



## CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

The Medieval period is considered as an age of great cultural synthesis in India. During this period a new phase of cultural development was initiated. The Turks and Mughals introduced fresh ideas and helped in giving rise to new features in the areas of religion, philosophy and ideas, Language and Literature, Styles of architecture and use of building material, Painting and Fine arts, Music and performing arts.

India already had a very rich cultural tradition in all spheres. The synthesis between different cultures gave birth to new philosophical and religious traditions, ideas, forms and styles in almost all spheres of culture. In this lesson you would be introduced to these new cultural developments in some important spheres. We will mainly focus on:

- new religious movements like Sufism and Bhakti,
- rise of Sikhism as a new religion,
- growth of Urdu and Persian language and literature,
- growth of literature in various Indian languages,
- the architecture of the Sultanate and Mughals with regional variations,
- new forms of music,
- the Mughal painting and other new styles that emerged in India.

We hope that the study of this lesson will enhance your understanding about culture during this period.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- know the philosophy and practices of various orders of Sufis in India;
- discuss the philosophy, and practices of various orders of Bhakti saints in India;
- trace the rise of Sikhism, its practices, institution of Gurus and Khalsa panth;
- describe various styles and forms of painting in medieval India;
- discuss the rise of new languages and the growth of literature in medieval India;
- discuss various schools of music and dance styles in medieval India and
- describe main styles, materials used and techniques adopted in medieval architecture.



## Notes

## 14.1 SUFISM

'Sufism' is a term used to refer to mystical religious ideas in Islam. It had evolved into a well developed movement by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Sufis, stress on the importance of traversing the path of the Sufi *pir* enabling one to establish a direct communion with the divine. Sufism or mysticism emerged in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and among the early known Sufis were Rabia al-Adawiya, Al-Junaid and Bayazid Bastami. Fundamental to sufism is God, Man and the relation between them that is Love. They believe that from man emerged the theories of *ruh* (soul), *qurbat* (divine proximity) and *hulul* (infusion of the divine spirit) and that from relation between God and Man ideas such as *Ishq* (divine love) and *Fana* (self annihilation) come into being. The Sufis were regarded as people who kept their heart pure; they sought to communicate with God through their ascetic practices and doctrine of divine love and union with God. The *murid* (disciple) passes through *maqamat* (various stages) in this process of experiencing communication with the divine.

The *khanqah* (the hospice) was the center of activities of the various sufis orders. The *khanqah* was led by *shaikh*, *pir* or *murshid* (teacher) who lived with his *murids* (disciples). In time the *Khanqahs* emerged as important centres of learning and preaching. By the twelfth century the sufis were organized in *silsilahs* (orders). The word *silsila* meant chain and it represented signifying an unbreakable chain between the *pir* and the *murid*. With the death of the *pir* his tomb or shrine the *dargah* became a centre for his disciples and followers.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century Sufism spread across important regions of the Islamic empire. Iran, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Egypt, Syria and Baghdad were important Sufi centers. Al-Ghazali, (1059–1111 A.D.) is among the most venerated of Sufis. He reconciled Islamic mysticism with Islamic orthodoxy, providing Sufi mysticism a secure place in Islam. He stressed on the need for the disciple to follow the guidance of the spiritual master. He also emphasised on the supreme authority of the holy Prophet and the need to obey laws in both letter and spirit

The Sufi movement in India commenced in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Al Hujwiri, who established himself in north India was buried in Lahore and regarded as the oldest Sufi in the sub Continent. Among the important Sufi Orders in the history of Medieval India were those of the Chishtiya, Suhrawardiya, Qadiriya and Naqshbandiya.

Chisti and the Suhrawardi *silsilahs* were popular during the Sultanate period. The Suhrawardis were active in Punjab and Sindh while the Chishti's were active in Delhi, Rajasthan and parts of the western gangetic plains. By the end of the sultanate period they had spread to the eastern regions of the gangetic plain (Bihar and Bengal) and into the Deccan. During the medieval period the Sufis played an important role in interpreting and elaborating on Islamic theological concepts like *Wahdat ul Wujud* (unity of being) and also encouraged the development of practices like *Ziyarat* (the practice of visiting tombs).

The Sufi movement as it emerged in India had the following features:

- The Sufis were organized in a number of different *silsilahs* (orders)
- Most of these orders were led by some prominent sufi saint or *pir*. It was named after them and was followed by his disciples.
- The Sufis believed that for union with God one needs a spiritual guru or *Pir*.
- The sufi *pirs* lived in Khanqahs with their disciples



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- The Khanqah (the hospice) was the centre of sufi activities
- The Khanqahs emerged as important centres of learning which were different from madrasas the centres of theology
- Many sufis enjoyed the musical congregation or *sama* in their Khanqahs. A musical form called the qawwali developed during this period.
- The *ziyarat* or pilgrimage to the tombs of the sufi saints soon emerged as an important form of ritual pilgrimage.
- Most of the Sufis believed in the performance of miracles. Almost all *pirs* were associated with the miracles performed by them.
- The different sufi orders had diverse approaches about the matters of polity and state.

**The Chishti Silsilah**

The Chisti Order was established in India by Muinuddin Chishti. He seems to have moved into India after the invasion of Muizzuddin Muhammad Ghori and subsequently to Ajmer in 1206. The fame of Khwaja Muinuddin grew after his death in 1235, his grave was visited by Muhammad Tughlaq after which the mosque and dome were erected by Mahmud Khalji of Malwa in the fifteenth century. The patronage of this dargah peaked after the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar.

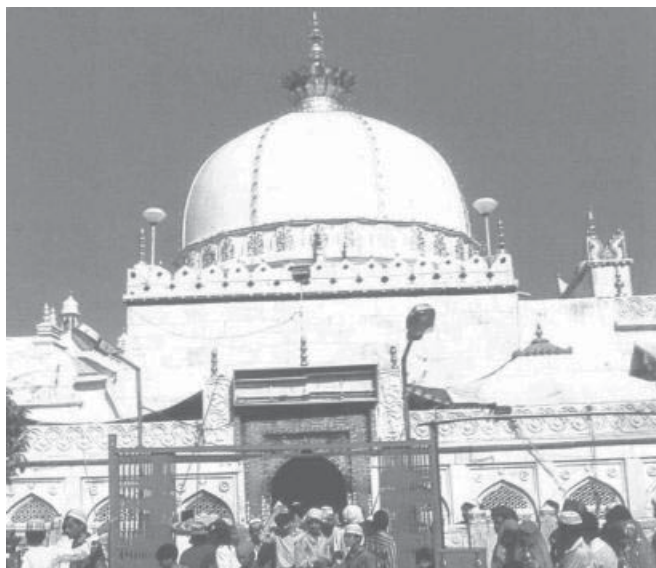


Fig. 14.1 Ajmer Durgah

The Chishtis believed in:

- love as the bond between God and individual soul,
- the tolerance between people of different faiths,
- acceptance of disciples irrespective of their religious beliefs,
- attitude of benevolence to all,
- association with Hindu and Jain yogi's, and
- use of simple language



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The Chishti presence in Delhi was established by Qutbuiddin Bakhtiyar Kaki who settled in Delhi from his homeland in Transoxiana in 1221. This was at the time of the Mongol invasions when there was a steady flow of people from central Asia fleeing from the Mongols. His presence in Delhi was a threat to the Suhrawardis who sought to force him to leave by levelling charges against him. The Sultan of Delhi, Iltutmish, dismissed these attempts eventually forcing the Suhrawardis to relent. The Chishti *pirs* laid great emphasis on the simplicity of life, poverty, humility and selfless devotion to God. The renunciation of worldly possessions was regarded by them as necessary for the control of the senses that was necessary to maintain a spiritual life. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti argued that highest form of devotion to God was to redress the misery of those in distress, fulfilling the need of the helpless and to feed the hungry. They refused to accept any grant for their maintenance from the Sultans.

The other important Chishti Baba Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar, established himself at Hansi (in Haryana) on the route between Multan and Lahore. Nizamuddin Auliya, was the best known Chishti saint of the Sultanate period. He lived in the fourteenth century, during a period of political change and turmoil. During his lifetime he was witness to the establishment of the Khalji rule after the death of Balban and subsequently the establishment of the Tughlaq's. There are numerous stories surrounding the life of Nizamuddin Auliya, famous among them were stories of his confrontations with the Sultans of Delhi. The Khwaja is said to have maintained a strict policy of not involving himself with the various groups and factions of the Sultan's court in Delhi earning him the respect of many. Nasiruddin Chiragh Delhi was another of the Chishti saints of Delhi. He played an active role in the political affairs of the period.

All these enabled Sufis to maintain a loyal and dedicated following.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Chishti Order was established in the Deccan by Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib. Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries many Chishti Sufis migrated to Gulbarga. This was accompanied with a change where some of the Chishtis began accepting grants and patronage from the ruling establishment. Muhammad Banda Nawaz is among the famous *pirs* in the region. The Deccan city of Bijapur emerged as an important centre for Sufi activity.

### The Suhrawardi Silsilah

This Silsilah was founded by Shihabuddin Suhrawardi in Baghdad. It was established in India by Bahauddin Zakariya. He founded the Suhrawardi Order, based in Mutan, which was under the control of Qubacha. He was critical of Qubacha and openly favored Iltutmish over his rival. His ways were different from that of the Chishtis. The Suhrawardis, unlike the Chishtis, accepted, maintenance grants from the Sultans. They believed that a Sufi should possess the three attributes of property, knowledge and *hal* or mystical enlightenment. Suhrawardi saints argued that this was necessary to ensure that they served the poor better. He stressed on the observance or external forms of religious belief and advocated a combination of *ilm* (scholarship) with mysticism. Practices like bowing before the sheikh, presenting water to visitors and tonsuring the head at the time of initiation into the Order that the Chishtis had adopted were rejected. After his death the *silsilah* continued to play an important role in Punjab and Sindh.

### Naqshbandi Silsilah

In India this order was established by Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi. From the beginning the mystics of this Order stressed on the observance of the shariat and



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denounced all innovations or *biddat*. Sheikh Baqi Billah the successor to Khawaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi settled near Delhi, and his successor Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi attempted to purge Islam from all liberal and what he believed were ‘un-Islamic’ practices. He opposed the listening of *sama* (religious music) and the practice of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints. He opposed interaction with Hindus and Shias. He criticised the new status accorded by Akbar to many non-Muslims, the withdrawal of the *Jizyah* and the ban on cow slaughter. He believed that he was the *mujaddid* (renewer) of the first millennium of Islam. He maintained that the relationship between man and God was that between the slave and the master and not the relation of a lover and beloved. He emphasised the individual’s unique relation of faith and responsibility to God as creator. He tried to harmonise the doctrines of mysticism and the teachings of orthodox Islam.

**The Qadri Silsilah**

The Quadiriyya *silsilah* was popular in Punjab. Sheikh Abdul Qadir and his sons were supporters of the Mughals under Akbar. The *pirs* of this Order supported the concept of *Wahdat al Wajud*. Among the famous Sufis of this order was Miyan Mir who had enrolled the Mughal princess Jahanara and her brother Dara as disciples. The influence of the sheikh’s teachings is evident in the works of the prince. Shah Badakhshani another *pir* of this *silsilah* while dismissing orthodox elements, declared that, the infidel who had perceived reality and recognised it was a believer and that a believer who did not recognise reality was an infidel.

During medieval period there was constant tension between the liberal and orthodox views in Islam. The *sufis* featured on both sides, while there were those like the Chishtis who held a liberal view and argued in favour of assimilation of local traditions there were others like sheikh Abdul Haqq of the Quadiriyya *silsilah* who held the view that the purity of Islam was being diluted. This Orthodox view was represented by the *ulema* that argued from the perspective of being upholders of the *shariat*. The liberal opinion found its voice among many *sufis* who argued against the narrow definition of Islamic laws by the *ulema*.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.1**

1. Who is a Pir?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was Al-Ghazali?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you understand by the term “Sama”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which famous chishti sufi saint lived during the time of the Khalji’s and Tughlaq’s?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Shaikh Abdul Qadir?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14.2 THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

The Bhakti movement in Indian history represents a movement that popularized devotional surrender to a personally conceived supreme God. Its origins are traced to



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the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions of ancient India. It was in south India that it grew from a religious tradition into a popular movement based on religious equality and broad based social participation. The movement led by popular saints reached its climax in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In its attempt to embrace the concept of bhakti the movement in different regions drew from diverse traditions and assumed different forms in different parts of the sub continent.

The bhakti movement attempted to break away from orthodox Brahmanism. The movement gathered momentum in the early medieval period. Historians have attempted to associate the origins of the bhakti movement in India with the advent of Islam and the spread of Sufism. They argue that the Turkish conquest paved the way for a reaction against the conformist Rajput-Brahman domination. The rise of bhakti movement is considered by some scholars as a reaction against feudal oppression. The anti feudal tone in the poetry of bhakti saints like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tulsidas are seen as illustrations of this point. There is no single opinion about the origins of the bhakti movement that can be sustained. It is clear from the poetry and the philosophy of the bhakti saints that they broke away from orthodox Brahmanism. They believed in religious equality and identified themselves with the sufferings of the common people.

Some scholars feel that the socio economic changes in the early medieval period provide the necessary backdrop to understand the emergence of the Bhakti movement. During the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries the demand for manufactured goods, luxuries and other artisanal goods increased leading to a movement of artisans into the cities. The artisans were attracted to bhakti because of its ideas of equality. These groups were dissatisfied with the low status accorded to them by Brahmanical system. The movement gained support from these classes of society. There were also a few variations in places like Punjab where not only Khatris but Jat peasants as were also attracted to this movement.

The bhakti movement in the early medieval period represents an important movement of reform and change. After the rise of heterodox movements of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC the bhakti movement represents another phase of Indian history in which new ideas and practices emerged influencing the country as a whole initiating reform movements.

**The Bhakti movement in north India**

The bhakti movement in the north included socio religious movements that were linked to one of the acharyas from the south and is sometimes seen as a continuation of the movement that originated in the south. Though there were similarities in the traditions of the two regions, the notion of bhakti varied in the teachings of each of the saints. The Nirguna Bhaktas like Kabir rejected the varnaashrama and all conventions based on caste distinction and championed new values, helping the emergence of new groups and new unorthodox/protestant sects. The Saguna Bhaktas like Tulsidas on the other hand upheld the caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmins. They preached religion of surrender and simple faith in a personal god and had a strong commitment to idol worship.

**Monotheistic Bhakti**

Kabir (c.1440–1518 A.D.) was the earliest and most influential Bhakti saint in north India. He was a weaver. He spent a large part of his life in Banaras. His poems were included in the Sikh scripture, the Adi Granth. Among those who were influenced by Kabir were Raidas, who was a tanner by caste from Banaras, Guru Nanak who was a Khatri from Punjab and Dhanna who was a Jat peasant from Rajasthan.



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There are similarities in the teachings of the various monotheistic Bhakti saints in North India.

- Most of the monotheists belonged to the low castes and were aware that there existed a unity in their ideas. They were also aware of each other's teachings and influence. In their verses they mention each other and their predecessors in a manner suggesting ideological affinity among them.
- All of them were influenced by the Vaishnava concept of Bhakti, the Nathpanthi movement and Sufism. Their ideas seem to be a synthesis of the three traditions.
- The importance given to the personal experience of Bhakti saint with God was another common feature among the monotheistic bhakti saints. Nirguna bhakti and not saguna bhakti was what they believed in. They had adopted the notion of bhakti from vaishnavism but they gave it a nirguna orientation. Though they called God using different names and titles their God was non-incarnate, formless, eternal and ineffable.
- The Bhakti saints refused any formal association with the organized dominant religions of the time (Hinduism and Islam) and criticized what they regarded to be the negative aspects of these religions. They rejected the authority of the Brahmans and attacked the caste system and practice of idolatry.
- They composed their poems in popular languages and dialects spoken across north India. This enabled them to transmit their ideas among the masses. It helped their ideas to spread rapidly among the various lower classes.

### Vaishnava Bhakti

In the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries Ramananda emerged as a popular vaishnava bhakti saint in north India. Though he was from the south he lived in Banaras because he considered it to be the link between the South Indian bhakti and North Indian vaishnava bhakti traditions. He looked upon Ram and not Vishnu as the object of bhakti. He worshiped Ram and Sita and came to be identified as the founder of the Ram cult in north India. He like the monotheist bhakti saints also rejected cast hierarchies and preached in the local languages in his attempt to popularize the cult. His followers are called Ramanandis. Tulsidas also championed the bhakti cause. In the early 16 century Vallabacharya, a popular bhakti saint popularized the Krishna bhakti. Among those who followed in his footsteps were Surdas (1483–1563) and Mira Bai (1503–1573).

The vaishnava bhakti movement in Bengal was very different from its counterparts in north India and the south. It was influenced by the vaishnava bhakti tradition of the Bhagavata purana and the Sahajiya Buddhist and Nathpanthi traditions. These traditions focused on esoteric and emotional aspects of devotion. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Jayadeva was an important bhakti saint in this tradition. He highlighted the mystical dimension of love with reference to Krishna and Radha. Chaitanya was a popular bhakti saint from the region; he was looked upon as an avatara of Krishna. Though, he did not question the authority of the Brahmans and the scriptures. He also popularized the sankirtan (group devotional songs accompanied with ecstatic dancing). With him the bhakti movement in Bengal began to develop into a reform movement with the notions of caste divisions that came to be questioned.

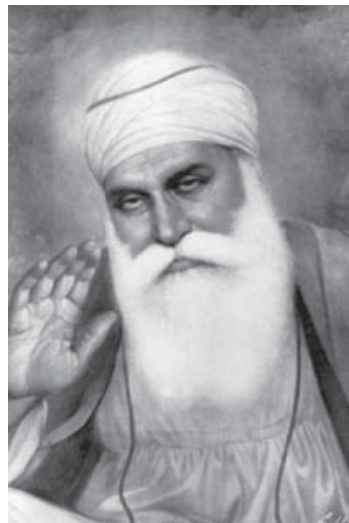
In Maharashtra the bhakti movement drew its inspiration from the Bhagavata purana and the Siva Nathpanthis. Jnaneswar was a pioneer bhakti saint of Maharashtra. His commentary on the Bhagavad Gita called Jnanesvari served as a foundation of the

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bhakti ideology in Maharashtra. Arguing against caste distinctions he believed that the only way to attain God was through Bhakti. Vithoba was the God of this sect and its followers performed a pilgrimage to the temple twice a year. The Vithoba of Pandarpur became the mainstay of the movement in Maharashtra. Namdev (1270–1350) was another important bhakti saint from Maharashtra. While he is remembered in the north Indian monotheistic tradition as a nirguna saint, in Maharashtra he is considered to be part of the varkari tradition (the vaishnava devotional tradition). Some of the other important bhakti saints of Maharashtra were the saints Choka, Sonara, Tukaram and Eknath. Tukaram's teachings are in the form of the Avangas (dohas), which constitute the Gatha, while Eknath's teachings that were in Marathi attempted to shift the emphasis of Marathi literature from spiritual to narrative compositions.

**INTEXT QUESTION 14.2**

1. The Bhakti movement attempted to break away from which system?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Name any three important Bhakti Saints?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was Chaitanya?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14.3 SIKHISM***Fig 14.2 Guru Nanak*

The teachings and philosophy of Guru Nanak form an important part of Indian philosophical thought. His philosophy consists of three basic elements: a leading charismatic personality (the Guru), ideology (Shabad) and Organization (Sangat). Nanak evaluated and criticized the prevailing religious beliefs and attempted to establish a true religion, which could lead to salvation. He repudiated idol worship and did not favour pilgrimage nor accept the theory of incarnation. He condemned formalism and ritualism. He laid emphasis on having a true Guru for revelation. He advised people to follow the principles of conduct and worship: *sach* (truth), *halal* (lawful earning), *khair* (wishing well of others), *niyat* (right intention) and service to the lord. He





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denounced the caste system and the inequality it caused. He argued that the caste and honour should be judged by the acts or the deeds of individuals. He laid stress on concepts of justice, righteousness and liberty. His verses mainly consist of two basic concepts, *Sach* (truth) and *Nam* (name). The bases of the divine expression for him were formed by, the *Sabad* (the word), Guru (the divine precept) and *Hukam* (the divine order). He introduced the concept of Langar (a community kitchen). Guru Nanak identifies himself with the people or the ruled. Though the Sikh guru's stressed on equality the social differentiation among the followers continued. It was only towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Guru Gobind Singh reasserted the idea of equality. In 1699 Guru Gobind Singh attempted to resolve the differences among the various Sikh groups and created the Khalsa. This institution removed the masands as intermediaries. Thereafter every Sikh was to have a direct link with the Guru. To create a sense of unity among the Sikhs the Guru started some practices which were to be followed by Sikhs. These were initiation through the baptism of the double edged sword, wearing uncut hair, carrying arms, adopting the epithet Singh as part of the name.

The idea of Guru Panth was another institutional idea that emerged during this period. It sanctified the collective authority of the Khalsa Panth, which equated the Panth with the Guru. Guru Nanak in his last days had nominated a successor and paid homage to him, this gave rise to the idea that the Guru and the Sikh were interchangeable. This created a problem for the institution of the Sangat (that was a collective body of the Sikhs) in which God was said to be present. When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa he chose the panj piyare (the five beloved) and requested them to administer the pahul (amrit chakhha) to him. With this the difference between the Guru and the Khalsa was symbolically removed. Guru Gobind Singh is believed to have said that the Khalsa is his own *roop* (form).

Guru Nanak was from the Khatri mercantile caste whereas his followers were mostly rural Jats. It was Guru Gobind Singh who inaugurated the Khalsa among the Sikhs. Guru Arjan compiled the Guru Granth Sahib. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the tenth Guru the tradition of guru ended. It was believed that the spirit of the guru did not pass onto any successor but instead remained within "Shri Gurugranth Sahib".



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.3

1. What do you understand from the term Khalsa?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who were Khatris?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 14.4 LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

## Sanskrit literature

The medieval period witnessed the growth of a rich corpus of literature that accompanied the development of new languages. The conventional view among historians was that the patronage of the Sanskrit language had declined because the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate led to the patronage of Persian. But this period witnessed the growth of a rich corpus of Sanskrit literature. This period is marked with composition of poetical works called the Kavya (poetical narrative) and the texts that codified laws called the Dhramashastras.



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During the first half of the medieval period Sanskrit received patronage from the numerous smaller political establishments in central and south India. In western India Hemachandra Suri was an important Jain scholar who composed works in Sanskrit, as was Chaitanya. There were also many dramas written during this period. A new style of writing called the *champu* also emerged during this period. It was a form that mixed both prose and poetry. Among the Sanskrit works that were written with the patronage of the Rajput kings were their family histories like the *Prithvirajavijaya* and the *Hammirmahakavya*. Among the historical poems of the period was the *Rajavinoda* that was a biography of Sultan Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat written by his court poet, Udayaraja. Another important work was Kalhan's *Rajtarangini*, which presented a history of the kings of Kashmir. It was written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The second *Rajtarangini* was written by Jonaraja who wrote the history of the kings of Kashmir from Jayasimha to Sultan Zainul Abidin and the third was written by Srivara who wrote the history of the region till 1486. Apart from these there were the *prabandhas* which were semi historical texts written during the period.

After the 15<sup>th</sup> century the patronage of the Sanskrit language was maintained in the southern courts of the rulers of Vijayanagar, Nayakas of Tanjor and the chiefs of Travancore and Cochin. The various genres of Sanskrit literature like Mahakavyas, Slesh Kavyas, Champu Kavyas, Natakas and the historical Kavyas continued. Among the important writers of this period were Govinda Dikshita (*Sahitya Sudha* and *Sangitsudhanidhi* being among his important works); Appaya Dikshita (in the court of the Nayaka ruler of Vellore); Nilanatha Dikshit (who was a minister in the court of the Nayaka of Madurai); Chakrakavi (who was patronized by the rulers of Kozhikode).

The historical Kavyas gave a glimpse not just of the exploits of the various rulers but also a glimpse of the social perception of the writers. Some of the Mughals like Dara Shukoh also came to be mentioned in these Kavyas. The Mughal prince is also credited with the composition of a *prasasti* in honour of Nrisimha Sarasvati of Benaras. There were also a few works composed in the courts of the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda, but Sanskrit literature during this period began to decline.

### Persian literature

With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate a new language and literary style was introduced into the sub continent.

The development of Persian literature in the sub continent entered a new era in the writings of Amir Khusrau. He was a poet born in a family of Turkish immigrants and began as a poet in the reign of Sultan Balban. He was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and was patronized in the courts of Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji and Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. He is said to have composed ninety-nine works on different themes and numerous verses of poetry. His poetry was written in the different forms of lyric, ode, epic and elegy. His writing style represents the first instance of Persian styles being composed in the Indian context. This came to be known as the *Sabaq-i-Hindi* (the Indian style). Among the important works composed by him are, *Mutla-ul-Anwar*, *Shirin Khusrau*, *Laila Majnun* and *Ayina-I-Sikandari*, these works were dedicated to Alauddin Khalji. Among his five Diwans (Ghazals) are *Tuhfat-us-Sighar*, *Baqiya Naqiya* and *Nihayat-ul-Kamal*. He also wrote masnavis (narrative poems), which have been of great historical and literary value. Among these are the *Qiran-us Sa'dain*, *Miftah-ul Futuh* (dealing with the military success of Jalauddin Khalji), *Tughluq Nama* (describing Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's rise to power) and the



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*Khazain-ul Futuh* (giving an account of Alauddin Khalji's conquest of the South). Among the other important Persian poets was Shaikh Najmuddin Hasan who was also one of the poets in the court of Alauddin Khalji. His ghazals earned him the title, S'aid of Hindustan.

The court chronicles were an important feature of the literature during the period of the Delhi Sultanate. Some important of these were, the *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri* by Minaj-us Siraj, *Futuh-us Salatin* by Isami and the *Futuhat-I Firozshahi* by Feroz Shah Tughluq. Ziauddin Barani made the most important contribution to Persian literature during this period. The *Tarikh-I Firozshahi* and the *Fatwa-I Jahandari* are his important works. The Sufi literature of the period developed a new form called the malfuzat that was in the form of a dialogue of the Sufi saints. The most famous of these was the *Fawaid-ul Fu'ad* written by Amir Hassan Sijzi containing the anecdotes of the Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and *Khair-ul-Majalis* containing the anecdotes of Sheik Nasiruddin Mahmud. During this period there were many works that were translated into Persian. The *Tuti Nama* (book of the parrot) by Zia Nakshabi was the first Persian translation of Sanskrit stories. The *Mahabharatha* and the *Rajtarangini* were also translated into Persian during this period. The number of translations of Sanskrit works into Persian grew during the reigns of Feroz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi.

Like that of the sultanate, Persian also continued as the official language of the Mughal court. The Mughal rulers and princes also maintained a tradition of writing. The first Mughal emperor Babur, himself a literary figure, wrote his memoirs in Turkish which was subsequently translated into Persian by Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan. Humayun composed a Persian diwan. Prince Dara Shukoh wrote a biographical account of the Sufi saint Miya Mir and his disciples in the *Sakinatul Auliya*. He also wrote the *Majm'aul Bahrain* (Mingling of two Oceans). There was a new genre of Persian literature known as the *Sabaq-i-Hindi* (the Indian style) created during this period by the Persian poets visiting and living in the sub continent. Writers like Faizi, Urfi, Talib, Ghani Kashmiri and Bedil were among those who benefited from the patronage they received from the Mughals.

Among the important works of Faizi was *Tabashir al Sabh*. He also authored many translations of Hindu religious books. Abdur Rahim Khan Khana a talented scholar and poet lived during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir. Akbar patronized great scholar historian Abul Fazl. He is said to have maintained a library of more than four thousand books. He is known for the patronage he extended to many writers of the period. The poets Ali Quli Salem and Abu Talib Kalim were important poets during the reign of Shah Jahan. The latter is said to have authored the *Padshahnama*. Persian literature in the south received patronage from the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur, here Malik Qummi and Mulla Zuhuri were regarded as important Persian poets. The Qutab Shahis of Golconda patronized poets like Muhammad Hussain Tabrezi. The development of Persian literature in the Mughal court played an important role and influenced the development and growth of regional literature. Languages like Punjabi, Pushtu, Sindhi and Kashmiri were strongly influenced by Persian.

### Growth and Development of Regional Languages

The growth of regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Marathi and Gujarati during the medieval period was an important development. These languages can be traced to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries when they seem to have broken away from their Prakrit base. In the south Malayalam emerged as an independent language in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The growth of these regional languages coincided with a growing regional sentiment and the emergence of regional polities. This resulted in the decline of Sanskrit that was being replaced by Persian and some of these regional languages as a medium through which the



## Notes

administrative machinery functioned. The rise of the Bhakti movement and its propagation using these languages also enabled the growth and development of these languages.

### Hindi and Urdu

Regional dialects like *Braj bhasa*, Haryanvi and other dialects spoken in regions around Delhi and Punjab influenced the development of Urdu during its formative stage. The basic structure of the language consisted of Khari Boli (a mixture of various dialects spoken in the region mentioned above). The language adopted the Persian script and literary tradition. The word Urdu is of Turkish origin referring to an army or camp. It seems to have been a language that emerged from the dialect spoken in the Turkish camp between officials and the soldiers. Hindivi is said to be the language out of which Urdu and Hindi eventually developed. The works of Amir Khusrau are regarded to have laid the foundations of this language. The use of this language in the Deccan from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards led to a literary speech called the Dakhni. The major centres of this language were Gujarat, Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar and Aurangabad. The oldest writer of this tradition was Sayyid Banda Nawaz Gesudaraz who was an important Sufi in the Bahmani kingdom. The sultan of Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Shah II himself was a great patron and author of a book on music in the Dakhni language.

Hindi evolved during the Apabhramsa stage between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was characterized as Veergatha Kala (age of heroic poetry) or the Adi Kala (early Period). The various Rajput rulers patronized these poems written in the rajasthani dialect of Hindi and that glorified chivalry and bravery. Among the famous works are the *Prithviraja Raso* of Chand Bardai, and other poems like the *Visaldeva Raso* and *Hamir Raso*. The authenticity of many of these works is doubted because of the various interpolations made to the original draft. There are other works of Buddhists and Jains that can be ascribed to this period.

The development of the Hindi language underwent another transformation during the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15 centuries with the increasing use of the language in expressing Bhakti traditions and ideas. Kabir adopted a style called the *ultabasi*, which consisted of paradoxes and enigmas. While bhakti saints like Tulsidas used the Awadhi dialect of Hindi others like Mira Bai used the Marwari dialect of Rajasthan and Surdas used *Braj bhasa*. The Sufi saints also used the development of the new dialects as a medium to reach out to a larger audience. While the Chishti saints used Hindi while composing and singing their devotional music.

### Bengali

The folksongs called Charyapads composed between the 10 and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries are the earliest specimen of the Bengali language. The works of Kavindra and Srikaranandi are regarded to be among the important early works in Bengali. The growth of the Bhakti movement and the composition of various hymns associated with Chaitanya further provided a stimulus to the development of this language. Brindabandas's *Chaitanya Bhagavata* or *Chaitanya Mangal* was one such contribution to Bengali literature that not only gave a valuable account of the saint's death a decade later but is also regarded as being reflective of the social condition prevailing at that time. The *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj was another important account. Lochandas is associated with the introduction of a new style of folk songs called Dhamali. Narrative poems called the Mangal Kavyas also grew popular during this period. They propagated the importance of local deities like Chandi and transformed Puranic gods like Siva and Vishnu into household deities. The narrative form of the Mangal Kavyas was derived from the Puranas.





## Notes

**Asamese and Oriya**

The 13<sup>th</sup> century works of Hema Sarasvati Prahladacharita and Hara Gauri Samyada are regarded as the first works in Assamese. The literature in Assam also developed in response to the bhakti movement. Shankaradeva who introduced Vaisnavism in Assam also helped stimulate the growth of Assamese poetry. His disciple, Madhavadas wrote the *Bhakti-ratnvali* dealing with aspects of bhakti and the *Baragitas* that depicted the life of Krishna in Vrindavan. There were also translations of the Puranas into Assamese. In Orissa the works of Saraladasa are regarded as the first works of Oriya literature. There were numerous kavyas composed on Puranic themes by Madhusudana, Bhima and Sasasiva. The *Rasa Kallol* written during this period also deals on the theme of the love between Radha and Krishna. Other important works are the *Ushabhilasa* of Sisu Sankara Dasa and the *Rukminibibha* of Kartik Dasa. The works of Upendra Bhanja (1670–1720) were important as they ushered a new era of Oriya literature in the succeeding period.

**Literature in South India**

In the south Villiputturar was an important literary figure of the period. The tradition of using Sanskrit words and literary expressions is ascribed to him. Other important works in Tamil are commentaries written by Vaishnava scholars and also commentaries on works of the sangam age like the *Tolkappiyam* and the *Kural*. There were also a number of philosophical works and commentaries that were written on the Puranas. Many of the works in Tamil literature were related to Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Among the important works of the medieval period was the *Irusamaya-vilakkam* written by Haridasas, the *Sivadarumottaram* and the *Saiva Samayaneri* both written by Marainanarbandar. In the realm of philosophy the notable works were the *Cidambarapurana* (1508) by Purana Tirumalainathan and the *Palanittalapuranam* by Balasubramanya Kavirayar.

During this period the most famous Telugu poet was Errapragada who popularized the Champu genre of literary writing (mixed form of verse and prose). He also translated the *Bhagavata Purana* into Telugu. The Vijayanagar ruler Krishnadeva Raya wrote the *Amuktamalyada* in Telugu. The most celebrated poet in his court was Allarrani Peddana and Nandi Timmaha who wrote the *Parijatapaharana*. Bhattumurti or Rama Raja Bhushan is known for the *Vasucaritra* and the *Hariscandra Nalopakhyanam* (that narrates the story of Nala and Raja Harishchandra). In the Kannada speaking regions Jain writers dominated the literary compositions of the period. The works of Basava and his followers who popularized the Virasaiva movement in the region also form an important aspect of Kannada literature. The patronage of the Hoysala rulers further helped the development of the language. The *Vadi Vidyanda* of Geroppa is an anthology of Kannada poets. The Jain scholar Salva wrote works like the *Trilokararara* (on cosmology), *Aparajiyasataka* (on Philosophy) and the *Bharataesvaracarita* (the story of the famous king Bharata). Malayalam emerged as an independent language during this period. The language was in oral form and the earliest work composed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was the *Rama Charitam*. The works of Rama Panikkar who wrote *Bharata Gatha*, *Savitri Mahatmyam* and the *Bhagavatam* are considered important in Malayalam.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.4**

1. Name any two important texts written in Sanskrit?



**Notes**

2. What is a 'Kavya'?

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3. Who was Amir Khusrau?

---

4. Name the two important works of Ziauddin Barani?

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5. What do you understand by the term *Sabaq-i- Hindi*?

---

6. Name any four regional languages that developed during the Medieval Period?

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**14.5 MUSIC**

Information on music of the sultanate period is limited. The important phase in the development of music during this period belongs to the time of Amir Khusrau. It is during this period that the *qawwali* style is said to have developed. He is also credited for the development of many modern ragas like *aiman*, *gora* and *sanam*. He is credited with the creation of a new musical instrument, the sitar that was a combination of the Indian *vina* and the Iranian tambura. The Turks are credited with bringing musical instruments like *rabab* and *sarangi* into South Asia. In Vrindavan Swami Haridas promoted music and is considered to have taught Tansen who was at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Tansen is regarded as an important exponent of the Hindustani classical music and is credited with introducing ragas as the Miyan ki Malhar, Miyan ki Todi and Darbari. Raja Mansingh is said to have played an important role in the perfection of the Dhrupad style of North Indian Music. In the south a system of ragas known as the Janaka and Janya ragas existed during this period. The *Swaramela Kalanidhi* by Ramamatya of Kondavidu written in 1550 describes 20 Janan and 64 Janya ragas. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century several new forms of music like Tarana, Dadra and Ghazal had come into existence.

**14.6 PAINTINGS**

The developments in painting during the sultanate period have not been studied because of the limited samples. The closest view that one has of murals in the sultanate is to the numerous literary references. The earliest reference to murals is in a *qasida* in praise of Iltutmish, which describes the figures depicted upon the squandrels of the main arch that was raised to welcome the envoy of the Caliph. In another reference in the *Tarikh-I Ferozshai* there is a reference to the Sultan seeking to ban the tradition of figural paintings on the walls of the palaces of Delhi. Quaranic calligraphy also became popular across South Asia during this period. The earliest copy of the Quran (dated 1399) was written in Gwalior. The manuscript was decorated with a variety of ornamental motifs. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the kingdoms of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur emerged as important centres of art.

Paintings in medieval India entered a new phase under the Mughals. They altered the character of painting across north India. The Mughal paintings are defined by the styles and subjects popular at the imperial court. The early origins of the Mughal School of painting can be traced to Kabul. During the reign of Humayun two Persian artists, Mir Syed Ali and Abdus Samad were patronized.



## Notes

Akbar deputed them to illustrate manuscript of *Hamzanama*. This manuscript of 1,400 pages was compiled by artists drawn from Gwalior, Gujarat, Lahore and Kashmir. It is during this period that many features of Mughal painting developed. Many paintings of this period are collaborative efforts with two or even four painters working on one painting. Among the important features of the paintings of this period are restricted movement of the figures, fineness of lines of drawings and flat depiction of architectural columns. The Mughal paintings are also marked with a naturalism and rhythm, the clothing of the objects assumed Indian forms and the use of subsidiary scenes in the background. The two most common themes in Mughal paintings of this period are specific events in the court and the portraits of leading personalities.



Fig. 14.3 Mughal Painting

During the reign of Jahangir there were other changes in the style of Mughal paintings. The paintings of the Jahangir period accentuate a formalist style and have broad margins which are well decorated with the depiction of flora and faces of human figures, the naturalistic representations matured during the reign of Jahangir. The use of trees, birds, streams and rivers in the backdrop of the paintings became very popular.



Notes

There are interesting scenes of love and portraits of women members attached to the royal court in Mughal paintings of the Shah Jahan period, while the paintings of the Aurangzeb period provide glimpses of the Mughal emperor during his campaigns. As in architecture the Mughal paintings also gave way to the growth and development of regional styles that tried to replicate the same features and characteristic decorative designs.

Rajput paintings that are also of the same period consist of various different court styles, corresponding to the various Rajput kingdoms. The Rajput paintings during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries used many representations of mythology and of court scenes.



Fig. 14.4 Rajput Painting

The Rajput paintings are spread over a larger geographical region, with each region forming a separate sub topic in the artistic scheme. The other styles that were popular were the regional styles of the Deccan and the regions of Bengal, Gujarat and Orissa. The Rajput paintings further flourished in the eighteenth century when many of the artists shifted to the courts of their new patrons. This also coincided with the emergence of many smaller regional styles of paintings. These paintings are known for the intensity of the colours that they use and depict hunting scenes, portraits of individuals and of musical sessions. The main styles of this painting were the Mewar, Bundi and the Kishangarh schools.



## Notes



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.5

1. Name the Musical instrument created by Amir Khusrau?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who played an important role in the development of the dhrupad style?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What were the stylistic changes in Mughal Paintings seen during the reign of Jahangir?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Mention a few popular themes in Mughal Miniatures?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 14.7 ARCHITECTURE

## Architecture of the Delhi Sultanate

New architectural forms and styles were introduced in India during the medieval period. The arch and dome were new architectural additions of the period. The use of lime-mortar in the construction of buildings and houses altered the building techniques. The development of the true arch was important feature of the architectural style of the period. The true arch required stones and bricks to be laid as voussoirs in the shape of a curve and bound together firmly by a good binding material. The arches were made in different shapes but the dominant one was the pointed form. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century a variant of the arch, called the four-centred arch was introduced by the Tughluqs in their buildings.

There are only a few instances of early Turkish buildings in the sub continent where newly quarried material has been employed. In most of the buildings of the period the richly carved capitals, columns and shafts of older buildings are reused. Stone has been used abundantly in the masonry work of this period. The material commonly used for plastering buildings was gypsum. Apparently lime-plaster was reserved for places that needed to be secured against water leakage as in roofs, canals and drains. In the later period gypsum mortar became popular in buildings.

Here we will provide you a brief account of medieval architecture during the Sultanate Mughal and the regional styles which developed in India during medieval period.



Fig 14.5 Qutab Minar & Alai Darwaja



## Notes

### The Sultanate Period

Monuments like the Quwwatul Islam mosque (1198), Qutab Minar (1199–1235),

Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra (1200) and Iltutmish's tomb represent the early forms of Indo-Islamic architecture. The early buildings show signs of being worked upon by local craftsmen while the later buildings show the development or the maturing of the Indo-Islamic style. In these monuments one can see the gradual development of dome and the true arch. The best examples of this are the tombs of Iltutmish (1233–34) and Balban (1287–88). The Alai Darwaza in the Qutub complex (1305) and the Jamat Khana Masjid at Nizamuddin (1325) are examples of Khalji period. Here one notices changes marked by the distinct influence of the Seljuq architectural tradition. The employment of the true arch shaped like a pointed horse shoe; the emergence of true dome; use of red sand stone and decorative marble reliefs; the emergence of the lotus bud fringe on the underside of the arch and the new masonry were the important features of this new style. The new architectural style of the Tughluq period is represented with the use of stone rubble as the principle building material, the battering of walls and bastions, a new type of arch called the four centred arch, the emergence of the pointed dome and the introduction of an octagonal plan of tomb building. Another important feature of Tughlaq architecture was the "batter" or sloping walls. This gave the structures an effect of strength. During the subsequent period numerous tombs were built using the octagonal plan while others were built using the square plan. The Architectural monuments of the Sur's can be divided into two periods, the first with buildings at Sasaram (1530–40) like the tombs of Sher Shah's father and Sher Shah himself. The second phase from (1540–45) is represented by buildings like the Purana Qila in Delhi and the Qilai Kuhna Masjid inside the Qila. The slight flatness in the curve towards the crown is indicative of the last stage before the development of the four-centred arch developed during the Mughal phase.

### Regional Variations

During this period there was a development of various regional architectural forms. In eastern India there was the development of two distinctive schools in Bengal and in Jaunpur. The most prominent buildings of the Bengal school belong to the Malda district in the remains of the two cities, Gaur and Pandua. Here there is an introduction of two important features. The first was the 'drop arch', which had a span greater than its radius and centres at the import level. The second was the method of raising the roof in a system of arched bays where small domes supported by diagonally arranged brick pendentives that helped transition from a square to a circular base. Another development in this period was the transition from constructing bamboo houses to brick structures, during which a special form of a curved roof developed. The best illustrations of the architecture styles from Jaunpur are the mosques. The styles here bear close resemblance to the Tughlaq style. The use of the arch and beam are notable features of this style.

In western India the development of regional architectural forms is notable in 14<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat. Here there is a distinctive change in the art form from the 14<sup>th</sup> into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the former there was a large scale use of building material from demolished temples and in the latter there is a development of a new style in which the layout of the mosques copied the architectural imprint of temples. In central India the development of new art forms is noticeable in the Malwa region; the cities of Dhar and Mandu are illustrations of this style.

Another important region that developed its distinctive style was the Deccan where the Bahmani kingdom created a very different architectural style as compared to the northern architectural forms. The Deccan style developed with the fusion of the Tughlaq style from the north and the Iranian style. The development of the





## Notes

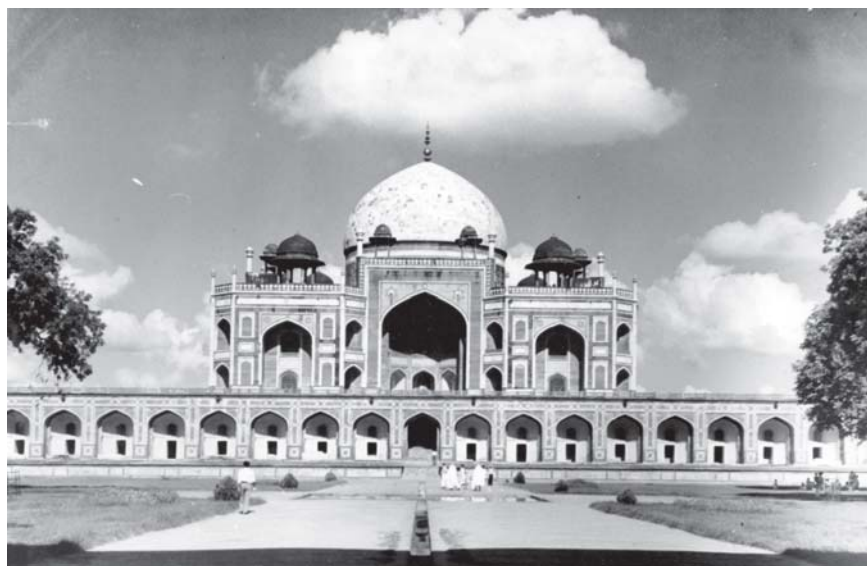
architectural style here coincides with the shifting of the kingdom's capital from Gulbarga (1347) to Bidar (1425) and eventually to Golconda (1512). In the first phase in Gulbarga the architectural style is representative of a distinctive Islamic architecture that followed the Tughlaq style. In the second phase there is an adaptation of Iranian architectural styles, this is accompanied with the use of coloured tiles, mural paintings and a change in the shape of the domes.

Another important regional development in the Deccan was Vijayanagara art. The distinctive style is best illustrated using the architectural forms in the city of Hampi. Besides palaces and temples the city also had an extensive network of waterworks and public buildings such as the elephant stables and the Lotus Mahal. The unique features of this style were the use of pillars for architectural and decorative purposes. The climax of temple architecture at Vijayanagara occurred under the *Tuluva* rulers. The architectural tradition was accompanied by a vibrant sculptural tradition that used many mythological figures and narratives. The shrines on Hemakuta hill, Virupaksha temple and the Hazara Rama temple are examples of Vijayanagara temple architecture.

## The Architecture of the Mughal Empire

This period witnessed large scale architectural activities that represented the peak of Islamic art in India. It was also a period where there was a great exchange of ideas and styles that led to the creation of a style that was very different from the Sultanate period and that had many features of local or regional styles. The Mughal Emperor Akbar initiated the grand projects that symbolize this period.

Among the early structures of this period are the two mosques built by Babur at Sambhal and Panipat in 1526. Babur is also credited with the laying out of gardens at Dholpur and at Ram Bagh and Zahra Bagh at Agra. Two mosques one at Agra and the other at Hissar belong to the reign of the second Mughal emperor Humayun. The grandness of Mughal architecture began with the construction of Humayun's tomb and its design by Mirak Mirza Ghiyas from Persia. He brought with him Persian craftsmen to work on the tomb. This tomb is the earliest specimen of a garden enclosure and is raised on an arcaded sandstone platform. The tomb is octagonal and



14.6 Humayun's Tomb



## Notes

crowned by a high dome. The dome is a double dome, which is built in two layers one which provides the ceiling to the interior of the building and the other, which provides the outer layer that crowns, the building.

During the reign of Akbar many indigenous styles were encouraged leading to the common use of sandstone, the use of arches (mainly in a decorative form) and the decoration that comprised mainly of boldly carved or inlaid patterns complemented by brightly coloured patterns on the interiors. Among the important monumental projects undertaken was the building of Agra fort, within the fort were many structures that were built in the Gujarat and Bengal styles, which were subsequently demolished by Shah Jahan who remodelled the fort and its interiors. The Janangir Mahal conceived as a robust building in red sandstone, is a fusion of Hindu and Islamic building designs. The combination of beam and bracket form the principal structural system, the same styles are seen in the palace fortresses of Lahore and Allahabad. Mughal architecture under Akbar entered a new phase with the construction of Fatehpur Sikri. This city-palace was built entirely of red sandstone between 1571–1585. The buildings could be studied under two categories, religious and secular. Among the religious buildings are, the Jami Masjid, the Buland Darwaza and the tombs of Shaikh Salim Chishti. The secular structures are the palaces, administrative buildings and other structures. The Jama Masjid uses a typical plan of a mosque with a central courtyard, arcades on three sides and a domed skyline. In its courtyard lies the tomb of Salim Chishti. Among the palaces are buildings known as the Jodh Bai palace, the Panch Mahal (the size of this five storey structure that diminishes as one goes higher), the *Diwan-i-Khas* (is in the form of a rectangle and is two stories from outside) and the *Diwan-i-Am*. Among the other buildings here are the Hathi Pol and the Karkhana buildings.

The important buildings of the reigns of Jahangir include the Tomb of Akbar at Sikandara, and the tomb of Itmad ud Daula. The tomb at Sikandara is designed as a tomb

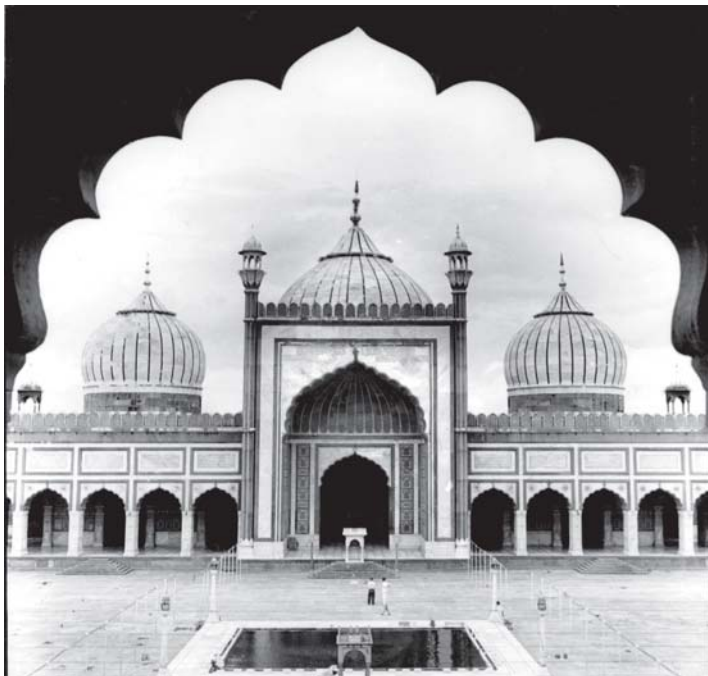


Fig. 14.7 Jama Masjid Delhi



## Notes

enclosure enclosed by a garden, the tomb itself is three stories high the first being an arcaded platform making the basement the middle portion is in three tiers of red sandstone while the highest one is made of white marble which is open on top with a screen surrounding it. The tomb of Itmad ud Daula built in 1622–28 marks a change in architectural style from the Akbari period. This enclosed tomb with a dome roof is enclosed with a beautiful marble tracery. Jahangir is also known to have laid the famous Mughal gardens in Kashmir.

Among the important monuments of the reign of Shah Jahan are the Lal Qila (in Delhi), the Moti Masjid (at Agra), the Jami Masjid in Delhi and the Taj Mahal. The Lal Qila is designed as a rectangle along the banks of the river Yamuna. There are two gates, the Delhi and Lahore gates. There is a moat that runs all along the fort except on the riverside. The important buildings inside the fort are the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas and the Rang Mahal. The Moti Masjid in Agra was an experiment with an alternative scheme of an open prayer hall that had also dispensed with the minarets and replaced them with *chhatris* on the four corners of the prayer hall. The Jammi Masjid is a larger version of the Jammi Masjid in Fatehpur Sikri. It is built on a large platform; within the mosque there are colonnades on three sides with the sanctuary along the fourth. There are three marble domes rising above the sanctuary. The Taj Mahal represents the grandest project of Shahjahan. The construction of the Taj began in 1632 and was completed by 1643. The plan of the complex is rectangle with a high enclosure wall and a lofty gateway in the middle. The main building of the Taj stands on a high marble platform at the northern end of the enclosure. There is a huge dome that covers the top of this structure, with an inverted lotus finial. The decorative features of the building consist mainly of calligraphy and inlay work in the exterior and pietra dura in the interior.

The Moti Masjid at Lal Qila in Delhi, the Badshahi Masjid in Lahore and the mausoleum built for his wife Rabia ud Dauran at Aurangabad are the main examples of Mughal architecture under Aurangzeb. The mausoleum at Aurangabad was modeled on the Taj Mahal. Of architectural monuments after Aurangzeb the tomb of Safdar Jang in Delhi is representative of the continuation of the tradition of the Mughals by the regional governors.



Fig. 14.8 Safdarjung Tomb

**Notes****Decorative Styles**

Another feature of the art of this period was the decorative art in Islamic buildings that was introduced in the sub continent for the first time. These decorative styles were usually in the form of calligraphy, geometrical figures and foliage. In calligraphy quranic sayings were inscribed on buildings in an angular, sober and monumental script called kufi. The calligraphy was found on different parts of the buildings as on doorframes, ceilings, wall panels, etc. The geometric shapes on the other hand were used in different variety of combinations. The generating source of these designs was the circle, which was then developed into a square, triangle or polygon. These forms were then elaborated by, multiplication and sub division, by rotating and by symmetrical arrangements. Of the flutations, the dominant form of decoration employed in the sultanate buildings was the arabesque. It was characterized by a continuous stem that split regularly, producing a series of leafy secondary stems which split again to reintegrate into the main stem.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.6**

1. Name two important changes in architectural forms made during the Medieval period?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a true arch?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Name a few monuments associated with early forms of Indo Islamic architecture?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which type of stone was used in the construction of Fatehpur Sikri?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name some of the decorative styles used in medieval architecture?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

The medieval Indian culture represents the synthesis of Indian and Persian philosophy, literature art and architecture. In religious sphere Sufism and Bhakti tradition influenced each other. They provided an opportunity for understanding religious traditions of Hindus and Muslims at people's level.

The emergence of Urdu as a new language is a best example of interaction and synthesis. The same is visible in the area of Music and Painting. In the field of architecture, the form, style and decoration take a lot from each other.

The medieval period thus represents an important era of dramatic change in the world of religion and art in South Asia. The growing popularity of Sufism played an important role in the popular acceptability of Islam and in the course establishing unique Islamic tradition in the sub continent. The Bhakti movement played a similar role in the development of Hinduism. On one hand it challenged existing religious and



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social hierarchies and on the other it revived concepts like monotheism in mainstream Hindu tradition. Both the Sufi and Bhakti movements questioned the authority of the established clergy and the relevance of established religious rituals. Importantly while both emerged questioning established religious traditions they eventually found themselves being integrated into established religious systems.

Another important development during the medieval period was the growth in vernacular literature. Growing regional identities helped create new literary and art forms. The growth in regional languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi and Telugu was a very significant development. The popularity of translations further widened readership and helped in the exchange of ideas. The exchange of ideas also ushered new development in music. The use of the Sitar and new styles of music further enriched the medieval period.

In the realm of art one witnesses the development of new styles of painting associated with the patronage of the Mughal and the Rajput style. There was a change in the character and stylistic representation seen in earlier periods. The synthesis of the medieval period is best seen in the development of new architectural styles. The large number of forts, palaces, temples and Mosques that can be dated to this period are examples of the new styles. The use of decorative motifs and the adaptation of the dome are examples of the architectural traditions of this period.



## TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss some of the important aspects of Sufi teachings?
2. Name the Sufi Order founded by Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi – What were the important teachings of their Silsilah?
3. What were the similarities in the teachings of various Bhakti Saints?
4. What were the important developments in the Bhakti Movement in Bengal/ Maharashtra?
5. Highlight the important aspects of the teachings of Guru Nanak?
6. Highlight the development of new trends in Sanskrit literature during the medieval Period?
7. Who was Amir Khusrau? Highlight his contribution to the development of Persian literature?
8. What were the important features in the new painting styles that emerged under the Mughals?
9. Examine the important Architectural features and style of the Sultanate period?
10. Discuss the emergence of new styles in Mughal architecture during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir?



## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

## 14.1

1. A pir is a Sufi teacher.
2. An important Sufi who reconciled Islamic Mysticism with Islamic orthodoxy.



**Notes**

3. It is a term used to refer to devotional Music.
4. Nizammudin Auliya.
5. He was the leader of Quadiriyya Silsilah in Punjab and a supporter of Akbar.

**14.2**

1. Orthodox Brahmanism
2. Kabir, Tukaram, Chaitanya
3. He was an Important Bhakti Saint from Bengal.

**14.3**

1. A Sikh having a direct link with the Guru.
2. An important mercantile caste in Punjab.

**14.4**

1. *Rajtaranginni, Prithvirajavijaya.*
2. It is a poetical narrative.
3. He was a Persian poet patronized during the Sultanate period disciple of Nizamuddin Anlyla
4. *Fatwa – i- Jahandari / Tarikh -i- firozshahi.*
5. A new form of Persian literature in India.
6. Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati Oriya.

**14.5**

1. Sitar.
2. Raja Mansingh
3. The emergence of a formalist style and use of naturalistic representations.
4. Specific events in the court and portraits of leading personalities.

**14.6**

1. The arch and the dome.
2. A style of arch making that emerged in the medieval period. The centre stone was important in this.
3. Quwwat ul Islam Mosque, Qutab Minar, Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra
4. Red Sand Stone
5. Calligraphy/Geometric Shapes.

**HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Refer Section 14.1 paragraph 1,3,6
2. Refer 14.1 Naqshbandi Silsilah
3. Refer 14.2 Para 1 to 4

**Notes**

4. Refer 14.2 under Vaishnava Bhakti
5. Refer Section 14.3 paragraph 1 & 2.
6. Refer Section 14.4 paragraph under Sanskrit Literature
7. Refer 14.4 under Persian Literature
8. Refer 14.6
9. Refer 14.7 under Delhi Sultanate
10. Refer 14.7 under Mughal Empire

**GLOSSARY**

|             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| Khanqah     | – | Centre of activities of Sufi orders  |
| Silsilas    | – | Orders of Sufi   |
| Mono Theist | – | Those who believe in One God   |
| Peitra Dura | – | Iranian decorative style in which colourful stone is embedded on white/another colour stone/marble in such a way it looks one piece. |
| Ruh         | – | Soul, spirit   |
| Hulul       | – | Infusion of the divine spirit  |
| Ziyarat     | – | Practice of visiting tombs, kind of pilgrimage   |
| Sama        | – | Musical congregation of Sufis  |