

## 4 MEDIEVAL INDIA



**D**evelopments in the field of religion, folk art and language in India during the medieval times have been important milestones in the evolution of the composite culture of India. New religions movements like Sufi and Sikhism along with Bhakti movement contributed to this process. If you look around, you will see the impact of Islam on many aspects of Indian culture. You might have visited some famous monuments in India. These monuments stand as the symbols of the composite nature of Indo-Islamic culture in India.

You can also see how various religions in India, including Islam, have influenced each other. Besides, every region in India is famous for giving shape to some folk art or the other. Development of folk arts through which the common people display their creativity is another significant aspect of Indian culture. The various regional languages that we speak today too have an interesting history which evolved during this period.

### OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand society during medieval times;
- trace the rise of Islam and Sufism;
- describe the political situation of India in medieval times;
- examine the influence of Islam on Indian religion;
- trace the growth of the Bhakti movement;
- examine the development of folk arts, painting and music during the medieval period;
- trace the rise of modern Indian languages;
- discuss the rise of Sikhism and the Sikh power in India; and
- trace the developments in South India.

### 4.1 LIFE OF PEOPLE UNDER DELHI SULTANATE

When the Muslim invaders came to India they decided to make it their home. They intermarried and took to the culture of the Indians. There was a mutual exchange in ideas and customs. In dress, speech, manners and intellectual outlook, the two influenced each other very profoundly. Some of these changes are described below.

#### Society

The Indian society was divided into four major groups. They were the aristocrats, the priests, the towns people and the peasants.

## **Aristocrats**

The aristocrats included the Sultan and his relatives, nobility and the landholders. There were also the Hindu rajahs, chiefs, Hindu merchants and bankers. They concentrated all the wealth as well as the power in their hands. Needless to say that they were a group of very powerful people. They lived in great style and luxury. The Sultan outmatched everyone in this. He had to do it so as to maintain his superiority and his status. He had to show that he was different from the others. Whenever a new sultan came to the throne, the Khutba or sermon was read out in his name in the Friday prayers at the mosques and coins were issued in his name. This established the new ruler on the throne. To maintain his distinction as the ruler, he was provided with many officers and servants at the royal household where he lived in great luxury. Even the nobility imitated his style and showed off their wealth.

## **The Priests**

The Priests were another important class of people in the society. Among the Hindus, they were the Brahmins and Ulemas among the Muslims. They were given grants of tax-free land for their maintenance and were often very powerful. The Ulemas wielded great influence on the Muslim Sultans and often influenced their policies. But at other times like during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, they were even ignored. Sometimes the priests were not interested in religious affairs but were more interested in worldly affairs.

## **The Town People**

In the town lived the wealthy merchants, traders and artisans. The nobility, the officers and the soldiers also stayed in the towns, that were the administrative and military centres. Places where the Sufi and Bhakti saints lived and places which housed important temples and mosques had become pilgrim centres. The artisans lived in their own special quarters. In fact, the weavers lived in the weaver's colony, the goldsmith lived in a colony inhabited by goldsmiths and so on. This was the general pattern for all artisans and craftsmen. These people supplied luxury goods were also sent abroad for trade. The royal karkhanas or workshops employed these workers for producing beautiful goods which were often used as gifts to be given away by the Sultans.

## **The Peasants**

The peasants, of course, lived in the villages and were often the worst off. They paid huge taxes to the state as land revenue. Any change of dynasty had no effect on their lives. Their life continued as before. The caste system was very rigid and inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining was totally prohibited. But exchange of ideas did take place on a large scale. Those who converted themselves to Islam did not forget their old customs. Thus, exchange of ideas and customs took place. Many Hindu customs were adopted by the Muslims while many Muslim customs were adopted by the Hindus, like those concerning food, dress, clothing and music, besides many others.

## **Trade**

Trade was flourishing and many new towns came up to encourage trade. Some communities like the Banias, Marwaris and Multanis made trade their special vocation. The banjaras traded in caravans and were continuously on the move carrying goods from one place to another.

Delhi was the centre for the incoming as well as outgoing goods. There was rice from the East, sugar from Kanauj, wheat from the Doab and fine silks from the South. Besides, there were luxury goods like metalware, ivory, jewellery, cotton textiles and many other. Goods from outside India like East Africa, Arabia and China also came to Delhi. According to Ibn Batuta, Delhi at that time was a magnificent city. The growth of trade encouraged the use of money and at this time came into use the silver tanka (coin). It was the most commonly used currency and was introduced by Iltutmish. Even the system of weights, that were used at that time, continued to be in use until the recent adoption of the metric system.

## Religious Condition

When Islam came to India, Hinduism was in vogue. But by this time Hinduism had degenerated itself. There were superstitious beliefs, rituals and sacrifices. Brahmans had become very powerful and the caste system was very rigid. The people, especially the lower classes, were ill-treated. Islam was the opposite of what was in practise among the Hindus. It talked of equality, brotherhood and oneness of God. There were no dogmas in Islam. On the other hand, it had a simple doctrine and a democratic organization.

The coming of Islam did not bring in many changes in the political structure of the country. On the other hand, it challenged the social pattern of society. The important result of this contact was the emergence of the Bhakti movement and the Sufi movement. Both the movements were based on the fact that God was supreme, all men were equal for Him and Bhakti or devotion to Him was the way to achieve salvation.

## 4.2 RISE OF ISLAM AND SUFISM

The Muslims first came to India in the eighth century AD mainly as traders. They were fascinated by the socio-cultural scenario in this country and decided to make India their home. The traders who came to India from Central and West Asia carried back with them traces of Indian science and culture. As a result they became cultural ambassadors of India by disseminating this knowledge to the Islamic world and from there to Europe. The immigrant Muslims also entered into matrimonial alliances with the local people and learned to live together in harmony. There was mutual exchange of ideas and customs. The Hindus and Muslims influenced each other equally in dress, speech, manners, customs and intellectual pursuits. The Muslims also brought with them their religion, Islam which had a deep impact on Indian society and culture. Let us find out more about Prophet Mohammad and Islam in this lesson.

Prophet Mohammad preached Islam in the seventh century AD in Arabia. He was born in AD 571 in the Quraysh tribe of Arabia. He migrated to Madina from Mecca in AD 622 and this marked the beginning of the Hijira Era. According to the Muslim belief, Quran is the message of Allah revealed to Mohammad through his archangel Gabriel. It has been translated into several languages.

The five fundamental principles of Islam are:

- (1) Tauhid (belief in Allah)
- (2) Namaz (prayers, five times a day)
- (3) Roza (fasting in the month of Ramzan)
- (4) Zakat (giving of alms)
- (5) Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

Prophet Mohammad's sayings are preserved in what is called the Hadith or Hadees. After his death the Caliphate was established. There were four pious Caliphs. Islam talked of equality, brotherhood, and the existence of one God. Its arrival particularly made a profound impact on the traditional pattern of Indian society. The rise of both the Bhakti and the Sufi movements contributed immensely in this regard. Both the Bhakti and the Sufi movements believed that all humans are equal, God is supreme and devotion to God is the only way to achieve salvation.

### 4.2.1 Rise of Sufism

Sufism is a common term used for Islamic mysticism. The Sufis were very liberal in their religious outlook. They believed in the essential unity of all religions. They preached spirituality through music and doctrines that professed union with God. Sufism originated in Iran and found a congenial atmosphere in India under the Turkish rule. Their sense of piety, tolerance, sympathy, concept of equality and friendly attitude attracted many Hindus, mostly from lower classes, to Islam. Sufi saints such as Moinuddin Chisti, Nizamuddin Auliya, Fariduddin Ganj-e-Shakar were the pioneer sufis who are still loved, respected and honoured in India. The sufis were also influenced by the Christian and Buddhist monks regarding the establishment of their *khanqahs* and *dargahs*. *Khanqah* the institutions (abode of Sufis) set up by the Sufis in northern India

took Islam deeper into the countryside. *Mazars* (tombs) and *Takias* (resting places of Muslim saints) also became the centres for the propagation of Islamic ideas. These were patronized both by the aristocracy and the common people. The Sufis emphasized respect for all human beings.

The Sufis were organised into religious orders or *silsilahs*. These *silsilahs* were named after their founders such as Chishti, Suhrawardi, Qadi. and Naqshbandis. According to Abul Fazl, the author of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, there were as many as fourteen *silsilahs* in India during the sixteenth century. Each order had its own *khanqah*, which served as a shelter for the Sufi saints and for destitutes, and later developed as a centre of learning. Ajmer, Nagaur and Ajodhan or Pak Pattan (now in Pakistan) developed as important centres of Sufism. These also started the tradition of *piri-muridi*, (teacher and the disciple). In order to attain a state of mystical ecstasy, the sufis listened to poetry and music (*sama*) which were originally in Persian, but later switched to Hindawi or Hindustani. They preached the unity of God and self-surrender unto Him in almost the same way as the votaries of the *Nirgun Bhakti* movement did. Music attracts everybody, irrespective of language. Slowly such music attracted the Hindus who started visiting the *dargahs* in large number. The Hindu impact on Sufism also became visible in the form of *siddhas* and yogic postures.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

1. The beginning of which era is marked by Prophet Mohammad's migration to Madina from Mecca?

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2. What is Roza?

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3. Who brought Hindu followers to Islam by their attitude of piety, tolerance concept of equality and sympathy?
4. Name the author of *Ain-i-Akbari*.

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### 4.3 POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The rulers of Delhi, who ruled from 1206-90, were Mamluk Turks. They were followed by the Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodis, who ruled northern India from Delhi till 1526. All these rulers were called Sultans. A Sultan was supposed to rule over a territory on behalf of the Khalifa or Caliph, who was considered to be the spiritual and temporal head of the Muslims. Both the names of the Khalifa and the Sultan used to be read in the *khutha*, (Friday prayers) by the local Imams.

In 1526 the Delhi Sultans were replaced by the Mughals, who initially ruled from Agra and later from Delhi till 1707. Thereafter, the Mughal rule continued only nominally till 1857 when the dynasty ended. The Mughals did not ask for any investiture but continued to send presents to the Khalifas. They also got the *khutba* read in their own names. However, Sher Shah, a local Afghan ruler, challenged the Mughal ruler, Humayun and kept him away from the throne of Delhi for about fifteen years (1540-55). Sher Shah's reign stands out for many outstanding achievements. Among these was the construction of several roads, the most important being *Sarak-i-Azam* or Grand Trunk Road extending from Sonargaon (now in Bangladesh) to Attock (now in Pakistan) and run through Delhi and Agra a distance of 1500 *kos*. The other roads were from Agra to Burhanpur, Agra to Marwar and from Lahore to Multan. He struck beautiful coins in gold, silver and copper which were imitated by the Mughal Kings.

Mughal emperor Akbar who ruled from 1556-1605 was a great ruler in the history of India. He made a sincere effort to foster harmony among his subjects by discouraging racial, religious and cultural biases. He tried to develop friendly relations with the Hindus. To fulfil his imperialist ambitions he entered into matrimonial alliances with the Rajput rulers. His greatest contribution was the political unification of the country and the establishment of an all powerful central government with a uniform system of administration.

Akbar was a great patron of art, architecture and learning. As a secular minded monarch he also started a faith called *Din-i-Illahi* which encompassed ideas from various religions. On every Thursday, scholars from different religions came to debate on religious issues raised by the emperor. This was done at the Ibadat



Khana in Fateh Pur Sikri at Agra. Though illiterate Akbar patronised scholars and learned men. In his court there were nine such Navratna Mulla Do Pyaza, Hakin Humam, Abdur Rahim Khan e Khanan, Abul Tayal, Tansen, Raja Todar Mal, Raja Man Singh, Faizi and Birbal. Akbar's policy of liberalism and tolerance was continued by his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. However this policy was abandoned by Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb's short sighted policies and endless wars in different parts of the country (especially in South India) resulted in the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The rise of the Marathas in the south, the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, unrest amongst the nobility in the court and the rise of the Sikhs in north- western India destroyed whatever was left of the Mughal power. Economically India was still the biggest exporter in the world and had great wealth, but it was left far behind in the process of modernization.

#### 4.4 CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

It was in the field of art and architecture that the rulers of this period took a keen interest. The composite cultural characteristic of the medieval period is amply witnessed in these fields. A new style of architecture known as the Indo- Islamic style was born out of this fusion. The distinctive features of Indo-Islamic architecture were the (a) dome; (b) lofty towers or minarets; (c) arch; and (d) the vault.

The Mughal rulers were great lovers of nature. They took pleasure in spending their time in building beautiful forts and gardens. The famous Mughal gardens like the Shalimar Bagh and the Nishat Bagh are important elements of our cultural heritage. There were waterways and fountains criss-crossing these gardens and finally, there were gardens with stages or levels. The water, while cascading from one stage to another, was made to fall in small streamlets with lamps lit behind them, making the water shimmer and lend a special charm to the whole atmosphere. It could also be made to flow over a chiselled and sloping slab, so that the water flowing over it shimmered. The best example of this type of garden is the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore (now in Pakistan). The Lahore garden has three stages. But a better example can be seen in India at Pinjore Garden situated on the Chandigarh-Kalka road where we have a seven-stage garden. This impressed the British so much that they created a three-stage garden in the Vice-Regal Lodge (now the Rashtrapati Bhawan) in New Delhi, It was on these very lines that the famous Vrindavan Garden in Mysore were built in the twentieth century.

The *pietra dura* or coloured stone inlay work on marble became very popular in the days of Shah Jahan and the finest examples of this type of work are available in the Red Fort in Delhi and the Taj Mahal at Agra. Besides, the structures within the Fatehpur Sikri complex, the forts at Agra and Lahore and the Shahi mosques in Delhi and Lahore are an important part of our heritage. During this period mosques, tombs of kings and *dargahs* came to dominate the landscape.

#### Coinage

Another aspect of art, which is of great importance to us, is connected with Numismatics (the study of coins) which is a major source of information for any period in history. The coins of Muslim kings are valuable in history. Their designs, calligraphy and mint marks give us plenty of interesting information on this period. From the royal titles, the name and place of minting we can find out the extent of the monarch's kingdom as well as his status. Muhammad Tughlaq's coins were minted at Delhi, Daulatabad and several other provincial capitals and had at least twenty-five different varieties. Some of the legends found on the coins are quite interesting. The warrior in the cause of God' and 'he who obeys the Sultan obeys the Compassionate', are a few examples.

#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

Fill in the blanks:

1. The names of the Khalifa and the Sultan were read in the\_\_\_\_\_.
2. A local Afghan ruler challenged the Mughal ruler Humayun and kept him away from the throne of Delhi for about fifteen years.
3. To fulfil his imperialist ambition Akbar entered into matrimonial alliances with the \_\_\_\_\_ rulers.
4. The Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi was known as\_\_\_\_\_ during British

rule.

5. The *pietra dura* or coloured stone inlay work on marble became very popular in the days of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **4.5 BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

The Sufis were not the only popular religious teacher of the time. There were also the Bhakti saints. Their teachings were similar to those of the Sufis but they had been teaching for a longer time. They were popular among the artisans, craftsmen and traders in the towns. The people in the villages also flocked to listen to them. The Sufi and Bhakti saints had many thoughts and practices in common. Their essential belief was in the need to unite with God. They laid stress on love or devotion as the basis of the relationship with God. To achieve all this a Guru or a Pir was needed. The Bhakti saints attacked the rigidity in religion and the objects of worship. They disregarded caste and encouraged women to join in their religious gatherings. The Bhakti saints did their entire teaching in the local vernacular language to make it comprehensible even to simple minds. The Bhakti saints belonged to various backgrounds but mainly from the lower castes. Many were artisans by origin or belonged to the less prosperous class of cultivators. They stressed the need for tolerance among humans and religions. The Bhakti movement was long known in the South. The idea of preaching Bhakti through hymns and stories was traditionally done by the Alvars and the Nayannars of the Tamil devotional cult. You will read about them later in this book

##### **Guru Nanak**

Guru Nanak was born of a Khatri family in the village of Talwandi which is now called Nankana. Though Guru Nanak was trained in accountancy, he preferred the company of saints and sufis. Some time later, he had a mystic vision. He left home for the company of saints and pirs. He composed hymns and sang them to the accompaniment of the 'rabab', which is a musical instrument. His hymns are popular even today. He emphasised love and devotion for the one and only God. He strongly denounced idol worship, pilgrimages, sacrifices and rituals as a way to achieving God. He demanded purity of character and conduct as the first condition of approaching God. He believed that anyone could achieve a spiritual life while doing his duties as a householder.

##### **Ramanuja**

Ramanuja was from the South and he taught in the language of the common people. His disciple was Ramananda who took his Guru's message to the northern parts of India.

##### **Ramananda**

Ramananda was born at Allahabad and educated at Varanasi. He preached at both these places. He wanted to rid the Hindu religion of its evil customs and practices. He wanted people to know that all men were equal in the eyes of God and there was nobody high born or low born. His followers belonged to different walks of life. For example, Kabir was a weaver, Sadhana was a butcher, Ravidasa was a cobbler and Sena was a barber.

##### **Kabir**

Kabir was Ramananda's favourite disciple. Like Nanak, he criticised the existing social order and called for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kabir, the son of a Muslim weaver, strongly denounced idol worship, taking part in formal worship such as Namaz, pilgrimages or bathing in rivers. He wanted to preach a religion which was acceptable to all and that would unite all religions. He emphasised the unity of God. He called Him by several names such as Rama, Gobinda, Hari and Allah. You must have read his 'Dohas' or 'couplets' in Hindi.

##### **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**

Chaitanya was a saint from Bengal. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna. Though he was a Brahman he condemned the caste system and emphasized on the equality of all. He wanted the people to know that true worship lay in love and devotion. He used to go into a trance singing devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna.

### Mirabai

Mirabai was another Bhakti Saint who worshipped, composed and sang songs in praise of Lord Krishna. Like Chaitanya, she too would go into a trance in her love for the God.

### Namadeva

Namadeva was a tailor. He wrote in Marathi. His poetry spoke of intense love and devotion to God.

### Popularity of the Bhakti Movement

How did the Bhakti movement become so popular with the people? An important reason was that they challenged the caste system and the superiority of the Brahmanas. They welcomed the ideas of equality and brotherhood which the Sufi saints also preached. People were no longer satisfied with the old religion. They wanted a religion which could satisfy both their rationality as well as emotions. All the Bhakti saints emphasised oneness of God. They said that the path to God lay in devotion and Bhakti to Him and not in any rituals. They condemned rituals and sacrifices. In northern India, it developed into two streams, *nirguna bhakti* and *saguna bhakti*. The *nirguna bhaktas* were devotees of a formless God even while calling him variously as Rama, Govinda, Hari or Raghunatha. The most conspicuous among them were Kabir and Nanak. The *saguna bhaktas* were devotees of Rama, the son of Dasharatha, or Krishna, the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Some of the best examples of *Saguna bhaktas* were Tulsidas, who idolised Rama in his famous *Ramcharita Manas*, and Surdas, who sang praises of Krishna in his famous *Sursagar*. Raskhan, a Muslim poet, who was a devotee of Lord Krishna, also belonged to this tradition.

The first important feature of bhakti movement was the concept of oneness of God and brotherhood of all human beings. It did not discriminate against anyone on the basis of caste or gender. Its second important feature was surrender into God, who is all pervasive and capable of solving the problems of the devotees. The third important feature of bhakti was an intense personal devotion to God with an emphasis on a good moral life. It was felt that chanting the name of God constantly purified the soul and prepared one for His grace.

A true devotee does not want heaven or *moksha*. He only wants to chant the Lord's name and be born again and again to sing His praise. In addition, came the *guru* or spiritual teacher, whose function was to provide people with hope, strength and inner courage. He was supposed to be a person who had marched ahead on the path of bhakti and had probably realised God and hence was capable of leading others into Him. This brought in a system of *pahul*. *Pahul* was the sanctified water offered by a master to the pupil or *shishya* as a token of his being accepted as a trainee on his march to godliness. The Sikhs performed "washing of the swords" ceremony, called *khande ka pahul*, evolving as the *pir-muridi* custom (the saint-soldier concept).

Have you been able to notice here some features of the Bhakti tradition, which were similar to the practices and ideas of the Sufis?

The spirit of Bhakti pervaded the whole of India and found vivid and beautiful expression in the religious poetry of the medieval saints and mystics, no matter what religious faith they believed in. Their literary compositions, rendered into *geet*, *qawali*, etc united the people, as nothing else could have done. It also stimulated the development of regional languages.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3

Answer the following questions

1. What were the two main streams of bhakti movement?

2. Name an important *nirguna* and *saguna* bhakti poet.

### 4.6 DEVELOPMENT OF FOLK ARTS

The rural masses got opportunities to display their creative skills in many fields. Several occasions associated with agricultural operations, for example the tilling of soil, sowing of saplings, picking of cotton,

pulling out the weeds and many other social functions provided opportunities for singing and dancing. Does this sound familiar to you? Yes, the festivals and rituals you perform today have continued from the past with necessary changes in keeping with time. The advent of rains became occasions for dancing and merry-making. The gods were invoked and special *pujas* offered in the temples. It was also an occasion for enjoying the swings. Similarly, ladies on their spinning wheels accompanied by other ladies would sit together and sing till late into the night. This was a common sight in almost all the villages in India. It is important to note that almost every region developed its own peculiar dance form with a local flavour. Thus *Garba*, *Kalbella*, *Bhangra*, *Giddha*, Bamboo dance, *Lavani* and innumerable other dance forms, came into existence. Today, some of these are performed during the Republic Day celebrations as well as on other festive occasions.

Formal education was not considered very important for women but this did not prevent them from showing their talent in various other fields. They displayed their creativity in needlework. In Rajasthan, girls came up with beautiful designs on *odhanis*, shirts and *ghagras*. The Rajasthanis also created beautiful designs of tie and dye work in fabrics used both by women and men. Even today, we find the people of Rajasthan as the most colourfully dressed in India. Their lavishness could be seen in the way they decorated their animals (horses, bullocks, camels and even elephants). In Punjab, the girls created beautiful *phulkaris*. In and around Lucknow, came up the *chikan* work on shirts, *salwars*, *odhanis* and even sarees. It appears that the dramatists about whom Bharata mentions in his *Natyashastra* (fifth century AD) had not completely disappeared. The *tamasha* and the *lavani* forms of dance drama were developed in Maharashtra; the *Pandavanis* in central India and Merasis in northern India applied such art forms with slight modifications. So also the puppeteer, the bard and the mime moved from place to place, entertaining people in various ways. The acrobat and the juggler also could be seen moving from place to place. In some areas the martial arts were developed, while wrestling has been popular all over India since time immemorial.

## INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.4

1. Name any two important folk dances.
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2. Name any one important type of needlework that developed in India.
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## 4.7 PAINTING

Another area which was influenced by Islamic culture was painting. Humayun had spent more than twelve years in Persia as a refugee. He brought painters with him to India when he became the ruler of Delhi once again in 1555. Famous among them were Mir Sayid Ali and Abdus Samad who nurtured the tradition of painting manuscript. An example of it is *Dastan-e-Amir Hamza*, which has nearly 1200 paintings. The period also witnessed the flowering of portrait and miniature paintings. However, what is amazing is that some of these painters tried to paint the classical *ragas*, thereby giving form and colour to such abstract conceptions as music. Seasons or *baramasa paintings* were similarly given artistic forms. Can you ever estimate the creativity of these artists? Nowhere else in the world except perhaps in China, artists have tried to paint music or seasons. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan continued to give patronage to these artists and as a result, the Mughal school of painting continued to flourish. Akbar as a liberal ruler extended his patronage to painting. He also employed a large number of Hindu painters like Daswant and Basawan Lal. .

Consequently, there was a fusion of Persian and Indian styles (of painting) during his period. The European influence on Indian painting too was noticed. The Mughal school of painting reached its zenith under Jahangir who was a famous painter. His court was adorned with famous painters like Ustad and Abul Hasan. Mansur was famous for his miniature painting. However Aurangzeb due to his orthodox views and political preoccupations, stopped patronising music and painting. Like their masters, some princes also extended patronage to painters. Thus, besides the Mughal school, the Rajput and the Pahari schools of painting also received encouragement. Even the upper classes in society started patronising painters. As a result, the *havelis* (big mansions) of the rich and temples were profusely embellished. These *havelis* in Rajasthan attract a large number of tourists even today. You can visit these havelis if you find an opportunity to visit Rajasthan. The Mughal school of painting from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century gave rise to the



Indo-Persian school of miniature art. The Mughal court painters introduced landscapes together with human figures and costumes. When they came in touch with the traditional Indian styles, they became more natural. Signing on the miniatures as a tradition also started. Artists were now employed on monthly salaries. They illustrated such important works as the *Changeznama*, *Zafarnama* and the *Ramayana*.

## 4.8 MUSIC

The Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, patronised several musicians. Tansen, who adorned the court of Akbar, not only sang the classical *ragas* but also composed new ones. It is said that Shah Jahan himself was quite a good singer. These musicians entertained the emperors at different times of the day and in different seasons with appropriate *ragas*.

During the Turko-Afghan rule in India, a synthesis of Indo Iranian music had started. During the Mughal rule, it developed further. It is interesting to note that Aurangzeb was against music, but the largest number of books on classical Indian music in Persian were written during his time. In the North, a distinct school known as the Hindustani school of music came into being and its speciality lay in producing sweet and rapturous melodies to suit different moods of life. The *ragas* and the *raginis* were personified accordingly. Khayal, Thumri and Ghazal were also elaborated during this period. Tansen, was in a sense the pioneer of this school. Similarly, in the south, the Carnatic school of music developed. However, ordinary people retained the flair for folk music and folk songs to commemorate their local chiefs like Alha-Udal, Dulla-Bhatti, Jaimal-Phatta etc.

### Indo-Mughal Culture

The Mughal rulers discarded the Afghan titles of Sultan and styled themselves as *Badshah* (emperor) and *Din-e-Panah* (protector of faith). Further, to evoke reverence among the subject for the emperor, they started the practice of *jharokha darshan* or making public appearances through specially built windows. They also encouraged the court practice of *sijda* (low prostration before the kings) and concentrated religious and political power more firmly in their hands.

## 4.9 RISE OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES

Another important development during this period was the emergence of several modern Indian languages. Urdu perhaps originated around Delhi. It developed as a camp language in the army of Allauddin Khilji when they were stationed in the Deccan around fourteenth century AD. In fact, the states of Bijapur and the Golconda in the Deccan became the cradles of Urdu literature. The language soon developed its own grammar and became a distinct language.

As time passed, it came to be used by the elite as well. The famous poet Amir Khusrau, who composed poetry in this language, also played some part in making it popular. Besides poetry, beautiful prose, short stories, novels and drama were written in Urdu during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the first half of the nineteenth century Urdu journalism played a very important role during the struggle for independence. Along with Urdu, nearly all other modern Indian languages like Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Khari Boli, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Sindhi, Kashmiri as well as the four South Indian languages -Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam – came to acquire their present form and developed during this period.

## 4.10 NEW FAITHS

During this period, two new religious faiths flourished in India. They were Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. To bring the established reforms within religion various reform movements also started in India,

### Sikhism

The Sikhs, who mostly belong to Punjab, form a sizable group of our population. The orthodox Sikhs believe that their religion was revealed by God to Guru Nanak, whose spirit entered the second and the

subsequent *gurus* till the tenth Guru. Guru Gobind Singh, ordained the Sikhs to treat the *Adi Granth*, popularly known as the *Guru Granth Sahib*, as their Guru. But the students of history and religion think that the seeds for the birth and growth of this religion were present in the Bhakti movement, in its *nirguna* branch. The Sikhs basically believe in a formless God, equality of all mankind, need of a *guru* and the *pahul* tradition. Sometimes, the gurudom was conferred on the son and sometimes on the best disciple. The fifth guru, Guru Arjun Dev, gave the Sikhs three things. The first was in the shape of the *Adi Granth*, which contains the sayings of five gurus and other allied saints. The second was the standardised script for Gurmukhi in which the *Adi Granth* was first written. And finally, the site and the foundation of the Har Mandir sahib or the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht at Amritsar, the highest seat from where the dictats for the entire Sikh community are issued.

The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, which means “the pure”, in 1699. He also ordained the Sikhs to take five vows, namely, keeping of *kes* (long hair and a beard), *kangha* (comb), *kada* (a metallic bangle), *kirpan* (a sword) and *kaccha* (an underwear extending to a little above the knees). Consequently, these symbols became the distinguishing marks of a Sikh. He further added that after his death *the Adi Granth* will be the guru of the Sikhs and they have to pay obeisance to this holy book. Music has always been an important feature of Sikhism and they believed that through music one can attain ecstasy or *samadhi*.

### Zoroastrianism

The Parsi or Zoroastrian religion was founded by Zarathushtra or Zoroaster, in the eighth century BC. He preached monotheism in the region now known as Persia. He taught the worship of fire and the presence of good and bad in the form of Ahura Mazda and Ahura Man. He also taught the ethical doctrine of kindness and charity. These doctrines are enshrined in the Zend Avesta.

The Zoroastrian religion spread over the whole of Persia and remained the dominant religion till the eighth century AD when Muslims conquered this region. Most of the Parsis migrated to different parts of the world. They also came to India and settled at Navsari in Gujarat, and later on spread to almost all parts of India. They have contributed a lot to Indian culture. It was Dadabhai Naoroji, the famous nationalist leader and a Parsi, who exposed the hollowness of the British claim of civilizing India and not exploiting it.

Another outstanding figure, who belonged to this community, was Jamshedji Tata, a pioneering Indian industrialist. He established an iron and steel industry in India in the face of the toughest competition posed by the British steel mills and yet continued to prosper. The Parsees also established a large number of public charities. Zoroastrianism is not a proselytizing religion and no new entrants are accepted into its fold under any circumstances. Thus, we can see that the cultural stream in India continued to assimilate all the newcomers and the resulting cultural interaction gave Indian culture its characteristic multidimensional, multilingual, multireligious and yet composite nature.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.5

Fill in the blanks

1. \_\_\_\_\_ founded the Khalsa and fixed the vow of five Ks.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ worship the fire, believe in good and bad and encourage kindness and charity.

### 4.11 SOUTH INDIA

Between the ninth and eleventh centuries AD, a dynasty known as the Cholas was ruling the holamandalam region in Southern India. The Cholas developed a strong army, besides a powerful navy. Rajendra Chola is said to have conquered some Indonesian islands. They also developed democratic institutions at the village level. Even Buddhism and Jainism flourished in this region. Literature, fine arts, sculpture and metal castings of the highest order flourished under their patronage. The fourteenth century saw the rise of a new state called Vijayanagara now called Karnataka. To the north of this state across the Tungabhadra river rose

a new Islamic state, called the Bahamani, now known as Andhra Pradesh. The Bahamani and Vijayanagara kingdoms were pitted against each other over the rich Raichur Doab.

In the Cholamandalam region, the Tamil language was popular. In Karnataka, Kannada, in Andhra, Telegu and in Kerala, Malyalam flourished, all having different scripts. It is just possible that originally the entire region spoke Tamil, as it is a very old language. But by the middle ages, the four languages had come to have distinct identities. However, between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Vijayanagara achieved great heights. Some foreigners, who visited these areas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, have praised the kings, the town and the people. The remains of Vijayanagara found in Hampi dazzle the world even today.

During the Chola period, Kanchi became a great seat of learning. The Vijayanagara kings also became great patrons of art and learning.

## WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The early Turkish rulers (1206-1526) were called Sultans, as they were supposed to rule on behalf of the Caliphs.
- The Mughals replaced the Sultans of Delhi. They patronised music, painting and architecture and they ruled India till 1707. They also built a large number of buildings. The Mughal empire weakened and disintegrated after 1707. In this chaos, emerged the British East India Company, as a political power.
- The Sufis with their attitude of piety, tolerance, sympathy, and concept of equality had deep impact on the Indian people.
- The Bhakti movement of fourteenth and sixteenth centuries developed into two streams; *nirguna* and *saguna*.
- The people developed their own regional and local folk traditions of dance and music.
- The medieval period saw the emergence of Urdu. This period saw the rise of the present-day Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Kannada and Malayalam in the south and Assamese, Bengali, Hindi or Khari-boli, Punjabi and Gujarati languages in the north.
- Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak. Guru Arjun Dev finalised the present script of Gurmukhi, the *Adi-Granth* and the site of Har-Mandir in Amritsar.
- Zoroastrianism was founded by Zoroaster in eighth century BC in Persia.
- The Cholas conquered parts of Bengal and Indonesia. They introduced democratic institutions at the village level.
- Kanchi became a great seat of learning.
- Vijayanagara's remains have been found at Hampi in Karnataka. In the Andhra region, flourished the Bahmani state.
- The Indian society at this time was divided into four major groups - the aristocrats, the priests, the town people and the peasants.
- Trade flourished in Delhi as the centre of all incoming as well as outgoing trade.
- Islam had a great influence on the Indian society. There were two important religious movements during this period – The Sufi and the Bhakti movements.
- The most important Sufi saints were Chishti, Firdausi, and Nizam-ud-din Auliya.
- Some well known Bhakti saints were Guru Nanak, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya, Mirabai and Namadeva.

## TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Describe the political situation of India in medieval times.
2. Discuss the influence of Islam on Hinduism.
3. Examine the role played by the Bhakti movement in enriching Indian culture.
4. Write a note on the rise of modern Indian languages.
5. Discuss the rise of the new faiths namely Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.

## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

### 4.1

1. Beginning of Hijira era
2. Roza is fasting in the month of Ramzan
3. The Sufis
4. Abul Fazl

### 4.2

1. *Khutba*
2. Shershah
3. Rajput
4. Vice-Regal Lodge
5. Shah Jahan

### 4.3

1. *Nirguna* and *Saguna* bhakti are the two main streams of this movement.
2. Nanak and Kabir (any one) *Nirguna* poets, Tulsidas and Surdas (any one) *Saguna* Poets.

### 4.4

1. Garba, Kalbelia, Bhangra (any two)
2. Phulkari in Punjab, Chikan work in Lucknow (any one)

### 4.5

1. Guru Gobind Singh
2. Zoroastrians

