Objectives

- Describe the impact of the Delhi sultanate on India.
- Explain why Muslim and Hindu traditions clashed and how they blended.
- Summarize the policies of Akbar that strengthened Mughal India.
Terms and People

- **sultan** – a Muslim ruler
- **Delhi** – the city from which the sultans ruled India from 1206 to 1526
- **rajah** – local Hindu ruler
- **Sikhism** – a religion blending Islamic and Hindu beliefs that arose in northern India
- **Babur** – military leader and poet who founded the Mughal dynasty
Terms and People (continued)

- **Mughal** – Delhi sultanate established by Babur
- **Akbar** – known as “Akbar the Great”; ruled the Mughal empire from 1556 to 1605
- **Nur Jahan** – wife of Akbar’s son Jahangir, most powerful woman in pre-twentieth century India
- **Shah Jahan** – ruled during the high point of Mughal literature, art, and architecture
- **Taj Mahal** – a magnificent Muslim structure built as a tomb for Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Shah Jahan
How did Muslim rule affect Indian government and society?

The arrival of Islam brought changes to India as great as those caused by the Aryan migrations 2,000 years earlier.

As Muslims mingled with Indians, each civilization absorbed elements from the other.
Two Muslim sultanates ruled India—the Delhi sultanate and later, the Mughal dynasty.
The Delhi sultanate conquered rival Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms through greater unity and better technology.

- Swift mounted archers outmaneuvered Hindus on elephants.
- Rival Hindu princes fought among themselves.
- Islam’s social mobility appealed to Hindus locked into a low social position by the caste system.
Indian government and society changed as sultans introduced Muslim traditions.

- Turks, Persians, and Arabs migrated to India to serve as soldiers or officials, bringing increased trade.
- During the 1200s, when the Mongols raided Baghdad, many scholars fled to India.
- These immigrants helped architecture and the arts flourish.
In 1398, Tamerlane plundered the northern plain and smashed Delhi.

Artisans were enslaved to build Tamerlane’s capital at Samarkand.

Northern India fell into rival Hindu and Muslim states.

Muslim sultanates would not regain control until 1526.
Muslim beliefs conflicted sharply with those of the Hindu they conquered in northern India.

Hindus:
- Believed in many sacred texts and gods.
- Honored a priestly class called the Brahmans.
- Accepted a hereditary caste system.

Muslims:
- Monotheistic with one sacred text.
- Taught equality of all believers.
In time, Muslim and Hindu cultures began to blend.

| Muslim scholars suggested that one God was behind the many Hindu gods. |
| Hindus were protected as long as they paid a poll tax. |
| In some places, local rajahs, Hindu leaders, were allowed to rule. |
| Many Hindus converted to Islam, out of belief, to avoid the caste system, or for trade and commerce. |
Indian Muslims began to absorb Hindu influences as well.

| Urdu, a new language, combined Persian, Arabic, and a Delhi dialect. |
| Some marriage and caste customs were accepted. |
| Indian dance and music reappeared in the courts of the sultan. |
| A new religion, **Sikhism**, blended Hindu and Muslim ideas. |
An Indian Holy man, Nanak, sought to blend Islamic and Hindu beliefs.

Nanak preached “the unity of God, the brotherhood of man, the rejection of caste, and the futility of idol worship.”

The Sikhs later gained military power and challenged for control in the north.
### Sikhism: A Blend of Religious Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Hinduism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Belief in one God</td>
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<td>• Religious and moral duties defined in Five Pillars</td>
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<td>• Belief in Heaven and Hell, and a Day of Judgment</td>
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<td>• No priests; all believers are religious equals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Belief in many gods, all part of Brahman</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emphasis on religious and moral duties, or dharma</td>
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<td>• Belief in a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth</td>
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**Sikhism**

- Belief in the “Unity of God”
- Belief in reincarnation
- Rejection of caste
India’s Muslim Empires

In 1526 Babur defeated Sultan Ibrahim just north of Delhi and established the Mughal dynasty.

Babur, a military genius and poet, claimed to descend from Genghis Khan and Tamerlane.

The Mughals, which means “Mongols” in Persian, ruled much of southern Asia until 1857.
The greatest ruler of the Mughals was Akbar the Great, grandson of Babur. Akbar reigned from 1556 to 1605.

Akbar built a united empire by:

- Replacing hereditary officials with professionals, including Hindus
- Listening to advisors from many faiths
- Modernizing the army
- Marrying a Hindu princess
- Encouraging trade
Women were influential in the Mughal empire.

- Akbar’s son Jahangir left the details of governing to his wife, Nur Jahan, who was the most powerful woman in pre-twentieth century India.

- The high point of Mughal art came during the reign of Shah Jahan. Grief-stricken at the death of his wife, he ordered a grand tomb in her honor.

- The lavish Taj Mahal was her memorial. It took 22,000 workers 20 years to complete.
The Taj Mahal, a memorial to the wife of Shah Jahan.
Section Review

QuickTake Quiz

Know It, Show It Quiz