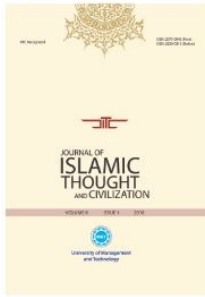


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Genesis of Muslim Culture and Co-Existence in Mughal Era

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Abstract

Muslim rule in India (1526-1707) is considered a golden chapter in the history of the culture of this region. Muslims established the Mughal Empire in India which was contemporary to the *Safavid Empire* in Iran. Massive migration to India occurred due to the wealth and grandeur of the Mughal court. Mughals transformed every sphere of the Indian culture. Their Central Asian background created an aroma in the native culture and with the amalgamation of two; Mughals gave new dimensions to Muslim civilization in India. The cultural aura of Mughals affected every sphere of Indian social life. New ways of dining were introduced. Muslims established new industries of clothing and textile. New forms of beautification were launched. Cultural feasts and festivals were regularly celebrated. Music and dance touched the heights of glory. Royal painting studio laid new styles of Indian painting. This culture gave space to every community to become its part. In the visual arts, the adaptation of local modes to the Mughal cultural environment involved a change of their ethos from religious devotion to secular entertainment. This paper focuses on the reinterpretation of Indian culture under the sway of Mughals. Every historian and scholar spells ink on the political and economic aspects of Indian history in medieval times. However, this work analyzes the cultural and social image of Muslim civilization which was developed under the policy of co-existence. Certain aspects of other cultures were also adopted by Mughal rulers under the policy of “*Peace for All*.”

Keywords: *Hindavi, kornish, langota, taslim, Ulbagcha.*

Introduction

India is the home of ancient civilizations and their mutual blending has resulted in a unique form of culture. The Arab-Iranian culture introduced by Muslims was a composite culture. The spread of Islam in South Asia led to the equality of human beings and revivalists movements.¹ The southern part of India encouraged reformers; many sects arose and tried to harmonize the teachings of Islam, Hinduism and other religions of India. This cultural interaction promoted pluralism, a new language *Hindavi* was invented and renowned poet *Amir Khusrau* used it as the language of his poetry. The influence of Muslims was also visible in diet, dress, in ceremonies, festivals and fairs and even on manners and etiquettes. Many new patterns of culture were introduced, first of all among the elites and gradually they became part of ordinary people’s life. The impact of Muslims on Indian culture showed how Hindus reacted to this culture which was completely different from their

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¹Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-a-Akbari* III volumes (London: I.C.S. Publisher, 1963), 193.



own. Some features of this culture were remarkable and enhanced the richness of their lives and hence were easily adopted. So, we can say that the culture of Muslims was wholly adopted by Hindus but they maintained their own identity as well.² Culture has a twofold impact. Muslims introduced new patterns and they were easily accepted by local communities. Similarly, Muslims were also influenced by the native culture as well. In food and drinks and living styles and manner, the locals were also impressed by the European styles. Many borrowed something from Mughal dresses, modes of life, vocabulary, behavior and many followed their own traditional path. Many ways of Hindus, Jains and Buddhists were adapted to the Mughal culture in the Mughal period. Social customs and personal laws still continued that were under the impression of religious creeds. Different categories of culture which form a civilization are discussed below.

2. Social Manners

Socially, to address a person with his/her name had never been the trend in India. The individual outlook of a person due to caste system was very visible. Mutual respect is the key element of Indian social structure. People were normally known by their families and it also determined their status in society. *Salām* was the usual salutation among Muslims and it became popular due to the blessings it carried even among the common people. However, the people of Punjab maintained the style of their *Gurūs* to greet each other. The way of greeting in upper classes and lower classes was different. As Abul Fazal mentioned that *kornish* and *taslīm* were the mode of greetings in the court of the king. Akbar, the most popular among Mughal kings, also started the custom of *sajdah* probably due to the insistence of his nobles, disciples and courtiers.³ The Mughal king started the activities of the day with *jharoka darshan*, the glimpse of the king in the balcony of his palace in early morning. Mughals were influenced by the Iranian culture. The worshipping of the sun by King Akbar with a prostration toward the east was purely inspired by the Iranian culture. Abul Fazal defined the divine origin of the Mughals from 'light.' It became popular as many of the Hindus considered it auspicious to see the face of king before their work. This tradition continued during the Mughal period.

3. Dresses and Ornamentation

Indian subcontinent has a hot environment and it is also reflected in their dressing. The Mughal king was very much conscious about his dressing. King Humayun launched new dresses known as *Ulbagcha*.⁴ Akbar's aesthetic taste is highly appreciated by every historian; he employed workers to enhance the style of his dressing. Father Monserrate commented on the style sense of Akbar, "his majesty wore clothes of silk beautifully embroidered in silver and gold. His cloak came down

²Jadunath N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India* (Calcutta: 1919), 138.

³Abul Fazal Allami, *Āin-i-Akbari* Vol. II, III, trans., H. S. Jarrett and revised by Sir Sadunath Sarkar H. Blochmann (New Delhi: D. K. Publishers, 1994), 115, https://archive.org/stream/TheAin-i-akbari-VolII-iii/TheAin-i-akbari-VolII-iii_djvu.txt

⁴A. S. Beveridge, *Humayunama*, (trans.) (London: 1902), 150. https://archive.org/stream/historyofhumayun00gulbrich/historyofhumayun00gulbrich_djvu.txt

from his hose and his boots which covered his ankles. He wore peal and jewelry.”⁵ The dress of the emperor was not the dress of the common man. The shirt was used by both upper and middle classes, sometimes long and sometimes short. There were different varieties of trousers like lose and tights. Workmen, artisan, peasants and labor class contented itself with the use of a cotton sheet which they tied around their waist reaching down to the knees. Babur wrote in his diary that Indians tie one thing called *langota* which is a piece of cloth which hangs below their navel.”⁶ The court historian of King Akbar remarked that men and women in Bengal normally go naked, wearing only one cloth around their loins.⁷ Mughals introduced some changes in the dressing of the elite and nobles, such as they used courts and proper shoes to cover their feet which were made in royal factories. Mughal dressing had three dominant elements including Khurasani, Iranian and Persian elements.

Fashion was the weakness of Mughal women. The most fashionable lady of Mughal times was Noor Jahan, the beloved wife of Emperor Jahangir. She introduced many styles of dresses, scarfs and ornaments.⁸ Several varieties of laces, brocades and gowns are remembered after her name. She was the pioneer in using scarf. Muslim women normally covered their heads. Common women did not have choices in dresses and ornamentation. A piece of cloth around their bodies which they used to cover their head with is known as sari even today. They used ornaments of cheap metals like copper and iron.⁹ Perfumes were not in common use. Only elites used them. King Akbar created a special department known as *khusbukhana* and Shiekh Mansoor was in charge of this department. They used rose, jasmine and amber in different varieties of perfumes.¹⁰ Noor Jahan’s mother Ismat Bano Begum invented *itr-e-Jahangiri* which is so strong that even if a single drop of this perfume is rubbed on the hand the whole assembly is scented.¹¹

In the well-known epic of *Padmavati*, Malik Muhammad Jaysi gave a detailed description of female toilet. Indian women used sandal paste or bath, a vermilion on parting their head, a spangle on their forehead, black lines in their eyes were visible, and they also wore ear-rings, nose stud, necklets, armlets, and anklets. These were known together as sixteen graces.¹² Men of that age were in the habit of using rings and few other ornaments, especially nobles also used necklets. Mughal political alliances with Rajputs integrated certain rituals and symbols in their culture, such as Mughal applied *tika* (vermilion) mark on their forehead. There were many factories in

⁵S. J. Monserrate, *The Commentary*, trans., J. S. Hoyland annotated by S. N. Banerji (Oxford University Press, 1922), 198.

⁶Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, [https://archive.org/stream/TheAin-i-akbari-Volli-iii_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/TheAin-i-akbari-Volli-iii/TheAin-i-akbari-Volli-iii_djvu.txt)

⁷Babur, *Tuzuk-i-Babari*, trans., A. S. Beveridge (London: 1921), 519.

⁸Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, 100.

⁹J. B. Tavernier, *The Six Voyages Through Turkey into Persia and East Indies*, Vol. II (London: 1967), 125.

¹⁰Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, 316, 312.

¹¹Beni Parsad, *History of Jahangir* (London: Indiana Press, 1930), 183.

¹²Malik Muhammad Jaysi, *Padmavat* (trans.) (Canob: 1911), 179.

Delhi, Agra, Lahore and Allahabad of Mughals which produced all kinds of ornamentation for royal consumption.¹³

4. Food and Drinks

Cooked and tasty food was available in capital cities of India like Lahore, Delhi and Agra in those days. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food was always kept ready for the customers.¹⁴ King Akbar took special interest in bakery and ordered the best material for his kitchen. Common people used *khichari* for their daily use. They added pickles on it. Mango-pickle was the part of North Indian taste before the advent of Muslims. Abul Fazal wrote that staple food was in common use. In mornings and evenings, Indians used *bajara* and *jawar* flour kneaded with brown sugar and water. Hindus were vegetarian and Akbar did not take meat in his diet in some days of week due to his Hindu courtiers.¹⁵ While drinking water, Hindus were not allowed to touch the cup/glass with their lips, they directly poured water in their throats. Table manners were not common. Indians sat on the floor during their daily meals. Some foods were introduced in the kitchens of Mughals like *kebab*, *yakhni*, and *falooda* which had Turkish origin and *dampukht* was very popular in Central Asia. King Akbar hired 400 cooks from all over India and Persia.

All the Mughal emperors were in habit of consuming wine and opium equally.¹⁶ King Jahangir was the exceptional one who took 20 cups of daily distilled liquor. He took 14 in day time and the rest at night.¹⁷ King Humayun was fonder of opium and seldom took wine. King Akbar never crossed the limits of decency.¹⁸ Strict prohibition was enforced by all Mughal kings but it could not discourage the local people. The most common and cheapest drink was *tari*, juice of coconut or palm date trees.¹⁹ Shiraz Wine (from Persia) was particularly popular in Mughal court. *Bhang* was another common intoxication which was sometimes mixed with nutmeg and mace. Tobacco gained popularity among common people as Portuguese launched it in India. Akbar enjoyed it a lot although his physician strictly advised him not to use it regularly. The use of betel leaf called pan was common in India among all classes.²⁰ Tea and coffee were used in the coastal areas of India. Tea was used by commoners and coffee was the drink of elite, such as Ovington mentioned the coffee part of the *Nawab of Thatta*.²¹ Tea and coffee houses existed in Delhi and Ahmadabad.

¹³Vijay K. Seth, *The Story of Indian Manufacturing, Encounter with Mughal and British Empire* (India: Anne Books, 2017), 45.

¹⁴Francois, *Travels in Mughal Empire*, trans., Bernnier and Annotated by Archibald Constable (V. A. Smith Revised, 1934), 230.

¹⁵Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, 128.

¹⁶Babur, *Baburnama*, Vol. 2, 125.

¹⁷Beni Parsad, *History of Jahangir*, 69.

¹⁸Badaoni, *Muntakhabul, Tawārīkh*, (trans.,) in three volumes, Vol. II (T. W. Haig: 1925), 301-302.

¹⁹William Foster, *Early Travels in India* (Oxford: 1921), 146.

²⁰W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar, an Economic Study* (London: 1920).

²¹J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1789* (London: 1700), 306.

5. Amusements

Mughals introduced many indoor and outdoor games. Among the outdoor diversions, hunting was the game of royals. Animal fight, polo, and wrestling were also very much in vogue.²² It is strange that no record of wrestling is found before Mughals. Akbar played the game of chess with slave girls as they were used as dices on the chess board. It is still preserved in the *pashisi* court of Fatehpur Skiri. *Chaucer* was a very famous game which remained popular throughout the Mughal period. Zeb-un-Nisa, the daughter of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, was an expert of this game. *Chandal Mandal* was the refined form of *Chaucer*.²³ Polo was the well-established recreation of the royals and nobles. Royal ladies also played polo during the Mughal period. The game came from Persia and became popular in India. Abul Fazal narrated that "Polo acquired predominance as the form of pleasure and the emperor really liked it in those days". Akbar introduced a new form of polo that was played in the night as well.²⁴ People also spent their time wrestling. It was pursued by both kings and commoners. In South India, women also took part in wrestling competitions. King Akbar was himself was a very good wrestler. He fixed a day of week to enjoy wrestling before him in the palace of his capital city.

Hunting was one of the means of amusements in Mughal India. Kings, princes, nobles and commoners all indulged in this game. Akbar invented a new style of hunting known as *Qumargah*²⁵ which became popular among Mughals games. Muslims were also fond of animal fight, a special fight was prepared under the command of the in-charge of the royal stable and it was presented before the king at the *darshani* gate of the Agra fort. Akbar took special interest in elephant fight. Pigeon flying was in vogue in those days and he studied different breeds of pigeons and used different methods to cross-breed pigeons. India is famous for music. Mughal emperors took a special interest in musical compositions. King Babur himself was an expert in music and composed many folk songs. Bairam Khan, companion commander of Humayun was an expert musician. The reign of Akbar produced legends like Tan Sen besides Ram Das and many others. There were famous musicians at Shahjahan's court such as Lal Khan and Sawad Khan who belonged to Fatehpur.²⁶ Mughal music was the mixture of Central Asian and Indian Music. Tan Sen, a leading singer in the court of Akbar, took Mughal music to its highest glory in the mediaeval ages.

6. Festivals

In Mughal times, a number of festivals were celebrated throughout the year. Some were religious in their format and some were neutral. Many Muslim festivals became the part of part of local culture and many local fairs became the part of

²²K. M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of People of Hindustan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal: 1933), 296.

²³Stanely Lanepole, *History of India* (London: West Vintage Press, 1965), 37.

²⁴J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, 292.

²⁵P. N Chopra, *Life and Letters under Mughals* (Delhi: Aditya Parkashan, 1975), 115.

²⁶Being a Turkish Game, *Qamangah* must have been in Voyage during the Regions of Babur and Humayun but no documentary evidence is available

Muslim civilization. *Nauroz* was borrowed from Persia, the New Year's Day, a national festival during Mughal times. The birthday of the ruling King was celebrated in the length and breadth of the empire with great pomp and show. Weighing ceremony of kind (*Tuledan*), on the eve of their birthdays, was the rituals of Rajputs adopted by Mughals. Akbar celebrated both his lunar and solar birthdays. All Mughal emperors followed this custom.²⁷ Humayun introduced *Mīna Bazar*. Akbar continued this practice in form of *khushroz* or joyful day. *Holi* is considered one of the ancient festivals of the Hindus, a day of rejoicing, music and feast, as it is today. Color throwing was a compulsory part of the celebration. It is normally celebrated on the eve of spring. *Diwali* or *Dipawali* means a row of lamps. It is observed on the 15th day of the first half of the Hindu month of *Kartika* (October-November).²⁸ It is associated with the arrival of Lord Rama to his Kingdom. Muslim emperors made it a part of official celebrations. King Akbar made *Holi* and *Diwali* an official event of rejoicing and social gathering.²⁹ King Jahangir continued it in the same manner. Aurangzeb, however, suspended this event.

The Muslim month of mourning called *Muharram* is dedicated to the anniversary of Imām Hussain's death at Karbala and it is one of the tragic events in the history of Muslims. All Muslim sects especially *Shi'a* mourn in this month of tragedy. *Eid-ul-Adha* or *Bakra Eid* is celebrated in the memory of the sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) that was held on 10th *Zil-Hajj*, month of Muslim lunar year. *Eid-ul-Fitr*, also known as *Choti (little) Eid*, is celebrated after the month of fasting known as *Ramazan*. It is celebrated on the first day of *Shawwal* and continues for three days.³⁰ Muslim communities in all parts of the Indian subcontinent celebrated it both in court and at lower levels. Hindus never celebrated Muslim festivals but sent them foods and clothes on auspicious occasions. Mughal kings officially announced Hindu festivals in their courts.

7. Fairs

Numerous periodical fairs were held at Hindu pilgrimage places where Hindu men, women and children gathered for their religious assemblies. There is a famous saying about India that it celebrates more fairs and festivals than the number of days in a year. These events were mutually respected. Hindus respected Muslim celebrations and vice versa. Religious fairs of Muslims were held in Ajmer, Delhi and Lahore. Other communities celebrated them in Haridwar, Mathura, Ujjain, Kashi and Rameshwaram.³¹

8. Education

In the words of a modern educationist, "education was not popular in India." Traditional religious education was considered the priority of parents for their

²⁷*Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, 318.

²⁸Badaoni, *Muntakhabul Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, 39-40.

²⁹Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, 321.

³⁰Sir Thomas Roe, *Travels in Indian in 17th Century* (London: Trubner & Co, 1873), 307.

³¹R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of Indian People* (London: G. Alien & Co., 1951).

children. All communities provided this kind of education in their religious centers, such as temples, mosques, monasteries etc. Priestly class was responsible for education in India. Some *patachala* also served for the purpose of education. *Dargahs* were considered the sources of learning. Muslim *sufi* saints who migrated from Central Asia spread the message of equality and promoted the cause of education in many parts of India. No regular syllabus and examination were part of learning during medieval times. King hired the services of religious and secular teachers for the training of his next generations. King Akbar also appointed a Christian teacher for the education of his grandchildren. Women of royalty got their education from experts like Sati-un-Nisa,³² who was appointed the teacher and trainer of Jahan Ara. Zeb-un-Nisa, daughter of King Aurangzeb, was a known poetess of medieval times. The education of common woman was restricted only to Quran and household works which she normally acquired from her mother. Private libraries were common. Kings, royal ladies, saints and religious scholars had their private libraries. Mughal plural culture gave space to the education of all communities. Even the royal prince Dara Shikoh was an expert in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. He translated *Upanishads* and also wrote the common ethics of all religious philosophies named as *Majam-al-Bahrain*.

9. Position of Women in Society

Even the liberal king Akbar had to issue an order that, “If someone found a young woman running in the streets and bazaars of a town and while doing so she did not veil herself and allowed herself to become unveiled...she had to go to the quarters of the prostitutes and take up this profession.”³³

Purdah seems to have been observed in Hindu middle classes but certainly not among the Hindu masses. Hindu ladies could move out of doors with little or no restrictions. The birth of a daughter was considered inauspicious. The anxiety of Akbar was visible in the case of his first child when he prayed if Almighty God bestowed a son on him, he would go on foot from Agra to Shaikh Muin-ud-Din Chishti's mausoleum, at a distance of about 140 *ks* from his capital. He did so, only because of the male off-spring.

Polygamy was in vogue among the rich Muslims; each Muslim can keep three or four wives at a time as it is religiously allowed. Hindus, in the small class of *rajās* and elites had many wives but generally restricted themselves to monogamy as enjoined by their social custom.

The custom grew so much that Akbar issued orders that if a woman “happened to be older by twelve years than her husband, the marriage should be considered as illegal and annulled.”³⁴ Muslim elite married Hindu women and gave them freedom to follow their native religion. Akbar's Hindu wives followed Hinduism as *Krishna* Temple in Fatehpur Sikri Palace indicated the religious freedom of Akbar's elder wife.

³²J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 332-336.

³³Badaoni, *Muntakhabul Tawārīkh*, (trans.), Vol. II, 391-392.

³⁴Sir Thomas Roe, *Travels in India*, op. cit., 182.

Akbar held a regard for the chastity of the Hindu woman, who burnt herself with the dead body of her husband and accepted immortal path. Jahangir, too praised the chastity of Hindu ladies who never allowed “the touch of an unknown person and accepts the flames of her husband pyre.”³⁵ Mughals did not forbade *Satti* by positive law, because it was the part of their (Mughal) policy to leave the idolatrous population with “a free exercise of their religion”, but the practice was checked by indirect means.

10. Birth Ceremonies

Abdul Fazl describes the birth ceremony when honey and *ghee* were put into the mouth (of the infant) by parents and relatives by means of a gold ring.³⁶ Muslims have numerous ceremonies and rituals which are attended on the eve of birth; only *aqiqah* has been allowed on the birth of a child by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The other important rituals, such as the naming ceremony, *bismillah* (initiation), *sunnat* (circumcision), etc. owe their origin either to the ‘traditions’ or other *Muhammadan* (SAW) works on ethics.³⁷

Muslim call to prayer *azān* is sounded in the ears of every Muslim infant. The practice of consulting the Holy Book in the matter of consulting ‘names’ still prevails among the Muslims. Akbar respected the fire cult, complied with *Parsies* and adopted Persian names. Aurangzeb stopped birthday anniversaries of the king in the 51st year of his reign.³⁸

11. Marriages

Early marriages were in vogue in India those days. It was due to the socio-political and religious circumstances in which a father had to marry his daughter in an early age.³⁹ The reason for this, as Abul Fazal asserted, was the desire for the best legacy which was physically, mentally and morally transferred to the children and they acquired good or bad qualities of their ancestors.⁴⁰ Akbar was against high dowries, but he considered that high dowries were a check on the ratio of divorce.⁴¹ Mughals had matrimonial alliances with women from other communities like Hindus, Irani, Turrani and Deccani women. Even the orthodox king Aurangzeb had two Rajput and two Irani wives. It will be interesting to relate with the life of Princess Zinat-un-Nisa, who wanted to spend a maiden's life. So, she begged her father that the

³⁵Nurud-din Jahangir Padshah, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* [Memoirs of Jahangir], Trans. Alexander Roger, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53674/53674-h/53674-h.htm>, 66.

³⁶Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, op. cit.

³⁷Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*, trans. W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl (Cambridge: W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, 1925), 66.

³⁸Badaoni, *Muntakhabul Tawārīkh* (trans.), Vol. II, Op. Cit., 391.

³⁹*Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, 268.

⁴⁰Afzal Hussain, “*Marriages among Mughal Nobles as an Index of Status and Aristocratic Integration: Proceedings of Indian History Congress*,” Vol. 33 (India: 1971), 304-312.

⁴¹Abul Fazal, *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, Op. cit, 318.

amount of her dowry must be spent in the construction of a mosque at Delhi which was later known as *Kunwari Masjid*.⁴²

12. Death Ceremonies

Death was announced by using certain euphemisms especially in the case of great men. Emperor Babar “departed from the fleeting world for the everlasting abode in paradises.” Akbar escorted the dead body of Maham Anaga for a distance to show his respect to her.

Among Muslims, mourning was observed for forty days according to *Manucci*. On the death of Qutb-ud-Din Koka's mother, Jahnagir refused to change his clothes, who the emperor regarded as his own mother.⁴³ Shahjahan also gave up the use of colored clothes on the death of Mumtaz Mahal, his beloved wife. Jahangir also said that this custom was equally popular among Hindus and Muslims. Food was prepared and distributed among the poor after death rituals and reciting the *fatihe*.⁴⁴

13. Charity and Public Works by Mughal Kings

Mughal kings were particular about giving away a large amount of money in charity. Akbar fixed the amount of daily and monthly alms and also a certain amount in a year for the poor community. Abul Fazl wrote that a *crore* of *dams* was kept ready in the period of Akbar in his audience hall for distribution among the poor and the needy.⁴⁵ Haji Begam, wife of Humayun, provided maintenance allowance to about five hundred needy persons.⁴⁶ Noorjahan provided dowries to poor and needy girls for their marriages.⁴⁷ Charity, grain and bread were freely distributed to the poor on the birth of a son in the royal family. Jahanara distributed fifty thousand on the occasion of the recovery from illness of her father Shahjahan to the poor and needy. Festivals like *Nauroz*, *Salgirah*, *Eids*, *Shab-i-Barat*, etc. were the special occasions on which a king showed his generosity.⁴⁸ Mughal emperors were never lagged behind in this activity.

Jahangir's mother built a *baoli* or step-well for travelers in the *pargana* of Jasut. A sum of Rs. 20,000 was spent on this well. Nurjahan constructed *Nur Mahal ki Sarai* at Agra and Patna and Begum Sahib's famous *caravan-sarai* at Kirki deserves a special mention. The famous *Arab Sarai* was built by Haji Begam, wife of Humayun just to facilitate travelers. Zinat-un-Nisa Begum⁴⁹ also built fourteen *sarais* (inns) in different parts of the country. An order of Jahangir (1605) was clearly laid down that

⁴²Z. Farooqi, *Life and Times of Aurangzeb* (Lahore: Book Traders, 2002), 85.

⁴³*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Vol. III), Op. Cit, 268.

⁴⁴J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb* (Calcutta: R.C & Sons), 85-86.

⁴⁵Abul Fazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, Op. cit, 318.

⁴⁶Gulbadan Begum, *Humayunama*, 62.

⁴⁷Beni Parsad, *History of Jahangir* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1930), https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.86122/2015.86122.History-Of-Jahangir-Second-Edition_djvu.txt

⁴⁸B. P Saksena, *History of Shahjahan of Delhi* (Delhi: Central Books, 1962), 45.

⁴⁹J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Op. cit, 355.

excessive funds should be spent in building mosques and *sarais*, in the repair of broken bridges and digging tanks and wells to provide drinking water to the people.

Emperor Aurangzeb ordered Mir *Habibullah of Jaunpur* to levy poll-tax on non-Muslims, who inappropriately used over Rs. 40,000 from the imperial treasury as the money of offender (Aurangzeb).⁵⁰ In the *Banaras Farman* in 1659, Aurangzeb protected Hindu temples and their caretakers so that *Brahmans* could pray for the longevity of the Mughal State. Among *Muhammadans*, it was considered meritorious to spend money in charity at their holy places like Mecca, Medina, Meshad, etc. There are numerous instances when the kings and their nobles sent a huge amount of money to poor besides clothes.

There were few efforts by Mughal emperors to improve the condition of the roads. Sher Shah Sur was, however, an exception. It was not safe to travel without a proper guard, as the highways had many robbers and thieves. People, merchants and travelers preferred to accompany a caravan which were safe to quote a contemporary was as it was a safe journey for everyone.⁵¹ They carried their merchandise from one place to another. Sometimes people organized this group journey for travelers only. “Thousands and thousands of people would join the king’s entourage as he moved out. And as a writer said, “Akbar’s court was a mini city, even when he was quartered in a city, a camp, a travelling city was considered one of the safest journey as guarded by the royal security.”⁵²

14. Houses

Indian houses have been built for centuries with due consideration given to a hot climate. Forts were built for the kings. Mughals renovated old forts like Lahore and Delhi forts. They introduced delicacy in architecture, such as Akbar built a new capital city and red sand stone was excessively used in its buildings. All Mughal palaces had gardens with running water channels. This style was borrowed from central Asia. Shahjahan introduced marble in the different styles of architecture and erected the seventh wonder of the world known as *Taj Mahal*. This style is known as Indo-Persian architecture. Mughal architecture was the mixture of Turkish, Persian and native Indian architecture. The gate of Agra fort exhibits Indian elephant and birds. A famous terrace in *Diwan-e-Āam* in Lahore Fort exhibits the Buddhist influence on the Mughal architecture. Local styles of housing and building material were also used. Mansions were built to serve the *rajas* and elite communities in different states with a typical style which meant that square buildings always had a garden in the center. Poor communities used mud houses with bamboo roofs. In the south, the leaves of Palm trees were used in roofs. Most houses in Kashmir were made up of wood. Houses in Sindh were a combination of straws and mud. A simple Indian house consisted of one or two rooms with a veranda outside. Sometimes they had

⁵⁰Annie Krieger Krynicki, *Captive Princess: Zeb-un-Nissa, Daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.

⁵¹Hussain Khan, *Sher Shah Suri* (Lahore: Feroz Sons, 1994), 112.

⁵²*Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, Op. cit, 85.

toilets and sometimes they did not. Trees were part of every style of architecture. Travelers praised Indians for their love of nature and greenery.⁵³

15. Travelling

Several Europeans have especially mentioned the Mughal manner of travelling. Humayun moved on *Takht-i-Rawan*. Humayun took this idea from the Abbasids, Muslim rulers who constructed a floating throne in the river Farat (Euphrates River). King was accompanied with *umaras* and nobility when he visited the shrine of a *sufi* or a mosque. Palanquins were in vogue especially for the king and his ladies. Elephants and camels were also the part of royal procession. Common mode of travelling was bull cart for long distances. Normally, people travelled by foot in all parts of Hindustan. The traditional infrastructure of roads connected one city to another. It was normally used by travelers and merchants who exchanged their merchandize and goods across the major cities of Hindustan. The postal system of India in medieval times did not cater the needs of the common man. Official correspondence reached the capital every day. There were two types of couriers, reached by foot or on horses. Foot- couriers had a long stick in their hands about two cubits long with small bells on it. *Dakchaukis* and runners officially served the Muslim empire in those days. *Sarais* were also considered the means of communication.⁵⁴ The king ordered the construction of a milestone at each *kos* and the establishment of a well on every 3rd mile. Many travelers have mentioned the administration of these inns expect Bernier.⁵⁵ Each inn was under an official who closed the gates at sunset and opened them at dawn. He requested the inmates to protect their belongings; if anything went missing the gates were closed again, a search was ordered and the thief was caught red-handed.⁵⁶

16. Conclusion

The idea of Indian culture and civilization under Muslims is very unique. This culture was blended with the practices of every community of India. This acknowledgement is the proof of co-existence that all Indian communities lived together under Mughals, especially Hindus and Muslims. There were no traces of conflict for centuries. This culture was visible throughout North India but it is a reality that South India always went intact with her indigenous culture. Although, the South also had good relations with Muslims of Bahamni Sultanate. The prosperity of Hindustan strengthened this civilization during pre-modern times.

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⁵³J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat*, Op. cit., 245.

⁵⁴P. N. Chopra, *Life and Letters under the Great Mughals* (Delhi: Aditya Parkash, 1975), 258-263.

⁵⁵Bernier, *Travels in the Mughals Empire* (India: Oxford University Press, 1914), 56.

⁵⁶Hussain Khan, *Sher Shah*, op. cit., 54.

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