residents of Delhi used to stand in long queues awaiting Shaykh's arrival on his way to the court and they often inundated the palanquin in a barrage of applications, being sure that they would certainly be attended to (Khurd, 1885, pp. 148-49; Kamboo, 1893, p. 142; Rizvi, 1986, p. 211).

It should be noted that in spite of the great respect in which these saints were held by the court and their desire to use this influence to serve the people, they maintained complete independence and refused to be

swayed by the grandeur and awe of the court. Saiyid Jalal ud din Bukhari was an outspoken critic of the extravagant and luxurious life style of the rulers as such wealth was generally acquired by unjust means. Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari delivered public sermons denouncing such expropriations and was determined in his efforts to ensure the establishment of Shariah, and it was mostly due to his influence that Sultan Firoz Shah abolished most of the taxes that could not be justified under Islamic law (i.e. those not absolutely essential for public welfare) (Husain, 1983, pp. 211-12). Saiyid Bukhari told his disciples that whatever he received from the Sultan was meant for the assistance of the people and not for the sake of the amassing of wealth (Husain, 1983, p. 262). Shaykh Rukn ud Din Multani was said to have remarked that besides learning and spirituality, money was also needed by a saint to satisfy the needs of the people (Dehlavi, 1891, p. 56).

Thus while maintaining a certain distance and aloofness from the purely political realm of the royal court and its intrigues, Sufis were always ready to intercede with the powerful on behalf of the people in their bid to help the needy and the downtrodden as a means of social service. The core of their spirituality was service for others, devoting their time, energy and money to the Islamic cause of helping the oppressed, and affirming the absolute superiority of non-violent methods to solve social and other problems of society (Khurd, 1885, pp. 46, 185; Nizami, 2002, pp. 236, 238).

The Muslim community of India was, by the 13th century, a dynamic Islamic civilization in its own right, interacting with the Hindu masses, which brought mutual understanding and fruitful awareness to both communities. While carefully avoiding antithetical engagement on sensitive issues, Islam had an enormous impact on the social and cultural life of Hindus. Both communities influenced each other in their daily practices and culture, and many Muslim elements were incorporated into Hindu religion, art, literature and science and vice-versa, due in large part to the close assimilation of Sufi practices. which themselves exhibit numerous Hindu and Buddhist themes not derived from exoteric Islam (Chand, 2011, p. 137). Muslims borrowed much ancient Indian knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine and philosophy, while lifestyle traces were left by Muslims on Indian customs, culture, music, fashion and dress, food, cooking, marriage, celebration of festivals and fairs (Chand, 2011, pp. 138-42).

Contribution of Scholars and Their Literary Productions

It is important to note that the elite of the Delhi Sultanate were not only preoccupied with political and administrative affairs, they were equally devoted to patronizing men and women of letters in their pursuits of academic and literary contribution. As the nobles themselves were well-versed in diverse branches of sciences, they produced a variety of literature in numerous languages, mainly Persian, Arabic, Awadhi and Hindawi. Their literary production can be grouped into literary works composed by the nobles themselves, and those whom they patronized.

Works by Aristocrats

Majd al-Mulk Baha al-Din al-Jamji was a prominent noble and a well- known Qutbi Amir. He was a poet of great merit and used to compose fine poetry (Awfi, 1906, pp. 467-8). Rukn al-Din Samarqandi (d.1218), who was appointed Qazi of Lakhnauti by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji (d. 1206), learned Sanskrit in Bengal from a local *yogi* (Hindu ascetic) and subsequently rendered *Amritkund,* a Sanskrit work on *yoga* entitled *Hauz al-Hayat* into Persian, assisted by Bhoj, a local Brahman. He further rendered this book into Arabic entitled *Mirat al-Ma'ani fi*

Idrak- i-Alam-i-Insani. This was a pioneering effort in opening the traditionally hidden and sacerdotal knowledge and traditions of India to the outside world. Muhammad Ghaus Shattari Gwaliori (d. 1562) rendered it again into Persian entitled *Bahr al-Hayat* (Rashid, 1969, pp. 46-52; Hadi, 1995, pp. 519-20).

Malik Taj al-Din Reza, a *dabir* (secretary) of Iltutmish, was a Persian poet of repute born in India. Due to his excellent poetry, he received appreciation from the elite of Delhi (Sijzi 68; Qamaruddin 72). Taj Reza recited an admirable *qasida* celebrating the occasion of receiving the robe of honour for Iltutmish sent by the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansir (r. 1226-1242) (Qawwas, 1999, p. 297; Hadi, 1995, p. 517). On the occasion of the conquest of the Gwalior fort by Iltutmish, Reza composed verses which were later inscribed on the fort's gate. Similarly, he composed *qasaid* praising Rukn al-Din Firoz and his *wazir* Malik Nizam al-Mulk Junaidi (Qawwas, 1999, pp. 54-5; Badauni, 1868, I, pp. 67, 69; Nizam al-Din, 1927, p. 29; Farishta, 1884-85, p. 66).

Shams al-Din Dabir was a resident of Samana, and besides his secretarial accomplishments he was also an eminent poet. He was devoted to Farid al-Din Masud Ganj-i-Shakar (1175-1265), the famous Chishti Saint. Due to his eloquent poetry he was given the title *Malik- al-Kalam* ('Lord of Eloquence') by Nasir al-Din. Shams al-Din Dabir was a good friend of Amir Khusrau; the latter cited him in his writings and composed a *qasida* in his praise (Sijzi, 1894, pp. 68, 127-8).

Minhaj al-Din 'Umar ibn Siraj al-Din Muhammad al-Juzjani, the celebrated author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* as well as a poet of great eminence, was appointed as the *mudir* (principal) of Madarsa-i-Firozia in Uchh by the then ruler Nasir al-Din Qubach in 1227 (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 175, 188. 200, 296, 303; Barani, 2005, p.14; Farishta, 1884-85, p.71). After Qubacha's death, Minhaj came to Delhi in 1228 and received the patronage of Shams al-Din Iltutmish, who appointed him *qazi, khatib* (preacher), *muhtasib* (superintendent of morals) and *imam* of Gwalior. He was in fact made responsible for all religious affairs and was later assigned the office of *Sadr-i-Jahan* (Chief Ecclesiastic of the State). He was appointed as the qazi of Delhi and made *qazi-i-Mamalik* by Bahram Shah in 1241, but after Bahram Shah's death, Minhaj resigned and moved to Bengal. He returned to Delhi and was appointed as the *mudir* (principal) of the Nasiriya College at Delhi, and superintendent of its *awqaf* (endowments) in 1244. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* an eyewitness account of the reign of Iltumish and his successors, makes particular note of the foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal from its conquest by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji until 1259 (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 144, 191, 202-205, 211; Sijzi, 1894, pp. 53, 265).

Amir Khusrau belonged to a family of eminent nobles. His father was an Amir and his maternal grandfather Imadul Mulk was the *Rawat Arz* (Minister of War) of Sultan Balban. Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, the father of Amir Khusrau lived at Patiyali in Etah, Uttar Pradesh, where Amir Khusrau was born in 1253. From an early age he began to compose verses and *ghazals* that drew attention and admiration from the elders. He was initially under the patronage of Malik Chajju, a nephew of Balban, after which he came to Bughra Khan, the Governor of Bengal; soon after he joined the court of Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of Balban at Multan. Amir Khusrau enjoyed extraordinary mastery over all forms of poetry.

Khusrau is one of the few Indian poets whose poetic accomplishments have been conceded by the Iranians. He was a prolific writer of both prose and poetry and in both genres he has left a vast corpus, but his genius flowed more naturally in poetry. In prose, his *Ijaza-i-Khusravi* (5 volumes) and *Khazain*

al-Futuh are very well-known. In poetry, besides historical *mathnavis,* he has left behind several collections of his poems. A contemporary of Amir Khusrau was Amir Hasan Sijzi (d. 1336), the famous author of *Fawaid al-Fuad,* i.e. the collection of *malfuzat* (sayings) of Shaykh Nizam al Din Auliya. It is not only an anthology of Sufi discourses over a fifteen- year period, but rather it is an inclusive, authentic and fascinating testimony of the socio-cultural and religious life of the period. From a literary point of view, his *ghazals* are considered to be of a very high standard of extraordinary beauty.

Zia al-Din Barani (d. 1357) was a historian, jurist and political thinker and the author of *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* and *Fatwa-i-Jahandari*. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* is a valuable source of the Delhi Sultanate from the reign of Sultan Balban to that of the first six years of Firoz Shah's reign, while *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* is a book on political philosophy and statecraft that deals with the counsel to rulers for good governance. He is the first historian known to have recorded the socio-economic conditions of the time, particularly with regard to the Delhi Sultanate.

Maulana Zia al-Din Sunami, a reputed scholar of religious sciences, was an authority on *tafsir* and *fiqh*. He was a *muhtasib* (Supervisor of Public Morals) during the reigns of Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq. Maulana Zia al-Din wrote a treatise in Arabic entitled *Nisab al-Ihtisab,* as a manual for *muhtasibs*. In this book, he explained the definition, significance and objectives of *hisbah* and discussed in detail the duties of *muhtasib*. It served as a reference book for a number of judicial works including *Fatawa-i-Firozshahi* and *Fatawa-i- Hammadiah* compiled during the 16th century (Barani, 2005, p. 356; Zafarul Islam, 2005, pp. 8-9). Maulana Razi al-Din Hasan al-Saghani (d. 1252), a native of Badaun, started his career as *naib-i-mushrif* (deputy account officer) in Koil (Aligarh). He rose to be a great scholar and later compiled *Mashariq-al-Anwar.*

Qazi Kamal al-Din Jafri, a *qazi* of Badaun, was known for his piety and scholarship. He compiled a book on*fiqh* entitled-*Munfiq* (Sijzi, 1894, pp. 225, 236-7; Qalandar, 1959, p. 211). Thakkura Pheru, a Jain scholar and a mint officer of Ala al-Din Khalji, wrote on a variety of scientific subjects in Prakrit. His well-known works are *Kharataragaccha- yugapradhana-catuhpadhika, Jyotisara, Dravyaparikkha, Vastusara, Rayanaparikkha, Dhatupatti* and *Ganitasarakaumudi* (Bhandarkar, 1907, p. 38).

Kabir al-Din, son of Taj al-Din Iraqi, was a court historian of Ala al-Din Khalji, and an expert in *dabiri* (secretarial) skills and the art of *insha.* He was appointed as *Amir-i-Dad-i Lashkar* and composed *Fathnama* ('Letters of Victory'), which ran into several volumes. He also composed *Tarikh-i-Alai*, which appraised the career and achievements of Ala al-Din Khalji (Barani, 2005, pp. 14, 361; Lal, 1980, p. 341). Ahmad Hasan Abdusi, known as Taj al-Mulk, was a noble of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq who joined Sultan's Lakhnauti expedition in 1324, and authored *Basatin al-Uns* and *Sadr-i-'Ala.* The *Basatin al-Uns,* a Hindu tale written in a style of metaphorical Persian, was completed in 1325. Muhammad Tughluq promoted him as *Dabir-i-Khas* by assigning him the title, Taj al-Mulk (Rashid, 1969, p. 171; Jackson, 1999, p. 153). The most prominent literary figure during the Tughluq period was Malik Ain al-Mulk, commonly known as Ain al-Mulk Mahru, who compiled a number of works on different sciences including *Tarassul-i-Ain al- Mulki,* commonly known as *Insha-i-Mahru.* It was a collection of letters which testifies to his literary skill and is regarded as a model of the *Insha* literature. It is also a very important source of historical information regarding the period.

Malik Shams al- Din Abu Rija, alias Ziya al-Mulk, the *mustaufi-i- mamalik,* was

an intelligent and accomplished *qasida* writer under Firoz Shah (Afif, 1891, p. 456). Ibn Battuta came to India in 1333 and became the *Qazi* of Delhi. He wrote a long poem in praise of Muhammad Tughluq and his travelogue *Tuhfat al-Nuzzar fi Gharaib al-Amsar wa Ajaib al-Asfar*, popularly known as *Rehla*, was a valuable work for the fourteenth century Muslim world (Ibn Battuta, 1953, p.750; Selin, 1997, p. 417). Malik Qabul Qara Khan, a jurist under Firoz Shah Tughluq, compiled a legal digest entitled *Fatawa-i-Qara Khani* for the guidance of *Qazis* (Hadi, 1995, p. 482).

Amir Ikhtiyar al-Din was a noble at the court of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq. He composed *qasidas* in praise of a new palace built by the Sultan (Chandra, 2003, p. 363). Qazi Zahir Dihlavi was a brilliant poet under Nasir al-Din Mahmud Shah Tughluq. His *Diwan* (anthology) is full of *qasidas* in tribute to Mahmud (Badauni, 1868, p. 257). Yahya ibn Ahmad Sirhindi, a courtier of Saiyid ruler Mubarak Shah, wrote *Tarikh- i-Mubarakshahi* as a token of gratitude to the Sultan (Hadi, 1995, pp. 623-4). Masnad-i-'Ali Mian Bhu'a, the *wazir* and *sadr* of Sikandar Lodi, had particular interest in the field of *ilm-i-tibb* (medicine), and compiled the *Tibb-i-Sikandar Shahi.* Mian Bhu'a, after gaining mastery over Sanskrit, studied the *Ayurvedic* system of medicine which he combined with *Tibb-i-Unani* to produce *Ma'adan al-Shifa-i Sikandar Shahi,* using different Sanskrit classics like *Ja Deskarat, Ras Ratnako, Suangdhar* and *Chintama* as his source materials (Mushtaqi, 2002, pp. 79-80; Rashid, 1969, pp. 171-2).

Conclusion

The success of the amazing scientific temperament and broadmindedness of Indo-Muslim rulers and people of the Delhi Sultanate established the predominance of 'Indo-Islamic Civilization' in the Islamic East in all fields of knowledge. Islamic elites in the Sultanate provided a broadly tolerant umbrella under which the intercontinental exchange of information and ideas was facilitated and made accessible to the wider world. The salient feature of the Delhi Sultans was their outward looking attitude, pursuing a more vigorous and creative foreign policy than the Mughals. Three Sultans of Delhi received official investiture, both from Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad and Cairo. Iltutmish was the first to establish diplomatic relations with the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansir Billah (r.1226-1242) and received a patent of investiture by the Caliph's messenger who confirmed him the title *Yamin Khalifat Allah* and *Nasir Amir al-Mu'minin* in 1229.

A hundred years later, Sultan Muhammad Tughluq also received Haji Said Sarsari, an emissary of the Abbasid Caliph of Egypt Al-Hakim II (r. 1341-1352) to Delhi, in 1344. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq twice received mandates from the Egyptian Caliph Al-Mu'tadid Billah (r. 1352-1362) as *Sayf al-Khilafat* (Sword ofthe Khilafat), and *Qasim Amir al-Mu'minin* (Partner of the Commander of Faithful) in 1354. In 1362, he received another patent from the new Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil Billah I (r. 1362-1383) with the title *Sayyidal-Salatin* (Lord of Sultans) (Afif, 1891, pp. 274-76; Jackson, 1999, p. 296).

Islamic civilization under the Delhi Sultanate paved the way for the local populace to experience Islamic religion, which liberated many people from the rigid restrictions of the traditional caste system and introduced refinements in cuisine, apparel, town planning and the arts. India also proved to be a fertile ground for Persian language and Islamic learning, and indigenous scholars as well as emigres produced many fundamental and key works in various fields, particularly their fostering and development of Sufism and Hanafi *fiqh.*

The factor facilitating the remarkable civilizational fillip given to India and the

world under the Delhi Sultanate was the robe of Islamic civilization that justified the rule and power of the Sultans and aristocracy, and which conferred legitimacy on them by virtue of their lavish patronage of material welfare and propagation of knowledge of all kinds for the advancement, preservation, harmony and adornment of society. Although there is much blood in the history of all world civilizations, rarely do we find such a legacy of educational, artistic and civilizational excellence as that of the Islamic world and medieval India. Just as the world should acknowledge the debt it owes to India, India must also acknowledge the debt it owes to Islam and to the generations of Muslims who fostered learning and progress through striving to live up to the words of the Prophet Muhammad, who said (narrated on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit):

May Allah brighten the face of the person who hears what I say and retains it, then conveys it to others: for sometimes one who hears from another remembers it better than the original hearer himself (Musnad Ahmad and Sunan at-Tirmidhi).

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