Historiography in India: A Study of the Muslims as the First Historiographers in India

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A Study Of The Muslims As The First Historiographers In India

Judith L. Clawson
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INTRODUCTION

Prior to my visit last summer, I was virtually unacquainted with India. Granted, when India was mentioned a few general images would come to mind: world's largest democracy, partition, Gandhi, yoga, population and starvation, Hinduism, no history. The seminar afforded an opportunity to look into these vague ideas of mine.

Being a history major one of my interests naturally concerned the Indian past. I had initially planned a topic on some aspect of early Hindu history. It took little time to discover that a great deal of the literature concerning this area is speculative, that there was actually no 'history' written during this period.

However, while searching through those marvelous Indian bookstores, I ran across all sorts of books on medieval Indian history, on Muslim history and civilization in India. In one of the many books which I thumbed through, I discovered a paragraph that channeled my train of thought and eventually developed into this paper. Roughly, it stated that the advent of Islam began a great series of Indian chronicles written by men who often actually took part in related events. The Muslim period is one of vivid living to us whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows.

I believe the bulk of this statement can be explained by religion; religion being the reason the Hindus did not write history and the reason the Muslims did.
If one believes, as did the Hindu, that he lives in the midst of a totally profane world, temporally and spacially, then naturally the events of man's past will have little or no meaning for him. All of man's actions are merely repetitions of archetypal precedents set in illo tempore by the gods. Mythology then supplies the necessary communication of the eternal moral values of the real cosmos of the gods.

On the other hand, if one believes that life on earth has meaning because God has so ordained it, then there is nothing prohibiting the study of the past. An Arabic potentiality of a legendary (not mythological) tradition was suddenly developed into a consciousness of history with the coming of the Prophet. Historical inquiry evolved from a strict theological character to a more secular study of the past, involving perpetuation of Islamic moral values.

Historiography, not history, should be used here. Islamic writing was an art of narration in which 'truth' was subordinated to beauty of form and richness of content, and had to appeal to the appropriate emotions of the reader. That is, actuality was subordinated to purpose. In this sense, it is historiography with which I will be concerned—historiography in India as a means of propagating a moral standard—historiography as a religious tool.

Before beginning my limited discussion of this topic, I want to emphasize that the generalizations I will make are not put down in the spirit of complete accuracy but should be recognized for what they are—
stimuli to historical imagination and formulas rendering a kind of coherence to varying data and ideas bearing some resemblance to the people and the periods about which I am writing.
As religious men, both the Hindus and the Muslims had concepts of sacred and profane time, sacred and profane space. However, the organization of these was fundamentally different. When the Muslims began moving into India, first as a religious and then as a political force, they brought with them a real consciousness of history. This was something new in India. Why?

The Hindu conceived that the cosmos in which he lived was cyclically oriented, that is, time was periodically regenerated. "Chronology is systematized in such a way that it is viewed not as an undefined (determined or contingent) and unforseeable succession, but as a delimited totality which is repeated at regular intervals." The existence of the world appears as a chain of identical cycles, composed of homologous years, succeeding endlessly and unchanging. This is the dispensation within which the world of man exists.

Sacred time, on the other hand, exists wholly outside this universe; before man's being; eternally. During this time all actions occurred which would later have meaning for man. The sacred cosmos of the gods was reality, and the scene in which the archetypes were set and the world created. What was created, however, was profane time and space, and man was left in an illusory environment. His contact with reality could only occur by repetition or participation, i.e., an object or act could only become real as it imitated or repeated an archetype.
Insofar as an act (object) acquires a certain reality through the repetition of certain paradigmatic gestures, and acquires it through that alone, there is an implicit abolition of profane time, of duration of 'history.'

Time merely makes the appearance and existence of this possible. It has no final influence on man's existence because it is itself constantly regenerated. The 'eternal return' is uncontaminated by time and becoming. No event is irreversible, no event final. Nothing new ever happens. The ancient Hindu could acknowledge no act which had not been previously posited and lived by someone else, some other being who was not a man. What he did had been done before and would be repeated again and again. For him, life was always played as the same melody, the only variation being that different notes were used at different times.

This periodic regeneration of time presupposed a new creation.

"Because of the metaphysical and an-historical structure of Indian spirituality, the Indian never elaborated a cosmological New Year scenario as elaborate as those found in the ancient Near East." However, Eliade describes an Indian sacrificial rite as a primordial restoration.

The sacrificer's conscious effort to re-establish the primordial unity, that is, to restore the whole that preceded the Creation, is a very important characteristic of the Indian spirit with its thirst for primordial unity.... With every sacrifice the Brahman reactualizes the archetypal cosmic act and that the coincidence between the 'mythical instant' and the 'present moment' supposes the abolition of profane time and the continual regeneration of the world.
Nothing is of importance except the deliverance of the soul, the return of the absolute. All that takes place in chronology is mere variation of surface appearances. Historical events occur only to vanish immediately after, vain effervescences of illusory phenomena, diluted and lost in outscaled cycles.  

Thus Hindu man never bothered with the question, "What has, in fact, taken place in the world?"—not even to the degree of legend. Instead he was interested in asking, "How must the present order have originated?"

This is the boundary between legend and myth. Social organization, the physical environment, geographical layout of the earth, the pattern and motions of the heavens and the natural progression of the year: all these were presumably established and set going at some remote epoch in the past.

The traditional mythologies of the ancient world were intended to provide answers to questions on which no legend, however authentic, could possibly throw light. For suppose one collected together all the tradition recording events for as far back as anyone could remember, and suppose one even called in legends to extend the time span of the story, the whole result would, nevertheless, be concerned with a sequence of events taking place within the present dispensation. Taken by itself, such a story must satisfy only those who were content to take the present order entirely for granted.

Therefore, in early India, writing of history, in anything like the modern sense, did not exist. It would have been nonfunctional. Instead, India was provided with mythology and that was all that was necessary. For myths spoke of the actions and interactions of the gods; the same gods who had created and patterned man's social order and being after their divine, eternal and natural order. This was reality and contact with it was of the
utmost importance. Myth established the moral standard of sacred
time which did not need repeated adaptations to present worldly con-
ditions, for its standards were eternal and life itself was but a repetition
of the past. Indeed, the Hindu strongly refused concrete time and was
hostile toward any attempt at autonomous history, that is, history not
regulated by archetypes. Archaic man defended himself to the utmost
of his powers against all the novelty and irreversibility that history
entails.

The historical event in itself, however important, does
not remain in the popular memory, nor does its recollection
kindle the poetic imagination, save insofar as the particular
historical event approaches a mythical model.8

Hindu mythology, then, can be loosely paralleled to Muslim histori-
ography in that they both fulfill the same purpose; they both set forth
moral propositions and the propositions were used as tools to know, or
approach, reality or the highest good.

Ilm al-Tarikh, or Islamic historiography, is an outgrowth of Arabic
and Persian culture. In the pre-Islamic times one might have expected
to find some sort of written historical tradition. However, all that can
be found is vague and exaggerated tales of the distant past, including a
few names of ancient kings and only a slightly more accurate memory of
the events which occurred during the last century before Islam. This
bears all the marks of an oral tradition. What, then, can help explain
the gulf between the legendary and popular traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia
and the historiography which appears by the second century of the Hijra?

In Arabia, verse was the technique which maintained traditions, and ancient traditions disappeared as the corresponding verses were forgotten. Such a tribal tradition, while necessarily one-sided, hazy in chronology and often romantically exaggerated, nevertheless reflected a reality and sometimes even preserved a core of truth. Islamic conquests diverted the course of these traditions but did not alter their character. Thus, the new traditions preserve the older associations. This was to influence Islamic historiography in that tribal tradition furnished materials and also sources from which later authors drew for their writings.

The beginning of scientific history in Arabia is associated with the study of the life and activities of the Prophet. The source of this discipline is consequently to be found in the collection of the Prophetic Tradition (hadith) and also in these traditions relating to the military expeditions of the Prophet.

These associations left an enduring impression on historical method and explains the change which appears from this moment on the character of historical information. Even while admitting rather dubious elements in some of the traditions relating to the Prophet's life, it seems that for the first time one can say that these people were standing on firm historical ground.

The second generation Muslims are sources rather than collectors, that is, they left no written evidence of such behind them. However, the next generation begins the art of combining traditions of several sources.
into a single narrative. From this point on, historical study widens, and it is here that the philologists, who had tried to recover all surviving ancient poety, had really performed a service and were the ones who collected and sorted out this mass of material. The historical science which derived from the hadith was approaching the historical materials collected by the philologists while retaining its own method of traditional presentation.

In his work, *Book of Classes*, Muhammad Ibn Sul (d. 250/864-865) assembled a biographical dictionary of the Prophet.

The conception of such a biographical dictionary itself marks a fresh development in the art of history, and illustrates its still close connection with the science of hadith, since it was chiefly for purposes of hadith criticism that these materials were assembled. This development occurred wholly in al-Iraq. The result of this being that al-Iraq, and its traditions, were given a dominant place in later works.

Also at the beginning of the third century (d. 280/893) we find a fresh impetus toward literary activities by the introduction of paper, and it is from this period that the earliest written works have come down to us.

To sum up these developments, the outstanding fact is that, in spite of the hostility of a section of early theologians, to historical studies, the Islamic community had become history-conscious. No doubt historical arguments contained in the Quran, natural pride taken in the extensive conquests and the rivalries between tribes contributed to this. But the
remarkable feature that, besides the philologists, the writers of historical tradition were almost exclusively theologians and muhaddiths suggests that a deeper reason existed. For in the theological view, history was the manifestation of a divine plan for the government of mankind, and while the historical outlook of the earlier generations might be limited to tracing it through the succession of prophets which culminated in Muhammad, all Islamic schools were agreed that it did not end there. "The whole faith was explicitly founded on historical data, both tanzil revelation and the hadith reports about the Prophet." This was the beginning of expansion. In the Sunni doctrine it was the Islamic community, the ummat Allah, with which the continuation of the divine plan on earth was bound up. Consequently, the study of history was a necessary supplement to the study of the divine revelation in the Quran and the hadith. Furthermore, the doctrine of historical continuity was one of the bases for Sunni politico-religious thought. To the Shia, divine government was continued in the line of the Imams, and shows the influence of this religious preoccupation. It is strong testimony to the importance of history in religious thought that mistaken pietism and religious controversy were already opening the door to partisan, apologetic and also irenical falsification. From here forward, historiography is an inseparable part of Islamic culture. "...in those cultured eastern lands where no written history existed..."
is followed by the rise of an historical literature."

Islam in India, as anywhere else, was a civilization that was founded upon religion. It would, therefore, seem unrealistic to perform a 
"... divorce of the Muslim part of the history of medieval India from the study of Islam as a religion and as a system of that in its extra-India setting."

Islam meant the recognition by man of some higher and unseen power who had control of his destiny and who was entitled to obedience, reverence and worship. "The reason for man's existence on earth, the purpose of his daily life, was submission (islam) to and worship of the one God, the Omnipotent." The only value that human society possessed was that Allah had endowed it as man's proving ground for eternal salvation. The life on earth was significant, but only because Allah had given it significance. The world was not illusory, but oftentimes an awful reality for man and portended everlasting bliss or eternal damnation. Man's existence on earth was not an evil to be avoided but an opportunity to serve God. The Quran emphasized man's accountability to Him for his deeds—that is to say for his history—on the Day of Judgment. Hence, the facts about what men do are instinct with a truly awful significance.

Thus, for Muslims, the values of this world are not of its own creation and man does not live only to gain his own satisfaction according to his own conception. "... right is right only because God so decrees it: and God
in fact, decrees it only for a given moment: accordingly, Jewish law was right in the day of Jewish prophecy, even as Muslim law is right since the time of Muhammad; as Muhammad was now the last of the prophets, there was historical assurance that moral norms would not change for the future: in practice they were immutable.\textsuperscript{16}

From the Muslim point of view, his ultimate obligation to obey the regulations of the Shari'a (Holy Law) is a religious one. These may fall into one or another of the five categories circumscribing all human actions: commanded, recommended, legally indifferent, reprobated or forbidden by God Himself. According to orthodox theory, unambiguous commands or prohibitions stated in the Quran or in the authenticated Sunna left out any possibility for the use of human reason and determination, except where philology or lexicography were needed in order to establish literal sense. However, in points not clearly stated, the Muslims turned to analogy (quiyas) or even opinion (ray): not to individual opinion, however, but to consensus (ijma) of the entire Muslim community. This and the acceptability of analogy were the real defenders against heresy and innovation. What the Muslim community was prepared to accept became Divine Law.

When the community had attained consensus, it was regarded as irrevocable; the formation and circulation of new doctrines and practices was in theory impossible, and in practice, dangerous. Consensus fixed the limit between orthodoxy and heresy; to question an interpretation of Islam so arrived at was tantamount to heresy. However, consensus is not promulgated by any formal body and its existence is perceived only on looking back and seeing that agreement has tacitly been reached and then consciously accepting that tacit agreement. The spiritual mantle of Muhammad fell not upon a church and a priesthood but upon the whole community.\textsuperscript{17}
This statement is the basis for a rather new concept of historical inquiry. Summed up in it is the importance of the past in asserting its immutable value for the entire community.

During this period of historical development, Islam had been sweeping out of Arabia and Persia in every direction. It stretched from Spain to China, from Africa to Russia. Within such a vast area there were numerous political districts, each directing its own affairs. This regionalization was to be a major influence in a shift that took place in the concept of history throughout the entire Muslim world.

In the annals written after 1000AD, the Muslims could no longer be 'universal' for each author was confined by political boundaries and thus rarely able to deal with events in such distant regions. Now the recording of political history passed from the hands of the theologians into those of officials and courtiers. Such a change affected form, content and also spirit. This secularization of history resulted in two major consequences.

The first was that now the historiographer replaced theological justification with the principle of finding moral value in its study. In other words, "history perpetuates the record of virtuous and evil actions and offers them as examples for the edification of future generations." 18

The second result was a generally biased and narrow approach to history which reflected the religious, political and social outlook of their class. The old theological conception was discarded and concentration
tended toward the activities of the ruler and court. An extensive field of biography still remained to the official of political historiography, and can be seen as a branch of classical tradition.

It is roughly at this point that Islamic culture had crystallized into a form which one can see, in retrospect, that it has maintained until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It had accomplished this by the time the Muslims began moving full force into India. This is the heritage they brought with them, and with this firmly fixed in their minds, it all gave the Islamic civilization a rigidity, strength and understanding to resist any impulse for change in the new environment of India.

The Muslim population had been continually growing in northern India since the beginnings of the Arab invasions around 700 AD, and the Ghaznavid invasions beginning in 1000. At the onset of this period, Islam was still a very basic and simple religion, only a century or so having passed since the death of the Prophet. Therefore, there was some give-and-take between Muslim and Hindu in the areas of science, such as mathematics and astronomy. However, the Ghorid Turkish conquest, which commenced in 1175 and blossomed into the Sultanate of Delhi, was vastly different. The Ghorids and the horsemen who followed them, all Afghans and Turks and newly converted nomads, were hardly the bearers of a Muslim culture of remarkable depth and subtlety. They came as raiders and remained as rulers. They came as soldiers of fortune, found it and stayed to organize it.
It would therefore, not have been surprising if Muslim thought in India had been stillborn of such parents. But although the Ghorid Turks and Afghans themselves were rude and uncouth, they became, nevertheless, the guardians of a proud and rich emigré civilization. 19

In 1220, the Mughals burst upon the Muslim world, and Islam was eclipsed for over a century in much of the Middle East. Many of the eastern Muslim scholars were killed. However, India was not hit and as a result the Sultanate of Delhi offered refuge for scholarly fugitives from these invaders. In the thirteenth century, India became a cultural colony of the Muslim world at a time when the center of their world was in enemy hands.

It is not surprising, then, that the strong conservative trends in Islam at the beginning of this century were strengthened in India. To re-establish ties with the old rather than embrace the new was a reasonable desire in men who had barely escaped alive.

Muslims backed into their future facing the past. God's will for mankind had been revealed for men through the Prophet 600 years ago and since men had worked out their understanding of that will, any impulse for change in the new environment of India would meet with tough resistance. The good days were the good old days. The history of the world after the death of the Prophet, therefore, was a history of decadence and of retrogression, not of betterment and progress. Change was ipso facto for the worse, and therefore to be avoided. 20

They found themselves situated precariously in an armed camp in North India, open to possible attack from the Mongols in the northwest and from the Hindus all around.
Once Islam was in power in India there was no important attempt made to forcibly evict it. By the thirteenth century tensions were not nearly as great as they had been earlier, for Muslims had already made the major concession to Hindu India: the defacto acceptance of Hindus to the status of zimmis (tolerated and protected unbelievers). They had not upset the entire social pyramid but had merely changed the higher order by substituting one group of revenue collectors and military chiefs for another.

Yet in spite of this relatively peaceful coexistence, relations remained at best just that: peaceful coexistence. The religions and cultures simply could find no means of compromise to bring the two units closer to one.

Hinduism can absorb new ideas, and can even if need be find room for new gods; moreover, every passage in the Hindu sacred texts is open to figurative interpretation so that it is possible for different schools of Hinduism to hold diametrically opposed doctrines without serious antagonism. Islam, on the other hand, cannot easily adapt or compromise. The absolute unity of God, the absolute wickedness of iconolatry, are there in black and white in the Quran and there is no gainsaying them.²¹

There was also a fundamentally different concept of time and space existing between them. While this world and its delimited dispensation was illusory knowledge for the Hindu, to the Muslim it was very real.

... it remains that it is in the form of factual history that the Shari'a-minded Muslim scholar wished to conceive all those morally decisive moments that might in some cultures be elevated to a mystic cosmic time apart from the accidental sequence of our years. The fall of Adam (interpreted quite physically as a fall from the sky) was located not only in time but in a given spot which men might visit. Wonders did not interrupt history, the continued
it. The sequence of time itself left no room for the world of symbol, either in a mythical past or in a superimposed HEILSGESCHICHTE; it was as merciless as the time of a modern scientist.\textsuperscript{22}

Therefore, with the two communities existing separately, the Muslims became the first, and still the only writers of historiography in India. What was the character of their writing?

As long as the Prophet had been alive there had been no political problems, for in Muhammad, the divinely appointed messenger, was united all legislative, executive and judicial functions. At his death, revelation of the Divine Command also died. Authority had to be found elsewhere.

Political theory is one aspect of the Shari'a and government is an expression of God's divine sovereignty. Ideally, the Muslim community was neither a political or religious one, but both. Confronted with a chasm between the ideal and actual, the Indo-Muslim theory stressed the divine ordination of the function of temporal government and the desirability of the sultanate in India acting as caliph de facto for its own denomination to dispense justice, and defend and maintain the Holy Law. "The test of the Muslim ruler was not how he came to his office but what he did when he arrived there."\textsuperscript{23}

A digestion of all this material would seem to produce something on this order: historiography has now become a means of propagation of a moral norm and the study of history had become an integral support of the orthodox Muslim conception of world order. The ruler is to preserve
the social order willed by God. The historiographer is now a court official, and naturally primarily interested in political affairs and activities. What then is the result of this synthesis in medieval India?

Very briefly, it is this. The court official writes his historiography in biographical form, concerns himself with expounding (or exaggerating) the virtues of the rulers so as to perpetuate divinely declared moral values and thus attempt to retard the social degeneration which has been continually progressing since the death of Muhammad. Undoubtedly this is an oversimplification of the overall historical picture, yet it serves to point out an important segment of the whole.

If all writers were not totally dedicated to this view, at least they expressed a consciousness of a similar historical philosophy, or acknowledged the utility of historiography of this form to the community and the individual. Both of these aspects are very important to the historiographer. "In the dimension of eternity the most valuable contribution an author can make to his contemporaries is a true and significant account of the past." Though the works produced in India were very seldom true, there surely was an attempt to make them significant. Then also "Muslims combined the hope for social justice with the stress on the ordinary man's moral status by vesting historical and social responsibility in each believer individually." With this in mind, it seems that an interpretative discussion of a few medieval Muslim historiographers is in order.
The first is Ziya al-Din Barani who completed his work, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, in 758:1357. He has been called the first Islamic historian in India. He does acknowledge utilitarianism of history and asserts that it has a didactic religious purpose. These statements are supported by his enumeration of seven benefits which the study of history confers.

1. It gives an acquaintance with the heavenly books. "History is a science which provides a capital stock of examples for those with eyes to see." 

2. It is the twin of the science of hadith; allows for distinctions between sincere and insincere Companions; gives rise to a more accurate report of the hadith and thus aids in explaining and strengthening aspects of the Muslim community.

3. It is a means of strengthening judgment by the experience of others.

4. Through the truth in history one can obtain guidance in duties and actions by comparison with the past.

5. Religious history, traditions, deeds and vicissitudes of the Prophet induce patience and resignation.

6. The concept of the just and virtuous character of the saved proves the fruits of good conduct.

7. History is a necessary foundation to truth. One can then understand and follow the virtuous path.

Barani was an unfortunate man in his own estimation. He was not in the good graces of the court, which he attributed partially to the wrongs
done to him by the members of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq's court and partially to his own moral failures. He speaks out in his work to propitiate the Divine Wrath and to secure himself a good hearing on the Day of Judgment.

In his Tarikh, he puts forth two widely accepted beliefs: "... religion and kingship are twin brothers," and that the facts reported by religious men are reliable. The latter is an attitude common to the entire Muslim world. The authors seemed to have complete confidence that the data from past historiographers is entirely accurate. His attitude toward this data is that of a believer in received truth.

The numerous general historians, whether writing in Persia or India, merely reproduce extracts from earlier sources with additional materials down to their own time, are as imitative and secondary as those in Arabic, and often show even less critical thinking.

Perhaps this will further illustrate how these eternal, immutable moral values functioned in the Islamic society.

Another Indo-Muslim historiographer of the same period is Isami. He wrote Futua-al Salatin a few years before Barani's work was completed, yet the two worked entirely independently, as Isami lived in the Deccan for twenty-five years. He was not a slavish follower of authority and imposed his own idea of form (verse) to the content and data. He was not extremely concerned with the story of Islam in India as a faith, doctrine or form of society, but he gives accounts of the deeds of Muslim rulers,
and warriors, all of whom are eulogized as warriors for the faith and pillars of orthodox Islam. "It is written within an Islamic framework of world order and within a general acceptance of Muslim revelation as laying down man's sole path to God, truth and righteousness."31

His work is adorned with moral injunctions, part of the ethical stock-in-trade of medieval Muslim authors.

Man does not know what God has will in His Infinite Wisdom and should never presume to seek to do so. However, God has willed Muhammad the Prophet, the best of created beings, who acts as an intercessor with God on behalf of fallible and sinful man.32

Yet he uses these sporadically and seems only to draw morals from events when it suits his mood; he does not preach but does not mind edifying, either. He seems to be indoctrinated in the total framework of the society, yet he seems to pursue these subjects not out of staunch conviction, but mainly because that is what is expected of him in his capacity of historiographer.

Shams al-Din Siraj Afif was a prose writer during the third quarter of the fourteenth century. His work, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, was finished in 757:1367. Again we will see a model historiographer for he accepts the word of 'reliable' informants for his information and supports the premise that those who will receive life in the next world are those who worship God and keep his commandments in this world.

For Afif, "History exists only to reveal what existed before history--
that is, Firuz Shah Tughluq's divinely created perfect nature." History (events) does not mold character, it only provides a stage for its manifestation. As a result he pays heed to only a very general chronology of events. His aim, then, is to show the sultan to be acting as may benefit moral stature. Following is an excerpt displaying his idea of the perfect rule:

Whenever the ruler with truly pious intent, his aspirations, and all solicitude, strives with the help of his supporters and followers, and with all the might and power of his office in the conviction that the glory of Muhammad's religion is the most important task of his own faith and dynasty (then the following consequences follow): obedience to the command to do what is lawful and the prohibition of what is unlawful manifests itself in his capital and provinces; the banners of Islam are always exalted; virtue and merit grow and good works and obedience to God arise; sin and iniquity, wickedness and wrongdoing sink low and remain concealed in hiding; justice and tyranny are doomed; the sciences of tradition become agreeable to men's minds and they avoid concealed innovations and the knowledge and literature of concealed innovations; the religious and protectors of religion attain to dignity and high positions while members of false sects, men of evil faith and heretics, enemies of true religion, become base and contemptible, powerless and of no account.

The problems of ascension to the sultanate throne he treats as a religious conflict between representatives of the spiritual and temporal worlds and not as a political issue. The latter was not evil as such, but only unfortunate in living on a lower religious and moral plane.

Another historiographer, Yahya Ibn Ahmad Sihrindi, composed his work, Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi, around the year 1427 with a casual and indifferent approach.

As long as the world exists, such things will happen and go on happening, in the end, the very same thing will happen to all.
He isn't passionate in his denunciation, he merely remarks on the natural ingratitude of man and the folly of trusting anything. His repeated call to avoid the chaos of the world is explainable by regarding him as obeying one of the conventions of Muslim historiography, in and outside of India.

His chronicle is adorned with morals as though he were, again, set to obey the literary cannons of his time. "We belong to God and are contented with His Decree." History for Ahmad was a body of fact not to be questioned but to be adorned at random by suitable and convention morals in verse form. And, after all, this was the type of work the educated Muslim class wanted to read.

This also was the type of work they continued to want after the onset on the Mughals. The Mughal Empire brings to a close the period of medieval India, however, there is no sharp break. There was a definite continuity in the history of Indo-Islamic civilization within the foundation of this empire which was founded in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Yet, this was also a cultural watershed.

During the medieval period there existed a general state of co-existence between the Hindus and Muslims. However, occasionally hostility would openly erupt. There was still evidence of this hostility and marked separation between the two communities during the Mughal period. A prime illustration of being that, "temples, monasteries and other splendid monuments were willfully destroyed and their materials used for building mosques." Yet, at the same time there were efforts to bring the groups closer to-
gether. "The tenacity with which attempts were made to establish links between the two religions is a dominant theme in the cultural history of the Mughals."\(^{38}\) This culminated during the reign of Akbar in his attempts to establish a real bond between the two. To the Perso-Turkish culture he added such elements as Indo-Muslim music, Hindu philosophy and literature. His attempts to combine Islamic and Hindu architecture may still be seen in the abandoned city, Fatepur Sikkri. Yet the seeping that did occur did not reach the historiographers, at least in an effective dose, for their writings did not change. The styles and purposes remained virtually unchanged. In fact, history was called upon in the following century to recall those eternal and immutable moral values.

All of Akbar's efforts were of no avail and were at least partly responsible for the orthodox reaction which followed in the 1600's. Appeals were made to the upper classes to maintain the faith through their political power, while the Prophet's message was spread to the common people. "Both appeals explain the resurgent power of Islam in the century following Akbar's experiment."\(^{39}\)

So, there was still a gulf separating these two cultures. The Hindus had not been able to influence a change in historical perspective of the Muslims and the Muslims had not been able to instill within the Hindus a consciousness of history. There was no real change in Indian historical inquiry until the advent of the British. They became overlords of Delhi in 1803 and the last Mughal emperor was exiled in 1858. It took the truly western sense of history
that the Britishers brought with them to wake up the Hindu culture. Combined
with the powerful force of Indian nationalism, at last all of India was startled
and called to look back into her long shadowy past.


4. Eliade, Myth, p. 75.

5. Ibid., p. 78.


10. Ibid., p. 113.

11. These were the early mystics who conferred much more importance on direct revelation from God than on the Quran or hadith; in other words, they neglected the importance of historical inquiry.


17. de Bary, p. 404.

18. Gibb, p. 121.
Footnotes (cont.)


20. de Bary, pp. 404-405.


22. Hodgson, p. 239.

23. de Bary, p. 465.

24. Hardy, p. 20.


26. The spellings of names of historiographers vary from source to source. Spellings used in this paper are taken from Hardy's book, Historians of Medieval India.


32. Isami, FS, p. 5, quoted in Hardy, p. 100.

33. Hardy, p. 51.

34. Afif, TFS, p. 63, quoted in Hardy, p. 54.

35. Sihrindi, TMS, p. 82, quoted in Hardy, p. 65.

36. Sihrindi, TMS, p. 110, quoted in Hardy, p. 66.


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