

Religious and Political Conditions of Muslims during Later Mughal Rule

Ali Muhammad Bhat (PhD)

Assistant professor, Dept. of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, 192122 (Srinagar) Jammu and Kashmir.

Email: alimohd1265@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Muslim situation in India is one of the great concern for historians in contemporary era. Muslims live in this country from time immemorial and historical anecdotes provide sufficient information about it. While analyzing the historical sources, it is very alarming as the prompt and show of the Muslim ruling class under later Mughal rule came to disastrous end due to their lavish and unethical activities. In this regard, it is necessary to know the causes which effected the whole medieval structure and collapsed within one and half century. An attempt is made to investigation factors responsible for decline of Muslim rule under later Mughal rulers. This paper is historical in nature and the historical events happened will be analyzed descriptively so as to reach a pragmatic conclusion.

Key Words: Medieval Era, Political Conditions, Religious Conditions, Muslims in late Mughal Era, Mughal Nobility, Reformers

Introduction

The Mogul Empire was the last Muslim dynasty, ruled over India, though having Persian origin they ruled over India efficiently and in an unbiased way. Historically a known fact, it started its rule under the invasion of Babar the founder of the dynasty dates back to the founder victory over Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat (1526) (The New Cambridge History of India,1-5, 1995). It reached its climax under Akbar, Jahangir and Sahajan and expanded much under Aurangzeb. The genesis of Muslim rule in India before eighteenth century had a chemical history of about five hundred years and if counted from the conquest of Sind during 18th century had one thousand years of glorious part. During this period Islam spread every nook and corner of India and gained much strength. While spreading in India this puritanical religion did not remain un affected in Indian society with its bedrock of cultural and religious system of Hinduism, while going thoroughly studying Islam in 18th century two main strands intertwined it, the great controversies, ideological and sectarian where over caliphate or Imamate, that shook other parts of Islamic world, in due course, extended too India. On the other hand, the co-existence with Hinduism presented symbolic features hardly paralleled in any other part of the world. Not only the above strands but also was highly influenced by the successive waves of ideas and practices of mysticism which encryped with some rituals of Hinduism.(Mohammad Umar,1993)

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Every civilization has its cultural traits which distinguish it from the other cultures and civilizations. (Leavis. F. R. 1930) In India Islam entered through traders and conquerors and fashioned Indian outlook to external world. In such circumstances Muslims who entered through successive waves of rule and trade have developed relation with Indian people and remained with them as per their own cultural values. The rulers who belonged to different Muslim dynasties ruled over India not as representatives of their culture but developed homogenous tendencies with the vast majority of Hindus. Majority of Muslim rulers were not well versed in their religious teachings and with the aim to consolidate their grip on people they developed cosmopolitan culture for the sake of their rule. The most notable example was Akbar when he changed the outlook of Islamic teachings and developed a new doctrine of *Dee-i Illahi* which suits to his rule. The same trend was followed by successive rulers except Aurangzeb. In the reform movement of Indian political Islam, Aurangzeb (d.1707) tried to paint Muslim culture with Islamic values and to safeguard it from external influences. The religious clarity in Aurangzeb was not a mere coincidence, but true sense of religious reform and with long lasting logical consequences of the long cultivated seeds of inclination towards Islam. Being an able scholar of Islam and practiced Muslim with clear understanding of teachings of Islam (S.R. Sharma, 1935), he tried his best to cudgel all customary and un-Islamic superstitious practices which were eating very vitals of Muslim society in India. His orders and regulations verbalized by true representatives of Sunni Islam were implemented. His moral reforms and puritanical regulations were inspired to bring the Empire, as well as the Muslim life within the code and conduct of sharia. (Inayat-Ullah Khan, 1912) After ascending on throne he took efforts to clear the superstitious practices which had become part of Muslim society in India. To overcome these thoughts censor boards were established in order to reduce the Zoroastrian practices immersed in Indian Muslim culture in the form of *al-Manac* and *Nauroze*. The Sha'riah boards established by Aurangzeb supervised the manmade taboos and abolish them along with the illegal settled incomes. (H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, 1877) Casement looks and dancing and Music was strictly banned. Sharie Qazi's were appointed and given chief authorities to supervise everything and actions of people. In whole Empire Islamic laws were implemented for the convenience of Qazi's. In this regard huge works of Islamic law were compiled like that of *Fatawa Alamgiri*. Instead of his great revolutionary and reform activities which are worthwhile and praise worthy, his great prolific and divinely attributed qualities were his awareness of state affairs and dominance on it. (Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, 1984)

In the words of Lane-Poole, "For the first time in their history, the Mughals beheld a rigid Muslim in their emperor, a Muslim as sternly repressible of himself as of his people around him, a king who was prepared to stake his throne for sake of his faith."(G. T. Kulkarni,1978)

Religious descent of Indian Muslims was common as the wine drinking, lavish activities and merry-making. When Aurangzeb (d.1707) ascended the throne he ostensibly held the view that only two persons, "he and his Qazi-ul-Quzat

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Abdul Wahab” did not drink. Many historians quoted that his Qazi too was a drunkard. Non-Muslims was given option to go outside the city for tasting the wine in order to save Muslim community for this evil practice and ordered Mutasibs (police) to check out that Hindus and Muslims did not indulge in selling and buying wine. It was a general practice among Muslims too particularly plebian section to use intoxicative drugs like Bung and Hem. Muhatasib were appointed to curb such people and strict vigil was laid to prevent people from it along with other beverage. (Majunder, H.C. Roy Chaudri, Kali Kinkar Datta, 1981)

At the beginning of 18th century the whole administrative system crumble and the great Empire founded by Babar and flourished under Aurangzeb showed clear signs of disintegration after the demise of Aurangzeb. None of his successor was able to maintain this huge Empire fortified by their predecessors. Due to the lack of administrative experience and due to involvement of these rulers in luxuries, the Islamic state scattered in to pieces.(S.M. Edward, H.L.O Garratt, 1962) Muslims during 18th century after Aurangzeb’s demise indulge in lavish activities and participated in every religious festivals of Hindus. They submerge so much in these un-Islamic practices that Muslims especially nobles and general people too enlighten their palaces, houses and huts during Hindu festivals respectively and freely participate in gambling. People of Alwar and Bharatput celebrate very anxiously not only Diwali but Janamashtami as part of their culture.(Zahir uddin Malik, 1977) Abdullah Khan, a Sayid descendent, Siraj ud Daulah and Mir Jafar enjoy the Basant and Holi festivals along with their friends and relatives. Moreover, Mir Jaffar as it is said; “on his death bed drank few drops of water poured over the idol of Kiriteshwari near Murshidabad.(L. S.S. O’Malley, 1914) Same was the case of Muslim Nobles in Delhi, celebrated Durga Puja with great zeal in late 1825 A.D. and indulged in every kind of un-Islamic acts, which were against Islamic norms.(Majunder, H.C. Roy Chaudri, Kali Kinkar Datta, 1961)

Mohammad shah (1720-1748) was very much influenced Swami Narayan Singh and became his disciple while as other saint Manjnu Nanak Shah was daily attended by the rich Muslims, nobles. He was also famous among the Delhi saints, considered savior by Delhi Muslims. (Zahiruddin Malik,1977) Due to intermingling of Hindu and Muslims, Muslims get largely influenced by the Hindu tradition and mode of life. A Muslim of southern India resemble as Hindu as compared to his co-religionists in Punjab and Oudh. The Muslim rulers pay homage to Hindus shrines and extended vast patronage to these shrines and paid high grants for their maintenance and decoration. (Zahiruddin Malik,1977)

In Indian subcontinent Muslims remain divided always in their religious and social practices. The Hindu converts to Islam came with their age long religious taboos as well as thoughts and stick to them and remained engaged in pre-conversion traditions along with caste ridden life and became dominant part of their faith after conversion. (Mohammad Umar ,1998)

Due to their weakness Mughal court divided into groups, Hindustani and Turani.(K. Ali,1958) Shah Alam II (1759-1805AD) ascended the throne with the help of Ghaziuddin. The power of the state was actually in hand of king maker and

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Shah Alam II was just a nominal head. The immoral behavior of Ghaziuddin create led rivalry in the court and made many persons' enemies in the court. To overcome these enemies Ghaziuddin invited Maratha. They invaded the Emperor created havoc among Muslims. Seeing such turbulent condition Shah Waliullah invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to combat the Maratha forces. Shah Waliullah got much serious about Maratha invasion. He knows that the mismanagement of administration and illegal appointments along with heavy taxes upon peasants and luxurious life was the basic cause for the decline of the Empire. He wholly considered rulers responsible for such kind of faults. According to him "if the exigency of time allow me I have courage to fight for the reformation of the Empire."(Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, 1969)

The war of succession was one of the major setback to Mughal Empire in the late 18th century. After the death of Aurangzeb his son's fought for succession and resulted in plotting among nobles. From Ahmadnager Azam declareded himself as emperor while as Kam Baksh also proclaimed himself the ruler and marched with army and conquered important places as Gulbarga and Hyderabad. More powerful Muazzam launched his campaign for the claim of the sovereignty and defeated both Azam at Jajau in 1707 and Kam Baksh near Hyderabad in 1708. His warrior-ship proved fruitful for the royal claim emerged victorious and come up the Mughal throne under the title of Bahadur Shah-I. In history he is also known as Shah Alam I. The claim for succession deepen so much his own son's after his death.

The dissent the blood relationship of the brother's result in war, and his four sons, Jahandar Shah, Rafi-us-Shan, Azim-us-Shan and Jahan Shah got involved to cut down each other's throats for power and in this tussle Jahandar Shah (1712-13) succeeded to the throne. Being a weak ruler and surrounded by the people with vested interests who helped him to occupy throne, Jahandar Shah was chiefly under the influence of the Zulfikar Khan, the powerful noble who was reward with the post of wazir (prime minister). Zulfikar Khan was a cunning man and advocated friendly policy towards the Rajput's, Marathas and the Hindu chieftains to strengthen his own position and outwardly giving impression to ensure the survival of the empire.

To gratify one's needs and to strengthen his position among courtiers Zulfikar Khan imposed harsh taxes. He did this all to restrict the growing power of mansabdars and jagirdars.(Satish Chandra,1981) Ostensibly he tried to improve the finances of the empire by checking the reckless growth of jagirs and offices and forced the mansabdars to maintain their official quota of troops. Before the introduction of evil practice of revenue farming or Ijarah the farmers and the middle men were paying a fixed amount to the government. Now they were free to collect whatever they could from the peasants. Implementation of such ruthless policies which oppressed the peasantry to a great extent an internal dissent emerged and led to revolt support by Prince Farrukh Siyar. However, the ignominious rule of Nominal head came to end in 1713 when he was dethroned by his nephew Farrukh Siyar at Agra. Along with the end of Jahandar Shah's rule his

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Prime Minister Zulfikar Khan was also executed by the commands of Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He too proved as a weak ruler and was unable to guide the Empire without outside influence. (Sarkar, J.N 1964) Around him large number of people tried to influence the Emperor to achieve their devolved interests. Among those Sayid brothers succeeded to influence the Emperor and were convinced that if the real authority were in their hands the empire would be safeguarded from decay and decline. This influence resulted in power struggle between Sayid brothers and emperor. Sayid brothers increased influence in the empire and took efforts to overthrow the ruler but their efforts failed repeatedly, and finally succeeded to depose and killed Farukh Siyar in 1719 (The New Cambridge History of India, 1995).

Sayid brother's efforts result in vane because strong opposite raised head against them. They constantly faced rival factions and conspiracies in the court and deteriorated the financial and political environment of the empire. The financial strength drowned because of the refusal of taxes and payments due to courtiers and Jagirdars. This steered intensified insubordination amongst the soldiers. Moreover the inimical nobles unified themselves under the leadership of Nizamul-Mulk of the Deccan resulted in pathetic condition of the empire (M.Athar, 1966). In addition to this murder of Farrukh Siyar resulted in extremist forces who created a reign of terror and repugnance against the Sayid brothers and were considered as traitors and conspirators. After this internal disorder and conspiracy continued and collaboration against rulers with outsiders drowned the empire and provide chance to foreigners to invade the Empire. The crises increased mainly because of the Deccan war, since a greater number of mansabdars was required, the ensuing political turmoil made the collection of revenue a more difficult task and the jagirdari crisis lead to an unhealthy competition to gain control over the fertile jagir (Irfan Habib, 1963).

Historical facts reveal that some of the corrupt and dishonest Mansabdars manipulated the imperial treasury and submitted wrong information about the rigorous number of soldiers and achieved huge amounts by heir fabricated pay rolls. Thus, they misappropriated large amounts of royal wealth for their own advantage and extravagances (Ganeswar Nayak, n.d). In practice the Mansabdari system which served as the base of the Mughal administration, adopted corrupt practices and endured its efficacy. It had sunk into corruption and an inefficient system that deteriorated and reduced the unanimity of the Mughal army and the state. Corrupt practices and inefficiency of rulers to overcome such grave situation resulted in the rise of prices, and hastened growth of Mansabs increase and rise to unchecked jagirs. The relentless impasse of increase in the Khalasa revenues at the expense of the jagirs and the consequent growth of unemployment was result of incompetence of Mughal nobles and stakeholders in the Mughal courts. (Romila Thapar and S. Bhattacharya (eds.), 1986).

It is noteworthy that if Mughal rulers of later age had some forbearance they could rule the country many centuries after the third battle of Panipat. But Mughal Empire was turned hollow internally and spiritless. So the advantage of battle of

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Panipat (1761AD) were reaped by the conquerors of battle of palassy. After the defeat of Maratha Ahmad Shah Abdali send his man to Shah Alam II to come back to Delhi, because he was aware about the intentions of English forces and their danger which was at the head of Empire. When he did not return from Bihar, Ahmad Shah Abdali approach his mother Zanab Mahal to write a letter to his son so that he may return to Delhi. The summary of the letter is as, "Shahanshah (Ahmad Shah) had come into fort. Today is twentieth Rajab and I meet him several times. He is waiting you anxiously. My son, believe when you return Delhi every affair will be set aright. Timur Shah send me gifts with candour and love. Your evil doers are trying to create distress, you do not pay heed to them. My son you come immediately, Allah forbade if Shah be gone you may be trapped by new calamities." This letter shows that rivalry and plot hatching against each other among Mughals was order of day during the later Mughal period (J. Heras, 937).

The nobles and wazirs wasted their much time and money in lavish activities. Sensuality of women during later Mughal life was a dominant factor. Even they were involved in hundreds of women on their beauty and paid huge amount to them. It is recorded that Shah Alam's (1772 A.D) spent much of his time in between 500 women in his palace. He was considered highly intoxicative and devoted to beauty of women (L.L Dolisy De Madave, 1937). It is recorded that Shah Alam's character exacerbated so much that he spent much of his time in midst of women. Being fond of lavish and luxuries he usually quotes his poetical note as;

"The morning passes in wine drinking, the night among the loved ones, God knows what would happen on the day of Judgment However, at present life passes in ease and comfort (Mir Hasan Delhvi, 1922).

In the first decade of 18th century the post of wizarat had become the bone of contention and with the appointment of a lesser known but most loyal person viz. Munim Khan on the coveted post, the concept that only high class, grandee could hold the post started diminishing. By doing so, Bahadur Shah had set aside the suggestion of Aurangzeb to continue to Asad khan in office. Family background, seniority, experience, relations, with the house of ruler were no longer criterion, but the role in gaining throne for king and loyalty was the latest and recent qualification to assume wizarat. This led to open all kinds of intrigues, understanding and dealings to achieve target which situation further aggravate the Mutual rivalries and between the nobles led even to brought weak, feeble princes of their choice on throne, just to enjoy more power as has been the case of Zulfiqarkhan and Syed brothers. The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 and the holocaust of Delhi was the natural outcome of these kind of political activities, based on selfish, greed and short sighted policy of the nobles. Majority of the great nobles, who held wizarat during the period viz. Zulfiqur Khan, Syed Abdullah Khan, Mohammad Amin khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Qamarud-Din Khan, Safdar Jang etc. were found drowned in their own personal interest and greets on one or the other occasions. This lavishness had engulfed the whole Muslim community during later ages and became cause of decline. The corruption has reached to

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climax when qazi's too accept bribe. According to Muzaffar Alam, "The family of the qazi of the pargana of Bilgram in the time of Muhammad Shah, have been involved in 'this worldliness'. The temptation to get money to purchase lands encouraged and increased corruption and malpractice in the courts of the qazis" (Muzaffar Alam, 2013).

He is also of the view that "Some madad-i ma'ash holders appear to have acquired quite a strong position in the land and monetary transactions in the locality and began to act as revenuefarmers and money-lenders as well. In 1677, one Mir Saiyid Ahmad of Bahraich held a number of villages on ijara, while in another instance, the zamindars of Gondai in pargana Husampur are reported to have pawned their village to one Saiyid Habibullah. In another case, Saiyid Muhammad Panah of Bilgram combined madad-i ma'ash with muqaddami (headmanship) of village Ikhtiarpur in 1723" (Muzaffar Alam, 2013).

Muhammad Shah was an exhaust mind and cheery ruler believes in extravagant desires and over fond of ease and luxury. Abandonment of affairs of the state gave rise to corruption and rivalry in the Mughal court. Instead of giving full support to able Wazirs such as Nizam-ul-Mulk, he fell under the wicked power of dishonest and rubbish designs of court nobles and fascinated against his own ministers. Muhammad Shah was so corrupt, he even shared the bribes taken by his favorite courtiers. Nizam ul Mulk felt shocked on the capricious attitude, double standard and cynical nature of the Emperor. The most powerful noble (Nizam ul Mulk) felt pray of the situation and followed his own ambition (Muzaffar Alam, 2013).

The ruler class of Mughal Empire ruined their image by indulging in lavish desires. In February 1756 when Hazrat Begum daughter of Mohammad Shah (d.1759A.D) being only 16 years old was proposed by Alamgir-II 60-year-old. This old man lingering to decline of age shamelessly threatened her mother the Ex-Empress Malika-i-Zaman "Either you give her to me in marriage or I shall take her by force and on her refusal she was forced to pass her life in loneliness" (Sarkar. J.N., 1966). He fell in love with a low born dancing girl at the age of sixty being without proper eyesight. Alike, Jahandar Shah spent every night in drinking frolics with the lower class women and paid 10 million rupees per year to Lal Kumari and married her. People were highly involved in wine drinking and it had become part of their life (Cambridge History of India, 1979).

In the courts of later Mughals, the concubine tool was very high. Harem was the hot bed of corruption and vices (Panday, A.B.1963). During marriage ceremonies some who are by name Muslims, perform every kind of Hindu ritual to quench their thirst of sensuality. They first perform Hindu rites and then call Qazi's to perform the Nikah ceremonies. The principles of Islamic inheritance were ignored through the local tribal laws followed by un-Islamic practices.(Titus, M.N. 1959) Muslims sold their girls as Hindus do to extradite them from the inheritance. Mirza Hasan Qateel says.

"During Muslim marriage every kind of Hindu custom was followed except some like mooring around the fire" (Mohammad Hasan Qateel, n.d.).

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Once Mir Murtza Waiz of Multan condemned un-Islamic practices in a religious ceremony observed by courtiers, Ulama and Mashaikh. They turned hostile to him and forced him to leave Aurangabad. The ulama were so much influenced by un-Islamic practices, Mir Murtza Waiz while condemning on use of intoxication, a Kashmiri scholar interrupted him in between the sermon and blamed him of creating blasphemous thoughts which are not mentioned in Sha'riah. From this period he superannuated into his house till death (Kafi Khan, 1860).

During eighteenth century the ulama generally degraded themselves and low opinions were held about their character especially theologians and fuqaha. During Jahandar Shah's rule, the Qazi distils wine and Mufti would drink it. Their status wreaked so low that during Furruk Siyar (d.1719A.D) rule, A Hindu Raja Ratan Chand controlled the appointments instead of Qazi's in department of judiciary. Moreover, the office of the judiciary was continuously sold by Abdullah Khan the Wazir in the Diwan of Qutb al-Mulk. (Kafi Khan, 1860). The character of Qazi reached to the level that Qazi Abdullah Turani entitled Mir-Jumla (governor of patna) along with his soldiers, plundered, looted and oppressed the innocent people (Kafi Khan, 1860). The Ulama tainted themselves to a level of character, that they did not attend the funeral of a dead unless paid. For this act Gulam Hasan Tabatabai stated it as.

“Since from very long period it became a custom to put everything in sale, even the post of Qazi was sold in favor of those who did not know anything about the Islamic laws. They take grants of everything what they considered their right. They reduce themselves low in character, whenever any person dies from poor section of society they send their deputies to collect money prescribed by their own principles. Those who were not able to pay where declared impure and dirty. The impact of such practices was terrifying and with immediate effect his neighbors exude his company (Gulam Hasan Tabatabai, 1866). An 18th century poet exposed the character of these people as;

“Though Ulama offer prayers and keep fasting it was only to show their character, and are ignorant of Sharia's bless and graces. They have lost faith on religion and divine guidance. Most of them give up the prayers and fasting and wonder in search of earning. During later Mughal period they were large in numbers. They have turndown the divine reality, have forgotten Allah, fell prey to sensuous and luxury pursuits (Khawaja Mir Dard, 1891).

The process of adaptation of non-Muslim practices in the middle of 18th century remain continue all over India but particularly in Bengal and Bihar all the courtiers enjoyed it weeks long and spent state exchequer without any check and balance. After the treaty of Alinagar, Siraj ud Daula, along Nawab Mir Jaffar and people below nobility took part in celebrating Holi at Mansurganj (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961). In Bengal and Bihar like other parts of India people converted to Islam halfheartedly, especially in rural areas the mixed practice of belief had encrypted to Muslims faith, like burning of Muslim widows and inter marriage with Hindus were practiced in many parts of the country. Worshiping at Hindus shrine became a continuous practice even cure for disease was related with

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Hindu goddesses “Devi Mata” in Punjab and other parts of India. According to the census report of late 1911 A.D. the Muslims were declared, “Neither Hindus nor Muslims but followers of a mixed culture of both” (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961).

New Muslims from Afghanistan and Persia introduced saint worship. Muslims perform Hindu practices like existence of ancient Guruchela practice and their universal concept of worshipping local god and goddesses (Titus, M.N. 1959). During 19th century belief in the usefulness of saints had become almost universal among the Muslims of India (K. M. Sen, 1936).

The living as well as demised Pir was considered as source of getting rewards and success. In this regard a remarkable thing prevails which still exists among Indian Muslims that amulets were sought from Pirs to overpower the evil forces and were always kept fixed with body as security. Among these leopards, lions and Tigers were considered as special property of saints. Muslim saints were pretend to these activities as Hindus do in order to grab money from the people (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick 1961).

The dead Pirs were considered as source of getting rewards and success. But the living one's are considered source of security and are seeking amulets having leopards, lions and Tigers skin and are declared special property of saints (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961). From the shrine of Khawaja Moinuddin Ajmiri people took stones, bricks and install them in their houses as sacred objects to overcome calamities. On the other Mutawalli of shrines earn their lively and build palaces from the money received from general people (Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal vol. 63/1, part 3, 1894).

Among the Mughal princes, nobles and wealthy land lords of India it was necessary to pay homage/service to evade sins. The worship on saint tombs became necessary and every class of the society, musicians, Juggles, courtesans and dancing girl, liberties and swindlers take part in it (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961).

The profound homage to Pir (saint) shrines was equated with Hindu pattern of veneration to their Gurus or Gossans and considered them exclusively powerful to cure. Accordingly, Shah Karim Ali, Jagannathpur can transform dead into living and cause rain whenever necessary (Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol. 63/1, part 3, 1894). For Murid (disciple) Sajdah (bowing down before Pir) to Pir is necessary and an act of most blessed for Muslims all over India. (Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal vol. 63/1, part 3, 1894) The ascetic practices of Hindus were widely adopted by the numerous Muslims. Among these fakirs class known as Sahifiya dress in women ornaments and accept money from dancing girls and also like to play, dance and sing before their spiritual guides. In such circumstances they get highly inducted in intoxication and in smoking Ganja, Bung, opium and drink wine (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961).

In Bengal after 18th century widow marriage was highly ostracized and weighed up disgraceful and against once dignity. According to H. Ali;

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“During her twelve years of residence among Indian Muslims, I did not hear of a widow marrying again. Many Muslim widows whose engaged husbands died before the marriage continued their life in loneliness till their death (Ali, H. 1832).

“To overcome such evil practice Sayid Ahmad Shaheed stand firmly against this practice and got married with his brother’s widow and is considered first widow marriage after long years” (Aziz ur Rahman Mallick, 1961).

To overcome these practices in 18th century Shah Waliullah (b.1703) point out all weaknesses of Muslim community from rulers down to the Sufi’s, and tried his best to reform the Muslim Empire. These superstitious practices engulfed the Muslim society e.g. some thought that witness of proposals, hostility to widow marriage, long dowries, along with playing drum and other musical instruments. Shah Waliullah declared these faiths and practice as un-Islamic. He is also of the view professions adopted by Muslims like music vocal instruments, dance, and chess and going out for hunting etc. had ruined the Empire. He was painfully conscious of the deteriorating condition of Muslim Empire and fall in ethical values and moral standards. To overcome the evil practices, he warned the Muslim nobility and rulers as,

“O Amir’s, do you not afraid Allah and have you not indulge in deep pleasures of this limited life..... Many of you had erected lofty buildings for wickedness for gambling and wine distillation. All of you are wasting your wealth for sensual desires with slim bodied womenYou have never bent your head before Allah instead use His words only for conversations and stories (Manzoor Numani, 1960).

Shah Waliullah point out the character of contemporary Ulama and Sufi’s and advised them to mend their character. According to him there is no difference between infidels and sufi’s and consider them as culmination of Sufism. He insisted rulers to appoint Qazi’s only people of knowledge and strict followers of Sunni faith. He ignited soldiers to mend their character and remembered them their duties. He warned them to come out from un-Islamic practices and selfish desires and offer prayers so that Allah may promote your life and confer upon you a victory (Manzoor Numani, 1960).

He also admonished descendants of Mashaikh, to behave as true representatives of Islam and overcome evil practices of negative spiritualism. Due to selfish desires they (saints also known as Pirs) exploit people for gaining worldly profits by pretending to be hermits. He advised nobles to give away extravagance and implored for judicious taxes on the peasants and merchants. He also criticized ulama who indulged in philosophical discussions involved in controversies of etymology and grammar. Instead need to follow the Quran and Sunnah. He pointed towards the general public and draw their attention towards the vices and un-Islamic practices which had diminished the real image of Islam due to moral corruption. You behave as true Muslims and He will open doors of livelihood for you. Shah Waliullah tried to restore the communities’ sense of unity, and tried to solve the Shia-Sunni tension (Sayed Ahd Bari, 2002).

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It is observed in the rule of Mughal dynasty that, in a situation where the Emperor's order came into a clash with a religious injunction, the former would prevail. This was, seen in the policies of later Mughal rulers too. (Iqtidar Alam Khan, 2001) Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi states that, the more dangerous than social and moral decline is denial from Allah's help and faith. The superstitious beliefs and customs of other religions mostly Hindu's were adopted by the Muslims Concept of infidelity had developed among the ignorant Muslims as they offer grave worship, prostrate before Mashaik. Paying full regard for prostration to saints and their shrines like Kaba was common among Muslims. Scarifies on the name of saints, arrangement of concourse singing and lighting ones' homes and shrines on special occasions are in full sway among Muslims, Faith on the un-Islamic practices like the goat of Shaikh Saddu, the cow of Syed Ahmad Kabir, the flag and stick of Ghazi Mian, the sarcophagus of Muharram, are observed with full devotion. Sometimes fasting was observed in some others name to get their favour and blessings. At some distinctive occasions quality food were served to achieve salvage through saints and such activities were prevalent everywhere among the 18th century Muslims (Shah Moin uddin Ahmad Nadvi, 1968).

According to Sayid Suleiman Nadvi, during 18th century antireligious customs and traditions were prevailing everywhere. Downfall in moral and religious thought and life resulted in the decline of Muslim society. He is of the view when the sun of the Mughal Empire was at dusk, the un-Islamic customs and schism was in vigor. The false saints and Mashaikh had established their thrones in Khanqah's of Nobles. Every corner of Madrasa's was involved in illogical insurrections of philosophy. Without any respect to fiqh, fatwa became order of their life without investigation about the issue. No one had right to investigate juristic matters and was considered biggest crime. Not only general masses but ulama and fuqaha were too away from the understanding the meaning of Holy Quran and Hadith. They were totally ignorant from understanding the secrets and composition of sha'riah (Jafar Sharif, 1972).

The cause of Muslim enervation and debility are directly related to extravagant activities and superstitious beliefs. Faith on Allah came very low while as faith on Sufi's established the status higher than Allah for themselves. They erected terraces under the trees at every step and they deceit and misled people. Rulers too were afraid of them and general people always pay service to them, graves, shrines and pay gifts as well as ablation to Sufi's (Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, 1984).

The lavish activities and desires of the rulers. Ulama and saints brought economic bankruptcy and wasted state exchequer. Across the all four directions in India people were involved in un-Islamic practices and widespread belief in magic and supernatural things. Astrology became basic source of known things than Quran and Sunnah. Total state administration was involved in such activities even powerful kings, like that of Tipu Sultan was very much involved in superstitious acts. Muslims across India perform such ceremonies to avert disaster and misfortune. Tipu Sultan had much faith on astrologers and consult them in his

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court about knowing fate. Every Saturday he offered seven kind of different foods to seven different stars on the instructions of these astrologers. In later Mughal era people who were incompetent, languid and do not like hard work they tried to achieve their livelihood due to Sufi designs as fortunetellers. Credulous belief was held that Sufi would do special thing for them by various types of esoteric methods. Talisman had become a super natural thing which they got from Sufi's. According to Jafar Sharif, several kinds of amulets were used to ward-off devil inflections and for the paralyzed man's upliftment and catching thieves as well as curing diseases. Hundreds of such activities were done which had no Islamic sanction. I cured them, but I feel much doubt regarding the effects produced. I frequently pray to Allah "O Allah what type of relation is between men and Jinn, also how I over power the Jinn's (Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, 1984).

The influence of these paranormal things develop very high and Shah Abdul Aziz, a prolific scholar was influenced by them. Once he got pain in his toe and came to know it would be cured by taking hair of child more than 40 days' age or less than six months, and tie this hair on infected part so that it cures. Moreover, in emperors' house particularly and in people generally keep naval cords of new born child were kept in safe place along with talisman containing magical symbols, especially under the pillow of child, so that evil spirits did not attack him. Sometimes knife was also kept aside of the child, which had been used to cut the Novel cord, as symbol of protection. All these were adopted from the culture of Hindu brethren. (Mohammad Naimullah Bahraichi, 1858) Many a times it is became difficult to distinguish between a Muslim who bows at a shrine and a Hindu bow down in a temple. A mixed culture flourished which diminished the Muslim identity at large. Muslims especially noble class celebrate every Hindu festival. Mir Hassan Dehvi wrote about the condition of nobility in such a way, 'Emperor had adopted the way of recluses. The ministers tried to soothe him, but he called all the astrologers and pundits and asked them about his future (Syed Mir Hasan, 1986). Emperors had adopted lot of Hindu customs and riots.

Religion of Islam at all levels faced set back due to lavish desires and cunning nature of Sufi's Mullah and rulers. All sorts of sacrileges became order of life. Not a single Muslim cared about the degeneration of religious life. Nazir Akbarabad visualize the situation of later Mughal life as;

"In every house the lamps of Diwali enlighten every side was luminous, due to it every person's heart enjoys Diwali and every one heart feels pleasure (Nazeer Akbarabadi, 1922).

He also points out the playing games, betting, playing with fireworks in his poetry. Muslims in general but illiterate Muslim women in particular discharge every type of Hindu tradition. Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan narrated the situation of his period as," Nowadays the Muslim had adopted the famous festival of Diwali like their own festival, especially the women took lead in such matters. Hindus present gifts at Dewali, Muslims also present gifts to their children at Diwali and other Hindu festivals. They too organise ceremonies during these festivals (Nazeer Akbarabadi, 1922).

Religious and Political Conditions of Muslims during Later Mughal Rule

Mirza Husain Qateel point out court life as, after the demise of Aurangzeb his successors celebrate the festival of Dussera in Royal court. During the reign of Jahandar Shah a hurt like “Lankan city was erected and put on fire, the king feels great pleasure on seeing such scene. During period of Akbar II and Bahadur Shah Zafar this scene of Dussera is celebrate such a way;

“On the day of Dussera the king held the Royal court, first the blue necked Jay was flown in air in front of the king, then the inspector of falcon house came with falcon on his hand and the court was discharged At, after-noon the inspector of stable came along with horses dyed with mehendi and different types of design were made on it, then came the instrument of entertainment decorated with gold, later on the king inspects these horses and in last he discharge the ceremony by awarding the inspector (Mujeeb Mohammad, 1967).

Downfall is the continuous loss of power or gradual decline of any government or empire (Bayly, C.A., Nov 1985, 38/4). Same thing happened with Mughal Empire under later rulers. The collapse of Mughal Empire is called by scholars as gradual process. Large number of causes are responsible for the loss of power but some are more important ranging from inefficient administration, immoral emperors, lavish desires and internal conflict and contradictions of nobility. In the words of Irfan Habib, “the fall of the Mughal Empire proceeded directly from certain basic structural, contradictions of the system on which it was based, and that all the factors that are generally brought forward in our textbook had, if any, only a secondary role to play” (Habib, Irfan, 1959, Meena Bhargava ed. 2014). Decline here refers to the failure of the administrative setup that had sustained the growth of the Mughal Empire, in its peak years (Metcalf, Thomas R., April, 1984, 89/10).

The political condition worsened day by day. The cause of political disintegration was the Wars of succession. After the demise of great ruler Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. His successors engage in the brutal war of succession and within seventeen years five rulers ascended and deposed constantly from the Mughal throne of Delhi. Within twenty years of decline of Delhi Empire, many independent states emerge like Hyderabad, and Maharashtra’s independence was recognized. The Maratha got right to collect levy on land in Deccan. During eighteenth century Muslim Empire became the custodian of Maratha power. Lastly depend on the help of foreign power like Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1761 A.D. to get rid-off from Maratha menace. The Emperor was just puppet in hands of the political factions which dominate the Mughal court. Apparently Mughal rule came to end in 1857A.D. when British forces got overall control but internally it had razed to ground by court politics and ceased to be an Empire in true sene in 1724 A.D (Sidney Owen, 1887).

Conclusion

Islam a religion of moral upbringing and unity was a source of victory for all rulers in India and Mughals too. But due to unethical activities by Nobility in particular

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and people as well as administration in general paved way for corruption at all levels of the Mughal Empire. People at all levels faced corrupt administrators and this created a breach between the state and people. They get worst set back from religious class when, sufi's, Mashaikh, Qazi's and fuqaha got involved in bribe and looting people through different immoral actions. The courtiers visited tombs and paid their huge sums instead of concerning about the issues of wrecked empire. The loot and plunder due to moral decadency became order of the empire. Not a single step is taken by nobility to overcome such chaos and disorder. The Character of nobility waned so low that many nobles believe in and lived lavishly beyond their means. Many of them even deserted in the art of fighting. Later the existing families of nobles began to monopolize all offices, barring the way to fresh comers. Not all the nobles, were weak and inefficient, but most of them used their abilities to endorse their own interest, and to fight each other, rather than to assist the state and society to bring it out of disorder. In order to increase their influence, authority, stature and income, the nobles formed élite groups against each other and even counter to the King. The moral decadency and not gaining guidance from Islamic teachings resulted in the decline. Their Mutual quarrels exhausted the Empire, affected its cohesion and in the end made it an easy tray to foreign conquerors.

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