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A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY OF IBN `ĀBIDĪN'S *AL-`ILM AL-ẒĀHIR FĪ NAF`I AL-NASAB AL-ṬĀHIR* (*EVIDENT KNOWLEDGE ON THE BENEFIT OF PURE LINEAGE*)

Sayyid Mohamed Ajmal Abdul Razak Al-Aidrus
Mohammed Farid Ali

Abstract

This article consists of the translation of Ibnu Abidin's views on the position of the family of the Prophet Muhammad by virtue of their blood ties to him here and the Hereafter. The work also covers critically the opinions of both sides of the argument as to their standing. Ibnu Abidin himself was a "Sayyid" and in his work extols his position as one. Nevertheless, his article provides a number of hadiths that can help provide a balanced look at the claims of a special position of the family of the Prophet as defined by history, tradition and culture.

The work of Ibn ʿĀbidin entitled *Evident Knowledge on the Benefit of Pure Lineage*, written in mid 1200s A.H., discusses the position of the descendants of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to him in the Hereafter. The write-up covers arguments presented for and against the privileged position of the members of the family of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. By members of the family of the Prophet, we are examining the designation as understood in its strictest sense, that is, to mean Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussein which is mentioned in several hadiths. Here several definitions of the term *ahl al bait* are used. In order to place the argument in context, this article provides a brief introduction of Ibn ʿĀbidin, his other works and, more importantly, a complete translation, commentary and documentation of his first treatise.

About the Author

Muhammad Amīn Ibn ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, better known as Ibn ʿĀbidin al-Ḥusayni or al-Shāmi,[1] was born in 1198 A.H/1784 A.D. in Damascus where he died in 1252 A.H./1836 A.D.

He was a prolific writer who wrote commentaries (*al-Ḥawāshi*) and treatises (*al-rasāil*). Some of his works include *Al-Ḥāshiyah*[2], *Ḥāshiyah Manḥat al-Khāliq `alā al-Baḥr al-Rāiq*[3], *Al-`Uqūd al-Durriyah fi Tanqīḥ al-Fatāwa al-Ḥāmidiyah,*[4] *Nasmāt al-Asḥār `alā Ifāḍat al-Anwār `ala Kitāb al-Manār, ʻUqūd al-lālī fi al-Asānīd al-Awāli, Maqāmat fi Madḥ al-Sheik Shākir al-ʻUqqād,* and *Nazhat al-Nawāẓir `ala al-Ashbāh wa al-Naẓāir.*

Of the thirty-one treatises he published under different topics and subjects, most of them were detailed exploration on issues of *fiqh*. These treatises were first published in his work *`Uqūd al-lālī fi al-Asānīd al-ʻAwāli* in Istanbul in 1287 A.H and 1325 A.H. and in Damascus in 1301 A.H.[5]. Presently all these treatises have been compiled as a book under the title *Majmū`at Rasāil Ibn `Ābidin* and published by Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi, Beirut and Lebanon and Suhail Academy, Lahore, Pakistan in 1976 A.D.

His unpublished manuscripts (*makhṭūṭāt*) include *Ḥāshiyah `ala Sharḥ al-Taqrīr wa al-Taḥbīr*[6], *Ḥāshiyah Fatḥ Rabb al-Arbāb `alā Lubb al-Albāb Nabdhat al-I'rāb, Al-Durr al-Maḍiyyah fi Sharḥ Naẓm al-Abḥār al-Sha`riyyah, and Fatāwa fi al-Fiqh al-Ḥanfi.*[7]

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[1] Ibn ʿĀbidin's lineage links upto Ali (May Allah Be pleased with him) the Companion, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). See Muhammad Mutiʿal-Hāfiz & Nazar Abāzah, *ʿUlamā' al-Dimashq,* 406, vol.1.

[2] The work is now known as *Durr al-Muhtār ala Durr al-Mukhtār* and is considered the *magnum opus* of Ibn ʿĀbidin. The work is a commentary of *Durr al-Mukhtār Sharh Tanwir al-Abṣār* and was written by Ala' al-Din Muhammad Ibn Ali al-Haṣkafi (d. 1088 A.H.).

[3] *al-Bahr al-Rāiq* is the work of Ibn Nujaym (d. 970 A.H.).

[4] al-Fatāwa al-Ḥāmidiyah is the fatāwa work of Ḥāmid Ibn Ali al-ʿImādi (d.1171 A.H.).

[5] Mutiʿal-Hāfiz & Nazar Abāzah, *ʿUlamā' al-Dimashq wa a`yānuhā fi al-qarn al-thālith `ashar al-hijri*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1991, 413, vol.1.

[6] *Sharh al-Taqrir wa al-Tahbir,* a work of Ibn Amir al-Hāj**.**

[7] Most of Ibn ʿĀbidin's manuscripts are preserved in the Library of Āl ʿĀbidin**,** Damascus.

From his productive and long career, we know, through reliable documentation and historical accounts, that nine of his works have been lost. These are *Ḥāshiyah `ala Sharḥ al-Multaqā, Naẓm Kanz al-Daqāiq, Ḥāshiyah `ala Tafsīr al-Qāḍi al-Baydhāwai, Sharḥ al-Kāfi fi al-`Urūḍ wa al-Qawāfi, Majmū` al-Nafāis wa al-Nawādir, Qissah al-Mawlūd al-Nabi, Ḥāshiyah `ala al-Muṭawwal, Dhail Silk al-Durar of* al-Murādi.

This present work is the first treatise in a collection of 31 called *Majmu`āt al-Rasā'il Ibn `Ābidīn*.[8] The complete translation of the first treatise is reproduced here.

TRANSLATION

EVIDENT KNOWLEDGE ON THE BENEFIT OF PURE LINEAGE[9]

[INTRODUCTION (*MUQADDIMAH*)]

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. May He bless and grant salvation to Muhammad, the most excellent of His creation and to Muhammad's family, companions, and descendants who are pure and to those who maintain adherence to Allah's *sharī`ah* and follow Muhammad's footsteps and ways. In the case of salvation from Muhammad, his followers did not rely on lineage or action, but feared and revered Allah. Hence**,** they were the rescued ones.

Proceeding from this position, this captive of the prison of sins and mistakes, Muhammad Amīn Ibn ʿUmar, better known as Ibn ʿĀbidin, may Allah forgive him and his parents, *Āmīn*, who dependent on the mercy of the Lord of the Worlds, relates that a discussion took place in a polite gathering, attended by a number of noble, knowledgeable people, on whether individuals with the correct lineage to the Messenger of Allah—peace be upon him—would

[8] Muhammad Amin Ibn Abidin, Majmuat rasail Ibn Abidin, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1976).

[9] The translation was jointly done by the authors of this article. It is a balance between a literal rendering of the original and approximate meaning. As such, some of the expressions may appear wordy in the English language. However, it provides the reader a short excursion into the mode of expression in the Arabic Language.

benefit from it in the Hereafter by entering Paradise and escaping Hellfire despite being sinners or would Allah judge them with justice and by entrusting them to His divine will like other sinful people. Some of the people in the gathering agreed with the advantage of the lineage, while some did not. Each group had arguments for their claim. One of the eminent, who was present in the gathering, asked me Ibn ʿĀbidin to write on the subject. He gave me a book on the virtues of the members of the Prophet's excellent household. The work of his sheikh, Sheikh al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥasīb al-Nasīb, who was better known as Jamal al-Layl al-Madanī, included information that would unveil the intended arguments. I selected from the work the prophetic sayings, which I will mention here (blessings on the narrator, salvations and pure salutations), and collected from it the sources that would state [the position of] both the parties. Then, I combined the contents to conclude correctly that which is apparent to the sight and named it *al-`Ilm al-Ẓāhir fī Nafʿi al-Nasab al-Ṭāhir* (*Evident Knowledge on the Benefit of Pure Lineage*).

ARGUMENTS OF THE DISAPPROVERS OF THE ADVANTAGE

So I will narrate—seeking the aid of the King, the Worshipped, Benefactor of the good and the generous—the sources used by the opposing group, starting out with the verse of the Qur'ān:

> Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that day, nor will one ask after another![10]

The authority of the exegesis (*qāḍī al-mufassirīn*) on the commentary of the above verse said that there is no lineage between people that could benefit them in the Hereafter because mutual affection and mercy would vanish because of the tremendous confusion and astonishment so much so that a man would run away from his brother, his mother, his father, his friend and his children. There would be no lineage amongst people to boast about. The

[10] *Al-Qur'ān, al-Mu'minūn* (23: 101). Translation by Muhammad Yusuf.

second reason—boasting—is akin to the first—benefit—since amongst the reasons for not boasting is the absence of benefit in that world.

The word of Allah, the Elevated:

> O Mankind; We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (He Who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).[11]

As far as the Prophet's hadiths are concerned, Imam Ahmad—may Allah be Merciful with him—narrated from Abu Naḍrah that a person who witnessed the Prophet's sermon in Mina, while he was on a camel, told him:

> O people! Indeed your Lord is one, and your father is one, there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, neither dark over fair except one with regards to *taqwā'* (righteous), the best of you near Allah is the most righteous[12].

Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* narrated from Abu Hurairah[13]—may Allah be pleased with him—said that when the verse "And admonish the nearest of kinsmen" was revealed, the Messenger of Allah—peace be upon him—called the Quraish. So all of them gathered, the commoners and the elect. Then he said:

O children of Kaʿb Ibn Luʾī! Save yourselves from the

[11] Al-Qurʾān, al-Ḥujrāt (49: 13).

[12] *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith: 22391, *al-Kitāb bāqi musnad al-Anṣār, Bāb hadith rajul min aṣhāb al-nabi*. Note: According to the report of *Musnad Ahmad*, the hadith ends with the word *bi al-taqwā*. If the extension *khair kum `inda Allahi atqākum* is not found in any other report, then most probably it is the words of the author who used it for elaboration purposes.

[13] His full name is ʿAbd al-Rahmān Ibn Sakhr al-Dawsi al-Yamani.

> Fire! O sons of Hāshim! Save yourselves from the Fire! O sons of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib! Save yourselves from the Fire! O Faṭimah! Save yourself from the Fire! because I do not have anything for you from Allah, except my relationship with you which I will moisten with its moistness i.e. I will connect it to its connection[14].

Imām al-Bukhārī narrated this ḥadīth from Abu Hurairah without [narrating] the exception[15]. Abu al-Sheikh related to Thawbān—may Allah be pleased with him—who reported that the Messenger of Allah said:

> O sons of Hāshim! People on the Day of Judgment will not obtain *Ākhirah* (the Hereafter) lifting it on their chest to me, but you will get to me with the *al-Duniyā* (the world) on your backs. I will not benefit in anyway for you in relation to Allah[16].

Imam Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* and Ibn Abi al-Duniyā narrated from Abu Hurairah—may Allah be pleased with him—that the Messenger of Allah said:

> Indeed my close friend on the Day of Judgment will be the righteous people (*al-muttaqūn*), though lineage of the nearest lineage would be present. The people will not "get deeds to me", and you will be getting the world lifting it on your shoulders. You will say, O Muhammad! And I will say this and that.

Abu Hurairah elaborating on the Prophet's response said, "He

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[14] *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith: 303, *Kitāb al-Īmān, al-Bāb fi qawlihi ta`āla wa andhir `ashirataka al-`aqrabin*. Note: Imam al-Nawawi in his commentary on *lā amliku lakum*…(I do not possess…) wrote "Do not depend on your relationship [to me] because I do not have power to defend any unpleasantness Allah intends for you."

[15] *Sahih al-Bhukhari*, Hadith: 4398, *Kitāb tafsir al-qur'ān*, *Bāb wa andhir `ashirataka al-`aqrabin*.

[16] See footnote no. 10

ﷺ renounced those who were on both his sides**,** right and left."[17] Al-Ṭabrānī related from Muʿādh Ibn Jabal—may Allah be pleased with him—that when the Messenger of Allah sent him to Yemen, he went out with him advising. Then he turned towards Medina and said:

> Indeed my close friends from you are the righteous people, whoever they are or wherever they are[18].

Abu Sheikh also reported this *hadith* and added at the end, "O Allah! I do not approve their corruption of what you have placed in order". Bukhari and Muslim narrated the words of Abu ʿAbd Allāh ʿAmar Ibn al-ʿĀṣ Ibn Walīd Ibn Hishām—may Allah be pleased with him—who said he heard the Messenger of Allah expressing publicly:

> Indeed the families of so and so (*inna āla banī fulān*) are not my close friends. Except for only those who are close friends of Allah and pious from among the faithful people[19].

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[17] Muhammad Ibn Ismāʿil al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1985, 300; Abu Shujāʿ Shirawayh Ibn Shahradār Ibn Shirawayh al-Dailami, *Al-Firdaus bima'thūr al-khiṭāb*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1986, 295, vol.5. Hadith: 8669. Note: These two reports can be understood by another report by al-Dailami. The latter reported that ʿImrān Ibn Husayn said: "O sons of Hāshim indeed my close friends amongst you are righteous ones. O son of Hāshim I will definitely not assist you if you go after the world lifting it on your back while the other people go after *Ākhirah*." This means: the Prophet ﷺ will not entertain those members of his family on the Day of Judgment who carried the world on their shoulders, when they should have focused on their Akhirah.

[18] *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith: 21040, *al-kitāb Musnad al-Anṣār, al-Bāb hadith Mu`ādh ibn Jabal*. Note: The author has quoted al-Ṭabrāni's report; the wording in *Musnad Ahmad's* report is slightly different. According to Imam Ahmad's report the wording is "*inna awlā al-nāsi bi al-muttaqūn man kānū wa min haithu kānū*." The translation reads "indeed the best of people near me are the righteous people, whoever they are or wherever they are." See (Hadith: 8229), al-Dailami, *al-Firdaus*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1986, 295, vol.5.

[19] *Sahih Bukhāri*, Hadith: 5531, *Kitāb al-Adab*; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith: 316, *Kitāb al-Imān*. Note: The wording of Imām Bukhāri's report is "Inna āl Abi" (Indeed family of my father). The word in Imām Muslim's report is slightly different. He reported "*Alā inna āl abi ya`ni fulānan laisū li awliyā'*…" The translation reads

Muslim related to Abu Hurairah—may Allah be pleased with him—a *hadith*, [where] the Messenger of Allah said:

> He who is slowed down by his deeds, his lineage will not speed [things up for] him.

There are many famous *aḥādith* to this effect.

ARGUMENTS OF THE APPROVERS OF THE ADVANTAGE

Arguments of the approvers of the benefit of pure lineage are as follows: Imam al-Tirmidhi related to Zayd Ibn Arqam ﷺ, who classified the *ḥadīth* as *ḥasan,* reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> I am leaving two valuable things (*al-thaqalayn*) to which if you hold strongly to will never lead you astray after me. One is greater then the other: First, the book of Allah, a rope stretched from the heaven to earth and second, the people of my house. The two things will not separate until they reach the Fountain. So look as to how you follow me in those two things[20].

Al-Hāfiḍ Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Zarnadī reported in his work, *Naḍm Durar al-Simṭīn* from Zayd Ibn Arqam ﷺ that:

> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came forward on the day of the farewell pilgrimage and said, "I am your access to the Fountain, and you are my followers. You will be on

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"Indeed the family of my father, meaning [to say] so and so, are not my close friends…" Imām Nawawi said of this hadith that according to some of the reporters, the prophet did not name the relative to avoid trouble (*mufsidah wa fitnah*) either for himself or for others. The inconsistency of Ibn ʿĀbidin's word in this work is either because of a typing error or because he merged the two reports and wrote the common implication of both, i.e., family of unnamed person.

[20] See (Hadith: 194) al-Dailami, *al-Firdaus*, 66, vol.1.

> the verge of reaching the Fountain, when I will ask about my two valuable things; how did you follow me through them?" A person stood up from the *muhājirīns* and asked what the two things were. The Prophet answered, "The larger of the two is the Book of Allah because one end of the Book is in Allah's Hand and the other end is in your hands, so hold strong to it. The smaller of the two are the people of my house. He who faces my *qiblah* and accept my propagation, then he should be good to the people of the house, so do not kill them, neither coerce them, nor deny them. I requested from Allah—the Gracious and the Knowing One—for them to reach the Fountain in this manner." The reporter was not sure which word the Prophet used, *katayni* or *kahātayni*—and gestured with his two forefingers (*al-musabbiḥatayn*).[21]

Al-Daylami related to ʿAbd Rahmān Ibn ʿAwf ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> I am enjoining you to be good to the people of my house, and certainly their place is the Fountain.

Abu Saʿīd narrated from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz on the nobility of the prophet hood, linking the chain to the Prophet ﷺ. He said:

> I and the people of my house are like a tree in Heaven whose branches are in this world. He who holds strong to it has taken a path to Allah.

Al-Ṭabrāni in *al-Awā'il* related to Ali ﷺ that the latter said:

> I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying that the first to reach the Fountain are the members of my house and

[21] *Al-Musabbihah* and *al-Sabbahah* are the index or forefinger; the finger next to the thumb. See under (sin), E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1291, vol.1.

the ones who love me the most from my *ummah*.

Al-Ṭabrāni, al-Dār Quṭni, and the author of *Kitāb al-Firdaus* reported from Ibn Umar ﷺ who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> The first persons I will intercede for on their behalf on the Day of Judgment are the members of my house, then close relatives according to their hierarchy, then the *Anṣār* (the helpers), then those who believed in me and followed me from the people of Yemen, then all the Arabs, and then all the non-Arabs. On whose behalf I intervene first is more excellent.[22]

Al-Ṭabrāni in *al-Sagīr* narrated from ʿAbd Allah Ibn Jaʿfar ﷺ that I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying:

> O children of Hāshim! I requested from Allah ﷻ to make you a noble family and requested to guide those among you who are astray, safeguard those among you who are fearful, and feed those among you who are hungry.

In *al-Mustadrak* in a *hadith* whose chain is authentic al-Ḥākim reported from Anas ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah said:

> My Lord promised me that the people of my house who amongst them confess to the unity of God (*al-tawḥīd*) and my message will not be punished.

Abu Saʿīd, al-Munlā in his *Sīrah*, al-Dailamī and his son related to ʿImrān Ibn Huṣayn who reported that the Messenger of Allah said:

> I asked my Lord not to send anyone from the members

[22] See (Hadith: 29) *al-Firdaus*, 23, vol.1.

of my house to the Fire and He granted me that[23].

Imam Ahmad in *al-Manāqib* related to Ali ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah said:

> Oh! people of Hāshim, by the One who sent me with truth of the prophecy, if I take a circle in Heaven, I will not start except with you.

Al-Tabrani related to Ibn Abbās in *al-Kabīr* (and the narrators are reliable) that the Messenger of Allah said to Fāṭimah:

> Certainly Allah ﷻ will not punish you or your children.

Imam Ahmad, al-Ḥākim in his *Saḥīḥ*, and al-Baihaqī reported from Abu Saʿīd that he heard the Messenger of Allah saying on the *mimbar* (pulpit):

> What has happened? People are saying that relation to the Messenger of Allah will not benefit his people on the Day of Judgment. Yea, by Allah my relation will be linked from this world to the Hereafter to me. O people I will be your access to the Fountain.

Abu Ṣāliḥ al-Muʾadhdhin in his *Arbaʿīn*, al-Hāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Azīz Ibn al-Akhḍar and Abu Naʿīm in *Maʿrifah al-Saḥābah* related to ʿUmar ﷺ that the Prophet said:

> All the causes and lineages will break on the Day of Judgment except my cause and lineage. And every son of Adam, their paternal relation is to their father other then for the children of Faṭimah, I am their father and paternal relative[24].

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[23] See (Hadith: 3403) Ibid. 310, vol.2.

[24] Abu Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzi in his *Ahkām al-Qur'ān* in explanation of the lineage of a daughter's children clarifies that generally the lineage of a child is through his/her father. In the case of Ḥasan and Ḥussein (peace be upon them) the lineage is

There are many more words similar to these with many chains of narrations from the Prophetic sayings (*aḥadith*) mentioned on this subject that promises them (people of the Prophet's house) salvation, a good state, even after their death.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO ARGUMENTS

As far as the verse on the Trumpet is concerned, according to contextual evidence it is mentioned in connection to the disbelievers (*al-kuffār*). Hence the verse is not general, and if generality is claimed, it is a general verse that should be understood as a special verse (*al-khuṣūṣ*) because of the evidence of the texts mentioned, which indicates that the Prophet's noble lineage will be beneficial to his pure descendants and that they are the most fortunate of humankind in this world and in the Hereafter.

When the associates of the Prophet's family (*mawālīhim*)[25] is distinguished even through the issue of accepting *zakah* which was made illegal for them because of their affiliation with the Prophet's family, without making any distinction between the obedient and the disobedient among them, then what more can we say about those who are honored because of their lineage—who gained superiority over others because of its excellence, and their affiliation to the prime lineage—the most honored of creations, most excellent of earth and heavens, whom Almighty Allah honored with that whose smallest amount is uncountable, and created existence because of him, and gave him the power of intercession for the infinite sinners who persists on carrying out major sins beside minor sins and gave place to those sinners in spacious Gardens and lowered the curtain of pardon and forgiveness upon them because of him. So why then can

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Faṭimah (peace be upon her) the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and this is an exception. See Abu Bakr al-Rāzi al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1994, 19, vol. 2.

[25] According to the preferred opinions of the Hanafis, Hanbalis, Shafis' and one of the opinion of the Malikis, *mawāli* of the Prophet's family are those [slaves] whom the Hāshimis or Muṭṭalibis freed. See the word *Āl* in *al-Mawsū`ah al-Fiqhiyah*. For the *mawāli* of the Prophet see Ibn Saʿad, "Account of the servants and the mawlas of the apostle of Allah may Allah bless him," in *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-Kabir*, translated from Arabic by S. Moinul Haq, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, n.d., 590-592.

the Prophet not be honored with salvation of his descendants, who are part of his body and have been elevated to a high level as they are elevated in the eyes of mankind in this world? It is far from [the trait of] the Prophet to intercede on behalf of non-relatives and forgo and forget his own relatives and break his relation with them. O! Allah, O! the King of the kingship and kings make it correct for us. Because I, praise to Allah, am elevated amongst them, whose lineage is authentic to the respected Master of the worlds through his grand son, Hussein peace be upon Him.[26]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said according to the long report of al-Bazzār and al-Ṭabrāni: "What has happened to the people? They think that my relation to them will not benefit them? Certainly every cause and lineage will break on the Day of the Judgment except my cause and lineage. My relatives will be joined to me in this world and in the Hereafter." And why should not his ﷺ relatives be connected while it is reported in the exegesis of Allah's words of "the wall…"[27] that was preserved, that between the two orphans and the father was a distance of seven fathers. So there is no doubt in the protection of the Messenger of Allah's children and his relatives, though the generations (*al-wasāiṭ*) between Him and them has increased.

On this Jafar al-Sadiq ﷺ said which al-Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Azīz Ibn al-Akhḍar reported in *Ma`ālim al-`itrah al-nabawiyyah*:

> For us has been preserved what the pious servant of Allah had protected for the two orphans because their father had been a righteous man.

[26] The argument here is not really well constructed. If all creations are seen as equal, then they would not be sidelined because they too would receive equal attention. The argument here is if they will receive special attention. Ibn Abidin "outcry" here is emotional and personal.

[27] *Al-Qur'an, al-Kahf* (18: 82). The complete verse is, "As for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the town; there was, beneath it a buried treasure, to which they were entitled; their father had been a righteous man: so thy Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure–a mercy (and favor) from thy Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which thou wast unable to hold patience."

The author continues commenting in this context on an incident that one of my respected *mashā'ikh* told me about his *mashā'ikh*—may Allah give all of them a place in the House of Peace—that he was adjacent to the noble Makkah and was reading a lesson when the verse "And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye Members of the family and to make you pure and spotless"[28] caught his notice. Some of the scholars concluded that the verse meant that the descendants of the Messenger of Allah would die in a perfect state. He pondered upon the evidence and found it strong, then took it as unlikely because of news that reached him regarding the nobles (*al-Shurafā'*) of the honorable Makkah. He slept and in his dream saw the owner of the prophet hood, the Prophet, turning his face away from him saying, "Are you saying it is unlikely that my family members will die in a perfect state or something to the effect?" He woke up frightened and took his words back.

This is also not opposed to the mentioned *aḥādith* such as the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ "the causes and lineage will break" because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ does not possess anything for anyone in relation to, Allah neither harm nor advantage, but Allah ﷻ holds the benefit for his Prophet's relatives, in fact for his entire *ummah* with special and common intercession. In other words the Messenger of Allah does not possess, except what his Master ﷻ allows him to possess and this is the reason why he said, *illā sababī wa nasabī* (except my cause and lineage).

Similarly, this was said in the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ *lā ugniya `ankum min Allāhi shai'ā* (I will not benefit you in any way in your dealings with Allah), i.e., I will not benefit you merely because of who I am except for what Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon me like intercession (*shafā`ah*) or pardon and its like. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ by his statement, "I will not benefit… said so with the intent of frightening and urging people towards *al-`amal al-khiṭāb* simultaneously and gesturing them towards the right of his relationship with his ﷺ words *gaira anna lakum raḥima sa'abulluha bibalāliha* (except my relationship with you which I will moisten with its moistness). This is a wonderful act emanating from his

[28] Al-Qur'ān, al-Ahzāb (33: 33).

treasure of wisdom and height of eloquence. He ﷺ, because of his earnest endeavor for his family members, wanted his family members to have a greater share in the realm of righteousness (*al-taqwā*) and fear of Allah ﷻ. This would be the best way for scholars to reconcile the *aḥādith* we quoted.

Coming back to the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ "*inna awliyā'ī yauma al-qiyāmah al-muttaqūn man kānū* (indeed my close friend on the Day of Judgment will be the righteous people, whoever they are)…" and his words "*inamā wali Allāhi wa sāliḥ al-mu'minūn* (certainly the close friend of Allah and pious are the righteous people)," does not negate the benefit for his relatives and families. The same is true with regards to his ﷺ words "*man baṭa'a bihī `amluhu*... (He who is slowed down by his deeds, his lineage will not hasten him). Perhaps the meaning of this hadith—Allah ﷻ knows best—is that the deeds will not hasten him to distinct elevations (*al-darajāt*), but at the same time will not stop him from achieving salvation since in the end, the door of grace is vast.

In addition, surely Almighty Allah considers violation of His dignity (*ḥurumātihi*) as an act of disdain and our Prophet ﷺ, servant of Almighty Allah, does not possess except what his Master possesses and does not achieve all that he wishes for except for what Allah ﷻ wills.[29] Do you not see, His verse: "It is true thou will not

[29] Prophet Muhammad will benefit his *ummah* through intercession that is, a prayer for an individual's *hidāyah*, etc., though this is not decided solely by him. They are subject to the pleasure of his Master ﷻ. This is made clear by the verse on which Ibn ʿĀbidin bases his *tafsir* of the verse: *Innaka lā tahdi man ahbabta*… (*Al-Quran, al-Qiṣaṣ* (28: 56)). The verse was revealed on the occasion when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ approached his uncle, Abu Ṭālib, to ask him to embrace Islam when the latter was breathing his last: "O Uncle! Say *lā ilāha illah* (there is no one worthy of worship except Allah); on that I will bear witness for you." Abu Ṭālib refused. See Jalāl al-Din al-Suyūṭi, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fi tafsir al-Ma'thūr*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1990, 253, vol. 5. Al-Shawkāni in his *tafsir* explains *Innaka lā tahdi man ahbabta*… (You cannot give *hidāyah* to one you love) in this way: you cannot give *hidāyah* to the people and giving *hidāyah* is not your responsibility. See al-Shawkāni, *Fath al-Qadir*, Beirut: Dār al-Khair, 1991, 206, vol.4. Al-Jawzi classifies the subject of *man ahbabta* (whom you love) into two: first, whom you love to show him light (*hidāyatahu*) and second, whom you love because of close relationship (*qirabātahu*). See Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din ʿAbd al-Rahmān Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Jawzi, *Zād al-Masir fi `Ilm al-Tafsir*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub

be able to guide everyone whom you lovest; but Allah guides those whom He wills. And he knows best those who receive guidance,"[30] and His verse: "Not for thee, (but for Allah), is the decision: whether He turns in mercy to them or punishes them; for they are indeed wrongdoers".[31] Hence not everyone knows that he ﷺ will intercede for them, even though they may be the dearest to him and their position nearer to him. This Abū Ṭālib, who helped the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, assisted him and sheltered him, despite being his father's twin brother, his protector and nurturer. Will this benefit him and save him from a dangerous abode? And to Nūḥ, peace be upon him, who is the father of mankind, Almighty Allah said to him about his son "O Nūḥ he is not thy family: for his conduct is unrighteous."[32] So everything is under the will of Almighty Allah as He said in the Holy Qur'an: "but no one can feel secure from the plan of Allah, except those (doomed) to ruin."[33] For this reason the Messenger of Allah was the most fearful of his Lord, the Elevated, and was the greatest in revering and honoring Him, so were the Messenger of Allah's pure companions and their pious followers. ʿUmar Ibn al-Khattāb who prepared armies for the Muslims, helped with his bravery the believers of the one God (*al-muwaḥḥidīn*), conquered countries, defeated the indignant for which, the Truthful gave him the tiding of Paradise, garment of goodness and grace. Despite all this, he said, "I wish the mother of ʿUmar would not have given birth to ʿUmar" and said that, "I do not feel secure from the plan of Almighty Allah for no one can be fully confident of it."

Indeed the ones who would escape from amongst us would be few if Allah, the Elevated, dealt with us with His Justice. [Hence] the people of lineage should not be deluded by their lineage and consider it a strong cause. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ achieved the highest level by knowing the rights (*ḥuqūq sing. ḥaqq*) of the Lord (*al-rubūbiyah*) and by performing that which is required of the servant (*al-`ubūdiyah*). It should be known that there is no line from

al-ʿIlmiyah, 1994, 112, vol.6.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., *Āl `Imrān* (3: 128).

[32] Ibid., *Hūd* (11: 46).

[33] Ibid., *al-A`rāf* (7: 99).

him ﷺ between Fatimah, his dearest, and the Lord ﷻ the Most High and the Victorious. He loves what His Master loves and is displeased with what his Master is displeased with His creations, etc. Though a person may be the most loved of the people to him, instead displeasing His Master would be the cause of detaching his love ﷺ from the person. Allah, the Elevated, is the Dearest, the Mightiest, the Greatest, and the Most Exalted to him ﷺ compared to all other things, and this is not a surprise to even a person with the lowest capability, let alone the intellectuals. Regarding turning his back ﷺ to those who did not comply with what he brought, even though they might be his closest family [member], [there] are strong evidences and authentic supportive chains and sources to this effect. So how can one from the Prophet's ﷺ lineage, after injuring the Dignity of Allah, the Elevated—by not caring for what was compulsory on him—think that respect and position await him with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Does the foolish one think that he is given the greatest respect from Allah in the sight of the Prophet? Definitely not! by Allah, for such a one, his heart is drowned in the waves of ignorance and mistakes. He who relies on lineage, a bad ending is feared for him—may Allah protect us from it.

One should ponder upon the state of past pious people from the members of the pure households—with what they characterized themselves and on what they had confidence—with what they distinguished themselves and on what they relied. If one pays attention towards achieving the causes of reaching them with pure intention, divine triumph will rush to them and good will be appended to them.

Certainly the family of the Prophet ﷺ are scrutinized and attention is on them. They are nearer to the link to their Lord. He who strives will succeed. He who endeavors for the noble position will not be turned away.

We ask Allah for continued prosperity—guidance to the most righteous path. We ask Him to accommodate us with His obedience and to execute the rights of lineage and relationship and not make it a cause of deception and derailment of character and to take our soul while on the religion of His glorified Prophet, [while] we love him and love his family members who are the honored of the honorables.

Allah is Most Generous and Most Merciful of the mercifuls. May Allah bless our Master, Muhammad ﷺ, his family and those with pure bloodlines, all his companions and their followers till the Day of Judgment. All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds [Ibn Ābidin's treatise ends here].

CONCLUSION

Ibn ʿĀbidin's approach to the issue, though novel, does not discuss the central question, which is, who are the family members of the Prophet? This is of paramount important in placing this issue in context. However, since he does mention, through examples from the Quran, notably with the surah about inheritance received by a child, seven times removed from his great grandfather, Ibn ʿĀbidin's position embraces descendants of the Prophet to this day. Nevertheless, a clear definition of who the *ahl*, entail is important.

In his treatise, Ibn ʿĀbidin's treatment of the subject begins with the argument of those opposed to the idea of a privileged position for the members of the household of the Prophet. The arguments are sound, especially since they are in line with the position of fairness and justice in Islam since it is devoid of a caste system or hierarchy. Almighty Allah states in the Qur'ān that any privileged position can only exists in terms of *taqwa*, a term summarily described to mean God-conscious, God-fearing, piety, abstention, the propensity to do good and to stop or put off evil.[34]

Ibn ʿĀbidin conclusively dismisses any advantage to members of the family of the Prophet who do not adhere to the teachings of the religion. He states that one who has abandoned the path of Allah should not expect a position of respect to await him. It is important for the members of this exalted household to realize that they too must emulate the pious ways and practices and manners of those family members who lived during the time of the Prophet. They were people who distinguished themselves by striving to attain noble

[34] Though the word has been defined differently, according to context, the meaning stems from a singular motivation——that which an individual does or does not do when he is conscious of the presence of God. Hence, it is an attained degree of awareness of the constant presence of God.

positions in the eye of Allah. The underlining factor in all this is still the issue of righteousness. The teachings of Islam are clear on this, and Ibn ʿĀbidin's conclusion bares this out. Those who are not righteousness will not benefit from the connection. By the same token, those who are righteous, but not members of the family, will not be left out on the Day of Judgment since any advantage is reserved for those who adhere to the teachings of Islam.

Ibn ʿĀbidin's discussion at the beginning of the article appears to contradict his conclusion since in the former, he allows the advantage to members of the family of the Prophet rather vehemently. The example on the privilege of the family of the Prophet though good, is not completely convincing since it is assumed that the honor is given without discrimination. The example he uses from the Qur'ān on the incident of the wall shows a physical inheritance, that is, a treasure, not a biologically connected advantage or a birthright. We know that the intercession of the Prophet is for all. The hope-giving *hadith* that the "cause and lineage" of the Prophet will not break on the Day of Judgment and that his relatives will be connected to him in "this world and in the Hereafter" is clear enough and indisputable, but the meaning of "cause" requires closer scrutiny. As to the restriction imposed on even the slaves working in the household of the Prophet does not extend to anything else except on accepting *zakat*. As to whether this practice is to be continued by the descendents of the slaves is not discussed. Any individual, it appears, who had the privilege of eating pure, unadulterated food in the Prophet's household is prohibited from consuming food obtained from the money paid out for the cleansing of wealth or the expiation of sins or purification of self.

Hence, we can see from Ibn ʿĀbidin's treatise that the noble and honorable family of the Prophet will have a chronological advantage in terms of proximity to him, provided that they are amongst the righteous. However, the very same advantage will exist for the righteous who are not members of his family. The privilege appears to be a chronological one: the members of the family will be the first to reach the fountain, together with the ones who love him the most from his *ummah*. The distinction between members of his family and the most attached to him from amongst the *ummah* is

made to show the honor and position relegated to the members of the family of the Prophet. Since such a great honor and position is assigned to them, it becomes even more imperative to define and identify the terms *ahl* and *'āl* in these *ahadith*.[35]

[35] The different usage of the word *'āl* and *ahl* will be studied in an upcoming paper thoroughly.

A LIBERAL APPROACH TO THE ISLAMIC SYSTEM OF *DHIMMAH*

Bican Şahin
Nafiz Tok
Bilal Sambur
Peter C. Mentzel

Abstract

The system of dhimmah has been used to deal with diversity and conflict within Islamic societies. Will Kymlicka, a comtemporary liberal thinker, states that since the system of dhimmah has failed to foster individual autonomy, it should be discarded in the contemporary world. However, some liberals disagree with Kymlicka's position. Chandran Kukathas, another prominent contemporary liberal thinker, opines that not autonomy, but freedom of conscience is the fundamental value each and every individual must possess. In this paper, we present the Islamic system of dhimmah and then turn to critically discuss two different liberal approaches of dealing with the differences. Finally, in the conclusion, it is argued that instead of discarding this approach, the system of dhimmah can be developed along liberal lines that can take freedom of conscience as the basis.

Introduction

If there is a most pressing issue in contemporary political theory, it is the issue of coping with the conflict that emerges from the diversity in society.[1] The societies in which we live are very diverse in terms of religion, ethnicity, language, moral values, and are becoming more

[1] B. Şahin, *Toleration: The Liberal Virtue* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010); C. Kukathas, 'Nationalism and Multiculturalism', in G.F. Gaus and C. Kukathas (eds.), *Handbook of Political Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), pp. 250-264; W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

and more so. In short, we live in culturally plural societies. However, not everyone welcomes this diversity. When someone or some groups, who oppose the ways of others, attempt to eradicate those differences, we end up having conflicts in the midst of our societies.

Muslim societies are also marked by diversity. There are ethnic, religious, racial, moral, sexual, and ideological differences within them. In this respect, they are also prone to conflict. In fact, Iraq, which is a mosaic of Arab, Kurd, and Turcoman ethnic groups, as well as Sunni, Shiite, and other religious groups, though the turmoil that it has been going through in recent years, provide us with an unfortunate example of this phenomenon. Thus, Islamic societies have a stake in the answer to the question, "How can religious, ethnic, racial, moral, ideological and other differences coexist on an equal footing on peace?"

Traditionally, Muslim societies have used the system of *dhimmah* to deal with diversity and associated conflict. In retrospect, the system of *dhimmah* has been a tolerant way of accommodating differences. However, this tolerance has had its limits as well. Although those limits might have been acceptable in the past, they may no longer be so. One such criticism is levelled against the system of *dhimmah* by Will Kymlicka, a contemporary liberal thinker. For Kymlicka, the system of *dhimmah has* failed to foster individual autonomy and thus should be discarded in the contemporary world. However, not all liberals agree with Kymlicka's position. For example, Chandran Kukathas, another prominent contemporary liberal thinker, opines that not autonomy, but freedom of conscience forms the fundamental value each and every individual must possess. For Kukathas, as long as they respect individual freedom of conscience, groups based on all sorts of moral understanding can exist in the liberal polity. In this respect, we argue that, instead of being discarded, the system of *dhimmah* can be developed along liberal lines that take freedom of conscience as the basis. In this direction, we will first present the Islamic system of *dhimmah* and then turn to critically discuss two different liberal approaches of dealing with differences. Finally, in the conclusion, in order to show the potential ways of revising the system of *dhimmah*

along the liberal lines, we will discuss the points of agreement and disagreement between these two traditions.

Islamic Tradition

Regarding the issue of minorities in the Islamic tradition, according to Bernard Lewis, there are two distorted pictures. While one picture illustrates a rosy state of affairs according to which there was a perfect harmony and equality among different religious communities that made up the Islamic state, the other illustrates a state of war according to which the majority culture, i.e. Islam, was imposed on the minorities by the force of the sword. For Lewis, neither of these reflects reality. In fact, it is impossible to talk about just one picture that depicts the nature of the status of minorities within Islam for all times and places. The treatment of minorities within Islam exhibits differences in terms of ages, places, different interpretations of Islam, and different minorities. However, none of these different practices corresponds to the two distorted pictures mentioned above.[2]

Once Islamic community organized itself as a polity, it needed to order its relationships with those who differed in belief yet resided within that polity. The system under which Islamic polity ordered its relationships with its minorities is called *dhimmah*. The system of *dhimmah* was established by Muslim polity in order to protect the rights of non-Muslim minorities within Muslim communities. It gave citizenship status to non-Muslim groups and made the state responsible for the protection of their rights. In fact, *dhimmah* was considered to be a pact between Islamic polity and its religious minorities. This pact stipulated protection and tolerance to non-Muslims. The people who are under the protection of the Islamic polity through the pact of *dhimmah* are called *ahl al- dhimmah* (the people of the covenant of protection) or more briefly *dhimmis*.[3] Non-Muslims, who accept to be the citizen of an Islamic state, have to pay citizenship tax, which is called *jizya*.

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[2] B. Lewis, *Jews of Islam* (Ewing, NJ, USA: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[3] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, p. 17; J.P. Berkey, *Formation of Islam: Religion & Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.161.

People, who paid *jizya*, have been exempted from military service and some other official services. Apart from *jizya*, non-Muslims were treated as equals with Muslims in the payment of other taxes.

It is important to understand the true nature of *jizya*. This tax is not imposed as a burden for non-Muslims. Not everyone has to pay *jizya*. People, who are capable of fighting, are required to pay. The amount of *jizya* was determined according to financial capability of the individuals. Different legal schools had determined different rates for *jizya*. There is no fixed or unchangeable amount for this tax. The amount had been determined according to time and conditions. We can say that the *jizya* tax was a sort of defence tax in that, thanks to this tax, Muslim authorities could provide protection for the non-Muslims in the face of any external threat or domestic oppression.[4]

The criterion on the basis of which the Islamic law is implemented to individuals is locality.[5] Thus, in Islamic polity, non-Muslims are also under the authority of Islamic law. However, due to verses in the Holy Qur'an and the Prophets' *hadith* that grant

[4] However, there are also those who take *jizya* as the evidence of intolerance and discrimination against non-Muslims in Muslim lands. For example, B. Lewis cites the Qur'anic verse (9:29) which is seen to be the foundation for *jizya* as one of the sources of intolerance towards non-Muslims. The Qur'anic verse in question reads as follows:

> Fight against those who do not believe in God or in the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and his Prophet have forbidden or practice the true religion, among those who have been given the Book, until they pay the jizya [poll-tax] from their hand, they being humbled. *The Qur'an*, 9:29, Quoted by Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, p.14.

A stronger criticism of *jizya*, in particular, and of the system of *dhimmah*, in general, can be found in the work of Bat Ye'or. See, Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*, Trans. from French by David Maisel, Paul Fenton and David Littman (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press/ Associated University Presses & London: AUP, 1985; 6th printing, 2003) ; "Jews and Christians Under Islam: Dhimmitude and Marcionism," Translated by Nidra Poller from French, " Juifs et chrétiens sous l'Islam. Dhimmitude et marcionisme," *Commentaire* , No.97 Spring (2002), pp. 105-116. http://www.dhimmitude.org/archive/by_dhimmitude_marcionism_en.pdf (accessed on 2 August 2010).

[5] M.A. Aydın, *Türk Hukuk Tarihi* (İstanbul: Beta Yayınları, 1999), p.150.

freedom of religion and conscience to non-Muslims, minorities in Islamic polity were entitled to autonomy in their civil legal affairs. Islamic belief that religion does not consists of only faith and prayers but also has social aspects that pertain to the worldly affairs is thought to have been decisive in granting this legal autonomy. This legal pluralism and autonomy could be seen as a liberal dimension of the Muslim political system. The decision to obey the rulings of one's religious communal courts belonged to the individual. If an individual refused to be tried by his communal court, then, he could always refer to the Islamic court. Similarly, if there emerged a disagreement among the sides of a legal affair as to which court the case should be taken to, they could always appeal to the Islamic court. However, it needs to be pointed out that cases that involve a Muslim are heard by Islamic courts.

It is obvious that the biggest advantage that the non-Muslim communities of the Islamic polity enjoyed was toleration, i.e., freedom of religion and conscience. On the basis of this freedom, non- Muslims were able to keep their faith and attend to their religious ceremonies. In an age when the primary source of identity was religious affiliation, the importance of this advantage cannot be exaggerated. Two factors that account for granting freedom of religion and conscience in the Islamic polity can be discerned: theological and prudential. Theological factors are concerned with the fundamentals of Islam, namely, Qur'anic verses and the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad.

For example, the Qur'an recognizes personal differentiation on religious matters: "Say: 'O unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, Nor do you worship what I worship; Nor do I worship what you have worshipped, Nor do you worship what I worship. You have your religion and I have mine".[6] Furthermore, the Qur'an exhibits justice in social dealings by stating that "O believers, be dutiful to God and bearers of witness with justice; and do not let the hatred of a certain group drive you to be inequitable. Be equitable; that is nearer to piety, and fear God".[7] Another verse states that "Those who believe [i. e., the Muslims], and those who profess Judaism, and the

[6] *The Qur'an,* 109: 1-5.
[7] *The Qur'an, 5:8.*

Christians and the Sabians, those who believe in God and the Last Day and act righteously, shall have their reward with their Lord; there shall be no fear in them, neither shall they grieve'.[8] These Qur'anic verses clearly show that Qur'anic theology accommodates religious tolerance, pluralism and freedom.[9]

Following the Qur'anic lines, the Prophet also respected the rights of non-Muslims and commanded Muslims to protect their rights. Concerning the treatment of non-Muslim minorities, the following statements of the Prophet show his sensitivity about the rights of non-Muslim people:

> Whosoever persecuted a non-Muslim or usurped rights or took work from him beyond his or her capacity or took something from him or her with ill intentions, I shall be a complainant against him or her on the Day of Resurrection.
>
> Whosoever hurts a non-Muslim, he hurts me, and one who hurts me hurts Allah.
>
> Whosoever hurts a non-Muslim, I shall be a complainant, and for whosoever I am a complainant, I shall ask for his right on the Day of Resurrection.

In addition to the theological factor, it is possible to talk about the prudential factor that might have been influential in granting tolerance towards non-Muslims. This prudential factor is related to the density of the Muslim population in the newly conquered areas, especially during the early stages of Islamic polity, the Muslims were in fact the dominant 'minority'. As the ruling minority struggling to establish its own authority, and to keep peace and public order, it was also for the benefit of Muslims to show tolerance towards

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[8] *The Qur'an*, 2: 62.

[9] However, according to Lewis, it is also possible to find verses in *Qur'an* that is not that tolerant towards non-Muslims. In addition the verse 9:29 cited in note 4, another example is:

> O you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as friends [or perhaps allies— the word is *awliya*']; they are friends of one another, and whoever among you take them as friends will become one of them. *The Qur'an* 5:51, Quoted by Lewis *Jews of Islam*, pp.13-14.

non-Muslims. Thus, it would not have been a wise idea to force non-Muslims to convert to Islam.[10]

As indicated at the outset, there was no one-size-fits-all conception of *dhimmah*. Different minorities were to some extent subject to varying degrees of tolerance. First of all, the followers of the Abrahamic tradition, of which Islam is a part, were the most favoured. The Jewish and Christian minorities were called to be the people of the book (*ahl al-kitab*). The concept of *ahl-al kitab* is closely linked to the system of *dhimmah*. In the Islamic belief, all prophets are true prophets of God and preached the same message, namely pure monotheism (*tawhid*). However, later generations did not keep the original and pure content and form of this message and made some distortions of it. Although Islam considers Christianity and Judaism as distorted religions and their books as abrogated books, Islam designates a special status for the followers of these religions. This term serves as a chief source for Muslim understanding of minority rights because it accommodates the basic rights of Christians and Jews in Muslim society: 'And dispute not with the People of the Book, except with better means'.[11] The Muslim idea of tolerance and religious diversity has been influenced deeply by this concept.

Although the term *ahl-al kitab* includes Jews and Christians, there have been other non-Muslim minorities in Muslim societies, such as Buddhists, Hindus, Manicheans, Sikhs, pagans and so on. Lewis (1984) and Berkey (2002) claim that the minorities, who were not from the Abrahamic tradition, were not as lucky as the Jews and Christians in terms of freedom of religion and conscience. The options they had were simply either conversion or death.[12] In contrast to this claim, others argue that Muslims had tried to include other religious minorities in the *dhimmi* system and given them the same rights as Christians and Jews.[13] From this perspective, although *ahl-al kitab* includes only Christians and Jews at the

[10] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, p.25.
[11] *The Qur'an*, 29:46.
[12] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*; Berkey, *Formation of Islam: Religion & Society in the Near East, 600-1800.*
[13] See, for example, I. K. Al-Cavziyya, *Ahkamu Ahlu'd-Dhimma* (Beirut: 1983).

theoretical level, there have been attempts to also include other religious groups at the practical level.

Another source of variance regarding the treatment of minorities in the Islamic tradition can be found in the different interpretations of Islam. The most fundamental interpretation difference can be found in the division between the Sunni and the Shiite traditions. As Lewis argues, historically Shiite tradition has been less tolerant towards its non-Muslim minorities than the Sunni tradition. The reason for this differentiation comes from the nature of *Shia* and *Sunni* thought. Social, religious and political aspects of the *Shiite* thought have a sectarian and narrow characteristic while *Sunni* thought reflects a more universal and inclusive essence of Islam.[14]

A second source of variance of this sort is the existence of different schools of Islamic law (*madhab)* within these two traditions. Accordingly, there are four different schools of Islamic law in the Sunni tradition: *Hanafi*, *Shafii*, *Maliki*, and *Hanbali*. Of these four schools, according to R. Şentürk, while the *Hanafi* school of Islamic law had a universalistic approach towards the issues concerning minorities, the other three schools had a communitarian perspective.[15] The universalistic aspect of the *Hanafi* school lies in its belief that regardless of one's faith every human being enjoys the inviolability of his/her person. In fact, according to Şentürk, *dhimmah* originally meant the inviolability of a person. Thus, for the *Hanefi* school, every individual has this right and its derivatives, e.g., freedom of religion and conscience. From this perspective, the pact of *dhimmah* corresponds to the declaration of the equality of individuals and the communities that are formed by them.[16] On the other hand, the other three schools of Islamic law insist that only a Muslim has the right of the inviolability of person. Thus, according to them, the non-Muslim communities can get this right only through the pact of *dhimmah*. It is clear that the *Hanafi* school of Islamic law is more accommodating towards the differences than the other three schools. In fact, thanks to this characteristic of the school, they had

[14] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*.

[15] R. Şentürk, 'İslam'da Azınlık Hakları: Zimmiden Vatandaşa', *İnsan Hakları Araştırmaları*, Vol.4, No.6 (2006), pp. 43-70.

[16] Şentürk, 'İslam'da Azınlık Hakları: Zimmiden Vatandaşa', p.51.

less difficulty than the other three schools in extending tolerance not only to the People of the Book, but also to other religious communities.[17]

Although the *dhimmi*s enjoyed toleration, i.e., religious freedom and civil rights, in Muslim societies, and the general tendency among the Muslim scholars was to enhance their freedom, they were not totally free from some restrictions. In other words, tolerance toward *dhimmi*s had limits. One such limitation was concerned with the top political position in an Islamic state. Accordingly, a non-Muslim could not become the head of a state. Such measures are defended by some Muslim scholars. For example, Sayyid Abul A`la Maududi argues that non-Muslims should not be rulers and take part in the consultative bodies of Muslim states. However, they could take part in local governments and keep their cultural autonomy.[18] A second limitation was the prohibition of bell ringing for Christians during the times of Islamic prayers.[19] Besides this, non-Muslims were able to carry their cross and ring the bells of their churches and hold their religious ceremonies in their churches or synagogues. In addition, non-Muslims had to differentiate themselves by their clothing from Muslims by wearing certain colours.

These restrictions can be arranged into two groups: obligatory (*mustahaq*) and recommended (*mustahab*).[20] There are six conditions in the obligatory category:

1. They may not mention Islam in derogatory terms.
2. They may not cite the book of God, the Qur'an, incorrectly or quote it falsely.
3. They may not denounce the Prophet or show contempt towards him.
4. They were not allowed to marry Muslim women nor to commit adultery with them.

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[17] Şentürk, 'İslam'da Azınlık Hakları: Zimmiden Vatandaşa', p. 55.

[18] S.A. Maududi, *İslam'da Hükümet* (Ankara : Hilal, undated), pp.757-758.

[19] Aydın, *Türk Hukuk Tarihi*, p.150.

[20] K.A. Kasim, 'The Dhimmis and Political Authority', in J.S. Nielsen (ed.), *Religion & Citizenship in Europe and the Arab World* (London : Grey Seal, 1992), pp.31-37, pp.31-32.

5. They may not force Muslims to reject their faith nor threaten their souls or property.
6. They must not assist the enemies of Islam.

These six conditions are vital because any violation of these six conditions means the cancellation of the *dhimmi* contract. It is a certain requirement for a *dhimmi* to follow these restrictions. There are also six restrictions in the recommended category:

1. *Dhimmis* must wear costumes with different colours from Muslims.
2. The sound of church bells and the mass should not be loud.
3. Their buildings must not be higher than those of Muslims.
4. They must not drink wine in public nor show off their crosses or their pigs.
5. They have to bury their dead silently.
6. They are forbidden to ride horses.

A second limitation on Islamic tolerance is brought to our attention by Will Kymlicka. According to Kymlicka, the tolerance that Islamic polity practiced was limited to the religious communities. The different religious communities were able to continue their traditional ways after coming under Muslim rule. In a sense this was a theocratic federation of different religious communities. The Islamic polity was silent in the face of internal repression within different religious communities. The individuals in those religious communities did not have the freedom of religion and conscience that involves both the right to believe and practice and to examine to revise or to denounce one's faith if necessary. In the system of *dhimmah*, the apostasy was strictly prohibited, at least for Muslims. Thus, Islamic tolerance towards non-Muslim communities was different from the liberal understanding of tolerance in one important respect: it was not based on "individual" freedom of religion and conscience.[21]

Without doubt, these are important limitations on the tolerance toward the *dhimmi*s in Muslim lands. The relationship between the dominant Islamic community and non-Muslim communities was not one of perfect harmony and equality: "discrimination was always

[21] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights.*

there".[22] However, it was not one of oppression and servitude either: "persecution was rare and atypical".[23] It was true that the non-Muslims had to distinguish themselves from the Muslims by their clothing and were not considered the full members of the Islamic polity. However, compared to medieval Europe where dissenters were not even given the right to live, let alone freedom of religion and conscience, the Islamic tradition was much more tolerant. Unlike, the medieval Europe, there were neither ghettos nor occupational restrictions for non-Muslims in Islamic polity: except for the position of the head of the state, a non-Muslim could have access to any position in an Islamic polity. Looking backward with contemporary standards to the Islamic experience, one may be tempted to find fault with such a system. However, a fair judgment can be reached only by evaluating that experience in its own time period with a view to rival experiences as well.

The Ottoman Millet System

One of the most famous examples of Muslim-dhimmi relations is the so-called "Millet System" in the Ottoman Empire. Until very recently, the accepted story was that shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Sultan established three "nations" or millets, the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian Gregorian, and the Jewish, each headed by a patriarch or in the Jewish case, Chief Rabbi, with their headquarters in Istanbul. Around each of these, the Ottomans built a system in which the three different millets were ruled by their religious authorities. These clerics were in charge of education, taxation, and the legal administration of each millet and were responsible to their respective patriarchs in Istanbul who was, in turn, responsible to the Sultan. The story of the millet system was tied to a general view of inter-communal relations in which the non-Muslim and Muslim populations were strictly segregated, only interacting rarely and in very superficial ways.[24]

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[22] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, 8.

[23] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, 8.

[24] This story of the millet system was very widespread in literature. See, for example, S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. I. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.151-153; N. Itzkowitz, *Ottoman*

The majority of historians now accept that this story of a centralized, hierarchical system established during the fifteenth century is a myth developed largely by nineteenth century European historians, on the basis of the oral traditions and much later written sources from the Christian communities. The Orthodox and Armenian patriarchs of Istanbul certainly claimed authority over all members of their flock in the Sultan's realm (if not outside it as well) but they were generally unsuccessful, and were certainly not aided in any systematic way by the Sultan's government. What most historians of the Empire currently believe is that up until the nineteenth century, there was no "system" in the sense of a centralized, coherent, and regular set of rules and regulations governing the conduct and administration of the non-Muslim population. There were indeed Orthodox and Gregorian patriarchs in Istanbul from at least the end of the fifteenth century, but these people seem to have been responsible for their coreligionists in and around the imperial capital only, despite their on-going attempts to extend their authority. As one scholar put it: "The point is not that distinct communities possessing a certain autonomy in their internal affairs did not exist. Rather, they existed at much lower levels of institutionalization, and with much greater interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims, than has commonly been assumed."[25]

Instead of a systematic organization for ruling the non-Muslim population, the Ottoman central administration more-or-less left local communities up to figuring these matters out for themselves. So, in many ways we end up with a kind of communal autonomy for the non-Muslims that resembles the structures of the so-called millet system. Thus, in general, local parishes were free to build and staff their own schools, teaching in their own languages. Similarly, Christian and Jewish clerics were free to set up courts in which their co-religionists could try cases of personal or family law.[26] The extent and operation of these kinds of

Empire and Islamic Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.59.

[25] C. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p.21.

[26] In practice, however, non-Muslims seem to have availed themselves quite freely of their option to take their cases to Sharia Courts. See, N. Al-Qattan, "Dhimmis in

institutions, however, was not tied to an Empire wide "millet" hierarchy. Instead they were based on older Muslim practices regarding the autonomy of the dhimmi as well as local forces and customs, in many cases pre-dating the Ottoman conquest. It is for this reason that one finds in Ottoman history such a wide variety of different stories about the conditions of the dhimmi, and especially the degree to which they were actually held to the mustahaq and mustahab restrictions on their behavior.

In terms of the question of tolerance and relations between the *ahl al-dhimmah* and the Muslims, this new understanding of the organization of non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire once again should caution us about making sweeping statements about the status or condition of Muslim/non-Muslim relations. In the localized setting in which most of these relationships played themselves out, "social relations were rooted not in some non-existent political-administrative construct [i.e., the "millet system"] or in a simple- minded religious mold, but in a far more complex functional nexus of family ties, geographic networks, local customs, and economic status and interests…These were not imposed by the Ottoman State from above, but rather reflected interlocking needs and traditions which interacted with the different branches of the political structure."[27] In other words, all the foregoing argues quite persuasively that for most of the Ottoman Empire's history, there were neither "millets" nor a "millet system." Instead, the conditions, degree of integration, and level of toleration of the dhimmi of the Empire were contingent on time and place.

From the point of view of tolerance or peaceful inter-communal relations, it is interesting to note that the situation deteriorated precisely at the time that the Ottoman Empire tried to centralize and strengthen the imperial government. As a matter of fact, both "millets" and a "millet system" are indeed established in the Ottoman Empire, during the nineteenth century, in much the same

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the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.31, No.3 (1999), pp.429-435, p.432.

[27]B. Braude, 'The Strange History of the Millet System', in Kemal Çiçek et. al. (eds.), *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, vol. II, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), p.410.

way they were alleged to have existed since the fifteenth century. In fact, much of the confusion regarding the antiquity of the millet system resulted from European historians "back-projecting" the millet system they found operating in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire onto its early history. In this, they were aided by the hierarchies of the millets, who were eager to imbue these new creations of the Ottoman state with the legitimacy that age could confer.

Counterintuitively, perhaps, the millet system was established as part of the overall centralizing project of the nineteenth century Ottoman State. The Ottoman administrators and bureaucrats of this period wanted to systematize and centralize the State's relationship with all its subjects. What this meant for the non-Muslims was the subjugation of all their communities throughout the empire to their respective patriarchs (or in the case of the Jews, a so-called "Grand Rabbi") in Constantinople, and a regularization of all of their laws and traditions. To further complicate the matter, the Ottoman authorities were simultaneously introducing new, secular law codes on European models to which everyone was subject without regard to their religion.[28]

Ironically, this strategy contributed to the growth of inter-communal tension as the fluid, locally developed strategies for co-existence were scrapped in favor of a uniform set of rules and regulations from the central millet authorities. Very quickly, the Muslim and non-Muslim residents of the small towns and countryside of the Empire came to see themselves not as fellow farmers or inhabitants of the same town, but as members of great and powerful organizations with their centers in far-off Istanbul. To make matters more contentious still, the numerous ethnic and linguistic communities lumped into the new state-sponsored millets soon chafed at their control by the distant patriarchs. Thus, in the most famous example, Bulgarian-speaking orthodox Christians and their parish priests in the Balkans found themselves under increasingly

[28]Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p.23; K.H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era", in B. Braude and B. Lewis, (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. I, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), p.163.

direct control from the Orthodox Patriarchate (always a Greek), in Istanbul. The increasing tensions between the Bulgarian and Greek speaking congregations in the Empire led to demands by the former for their own millet, granted by the Sultan in 1870.

Finally, growing numbers of secular-minded intellectuals, educated in Europe, had imbibed the ideals of the Enlightenment and Romantic nationalism. They saw in the millets not the more-or-less arbitrarily created bodies of the centralizing Ottoman state, but embryonic national states.[29] The efforts of these young nationalists ultimately destroyed the Empire and created untold suffering for millions of people.

Having presented the system of *dhimmah* in general and the so-called "millet system" in the Ottoman Empire in particular, it can be stated that essentially, the Qur'anic principles and Prophetic practice require Muslims to show tolerance and respect towards non-Muslim minorities in the society. Furthermore, because the Islamic society has always been heterogeneous with its non-Muslim groups, such as Christians, Zoroastarians, Manicheans, Jews, Pagans and so on, it was vital for Muslim polity to make these non-Muslim groups natural parts of Muslim society. As we stated earlier, there were religious, social and political reasons behind the tolerant and peaceful attitude of Muslims towards non-Muslims. In light of this peaceful and tolerant attitude, we can say that recognizing, instead of denying and oppressing, religious and social diversity is a natural part of Muslim political consciousness.

However, the argument here, is not that the Islamic way of treating minorities is the ideal system that can be employed to overcome the conflicts that are caused by differences in our contemporary world. On the contrary, we think that although the Islamic system of *dhimmah* can be seen as a tolerant system in comparison to others, rivals especially in the medieval times, it has important discrepancies with respect to equal dignity of individuals and fundamental human rights which make it unsuitable to be implemented in our contemporary world. However, it is not argued here that the Islamic system of *dhimmah* must be totally abandoned.

[29] Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era", p.166.

Instead, it is argued that Islamic attitude toward non-Muslim minorities has a liberal dimension and we believe that it can be further developed along liberal lines. Thus, we now turn to examine the treatment of minorities in the liberal tradition.

The Liberal Tradition

The roots of liberal preoccupation with the peaceful handling of diversity can be traced back to the seventeenth century. At that time, the source of diversity was, to a great extent, differences in religious belief. In order to secure peaceful coexistence of these potentially conflicting differences, the liberal philosophers defended religious toleration. A well-known example is provided by John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration*.[30] However, in our contemporary societies, difference of religious belief is not the only source of diversity, and thus, the minorities are not limited to religious ones. The contemporary societies are diverse not only in terms of religion but also in terms of race, sexual orientation, ethnic and cultural background. Today, it is possible to talk about racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities besides religious minorities.

There is no homogeneity with respect to the treatment of different minorities in the liberal tradition. The current state of the discussion in the liberal tradition is marked by a twofold distinction. On the one hand, we find the approach of *multiculturalism* promoted by Will Kymlicka, and on the other, Chandran Kukathas' model of *benign neglect*.

The work in which Kymlicka stated his argument for multiculturalism most profoundly is *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*.[31] As can be inferred from its title, the main purpose of this work is to develop a *liberal* theory of *minority rights*. Thus, it should be a theory within the limits of liberalism or compatible with its main principles. Before delving into the main principles of liberalism and the minority rights that are accorded with them, however, we need to ask if there is any need for such a theory. For Kymlicka, such a theory is necessitated by the

[30] J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) (Amherst: Prometheus, 1990).
[31] W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

failings of the system that has been in place since the end of World War II. Accordingly, during the formation of the United Nations and the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was debated whether there should be specific rights concerning minorities. The view is that human rights, in general, civil and political rights that are accorded to the individuals in particular, are enough to protect the individuals, that bel ong to minorities prevailed in these debates. Thus, there was no mention of specific minority rights when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was finally adopted in 1948.

However, Kymlicka thinks that "neutral" treatment of individuals by the state on the basis of individual rights, without any reference to their ethno-cultural backgrounds, cause injustices. The relevant injustices occur as a result of the impossibility of the state neutrality in relation to ethno-cultural identities. The state is not, and cannot be, neutral in relation to ethno-cultural identities because it cannot avoid making decisions on matters such as languages, internal boundaries, public holidays and state symbols, and these decisions are not neutral. They unavoidably involve recognizing, accommodating and supporting the identities of some particular cultural groups, especially of the dominant-majorities, but not of others.[32] Hence minority cultural groups are disadvantaged in relation to their ethno-cultural identities, while dominant majorities are advantaged. Minorities face a special kind of injustice in terms of their cultural identities, and these injustices, for Kymlicka, can be remedied only through group-differentiated rights.[33]

Then, for Kymlicka, minority rights are justified by the disadvantages that members of minority cultures face with respect to their cultural identities.[34] Moreover, these rights are in line with liberalism because they are required by the basic liberal principle of equality for rectifying the injustices minorities experience in terms of their cultural identities. However, what is the relevant importance of

[32] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.108-115.
[33] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p. 5.
[34] N. Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', *Boğaziçi Journal*, Vol. 16, No.2 (2002), pp.39-58, p.41.

cultural membership or identity that justifies appealing to the liberal principles of equality? What importance does Kymlicka attach to cultural membership that justifies invoking minority rights for the correction of the disadvantages minorities face with respect to their culture?

According to Kymlicka, what elucidates the importance of cultural membership is the basic liberal principle of individual autonomy.[35] Culture is important because it promotes individual autonomy, the capacity to make meaningful individual choices. Thus the liberal priority of autonomy entails the placing of great value on cultural membership and cultural context.

The liberal priority of individual autonomy involves an acknowledgement of that human beings have an essential interest in leading a good life. In parallel to Aristotle, those, like Kymlicka, who emphasize individual autonomy also believe that the primary aim of life is happiness and it is the result of leading a good life. However, unlike Aristotle who is certain about the form and content of the good life, this line of thinking avoids identifying the content of the good life. There are various, in a sense competing, ways of good life, and it is the individual's responsibility to "choose" among them. In this sense, "... government must be neutral on what might be called the question of the good life".[36] Furthermore, unless it is chosen by the individual himself, a chosen good life cannot lead to happiness. Stated differently, it needs to be chosen from inside.[37]

Then the fulfilment of the essential interest we human beings have in leading a good life requires leading our life from inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value to life.[38] Moreover, given that we human beings are fallible creatures, it also requires us to be free to question, examine, revise, and even drop that understanding of good life we previously chose. It follows that

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[35] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', pp.41-42.

[36] R. Dworkin, 'Liberalism', in M. Sandel, (ed.), *Liberalism and its Critics* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), pp.60-79, p.64.

[37] W. Kymlicka, Liberalism, Community, and Culture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.12-13; Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights, pp.80-82.

[38] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p. 13; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.81.

pursuing our essential interest in leading a good life requires us to be autonomous, to have the ability to form an understanding of good life for ourselves and the right to revise it down the line as we see it necessary.[39] Thus, for Kymlicka, human beings should not only be let free to choose their own form of good life, but should also be provided the necessary resources to achieve this.[40]

Being autonomous is being free to question and revise our beliefs about values as well as to form a life plan based on these beliefs. It follows that to be autonomous, to exercise our moral power of forming and revising a good life, we need freedom, options for choice, and beliefs about the values of these options.[41] What ensures our autonomy are the civil liberties that secure our freedom and the cultural context that provides us with options for choice and beliefs about the value of those options.[42] Hence the social preconditions needed to exercise individual autonomy are civil liberties and cultural membership. For Kymlicka, cultural membership, alongside civil liberties, becomes a precondition for individual autonomy. The cultural structure is the context of choice in which individual autonomy is exercised.

Moreover, for Kymlicka,it is not just membership in any culture, but rather membership in one's own culture that is important because "one's sense of personal agency is tied to one's own cultural heritage; [one's] upbringing is not something that can just be erased; it is, and will remain, a constitutive part of who that person is".[43] Culture is then not a matter of choice, but of circumstance. Hence the culture in which we exercise our autonomy is not any culture, but our own culture. The culture whose importance matters is not any culture but one's own culture.

According to Kymlicka, one's own culture is important because of its autonomy-fostering role, but in what sense does he use

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[39] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', p.42.

[40] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.80-82.

[41] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', p.42.

[42] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p.164; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.83-84.

[43] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, p.175; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp. 89-90.

the term culture? He uses it to refer to "cultural community", a "societal culture," a "nation," or a "people".[44] We human beings live in what Kymlicka calls *societal cultures*. A societal culture is "an inter-generational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history".[45]

> [Societal culture] provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language.[46]

We are able to exercise our autonomy only in our own societal culture which provides us with options and meanings for choice. Our formation of a good life takes place in our societal culture, not in a vacuum. Our choices are shaped and informed by our culture. Freedom of choice can be used in a meaningful way only in a cultural milieu: "…freedom is intimately linked with and dependent on culture".[47] Thus, the existence and continuity of our culture is fundamental for our pursuit of happiness. It is a pre-condition for exercising our personal autonomy.

However, in most societies, culture is heterogeneous. As stated earlier, contemporary societies are marked by religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. Kymlicka makes a distinction between two forms of cultural pluralism: ". . . 'multination' states (where cultural diversity arises from the incorporation of previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultures—national minorities into a larger state) and 'polyethnic' states (where cultural diversity arises from individual and familial immigration)".[48] Thus, "a state is

[44] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.18, 76.
[45] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.11, 18.
[46] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.76.
[47] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.75.
[48] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.6.

multicultural if its members either belong to different nations (a multination state) or have emigrated from different nations (a polyethnic state), and if this fact is an important aspect of personal identity and political life".[49]

Even though, the nation-state has aimed at creating homogenous societies since its inception by eroding these differences, according to Kymlicka, it has not been successful in this.[50] The liberal nation-state must compensate for this by acknowledging the reality of diversity and taking the necessary steps in order to create not only an economically, but also a culturally, just society.[51] As indicated above, the solution that Kymlicka comes up with to deal with this problem is group rights. There are three sorts of group rights: 1- the right of self-government, 2- poly-ethnic rights, and 3- special representation rights.

Self-government rights are the rights of national minorities to govern their own affairs within their own territory, alongside and distinct from the larger society.[52] They aim at some degree of institutional separation from mainstream society. They are often achieved through federalism. They want to devolve power to national minorities as much as possible. This is not a temporary, but permanent solution. Through redrawing the internal borders of a country, it is guaranteed that national minorities will be majority in their traditional homelands. In Kymlicka's words, "[s]elf-government claims, then, typically take the form of devolving political power to a political unit substantially controlled by the members of the national minority, and substantially corresponding to their historical homeland or territory."[53]

Polyethnic rights are the rights to which ethnic minorities are entitled. Ethnic minorities are groups with common cultural origins, but whose members do not constitute an institutionally complete society concentrated in one territory. Polyethnic rights give special

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[49] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.18.

[50] Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 343-347.

[51] Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.362.

[52] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', p.41.

[53] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.30.

recognition to ethnic minorities in order to compensate for the disadvantages they would otherwise have in political participation and socio-economic opportunity in a larger society.[54] They aim at the integration of ethnic minorities with the larger society.[55] They are concerned with claims of financial support and/or legal exemptions for certain ethno-cultural practices. The most well-known examples of the latter sort are the claims of Sikh men who ask to be exempted from wearing helmet while driving a motorcycle or the demand to be able to wear yarmulke by Jewish men and *hijab* by Muslim women in public spaces. On the other hand, the claims of financial support are justified with the argument that it is the role of the state to provide material support for preserving cultural diversity in a society seen as a source of cultural richness. After all, by subsidizing artistic and cultural events, liberal democracies are already supporting one culture: the Western culture. Thus, the argument continues, by giving material support to the minority cultures, the fairness through equal treatment of cultures will be established.[56]

Special representation rights guarantee the representation of minority cultures in a country's central representative institutions. They are "often defended as a response to some systemic disadvantage or barriers in the political process which makes it impossible for [the minority] group's views and interests to be effectively represented".[57] Special representation is also thought to be a corollary to the self-government right. Accordingly, if the opposite decisions binding for the whole country can be taken at the central legislative assembly, the regional self-government may mean little. Thus, in order for a self-government right at the regional level not to be a sham, guaranteed representation and veto rights at the central government level must be provided.[58]

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[54] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp. 10-11.

[55] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', p.41.

[56] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.30-31.

[57] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.32.

[58] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, pp.32-33.

For Kymlicka, cultural groups may demand group rights from a liberal state/society for two purposes: a- for suppressing their internal dissent in the name of group solidarity or cultural purity, b- for protecting their cultural affairs from outside intervention. Kymlicka states that "[t]he first kind is intended to protect the group from the destabilizing impact of *internal dissent* (e.g. the decision of individual members not to follow traditional practices or customs), whereas the second is intended to protect the group from the impact of *external decisions*".[59] While Kymlicka sees no problem in accepting the second demand, he finds the first demand difficult to accept from a liberal perspective: ". . . liberals can and should endorse certain external protections, where they promote fairness between groups, but should reject internal restrictions which limit the right of group members to question and revise traditional authorities and practices".[60]

However, Kymlicka's defence of minority rights is not successful in showing the importance of culture. He is unable to successfully ground his defence of minority rights on the autonomy-fostering role of culture. His autonomy-based approach, as it grounds the importance of culture on its autonomy fostering role, fails to acknowledge the importance of non-liberal cultures that do not necessarily promote, but rather restrict, individual autonomy.[61] The importance of culture cannot be grounded on its autonomy-fostering role, since not all cultures promote autonomy. Only liberal cultures promote autonomy, securing individual liberty. There are also non-liberal cultures which do not sustain individual choice and critical reflection, which do not provide its members with personal and civil liberties. Hence, Kymlicka is mistaken in treating cultures as if they all promote autonomy. He cannot justify the importance of cultural membership in non-liberal cultures on the grounds that they promote autonomy, neither can he justify their protection.

Unlike Kymlicka, who developed his theory of minority rights on the premise that the fundamental liberal value is freedom of

[59] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.35.
[60] Kymlicka , *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, p.37.
[61] Tok, 'A Critique of Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights', pp.43, 44-49.

choice that is based on autonomy, Chandran Kukathas builds his model on the basic assumption that the fundamental liberal value is not freedom of choice based on autonomy, but rather that of conscience: "the most important feature of human conduct is its attachment to the claims of conscience. It is this aspect of human nature that reveals what is preeminent among human interests: an interest in not being forced to act against conscience".[62]

The second freedom that logically follows from the freedom of conscience is that of association. For Kukathas, the idea that free individuals must be able to freely associate with their like-minded fellows is fundamentally important. He rejects the idea that minority cultures have special rights against larger society on the grounds that individual right to free association is sufficient to respect the wish of members of minority cultures to live according to the cultural practices of their own communities.[63] He denies the very idea that culture has the right to be protected or preserved. However, if members of a cultural community wish to live according to the practices of their own cultural community, they are free to "associate" in order to do so; they are free "to form communities and to live by the terms of those associations." Hence Kukathas regards cultural communities "as associations of individuals whose freedom to live according to the communal practices each finds acceptable is of fundamental importance."[64] In this sense, cultural groups are analogous to voluntary associations that exist in civil society. Their existence is dependent on their members' continuous support.

Kukathas does not think that membership to cultural groups is always voluntary. Many times, we gain membership by birth. In fact, many cultural groups refuse to naturalize, i.e., accept into membership, those who are not natural members. However, the adjective *voluntary* here points to the fact that

"…members recognize as legitimate the terms of association

[62] C. Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago* (New York: Oxford Uni. Press, 2003), p.17.

[63]C. Kukathas, 'Are There Any Cultural Rights?' *Political Theory*, Vol.20, No.1 (1992), pp.105-139, reprinted in W. Kymlicka, (ed.), *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 228-256, p.238.

[64] Kukathas, 'Are There Any Cultural Rights?', p.238.

> and the authority that upholds them. All that is necessary as evidence of such recognition is the fact that members choose not to leave. Recognition in these austere terms would, of course, be meaningless without the individual having one important right against community: the right to leave."[65]

Thus, another fundamental freedom that goes with the freedom of association is the freedom of dissociation. The individual must have the freedom to leave the cultural group whose practices and/or values do not seem to be acceptable to him/her.

According to Kukathas, this theory accommodates in the larger liberal society not only those cultural groups that accept fundamental liberal values, but also those who do not. The freedom of association lets the cultural groups who do not subscribe to such liberal values as freedom of choice and autonomy exist along with the groups that subscribe to those values. As long as these groups do not resort to force in making and keeping individuals as members, they can continue with their illiberal ways. In view of Kymlicka's twofold distinction about the demands of minority cultures, Kukathas opines that the larger society should tolerate the demands of internal restrictions.

Then Kukathas's approach gives cultural communities unlimited power over their members. Regarding the right of association as fundamental, it denies outsiders the right to intervene in the practices of communities whether in the name of liberalism or any other moral ideal. Instead it lets them govern their own affairs as they wish on the basis of toleration. Thus this approach does not accord substantial civil rights (except for the fundamental right to exit) to the members of cultural communities on the ground that cultural communities have their moral basis in the acquiescence of their members with the cultural norms of communities. On the contrary, it renders cultural communities entitled to force their members to comply with the traditional norms and practices of the community in order to protect their cultural integrity against individual dissents.

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[65] Kukathas, 'Are There Any Cultural Rights?', p.238.

In the absence of substantial civil rights, Kukathas seems to think that the individual right to dissociation (or exit) will reduce the danger of injustice in illiberal minority communities, and even, to some extent promote their liberalization.[66] Therefore it is fundamentally important that the right to dissociation is to be a substantial, not just a formal one. The most important condition which makes the right to exit from a cultural community a substantial one is "the existence of a wider [liberal political] society that is open to individuals wishing to leave their local groups".[67] Hence Kukathas thinks that one can substantially exercise his/her freedom to exit from his/her cultural community if the wider society which he/she might enter is an open, liberal one. However, whether one can substantially exercise the right to exit does not depend on only the openness of the larger society. Even if there is an open, liberal wider society, the factors such as lacking education, being uninformed or being ignorant of other cultures and of wider society, living in a closed cultural community and lacking the necessary skills to operate in the wider society could still be main impediments for the members of minority communities to substantially exercise the right to exit.

On the other hand, Kukathas cannot accept some of the demands of external protection that are defended by Kymlicka. For example, Kymlicka argues that in order to secure fairness and/or diversity, financial support to cultural groups should be provided by the state. From Kukathas' perspective, the creation of incentives for the formation and continuation of groups that would not normally exist can be seen as one negative aspect of providing such a support to cultural groups. In the absence of external support, groups keep their existence through satisfying the needs of their members. If the individual members cease to believe that their membership to group is beneficial to them, they will stop being a part of the group. Secondly, cultural groups are heterogeneous entities. There may be minorities within the minority groups. In practice, the state support may serve the interests of the status quo powers in the group. Thanks to the state support, the privileged group may increase its ability to

[66]C. Kukathas, 'Cultural Rights Again: A Rejoinder to Kymlicka', *Political Theory*, Vol.20, No.4 (1992), pp.674-680, p.678.

[67] Kukathas, 'Are There Any Cultural Rights?', p.252.

oppress the minority view within the group. For these and other similar reasons, Kukathas rejects Kymlicka's view that the state must supply the resources and opportunities for the preservation of cultural groups. Thus, for Kukathas, the state should neither interfere with the illiberal way of life of a cultural minority nor promote such a culture. All the state needs to do is to leave minority groups alone.

However, in the absence of group differentiated rights (or external protections) for minority cultures, it is doubtful that Kukathas's approach could provide a substantial protection for them. As this approach deprives minority cultures of external protection against the majority culture, it seems to remain insufficient to preserve minority groups against the economic and political decisions of the majority.

In spite of all these criticisms, Kukathas's approach is an important endeavour to develop a theory of minority rights which is acceptable for both liberal and illiberal cultures. As will be remembered, in Kymlicka's theory, only those groups who respect the value of autonomy have a right to exist within the larger liberal society. This attitude, Kukathas argues, takes Kymlicka down the path of intervention.[68] In fact, contrary to his main aim, which is to protect minority cultures, Kymlicka ends up providing little space for difference. Directing this criticism to Kymlicka, Kukathas himself envisages a social order where both liberal and illiberal cultures could coexist, mutually tolerating, without imposing their own moral values on each other.

Kukathas depicts the social order that emerges from following these principles with the metaphor of archipelago. In this social order, there is not one single authority, but different authorities, and none of these authorities are entitled to interfere with the affairs of another. Furthermore, political society is only one of these different authorities. All these different groups float in a sea of toleration: "Liberalism is a doctrine of toleration rooted in a respect for freedom of association and, ultimately, liberty of conscience".[69] Thus, Kukathas criticizes Kymlicka for attempting to build a morally unified society/nation-state around the concept of freedom of choice

[68] Kukathas, 'Are There Any Cultural Rights?', p.242.
[69] Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago*, p.17.

based on autonomy. This aspect of Kymlicka's theory places him in the camp of ethical/comprehensive liberalism. For Kukathas, liberalism is a minimal moral order that does not require a moral unity in society. This stance of Kukathas places him in the camp of "political liberalism." For him, not only liberal elements, but also illiberal ones have a right to exist in a liberal polity.

These two positions by Kmylicka and Kukathas were subjected to a thorough going criticism by Suri Ratnapala (2005)[70]. According to Ratnapala, the fundamental liberal value is *freedom of choice*. Thus he disagrees with Kukathas who claims that the fundamental liberal value is freedom of conscience. For Ratnapala, freedom of conscience is freedom to believe which involves the right to believe or not to believe. Thus, at the basis of freedom of conscience lies freedom of choice. A person can think and/or believe whatever way she or he wishes. Short of mind-control one cannot be prevented from thinking/believing in the way that person wishes. However, one can be prevented from realizing that thought or belief by being prohibited from acting on that thought or belief. In order for someone to really experience freedom of conscience one needs to have freedom of choice. Freedom of conscience enables a person to act on her or his thoughts and beliefs.

However, Ratnapala does not think that freedom of choice creates a right to choice. Depending on the Hohfeldian analysis, he thinks that while a freedom only requires others to leave an individual alone, a right entails others to provide that individual with opportunities to realize her or his individual plans. For Ratnapala, liberalism in the classical sense cannot endorse the right to choice. This approach necessitates making individuals a means for others' goals. This cannot be acceptable from the classical liberal perspective which is normatively individualist, i.e., affirming the separate value of each individual's life, preference satisfaction and well-being.[71] Thus, Ratnapala rejects Kymlicka's position which is based on a

[70] Ratnapala, Suri. "Cultural Diversity and Liberal Society A Case for Reprivatizing Culture," *The Independent Review*, v. X, n. 2, Fall 2005, pp. 249-271.

[71] Eric Mack and Gerald F. Gaus, "Classical Liberalism and Libertarianism the Liberty Tradition," in *Handbook of Political Theory*, eds. Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas, London: Sage Publications, 2004, pp.115-129, p.116.

right to choose. For Ratnapala individuals are free to choose to follow their cultural traditions. However, they do not have a right to choose to follow those traditions. In this sense, individuals cannot legitimately expect others to provide them with the resources for carrying their traditions into the future. Insisting on this would amount to using some people for the goals and happiness of others.

While Ratnapala's criticism to Kukathas is misplaced, his criticism of Kymlicka is correct. Kukathas argues that not having autonomy or being autonomous, but having a conscience or being conscientious is the distinctive feature of human beings, especially those who follow John Stuart Mill in arguing that choice-making is the distinctive feature of human beings believe that every individual is unique in her or his character and attains happiness only when she or he leads a life that suits her or his unique character. Mill calls this process self-development and the end-result of it *individuality*, i.e., autonomy. Accordingly, every individual should dare to know herself/himself, examine alternatives and make experiments in living. In all that, one should not follow the traditional ways blindly, but must listen to her or his reason. Thus an autonomous person is one who *rationally* designs his understanding of good life. This person reviews, revises or even drops totally his understanding of good life if he thinks fit. Obviously, this process depends on individual choice-making and the related freedom is freedom of choice.

On the other hand following David Hume, Kukathas claims that human beings are led by three motives…conscience is the most important not because it always trumps other motives, but because it should.

Ratnapala opines that fundamental liberal value is freedom of choice and this entails an individual to be left alone. Using Isaiah Berlin's conceptualization, Ratnapala's conception of freedom of choice corresponds to negative freedom. Similarly, Kukathas' understanding of the freedom of conscience is based on negative freedom. Individual(s) should be left alone to follow the dictates of their conscience. Freedom of conscience does not require others to provide resources to individual(s). although Kukathas and Ratnapala take two different concepts to be the fundamental value of a liberal society, i.e., conscience and autonomy respectively, they both defend

negative liberty for individual(s). In this respect, in their essences, their positions are not radically different from one another.

Conclusion

In this paper, it was presented that, for both theological and prudential reasons, the Islamic polity has been generally tolerant towards the religious differences. Through the pact of *dhimmah*, the non-Muslims enjoyed the freedom of religion and conscience. Muslims believed in the unity of this worldly and other worldly affairs, that the non-Muslims were entitled to not only freedom of religion, but also autonomy in their civil legal affairs, such as inheritance, marriage, and education. However, it must be also indicated that Islamic toleration had also its limits.

We should abstain from evaluating past practices with contemporary standards of human rights or democracy. However, if we are going to prescribe a model for our contemporary world, we need to take these values into account. In fact, Kymlicka's criticism that Islamic tolerance was limited to the religious communities and individuals in those religious communities did not have the freedom of religion and conscience that involves both the right to believe and practice, and to examine, to revise or to denounce one's faith, if necessary, is meaningful in this respect. As indicated earlier, in the system of *dhimmah*, apostasy was strictly prohibited, at least as far as Muslims were concerned. Although it was possible for a non-Muslim to convert to Islam, it was impossible for a Muslim to change his/her religion. Furthermore, to the extent to which it remains an *Islamic* system, the system of *dhimmah* privileges Muslims over non-Muslims. This runs against the ideal of equality. In this respect, the Islamic model of accommodating diversity falls short of providing a contemporary model that can provide the general framework in which differences can co-exist on an equal basis.

However, Kymlicka is not immune from criticism either. In the name of preserving individual autonomy, Kymlicka imposes his own understanding of liberalism on groups who are not liberals themselves. If the purpose is to provide individuals with "real" choice to live their lives as they wish, Kymlicka's model fails. For Kymlicka, in the final analysis, one can lead only a liberal way of

life. In this sense, Kymlicka's understanding of liberalism takes the form of comprehensive liberalism. For a comprehensive liberal it is impossible to separate the general principles of a polity from the values that give meaning to the lives of individuals who reside in that polity.[72] As a result of this, a comprehensive liberal cannot tolerate individuals and groups which do not endorse such substantive liberal values as autonomy.

On the other hand, Kukathas's approach that is based on freedom of conscience rather than autonomy provides a broader space for groups with different understanding of "good life". Kukathas's approach of "benign neglect" accommodates both liberal and illiberal groups, and in this respect, is more inclusive than Kymlicka's model of multiculturalism. It does not impose any particular way of good life on individuals or groups within the liberal polity. Nor does it privilege a certain moral view over others. Kukathas's understanding of liberalism corresponds to political liberalism. A political liberal avoids establishing the general political framework of a society on any comprehensive moral value. As John Rawls puts it, the problem of political liberalism is: "How is it possible that deeply opposed though reasonable comprehensive doctrines may live together and all affirm the political conception of a political regime?"[73]

Of the two liberal models, the model of multiculturalism offered by Kymlicka seems to be the less attractive one for a Muslim society. This model can make uncomfortable both Muslim and non-Muslim groups that do not welcome such substantive liberal values as autonomy within an Islamic society. On the other hand, it seems that Islamic societies which are also very sensitive about preserving communal identity would feel much more comfortable with the model offered by Kukathas. This model does not entail traditional communities to deny their identities in favour of modern values. All it requires from different communities and groups is to

[72] J. Waldron, 'Liberalism, Political and Comprehensive', in G.F. Gaus and C. Kukathas, *Handbook of Political Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), pp.88-99.
[73] J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.xx.

tolerate one another.[74] Furthermore, all groups in such a polity stand as equals with respect to one another. None of the groups can legitimately discriminate against other groups depending on the state power based on the claims of moral superiority. In other words, the state should not be under the control of any group(s). The state should stand at an equal distance to each and every group in the society. The rules and policies of the state that are binding all groups and individuals should not be based on the moral beliefs of any group(s) in that society so that the state can keep a neutral position towards all these groups.

To accommodate itself to such a liberal model, Islamic societies need to make some important revisions in the system of *dhimmah*. One of these revisions involves the acceptance by the state of the political and moral equality of all groups in an Islamic society. This means that the state will stand at an equal distance to both Muslim and non-Muslim groups. The primary role of the state should be limited to keeping the peace and order among these groups. It should not side with any of the groups and try to further its cause.

For Muslims, as well as other religious or irreligious groups, they should be ready to see all other groups as their political, if not moral, equals. Requiring each and every group to take other groups as their moral equals may go against their conscientious choices and thus violate the most fundamental freedom, i.e., freedom of religion and conscience. Although we cannot expect an individual or group to take all other groups as their moral equals, we can demand that they tolerate one another. Toleration does not necessitate cherishing the differences. In John Horton's words, all that toleration involves is "a deliberate decision to refrain from prohibiting, hindering,or otherwise, coercively interfering with conduct of which one disapproves, although one has power to do so."[75] Thanks to

[74] B. Şahin, 'Toleration, Political Liberalism, and the Peaceful Coexistence in the Muslim World', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol.24, No.1 (2007), pp.1-24.

[75] J. Horton, "Toleration," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig (London: Routledge, 1998), Vol. 9, 429-433.

toleration, the peaceful coexistence of differences in Islamic societies becomes possible.[76]

In order to realize the freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of association must be established in Muslim societies. Individuals should be free to associate with their like-minded fellows and lead the life that is most in line with their consciences. However, this revision entails granting individuals freedom of dissociation, i.e., "the right to exit," from the religious/irreligious communities with whose values they cannot reconcile their consciences as well. In this sense, the prohibition of apostasy, i.e., changing one's faith, cannot be a crime that needs to be punished by the state.

Within this limited space, we can only sketch a general outline of the system that is defended here. Sorting out each and every policy implications is beyond the limits of this study. However, we think that the views discussed here set a good framework to give direction for the future debate as to the specific policy implications of such a system. We would like to conclude by stating that, within the Islamic tradition, the *Hanafi* school's interpretation of *dhimmah* with its universalistic and egalitarian approach seems to provide the most potent means for developing the system of *dhimmah* along the liberal lines defended here.

[76] Şahin, 'Toleration, Political Liberalism, and the Peaceful Coexistence in the Muslim World.'

BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND TEMPORAL POWER: IBN KHALDUN'S VIEWS ON SUFISM

Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad

Abstract

In the 9th/15th century the jurist and historian 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406) became involved in a dispute that broke out in Andalusia about whether one needed a shaykh to tread the sufi path or whether books sufficed. The dispute was a very heated one and generated much discussion about the nature of sufism and spiritual realization. The response of Ibn Khaldun, as well as the other key figures who issued rulings (fatwas) on this question, are analyzed and Ibn Khaldun's view is further examined in the light of a much neglected fatwa of his in addition to relevant passages from the Muqaddiama and Shifa'ī al-sa'il. It is argued that that Ibn Khaldun favored a sober pursuit of the spiritual path based on rigorous adherence to the Qur'an and Sunna while rejecting the monistic doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabi and others whom he condemned in the strongest possible terms. Moreover, this condemnation was the result of what Ibn Khaldun perceived to be the dangers inherent in Ibn a-l-'Arabi's doctrine of the Perfect Man since it allowed for the possibility of individual saintly apotheosis that he further saw as an even more dangerous coinciding of spiritual authority and temporal power.

Introduction

Ibn Khaldun became involved in an intellectual dispute which arose in Andalusia on the nature of the sufi spiritual quest to which he devoted an entire treatise entitled *Shifa' al-sa'il ila tahdhib al-masa'il* which despite its appearance in a critical edition in 1958

continues to be somewhat neglected.[1] He additionally made known his views on the potential dangers of certain kinds of sufism, sufis and sufi books in an also somewhat neglected *fatwa* of condemnation which comes down to us in three slightly different versions.[2] In what follows, we will examine Ibn Khaldun's view of what constitutes legitimate Sufism as set out in *Shifa' al-sa'il* together with his *fatwa* against certain sufi writings. We will conclude with a reflection on the possible reasons for Ibn Khaldun's position which we see as an instance of the tension between spiritual authority and temporal power.

The dispute in which Ibn Khaldun became involved was on the question of whether a sufi required a spiritual guide (*shaykh*), or whether books on sufism—assuming adherence on the part of the seeker to Islamic ritual—sufficed. That the latter debate retained its resiliency for centuries afterwards is indicated by a specific reference to it in one of the works of the 13th/19th century sufi Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Ajiba al-Hasani (1160–1224/1747–1809),

[1] 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406), *Shifa' al-sa'il ila tahdhib al-masa'il*, ed. Muhammad Ibn Tawit al-Tanji (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlâhiyât Fakültesi Yayınları XXII, 1958). A doctoral study was devoted to this work by Youmna Adal, "Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An annotated translation of the Shifa' al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il," Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1990.

[2] The first version appears as an appendix to Muhammad Ibn Tawit al-Tanji edition of Ibn Khaldun's, *Shifa' al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*, 110–11. Ibn Tawit al-Tanji bases his text on two MSS , *Tanbih al-ghabi 'ala takfir Ibn 'Arabi* by Burhan al-Din al-Biqa'i (d. 885/1480), Şehit Ali MS 2734, fols. 39-69 and 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1143/1730) *al-Radd al-matin*, İstanbul Üniversitesi MS AY 3767, fol. 105. The former work has since been published as *Masra' al-tasawwuf aw tanbih al-ghabi ila takfir Ibn 'Arabi*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Wakil (Cairo: 1409/1989). The *fatwa* was most probably given sometime between 774 and 776 H (i.e. between 1372 to 1374), that is to say at approximately the same time as the composition of the *Shifa' al-sa'il*. The second version is quoted by Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition. The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1999), 191–92, 357 n. 160; citing Taqi al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Fasi in *al-'Iqd al-thamin fi ta'rikh al-balad al-amin*, 8 vols. Ed. Muhammad Hamid al-Faqi, Fu'ad Sayyid, and Mahmud Muhammad Tanahi (Cairo: Matba'at al-Sunna al-Muhammadiya, 1958–69), 2:180–1. The third version is quoted by the 11th/18th century Zaydi scholar Salih Ibn Mahdi al-Muqbili in his *al-'Alam al-shamikh fi ithar al-haqq 'ala al-aba' wa'l-masha'ikh* (Cairo: 1328), 428.

who not only mentions Ibn Khaldun but indicates the involvement of a large number of other scholars in the debate.[3] After stating that the admonitions of the masters of the spiritual path (*shuyukh*) regarding the necessity of recourse to a spiritual preceptor and warnings against not doing so are legion, and quoting the warning of Abu Yazid[4] that "He who lacks a *shaykh* has taken Satan as his *imam*," Ibn 'Ajiba informs us that,

> Considerable dispute and debate arose toward the end of the eighth century [hijri] among the brethren in Andalusia so much so that they even struck each other with their shoes over whether it was sufficient to merely observe the rituals of the faith and study books about the path of the Sufis… or whether a spiritual guide (*shaykh*) was necessary. So they wrote to scholars far and wide and each answered according to his capacity, such as 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbad,[5] may Allah be pleased with him; and such as Abu 'Abdullah Ibn Khaldun, may Allah

[3] Abu'l-'Abbas Ibn 'Ajiba (d. 1224/1809), *al-Futuhat al-ilahiyya fi sharh al-Mabahith al-'aliyya* printed on the bottom of his *Iqaz al-himam fi sharh al-hikam*, 2 vols. in 1, (Beriut: Dar al-Fikr, no date), 147–148. This is a re-print of an edition which was printed, according to the notice on 2:461, in 1331 H, perhaps in Cairo. Moreover, on the same page we learn that *Iqaz al-himam* begun in Muharram 1211 H and completed on a Wednesday, 8 Jumada I of the same year, whereas *al-Futuhat al-ilahiyya* was completed on a Thursday in the middle of Ramadan 1211 H. The *Hikam*, or sufi aphorisms, upon which *Iqaz al-himam* is a commentary, is by the famous Shadhili master Ibn 'Ata'illah al-Sikandari, whilst *al-Futuhat al-ilahiyya* is a poem on the spiritual path Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Yusuf known as Ibn al-Banna "al-Saraqusti" indicating his origin Saragossa, Spain. He should not be confused with the mathematician, astrologer/astronomer and occultist Ibn al-Banna who died in 721 H at Marrakech; see *E1²* 3:731 (H. Suter and M. Bencheneb). On Ibn 'Ajiba see J. L. Michon, *The Autobiography of the Moroccan Sufi Ibn 'Ajiba*, Trans. David Streight (Louisville, KY: 1999).

[4] Presumably Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 261/874 or 264/877-8). See *E1²* 1:162 (Helmut Ritter).

[5] According to the entry on Ibn 'Abbad by Paul Nwiya in *E1²* 3:670, he is Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad b. Ishaq Ibrahim al-Nafzi al-Himyari al-Rundi (d. 792/1390). See also Nwiya's full study of him, *Ibn 'Abbad de Ronda* (Beirut: 1961). He was from Ronda 36º N 44´´ 5º W 10´´, in present day Spain. See "Runda" in *E1²* 8:615 (Manuela Marin).

> have mercy on him, who devoted a separate work to this question.

Ibn ‘Ajiba goes on to tell us that the views of Ibn Khaldun and Ibn ‘Abbad were summarized by Abu’l-‘Abbas Ahmad Ibn ‘Isa al-Barnusi al-Fasi, known as Ahmad al-Zarruq (d. 899/1493), in his *‘Uddat al-murid*.[6] Not only do we find mention of these matters in the latter, but also in Zarruq’s *Qawa‘id al-tasawwuf*.[7] However, these works provide only a terse summary of the dispute and none of these sources provide quotations – whether in full or in part – of the *responsa* that emerged as a result of the correspondence initiated by the Andalusian sufi brethren. For this we are indebted to Abu Ya’qub Ibn Muhammad al-Wanshirisi (d. 914/1408) and his voluminous compendium of Islamic legal rulings, *Kitab al-Mi‘yar*, which preserves the *responsa* of Abu‘1-‘Abbas al-Qabbab (d. 779/1377) and the sufi-scholar Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn ‘Abbad al-Rundi (d. 792/1390)[8] whose *fatwa* also appears as an epistle (no.16) in his letters of spiritual instruction, *al-Rasa’il al-Sughra*.[9] These sources tell us that the controversy became so protracted and unresolved that the scholars of Granada finally decided to appeal to erudite scholars in the Maghrib, and it was only then that Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 790/1388), himself an eminent Maliki jurist of Granada, addressed a letter (*istifta’)* to several learned men in Fez which was the capital of the Marinid dynasty at the time and a center of intellectual activity. Among these were the aforementioned Maliki jurist al-Qabbab, who had also been one of al-Shatibi’s teachers, and the renowned sufi, Ibn

[6] We have not been able to secure a copy of this work.

[7] Ahmad al-Zarruq, *Qawa‘id al-tasawwuf* (Cairo: 1976), 40. An excellent study of Zarruq and complete English translation is Zeinab S. Istarabadi, “The Principles of Sufism (Qawa’id al-Tasawwuf): An annotated translation with introduction,” Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1988.

[8] al-Wansharisi, *al-Mi‘yar al-mughrib wa al-jami‘ al-mu‘rib*, 12 vols. Ed. Muhammad Haji (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, n. d.). al-Qabbab’s ruling is in 11:117–123 and Ibn ‘Abbad’s ruling is in 12:293–307.

[9] Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn ‘Abbad al-Rundi (d. 792/1390), *al-Rasa’il al-Sughra*, Ed. Paul Nwiya, a. k. a. Bulus Nawiyya (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Kathulikiya, 1957), epsitle no.16, pp. 106–115 and appendix C, pp. 125–138. The latter has been translated into English by John Renard as *Ibn ‘Abbad of Ronda: Letters on the the Sufi Path*. Classics of Western Spiritualty (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).

'Abbad. The most detailed response was Ibn Khaldun's who produced a detailed study of the issue in his *Shifa' al-sa'il ila tahdhib al-masa'il.*

Sufism and the Question of the Spiritual Master

The various responses given to al-Shatibi all seem to favour the necessity of a spiritual master to some degree or another, including Ibn Khaldun's. We shall begin with al-Qabbab followed by Ibn 'Abbad and then turn to Ibn Khaldun in a separate section.

As noted above, al-Qabbab was one of al-Shatibi's teachers and a renowned Maliki jurist. He taught at Gibraltar and Fez.[10] It is important to bear in mind that he was not only a jurist but had also practiced Sufism. In his view, no art whether it be grammar (*nahw*), law (*shari'a*), or medicine (*tibb*), can be mastered on the basis of mere formal book based-study alone; this was all the more true in the case of Sufism, for not only is it a discipline in which just that, namely *discipline* and *practice* are paramount, but a science whose deep truths were often conveyed in the form of symbols, allusions and technical language that only those who were experts in such matters could impart in person. Thus, he took a firm position in favour of the necessity of spiritual guidance imparted by a living master over the sole reliance on books by such masters. He clarified his position by noting that knowledge is in the "hearts of men" (*sudur al-rijal*) and it is there that the ultimate keys to such knowledge were to be found. Even if such knowledge was put in writing, the keys would still be retained in the hearts of the experts. He also viewed the science or discipline of *tasawwuf* as having two dimensions: an esoteric one, dealing with knowledge of mystical states (*ahwal*) and stations (*maqamat*), and an ethical one, dealing with the spiritual remedies for the baser tendencies of the soul. Having knowledge of this second ethic is incumbent on all Muslims and is much easier to acquire through books if a master cannot be found, in contrast with the first dimension which can only be learned from a master. Books that deal with the esoteric dimension can also be very dangerous as

[10] al-Qabbab's views are summarized from al-Wansharisi, *al-Mi'yar*, 11:117–123.

they may lead the practitioner astray.

Ibn ‘Abbad’s letter to al-Shatibi is longer than the response of al-Qabbab and can be viewed almost as an independent essay on the need for a spiritual guide on the Sufi path.[11] He refused to become directly involved in the Granada dispute and confines himself to discussing the role of the spiritual master. Ibn ‘Abbad states that one could hardly deny the necessity of a spiritual guide in Sufism and proceeds to outline the various types of guides: the *shaykh al-ta‘lim* and the *shaykh al-tarbiya*. The first is the “Master or guide who educates.” Not all seekers on the path need a *shaykh al-ta‘lim*. It is only those who have a dull mind and a rebellious lower self that must have recourse to this type of master who acts in fashion akin to a physician that heals a chronically ill person. Such persons cannot treat themselves and must seek out a competent physician. Those who have a more expansive mind and sufficient control over their lower selves only need a *shaykh al-tarbiya* who assigns them specific spiritual practices exactly suited to each individual, although they may still be in need of *ta‘lim*, i.e. the sort of instruction imparted by the first kind of *shaykh*. Thus, the two types are not mutually exclusive although the functions and qualities of the *shaykh al-tarbiya* encompass those of the *shaykh al-ta‘lim*, but not the reverse. As for books there is no harm in consulting them provided they are by people of true knowledge (i.e. that they are consistent with the *shari‘a*), yet one can only truly know this through the teaching of a living guide. Thus, the reading of books, though they have value, does not mean that one can dispense with a spiritual master. Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Abbad very realistically noted the difficulty of finding a genuine *shaykh al-ta‘lim* in his day. Given this difficult state of affairs, Ibn ‘Abbad concluded that rather than rely on books or masters, the seekers should rely on Allah. There is no point in searching for the *shaykh* since he is a divine gift, a

[11] Ibn ‘Abbad’s views are summarized from al-Wansharisi, *al-Mi‘yar*, 12:293–307; Ibn ‘Abbad, *al-Rasa’il al-Sughra*, 106–115 and 125–138. The references to Ibn ‘Abbad in Ibn ‘Ajiba are highly condensed and are culled from Ahmad Zarruq’s *Uddat al-murid*, a work which I have not been able to locate. However, Zarruq also refers to the debate and the views of Ibn ‘Abbad, also in highly condensed form, in his *Qawa’id al-tasawwuf* (Cairo: no publisher given, 1976), 40.

manifestation of divine grace and will be encountered at the appropriate time if it is one's destiny. Even so, in the meantime, one cannot relinquish practice for the ultimate goal is neither books nor masters but knowledge of Allah (*'irfan*), and thus such a person must continue to practice while remaining true and sincere, continually relying on Allah to send him guidance in the person of a master.

Ibn Khaldun's position on the need for a spiritual master in *Shifa' al-Sa'il*

In *Shifa' al-sa'il*, Ibn Khaldun reaches very similar conclusions, but discusses the question in relation to his understanding of sufism's history. Sufism for Ibn Khaldun is a science (*'ilm*), but like any other phenomenon pertaining to human existence, *tasawwuf* is also liable to change (*tabddul*) in its external, relative and contingent aspects and in this sense is a historical phenomenon. Ibn Khaldun observed that sufism had a history, for it emerged at a particular time, grew and, in his opinion had declined somewhat in his time. Like any other aspect of culture (*zahira 'umraniyya*) sufism was born out of a need. Approximately the first three or four generations of Muslims led virtuous and pious lives in perfect accord with the *shari'a* and focused primarily on their inner spiritual deportment and deeds rather than on external ones only[12]. After this period of relative spiritual balance and equilibrium, differences and disagreements emerged among members of the Islamic community thus opening the door to deviations from the earlier period of virtuous adherence to the straight path. It thus became necessary for the jurists to standardize ritual observances (*'ibadat*) and to codify the laws pertaining to human relations (*mu'amalat*). This opened the way for many to forget the importance of the inner spirit and deeds. This diminishing focus upon actions stemming from the heart, along with the unfortunate infiltration of heretical beliefs and doctrines and their adoption by many Muslims, according to Ibn Khaldun, contributed to the emergence of *tasawwuf* around the year 200 H. Thus, in his opinion sufism emerged in the form of a distinct discipline as a kind of reaction to the growing entanglement and involvement of most of

[12] *Shifa'a al-sa'il*, 143.

Islamic society with externals and appearances and emphasis on the material side of life at the expense of the spiritual.

Ibn Khaldun sees the later tendency as an aspect of civilization (*hadara*) itself.[13] He elaborated his analysis of sufism as it bears on the question of the spiritual guide by outlining a three-fold scheme of historical cycles which account for the emergence, development and decline of sufism. At the outset, sufism was simply an interior understanding of religion (*fiqh al-batin*). This he identified with an inner combat (*mujahada*) in which the seekers stood in fear of Allah and calls it *mujahadat al-taqwa*.

In this first 'cycle' the individual seeker must—just as did the early Muslim community—seek to avoid all transgression of the *shari'a* and strive all-out for righteousness. This leads into the second cycle, *mujahadat al-istiqama,* the attainment in the constancy of righteousness, i.e. of being established in moral rectitude and virtuous behaviour. Some of those believers, according to Ibn Khaldun, who had achieved such constancy moved to a third and final cycle of struggle, *mujahadat al-kashf*, in which the the veil separating the sufi from his Lord is finally lifted. However, according to Ibn Khaldun, these sufis failed to sustain the tradition of careful approach toward truth as exemplified in the first two cycles. Due to this neglect, some later sufis pursued the third *mujahada* outside of the protective perimeter of the rigorous adherence to *shari'a* which was so strongly cultivated in the first two *mujahadas.* This led to a proliferation of speculations and abstractions which had no relation to spiritual truth because they were not the result of genuine spiritual practice and thus, many went astray.[14] In the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun singled out for censure this elaborately speculative sort of sufism, particularly the rigorously uncompromising monism associated with Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 638/1240)[15] and

[13] *Ibid*. 146–147.

[14] *Ibid.* 208.

[15] The best biography of Ibn al-'Arabi remains Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society), to which should be added the papers of Gerald Elmore, New Evidence on the Life of Ibn al-"Arabi," *JAOS* 117 (1997): 347-349; "New Evidence on the Conversion of Ibn al-'Arabi to Sufism," *Arabica* 45 (1998): 50-72; "Poised Expectancy: Ibn al-'Arabi's Roots in 'Sharq al-Andalus;'" *Studia Islamica* 90 (2000): 51-66; and "Shaykh 'Abd

'Abd al-Haqq Ibn Sab'in (d. 699?/1270?),[16] as well as the antinomian tendencies associated with ecstatic utterances (*shatahat*) related to figures such as al-Hallaj (executed in Baghdad, 310/922).[17]

How does his theory of combative cycles relate to the need for a spiritual guide? Here Ibn Khaldun invokes the hadith. He identifies these three cycles of *mujahada* with the three levels of *islam* (submission), *iman* (faith) and *ihsan* (excellence in worship) as mentioned in a very well known statement of the Prophet Muhammad.[18] In the combative cycle of *mujahadat al-taqwa*, which corresponds to the level of *islam*, a spiritual guide is not absolutely necessary and one may traverse this stage with the aid of books, although it is more difficult to do so without a *shaykh*. Thus, though not an absolute necessity, the significance of the s*haykh* is in no way diminished. In the second combative cycle of *mujahadat al-istiqama*, which corresponds to the level of *iman*, the seeker must actualize the virtues of the Qur'an in him or herself and thus rid the heart of its imperfections. This form of struggle—unlike the first one—is not an obligation on every person and here too the *shaykh* is not an absolute necessity as there are some who may traverse this stage by themselves through recourse to the relevant books dealing with the Qur'an and the *hadith* but it is once again better to have a *shaykh* and this is more so than in the first *mujahada*. In the third and final combat, *mujahadat al-kashf*, which corresponds to the level of *ihsan* and is also not incumbent on all Muslims, a *shaykh* is absolutely necessary. None can pass through this stage without the guidance of a spiritual master.[19] The response of Ibn Khaldun to the controversy

al-'Aziz al-Mahdawi, Ibn al-'Arabi's Mentor," *JAOS* 121 (2001): 593-613.

[16] His death date is uncertain and was either 668 or 669 H, corresponding to the period 1269-71 CE. On his life see *EI²* 3:921 (A. Faure) and Abu'l-Wafa' al-Taftazani, *Ibn Sab'in wa falsafatuhu al-sufiyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri al-Lubnani, 1973).

[17] *The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Trans. Franz Rosenthal. Bollingen Series XLIII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 2:187–88, 3:92. 101–2, 278.

[18] It is a very widely reported hadith. See for example Abu'l-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *al-Jami' al-Sahih*, 2 vols. (Vaduz, Lichtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 1:23–25, kitab al-Iman, bab 1–2, hadiths 102–107 [the first five hadiths from the beginning og kitab al-iman];

[19] *Shifa' al-sa'il*, 241-244.

which began in Granada is not terribly different from those of al-Qabbab and Ibn ‘Abbad. All of them indicate that the *shaykh* may not be entirely dispensed with and emphasize a sort of sober spirituality based on a practice of superogatory worship (*nawafil*). In the case of Ibn Khaldun this was described by his three cycles of *mujahada*. It is also true that none of the three scholars completely denounced books as a source of mystical knowledge either, although all of them consider books to be subordinate to personal instruction especially regarding ultimate truths, the cycle Ibn Khaldun called *mujahadat al-kashf*, which he saw as the most perilous in its potential for leading to deviation from the *shari’a*. Books purporting to deal with such ultimate truths were deemed particularly misguided and are the subject of his *fatwa*.

Ibn Khaldun’s censure of a certain species of Sufism in his *fatwa*

We have seen that for Ibn Khaldun it is not simply a question of yes or no to the need of a spiritual guide. Books have their place but the master is paramount especially in the final combative cycle of *mujahadat al-kashf*. However, apparently some masters and their books were both regarded with more than a little suspicion. At the very end of the critical edition of the *Shifa’ al-sa’il*, prepared by Ibn Tawit al-Tanji, we find, in the form of an appendix, *a fatwa* which has not received much attention. It is a very forceful text of the genre of what are known as “*fatwas* of condemnation” to which genre we have devoted a major study.[20] Ibn Khaldun calls for the physical destruction of books by Ibn al-’Arabi and other sufis associated with the mystical tendency personified by him which Ibn Khaldun deemed

[20] Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Fatwas of Condemnation: Islam and the Limits of Dissent* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2006). The first and second versions of this *fatwa* were first translated into English and studied in the latter work. Another translation of the first version of the *fatwa* appeared in an article by James Morris entitled “An Arab “Machiavelli”? : Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun’s Critique of “Sufism.’” Apparently the article was published in the *Proceedings of the Harvard Ibn Khaldun Conference* edited by Roy Mottahedeh. Unfortunatley, I have not seen this published version but have been compelled to rely on the version publically posted by the author on the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society webiste: www.ibanrabisociety.org. Knysh also discuses the *fatwa* in its third version in *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 191–92,

dangerous to the public good.[21] The text speaks for itself and is translated below.

> The sufi path consists of two methods: The first, which is the path of the [adherents to] the Prophetic Norm (*Sunna*) is the path of their forebears, that was in accord with the Qur'an and the Prophetic Norm (*Sunna*), and consists of adhering to the Pious Forbears (*al-salaf al-salih*) from among the Companions (*sahaba*), and the generation that immediately followed them (*tabi'un*). The second method—which is contaminated by innovations (*mashubatun bi'l-bida'*)—is a latter day tendency on the part of some to render the first path merely a means to lift the veil of sense perception (*kashf hijab al-hiss*), as that is one of its results.
>
> Among such sufis are Ibn 'Arabi,[22] Ibn Sab'in,[23] Ibn Barrajan,[24] and their followers who adopted their method and embraced their doctrine They have authored numerous works filled with clear expressions of unbelief (*mashubatu bi sarih'il-kufr*), conspicuous innovations

[21] *Shifa' al-sa'il,* 110–11 and footnote 2 of this paper.

[22] His *Fusus al-hikam* was critically edited by Abu'l-'Ala al-'Afifi (Cairo: 1365/1946), however the latter was not based on the most important MS, namely Evkaf Musesi 1933 which was dictated by Ibn al-'Arabi to his disciple Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi at Damscus in 630 H. We have prepared a critical edition of it based on this MS to be published by the German Oriental Institut, Beirut (OIB) in 2014. His most important work, *al-Futuhat al-makkiya,* was being edited by Osman Yahia until his death a few years ago. To my knowledge, fourteen volumes appeared under the auspices of the General Egyptian Book Organisation from 1972–1991. The 4 volume Bulaq edition of 1293/1876 is available in a number of pirated printings. The most relevant work on the reception of Ibn 'Arabi's though is Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi and the Later Islamic Tradition*. *The making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: Satte University of New York press, 1999) to which must be added Haji Muhammad Bukhari Lubis, *The Ocean of Unity: Wahdat al-Wujud in Persian, Turkish, and Malay Poetry* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa, 1994).

[23] Abu Muhammad Qutb al-Din 'Abd al-Haqq b. Ibrahim b. Nasr al-'Akki al-Mursi, known Ibn Sab'in (d. 669/1270).

[24] 'Abd al-Salam Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Lakhmi of Seville, known as Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141). On him see *EI²* 3:732 (A. Faure).

(*bida*') and interpretations that could not be more repulsive and remote from the apparent meaning of texts, so much so that one is at a loss to ascribe such works to Muslims or consider them to be works of *Shari'a*. The esteem in which these people are held by some is of no value-regardless of how eminent such an admirer might be, because the Qur'an and the Prophetic Norm (*Sunna*) are ever more eminent and authoritative than anyone.

As for the ruling regarding these books containing those misguided doctrines and their copies in circulation among the people (*wa ma yujadu min nusakhiha bi aydi'l-nasi*), such as the *Fusus*, and *al-Futhat al-makkiyya of* Ibn 'Arabi, the *Budd* of Ibn Sab'in,[25] and the *Khal' al-na'layn of* Ibn Qasi[26] These books and those like them are to be physically destroyed (*idhhab a'yaniha*), whenever copies are found by consigning them to the flames, or washing away the ink of their texts so that no trace of the writing remains visible. This is to safeguard the general welfare of the religion (*al-maslaha al-'amma fi'l-din*). It is incumbent on the ruler (*waliy'l-amr*) to burn these books in order to

[25] *Budd al-'arif*, Ed. Jurji Kattura (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus/Dar al-Kindi, 1978).

[26] Ahmad Ibn Qasi (d. 546/1151). On him see Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-'Ibar wa diwan al- mubtada' wa'l-khabar fi ayyam al-'arab wa'l-'ajam wa'l-barbar wa man 'asarahum min dhawi'l-sultani'l-akbar*, 7 vols, (Bulaq: Amiriya Press, 1284/1867), 6:485; 'Umar Rida Kahhala, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin* 15 vols. (Damacus: Matba'at al-Tarraqqi, 1957-61), 2:51; Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, al-A'lam, 8 vols., (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li'l- malayin, 1979), 2:58; Hajji Khalifa (Kâtib Çelebi), *Kashf al-zunun 'an asami al-kutub wa'l funun* 2 vols., Eds. Şerefettin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaasi,1941-3), 1:722; *EI²* 3:816-17 (A. Huici-Miranda); Carl Brockelmann *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Supplement, 3 vols., (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937-42), 1:776; his *Khal' al-na'layn* remains unpublished in a unique MS: Şehit Ali 1174. The latter seems to be the only complete MS of this work and also contains the commentary of Ibn al'Arabi. The Arabic text minus the commentary appeared in David Richmond Goodrich, "A 'Sufi' Revolt in Portugal: Ibn Qasi and his "Kitab Khal' al-na'layn" (Arabic Text)", Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, 1978. This researcher is preparing a critical edition *Khal' al-na'layn* of the latter with Adam Sabra based on additional manuscript sources.

> safeguard the general welfare. Moreover, whoever has them should offer them for burning.

The authors condemned above, Ibn al-'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Barrajan, and Ibn Qasi all evince similar concerns in their writings, namely the notion of the absolute unicity of *Allah* and the utter nothingness and illusory nature of all that is other than God. In addition, each one espoused a cosmology and Qur'anic theurgy based on the Divine Names. Indeed, Ibn al-'Arabi speaks highly of both Ibn Barrajan, and Ibn Qasi in his works. We will examine these dimensions further in our concluding reflections, but first we must present the other versions of this *fatwa*.

A Second Version of Ibn Khaldun's *fatwa* of condemnation

A second version of this *fatwa* exists. Although nearly identical, the text singles out additional figures and their works for censure. We have had to rely on Alexander Knysh's study of Ibn 'Arabi for the text of this *fatwa* and it is his translation that we cite below.[27]

> Among those Sufis (*mutasawwifa*) were Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Barrajan, and those who followed their creed. They composed many works which they circulated among themselves These works reek of downright unbelief and reprehensible innovation. [Any attempt to] explain their underlying meaning allegorically produces results that are as far-fetched as they are abhorrent. This makes the inquirer wonder whether these people can at all be treated as members of this [Muslim] community and counted among [the followers of] the *shari'a*… Now, as regards the books which contain these erroneous beliefs and are passed around by people, for example, the "Bezels" and the "Revelations" of Ibn 'Arabi, the "Removal of the Sandals" of Ibn Qasi, "The Eye of Certainty,"[28] and

[27] Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*, 191–92.

[28] Arabic: *'Ayn al-yaqin*. A work by Ibn Barrajan. We have not been able to locate this work. Either it is lost or remains in MSS.

> many poetic lines by Ibn al-Farid and al-'Afif al-Tilimsani, as well as the Ibn al-Farghani's commentary on the "Ta'iyya" of Ibn al-Farid. The judgment with respect to these and similar books is as follows: When found, they must be destroyed by fire or washed off by water until the traces of writing disappear completely. Such an action is beneficial to the religion [of Islam] because it leads to the eradication of erroneous beliefs.

As in the first version, here we also meet Ibn al-'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Barrajan, and Ibn Qasi, but the second paragraph includes 'Umar Ibn al-Farid (d. 632/1234), 'Afif al-Din al-Tilimsani (d. 690/1291), and Sa'id al-Din al-Farghani (d. 699/1300). Of these three figures al-Tilimsani was a disciple of Ibn al-'Arabi and wrote a commentary on his *Fusus al-hikam* (which remains in manuscript); in addition to being an accomplished sufi poet.[29] 'Umar Ibn al-Farid is considered by many to be the finest sufi poet in the Arabic language.[30] al-Farghani was a student of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (d. 672/1274) who was perhaps Ibn al-'Arabi's most eminent disciple. At al-Qunawi's behest, al-Farghani wrote an important commentary on Ibn al-Farid's most celebrated poem, which is known as the *Ta'iyyat al-suluk* or "Ode Rhyming in the Letter Ta' on the Spiritual Path." Ibn al-Farid's poetry was highly esteemed by the school of Ibn al-'Arabi. Thus, all three additional figures are closely linked with Ibn al-'Arabi and his school as well.

[29] An edition of his *diwan* was published by Yusuf Zaydan as *Diwan 'Afif al-Din al-Tilimsani* (Cairo: 1989). His commentary on the *Fusus* may well predate that of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi which is usually regarded as the first commentary by a disciple of Ibn al-'Arabi. Until all the known manuscripts of al-Tilmisani's commentary on the *Fusus* are located and studied it will not be possible to say. We know of 2 MSS in Turkey: Haci Mahmud Efendi 2654 and Şehit Ali Paşa 1248. Unfortunately, neither bears a dated colophon.

[30] See Muhammad Mustafa Hilmi, *Ibn al-Farid wa'l-hubb al-ilahi* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.). Hilmi mentions the same *fatwa*, citing his teacher, Abu'l-Wafa' al-Taftazani, *Ibn Sab'in wa faslsafatuhu al-sufiya* (Cairo: Dar al-Lubnani, 1973), 156 to illustrate the hostility toward Ibn Sab'in. See also Ibn al-Farid, *Diwan Ibn al-Farid*, 3rd revised edition, Ed. 'Abd al-Khaliq Mahmud (Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1428/2007).

A Third Version of Ibn Khaldun's *fatwa* of condemnation

We first came across this version in a work on the life of al-Farid. The author cites the *fatwa* to illustrate the controversy generated by his work even centuries after his death. He gives as his source *al-'Alam al-shamikh fi ithar al-haqq 'ala al-aba' wa'l-masha'ikh* of the 11th/18th century Zaydi scholar Salih Ibn Mahdi al-Muqbili.[31] The version quoted by al-Muqbili differs from the other two versions and also seems to be an incomplete quotation. The differences between it and the other versions are also of interest.

> … As for the ruling regarding these books containing those misguiding doctrines and the lofty rank acquired by them among the general populace, namely the *Fusus*, and *Futuhat* of Ibn 'Arabi, the *Budd* of Ibn Sab'in, *Khal' al-na'layn* of Ibn Qasi, *'Ayn al-yaqin* of Ibn Barrajan,[32] also worthy of mention is much of the poetry of Ibn al-Farid, 'Afif al-Tilimsani not to mention the commentary of al-Farghani on *The Ode Rhyming in Ta'* by Ibn al-Farid. The ruling regarding these books and those like them is that they should be physically destroyed wherever copies are found by consigning them to the flames or washing away the ink of their texts so that no trace of the writing remains visible in order to safeguard the general welfare of the religion (*al-maslaha al-'amma fi'l-din*). It is incumbent on whomever has them to offer them for burning, and if not then the ruler must confiscate them and punish him for opposing him in not allowing them to be burnt, since the ruler cannot be opposed in matters of general welfare (*al-maslaha al-'amma*). [33]

Here the two introductory paragraphs seem to have been omitted altogether. Clearly, al-Muqbili is only quoting the portion he

[31] al-Muqbili, *al-'Alam al-shamikh* (Cairo: 1328), 428.

[32] As noted above, a work by Ibn Barrajan. Which is either lost or remains in manuscript.

[33] al-Muqbili, *Ibid.*, 428.

is interested in. Nevertheless, all of the persons mentioned in the other two versions appear in this one. Recall that passages in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima* corroborate the negative attitude toward Ibn 'Arabi and these poets.[34] This leads me to believe that these three versions of the *fatwa* are not mutually exclusive and, taken together, give an indication of examples of the sort of sufism that Ibn Khaldun's considered to be deviant. We may conjecture that Ibn Khaldun included all of Ibn al-'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Barrajan, Ibn Qasi, Ibn al-Farid, 'Afif al-Tilimsani, and al-Farghani in the originl text of his *fatwa* of condemnation, and that the MSS relied on by Ibn Tawit al-Tanji in his critical edition are incomplete in this regard. Finally, al-Muqbili's version ends on a more severe note. In this redaction, those who possessed copies of the condemned works were to hand them over and if they did not, they were to be punished by the ruler for he was not to be opposed in matters of public welfare. In the first version, although Ibn Khaldun is quoted as saying that those that have the proscribed books should offer them for burning (*wa yata'ayyanu 'ala man 'indahu'l-tamkinu minha lil-ihraq*), one is at least left with the impression that this is somewhat voluntary; there is no explicit indication here of the ruler using coercive authority to confiscate the books for destruction. Conspicuously absent from both versions is the text of the *istifta'* – if indeed there was any – which would have been indispensable in reconstructing the immediate historical context of this *fatwa*. It does not appear that Ibn Khaldun's *fatwa* gave rise to any kind of official hunt for the works of Ibn al-'Arabi in his time, but it is certain that Ibn al-'Arabi continued to be controversial and remains so to this day.[35] We may now approach the matter of Ibn Khaldun's motivations for his strong condemnation of these Sufis and their works, as well as the most relevant

[34] *The Muqaddimah*, 2nd ed. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2:187–88, 3:92. 101–2, 278.

[35] The reactions to Ibn al-'Arabi have been examined in detail in the already cited study by Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*, passim. For a listing of *fatwas* both for and against Ibn al-'Arabi, see Osman Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'oevre d'ibn 'Arabi*, 2 vols. (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1964), 1:122–135. For a treatment of more recent reactions see Th. Emil Homerin, Ibn Arabi in the People's Assembly: Religion, Press, and Politics in Sadat's Egypt, *Middle East Journal* 40.3 (Summer 1986): 462–77.

dimensions of their doctrines in our concluding reflections.

Concluding Reflections

Ibn Khaldun is certainly no salafi of the Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328)[36] or al-Barabahari[37] variety. However, Ibn Khaldun *was opposed* to much of the Sufism of his day, and particularly the type inspired by Ibn al-'Arabi. All of the figures mentioned in his *fatwa* in its three versions, as well as in passages in the *Muqaddima* have some association with Ibn al-'Arabi whether directly or indirectly or with his school.[38] Ibn Sab'in — while not associated with Ibn al-'Arabi and his school — is regarded as having espoused a "radical monism" of the *wahdat al-wujud* (unicity of being) variety associated with the name of Ibn al-'Arabi.

'Afif al-Din al-Tilmisani was also a disciple of Ibn al-'Arabi and also authored a commentary on the *Fusus al-hikam* which remains in manuscript.

Sa'id al-Din al-Farghani was a student of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi who maybe regarded of as Ibn al-'Arabi's chief disciple. Farghani authored a commentary, one version in Persian and another in Arabic, at the behest of Sadr al-Din on the *Ta'iyya* of 'Umar Ibn al-Farid who although not a disciple of Ibn al-'Arabi, had his poetry highly esteemed by Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers.[39]

Ibn al-'Arabi speaks favourably of Ibn Qasi in his *Fusus*[40] and also wrote an entire commentary on his *Khal' al-na'layn* ("Doffing

[36] On him see Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[37] al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Khalaf al-Barbahari (d. 329/941). See *E1*[2] 1:1039 (H[enri]. Laoust) and *E1*[3] (ChristopherMelchert), www.brillonline.nl.

[38] See William C. Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi and his School" in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ed. *Islamc Spirituality. Manifestations* (New York, Crossroads Publications, 1991), 49–79.

[39] The Arabic commentary was published as *Muntaha al-madarik*, 2 vols. (Cairo: 1293) and subsequently in a critical edition by Wisam al-Khattawi also in two volumes of which we have only seen the first volume, *Muntaha al-madarik wa muntaha kulli kamil wa 'arif wa salik* (Qum: Matbu'at-i Dini, 1386 hijri solar).

[40] *Fusus al-hikam* MS Evkaf Musesi 1933 fol. 15v, line 12. This MS was dictated by Ibn al-'Arabi to his disciple Sadr al-Din Qunawi and contains a statement to that effect in his handwriting with his signature. See fol. 1r of the same.

of the Two Sandals"). In fact, it appears that the latter is transmitted solely by Ibn al-'Arabi.

Ibn Barrajan's prowess in the occult noetic theurgy of the Arabic letters (*'ilm al-huruf*)[41] is highly esteemed by Ibn al-'Arabi in his own treatment of the subject in the second chapter of the *Futuhat* where he mentions that Ibn Barrajan unambiguously predicted with mathematical accuracy the year of the victory of the Salah al-Din over the Crusaders occupying al-Quds on the basis of the opening verses of the Thirtieth Sura of the Quran (al-Rum (30): 1–4).[42] Ibn Barrajan made this prediction in 520 H. Salah al-Din attained victory in Rajab 583/1187. Ibn Barrajan died in 536 or 537 of the Hijra. Moreover, the figure most associated with recondite arcana of the Islamic occult sciences, namely Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad Ibn 'ali Ibn Yusuf al-Qurashi known as al-Buni[43] while not mentioned in any of

[41] On *'ilm al-huruf* see Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, "Glimpses of 'Ilm al-Huruf", unpublished manuscript.

[42] See Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Sa'in al-Din Turka Isfahani (1369-1342) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 2012, 284-306.

[43] The entry on al-Buni in the Supplement to *EI*^{2} 12:156 by A. Diterich is now obsolete, as are the following: Mohamed M. El-Gawhary, *Die Gottesnamen im magischen Gebrauch in den al-Buni zugeschriebenen Werken*. Bonn: 1968; Dorothee Anna Maria Pielow, *Die Quellen der Wiesheit: Die arabische magie im Spiegel des Usul al-Hikma von Aḥmad Ibn 'Ali al-Buni*. Band 8. Arabistische Texte und Studien Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995; Edgar Walter Francis IV, "Islamic Symbols and Sufi Rituals for Protection and Healing: Religion and Magic in the Writings of Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni (d. 622/1225)", Ph.D. diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2005; Jan Just Wikam, "Gazing at the Sun. Remarks on the Egyptian Magician al-Buni and his Work" in Arnoud Vrolik and Jan P. Hogendijk (Eds.), *O Ye Gentleman. Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in Honour of Remke Kruk*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007, p. 183–199; and Jaime Coullaut Cordero, "El-Kitāb Sams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra (al-yuz al-awwal) de Aḥmad b. 'Ali al-Buni: Sufismos y ciencias ocultas," Ph.D. diss., Universidad de Salamanca, 2009. I am grateful to Dr. Sajjad Rizvi, University of Exeter for giving me a copy of this work. There have been several new studies which now call for revision of these earlier attempts. These new studies on al-Buni are: John D. Martin III, "Theurgy in the Medieval Islamic World: Conceptions of Cosmology in al-Buni's Doctrine of the Divine Names," MA diss. American University in Cairo, Dec. 2011, Noah Gardiner, "Forbidden Knowledge? Notes on the Production, Transmission, and reception of the Major Works of Ahmad al-Buni," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies 12* (2012): 81–142; Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, "Navigating the 'Corpus Bunianum' I:

the versions of the *fatwa*, is singled out for censure together with Ibn al-'Arabi in the *Muqaddima*.[44] al-Buni is strongly associated with Ibn al-'Arabi not just in "spirit," so to speak, but through a common teacher as well. In a seminal paper on al-Buni just published by Noah Gardiner, we learn that al-Buni and Ibn al-'Arabi shared the same spiritual master in the person of Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Abi Bakr al-Qurashi al-Mahdawi (d. 621/1224).[45] Both Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Buni, not to mention Ibn Qasi as well as Ibn Barrajan, espoused both a doctrine of the theophany of the Divine Names as well as a theurgy of the Divine Names which enabled the adept to perform directly manipulate the underlying forces and principles of the cosmos. Clearly there are strong links and similarities between the figures singled out by Ibn Khaldun for censure. It would seem that the reason Ibn Khaldun so strongly opposed these figures was because of the allegiance of all of them to the doctrine of the unicity of being (*wahdat al-wujud*) with which Ibn al-'Arabi is strongly associated. This is indeed true, but in our view neither the sole nor decisive reason for Ibn Khaldun's condemnation: the decisive reason is Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine of the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*). To better understand the rationale behind Ibn Khaldun's condemnation we must discuss this doctrine in some detail.

The *locus classicus* of the doctrine of the Perfect Man in Ibn al-'Arabi is the opening paragraph of his *Fusus al-hikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom) and it is with a key passage from the *Fusus* that we shall begin.[46] Before doing so, I should like to note the lamentable fact of

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A Survey and Analysis of Key MSS ascribed to Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Buni (d. 622/1225)," unpublished, an earlier version of it was presented at the Eighth Annual Islamic Manuscripts Conference of the Islamic Manuscript Association, July 9-11, 2012 at Queens' College, University of Cambridge; Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, "Navigating the Corpus Bunianum II: An Inquiry into the Art and Science of Talismans in the Occult Technology of Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī (d. 622/1225?)," *The Occult Sciences in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture*, Beirut: Beiruter Texte und Studien, forthcoming 2014.

[44] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 2nd ed. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3:172.

[45] Gardiner, *Ibid*., 87.

[46] According to Masataka Takeshita, the Arabic term for the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) occurs seven times in the *Fusus*, see his "Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and its Place in the History of Islamic Thought," Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1986, 49.

this important work having never been properly critically edited until now despite the existence of a MS dictated by the master himself to one of his chief disciples, Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī.[47] None of the published editions prior to ours (which will appear soon) are to be trusted.[48] We have relied upon the aforementioned MS in all of our work. We will begin by quoting our translation of the opening paragraph in its entirety:[49]

> The Transcendent Wisdom of Divinity in the Matrix of Adam.
>
> Whereas the Absolute (may He be glorified), in respect of his Most Beautiful Names which are beyond number, wished to see their essences—or in other words to see Himself—in an all inclusive object encompassing the

[47] Evkaf Musesi 1933 currently in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, İstanbul. All references in this paper will be to Evkaf Musesi 1933. Other highly significant MSS have also been examined but will not be cited: Carullah 986, Carullah 1070, Kılıç Ali Paşa 618, Ragib Paşa 1453, Şehit Ali Paşa 1351, all in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İstanbul. For further details of the MSS of the *Fusus*, see Osman Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabi*, 2 vols. (Damscus: Institut Français de Damas, 1964), 1:240–241.

[48] The most well-known published editions are: Abu al-'Ala' al-'Afifi, *Fusus al-hikam* (Cairo: 1365/1946) *Sharḥ Fusus al-hikam min kalam al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi*, Ed. Maḥmud Maḥmud al-Ghurab (Damascus: self-published, 1405/1985), *Fusus al-hikam*, Ed. Nawaf al-Jarraḥ (Beirut: Dar Ṣadir, 1426/2005). Only al-Afifi's is a critical edition, but it is based on a very late MS of no real significance.

[49] Evkaf Musesi 1933, folio 2r, lines 11–20 to folio 2v, lines 1–3. In preparing our translation we have benefited greatly from *Ibn al-'Arabi. The Bezels of Wisdom*, Trans. and Introduction by R. W. J. Austin. Preface by Titus Burckhardt. The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 50. Austin's translation reads the best in English. It is also the only one in which the translator also consulted the MS Evkaf Musesi 1933 in addition to the published edition of al-ʿAfīfī. There are only two other English translations done directly from the Arabic: Aisha Bewley, *The Seals of Wisdom*. The latter is now out of print and I no longer have my personal copy. If I am not mistaken, it was first published in the mid-1980s after Austin's translation. It is now available online, for some reason minus not only the translation of Ibn al-'Arabī's preamble, but also minus the introduction by Abd al-Qadir al-Murabit which were both in the published version, at http://bewley.virtualave.net/fusus.html; and Caner K. Dagli, *The Ringstones Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. Great Books of the Islamic World. Series Editor: Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Chicago; Kazi Publications, 2004).

> Divine command in its totality, which qualified by existence would reveal to Him His own mystery—for the seeing of a thing, itself by itself, is not the same as its seeing itself in another, as it were in a mirror, for it appears to itself in a form that is invested by the location of the vision by that which would only appear to it given the existence of the location and its self-disclosure to it—the Absolute bestowed being upon the whole cosmos as an undifferentiated thing not having anything of the spirit in it. So, it was akin to an unpolished mirror. And it is in the nature of the Divine determination that He does not set out a locus (*mahall*) except to receive a divine spirit, which He describes as the breathing into him [Qur'an 21: 91]. The latter is nothing other than the coming into operation of the undifferentiated form's innate disposition to receive the inexhaustible overflowing of self-revelation which has always been and will ever be. There remains only the receptive and the receptive can only be from the Most Holy Superabundance (*al-Fayd al-Aqdas*), for the whole affair, in its entirety, is from Him (*minhu*), in the beginning and the end—and to Him returns the whole affair [Qur'an 2: 210]—just as it began with Him. {NB: An alternative reading: "for the whole affair, in its entirety, is from Him in its beginning and its end—and to Him returns the whole affair [Qur'an 2: 210]—just as it began with Him"}.

As noted earlier, the Arabic term for the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) occurs seven times in the *Fusus*.[50] Whilst the term itself does not occur in the paragraph quoted, the essence of the doctrine is expressed therein. Moreover, Ibn al-'Arabi authored his own brief commentary on the *Fusus*, known as the *Naqsh al-Fusus* (The Imprint of the Bezels). His remarks on the entire chapter are both brief and highly significant and thus also deserve to be quoted in

[50] Masataka Takeshita, "Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and its Place in the History of Islamic Thought", 49.

full.[51] After an analysis of these passages we shall consider the explicit occurrences of the term in the *Fusus*.

The Transcendent Wisdom of Divinity in the Matrix of Adam.

> Know that the Most Beautiful Divine Names entail by their very nature the existence of the cosmos, for Allah bestowed being on the cosmos as an undifferentiated body and made its spirit "Adam". By "Adam", I mean the very being of the realm of humanity. And he taught him [i.e. Adam, primordial man] the Names, all of Them. [Qur'an 2:31]. For truly the spirit is none other than that which governs the physical body by its faculties. Similarly, the Names are for the Perfect Man as faculties. Thus is it said concerning the cosmos that it is the mega-anthropos but only on condition of the existence of Man therein. Man, then, is the epitome of the Divine Presence and it is for this reason that he was singled out for "the Image" for thus did he [i.e. the Prophet Muhammad] say: "Verily, Allah created Adam in His own Image" and in another narration "in the Image of the Infinitely Compassionate (*al-Rahman*)". Allah made him [primordial Man] the sought-after goal [*telos*] of the cosmos, just as the rational soul is in the individual human being. Therefore, the cosmos is destroyed with his demise, and the entire [cosmic]

[51] The version in the Hyderabad edition of the miscellaneous treatises of Ibn al-'Arabi is quite useless: *Rasa'il Ibn 'Arabi* (Daiirat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmāniya in 1361/1948). The latter is based on Asafiyah 376 (dated 997/1589). We have prepared a critical edition of the latter based primarily on Carullah 2080 (dated 791 H, copied from an original in Ibn al-'Arabi's handwriting) which is to be published together with our edition of the *Fusus*. There are some significant differences between it and the text that William. C. Chittick printed in his critical edition of 'Abd al-Rahman Jami's (d. 898 H) *Naqd al-nusus*, a commentary on *Naqsh al-Fusus*, which was embedded in the MSS he used. We relied on the following additional MSS all in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İstanbul: Şehit Ali Paşa 1351 (dated 690 H), Bağdatlı Vehbi 2023 (dated 691 H), Şehit Ali Paşa 2717 (dated 977 H), and Nafiz Paşa 685 (dated 1096 H). For further details of the MSS of the *Naqsh al-Fusus*, see Osman Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabi*, 2 vols. (Damscus: Institut Français de Damas, 1964), 2:407.

> edifice will pass into the End (the Hereafter) because of him [i.e. by reason of the Perfect Man being transferred there]. Thus, he is the first in intention, yet the last in existentiation; the outwardly-manifest in form, yet the inwardly-hidden in rank; [but] a [mere] servant in relation to Allah, yet a lord in relation to the cosmos. It is for this reason that He made him a vicegerent (*khalifa*) and his offspring vicegerents (*khulafa'*). And therefore none of the creatures of the world has claimed lordship for themselves but Man due to the power he possesses and [in the same fashion] none of the creatures of world has mastered the station of [divine] servanthood (*'ubudiyya*) but Man. Thus, did he worship stones and [other] inanimate objects which are the lowest of existing things. Hence, there is nothing more exalted than Man in lordship; yet none more lowly than him in his servitude. If you have understood, then I have made clear to you what is intended by "Man", look then to his grandeur by virtue of the Most Beautiful Names and the fact that they seek him. From the fact of their seeking him is known his grandeur and from his manifestation by them, is known his lowliness. So understand! And thence it is revealed that he is a paradigm of the two images: the Absolute (*al-Haqq*) and the cosmos (*'alam*).

Careful consideration of the foregoing passages, as well as an understanding of the relevant portions of the Qura'n as well as the relevant hadiths to which Ibn al-'Arabi only gives the slightest of allusions, leads to a number of important conclusions. First, Ibn al-'Arabi is expounding a metaphysical cosmology in which the Perfect Man is identified with the Qur'anic Adam. The second chapter of the Qur'an (2:30–34), speaks of the creation of Adam. God informs the angels that He is to create and place upon the Earth a vicegerent (*khalifa*). The angels reply by saying that the new creature will make mischief upon the Earth and shed blood therein, whereas, in contrast, they constantly glorify God and sanctify His

Name. God responds by saying that He knows what they know not. He then proceeds to teach Adam—and we must not forget that Ibn al-'Arabi is reading "Adam" in the sense of primordial humanity—"the names, all of them" (*al-asma'a kullaha*, Qur'an 2:31). This is considered by Ibn al-'Arabi to mean the Divine Names which are beyond number. At this point God commands the angels to prostrate to Adam in acknowledgement of his superiority. This knowledge of the Divine Names is how he also construes the ḥadith, quoted in the *Naqsh al-Fusus* (the second passage above) which states that God created Adam in His Image.[52] It is against this backdrop that the *Fusus* opens. Ibn al-'Arabi indicates that Adam, who is, once again, a symbol for man *qua* man or if one prefers the human being *per se*, was created by God through an act of self contemplation "when"—(quotation marks to indicate the latter word must be construed non-temporally since time as we know it did not yet exist)—He wished to contemplate his own visage, so to speak, in another. The latter is likened by Ibn al-'Arabi to a mirror. Since man is the reflection of the Divine Names, he is created in His Image and is thus worthy of being his vicegerent. Another Qur'anic passage and image is evoked when he speaks of God breathing into man of his Spirit. This too is taken as symbolizing the Divine Names, which, through a sort of Divine "exhalation", animate not only Adam, but Adam himself by virtue of his existence in the cosmos as the vicegerent of God, in turn, animates the world. Thus, the Perfect Man is the very soul of the cosmos (*anima mundi*) and, through God, sustains it. The existence of the Perfect Man is entailed by the Divine Names, and it is through the existence of the Perfect Man in the world that it is sustained. The cosmos is incomplete without the Perfect Man whose existence is its ultimate teleological end, and the cosmos will cease to exist with the demise of the Perfect Man. Who

[52] See Muḥammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 256 H), *al-Jami' al-sahih*, 3 vols. (Vaduz, Lichtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), kitab al-isti'dhan, bab bad' al-salam, v. 3, p. 1268–1267, no. 6299, kitab ahadith al-anbiya', bab qawl Allah wa idh qal rabbuka li'l-mala'ika… , v. 2, p. 648, no. 3361; and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjaj al-Naysaburi (d. 261 H), *al-Jami' al-sahih*, 2 vols. (Vaduz, Lichtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), kitab al-janna wa sifat na'imihā wa ahliha, bab yadkhul al-janna aqwam af'idatuhum mithl af'idat al-tayr, v. 2, p. 1198–1199, no. 7342.

is this extraordinary being? If Adam signifies primordial humanity, man *qua* man, the human being *per se*, does that mean everyone is the Perfect Man? In order to answer this and other questions we must examine how Ibn al-ʻArabī has used the term elsewhere, in the *Fusus*. However, we will not burden the reader with further quotations.

The first occurrence of the term in the *Fusu*s is in the first chapter after Adam has been identified with the macrocosm as the "great man", mega-anthropos (*al-insan al-kabir*) as well as God's vicegerent. Here the Perfect Man is likened to the seal (*khatm*) which a king places on his treasury and thus, just as none dare opens his treasury as long as the seal remains and the treasury is protected thereby, so too is the existence of the Perfect Man the means by which the cosmos is preserved.[53]

The second occurrence refers to how the Perfect Man has been fashioned by the Divine Attributes of Majesty (*al-Jalal*) and Beauty (*al-Jamal*) which are symbolized as the "two hands" of God.[54]

Shortly thereafter we have the third occurrence of the term where we find the explicit declaration that none maybe the vicegerent of God but the Perfect Man. Here another ḥadith is alluded to in which God Himself declares that He becomes the very sight and hearing of the Perfect Man.[55]

The fourth use of the term unequivocally declares the Perfect Man to be at the apex of the hierarchy of engendered existence (*a'la al-mawjadat*).[56]

The fifth instance of the term is in the context of the heart of the gnostic (*qalb al-ʻarif*). Here it is stated, somewhat elliptically, that whilst the Perfect Man is the locus of manifestation of the Divine Names — which by their very nature entail his existence — to be more precise it is the heart of the Perfect Man which is the physical locus of these Names. The sixth and seventh occurrences of the term elaborate this idea further and indicate that the [heart of the] Perfect

[53] Evkaf Musesi 1933, fol. 3r, line 3.
[54] Evkaf Musesi 1933 fol. 5r, line 6.
[55] Evkaf Musesi 1933 fol. 5r, line 20.
[56] Evkaf Musesi 1933 fol. 14r, line 10.

Man epitomizes *all* of the Divine Names.[57] This is highly significant since Ibn al-'Arabi indicates in the opening words of the *Fusus* that the Divine Names, are beyond enumeration. Moreover, for this reason the entire cosmos is subjugated to the Perfect Man and subject to his command. That the whole universe has been subjugated to the will of the Perfect Man is also stated in Ibn al-'Arabi's *'Uqlat al-mustawfiz*.[58]

There is another dimension in the use of the term in the latter text as well as in the seventh occurrence in the Fuṣūṣ which allow us to answer the question posed earlier, namely who is the Perfect Man? These two citations contrast the "Perfect Man" with what Ibn al-'Arabi calls the "Animal Man". The latter signifies all those human beings who, despite being made in the image of God, fail to actualize this dei-formity which is only potential. Thus, the Divine Names were "blown" into the physical matrix of the Qur'anic Adam, as well as into all humans since Adam symbolizes all persons. The Divine Names then exist in a potential state in all people, but must be made actual. Therefore, it is not given to the ordinary man to reach the station of the Perfect Man. In the third occurrence of the term in the *Fusus*, Ibn al-'Arabi alludes to a hadith which he identifies with the path of sainthood that culminates in the station of the Perfect Man. The ḥadith is a well known one and implies that only those who wholeheartedly draw nigh to God through acts of supererogatory worship reach this station and God becomes their very hearing by which they hear and sight by which they see.[59] Thus, only the

[57] Evkaf Musesi 1933 fol. 66r, lines 14, 19.

[58] Cited in Masataka Takeshita, "Ibn 'Arabī's Theory of the Perfect Man and its Place in the History of Islamic Thought", 112. See also Şehit Ali Paşa 1341, fols. 151-165. This is an important manuscript of *'Uqlat al-amastawfiz* which bears a colophon dated 18 Rabi' al-Awwal, 625 H which means it was copied in the lifetime of Ibn al-'Arabi. However it is not in his handwriting. The scribe gives his name as Muzaffar Ibn Sayyid 'Ali al-Huwayni (or al-Juwayni as there are no dots here). It was copied in the city of Sivas in what is today central Turkey.

[59] Muḥammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 256 H), *al-Jami' al-sahih*, kitāb al-riqaq, bab al-tawadu', v. 3, p. 1319, no. 6581. Ibn al-'Arabi also quotes it in his own ḥadith collection. See his *Mishkat al-anwar* published with facing-page french translation as *La niche des lumières*, Ed. Michel Valsan (Paris: Les Editions l'Œuvre, 1983), 119–120, no. 91. On Ibn al-'Arabi and hadith see Ali Vasfi Kurt, *Endülüs'de Hadis ve İbn Arabi* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayinları, 1988?).

choicest saints (*awliya'*) are worthy of this station which is the culmination of sanctity (*wilaya*). Yet, there is a hierarchy of sanctity and of saints. At any given time there is only one supreme saint called by the sufis, Ibn al-ʿArabī included, the *qutb* or "axial saint" around which the firmament of sanctity revolves. All saints however, and the axial saint in particular, do not attain to sanctity directly since the Divine aid does not flow to them directly.[60] It reaches them only via the Prophet Muhammad. It is here that we encounter what is known as the Muhammadan Reality (*al-haqiqat al-Muhammadiya*) and also as the Light of Muhammad (a*l-nur al-Muhammadi*). It is held by Ibn al-'Arabi that the Prophet Muhammad was not a mere man like other men and that he existed prior to all other things as the first delimitation of Being after the ontological plane of the Divine Attributes. Ibn al-'Arabi devotes the final chapter of the *Fusus al-hikam* to the doctrine of the Light of Muhammad[61] as well as making mention of it in innumerable number of places in his massive *al-Futuḥāt al-makkiya* a work of some four thousand pages in the Cairo edition of 1293 H. The relationship between the doctrines of the Light of Muhammad and the Perfect Man is nicely summarized by M. Chodkiewicz:[62]

> These various expressions can strictly be applied only to the *haqiqa muhammadiyya*, for it alone possesses these attributes *ab initio* and in full measure. In another sense, however, they are adequate to designate the *qutb* and any beings who are able to assume his cosmic function. In any case, the terms *haqiqa muhammadiyya* and *insan kamil* are not purely synonymous, but express differing views of man, the first seeing him in terms of his

[60] This understanding expressed in this paragraph is heavily indebted to Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints. Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), *passim*. Regarding hadī]iths on the issue of the hierarchy of the saints see Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911 H), *al-Khabar al-dall 'ala wujud al-qutb wa'l-awtad wa'l-nujaba' wa'l-abdal wa yalih al-qawl al-jali fi ḥadith al-wali*, Ed. 'Abd al-Hadi Mansur (Dar al-Albab, 1426/2005).

[61] Evkaf Musesi 1933, folios 72r–78v.

[62] *Seal of the Saints. Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), p. 71.

> primordiality and the second in terms of his finality. The *kamal* or perfection of the *insan kamil* should not be understood in a 'moral' sense (so as to correspond with the 'heroic virtues'), but as meaning 'fulfillment' and 'completion'. Properly speaking, this perfection is possessed only by Muhammad, the ultimate and total manifestation of *haqiqa muhammadiyya*. Yet, on the other hand, it is equally the goal of all spiritual life and the very definition of *walaya*. Hence, the *walaya* of the *wali* can only be participation in the *walaya* of the Prophet.

Thus, the doctrine of the Perfect Man only finds its fullest manifestation in the Prophet Muhammad. All who attain to any degree of sanctity (*walaya*) no matter how great or small, do so only through participation in the sanctity of Muhammad. Muhammad's sanctity has always been because the existence of his luminous reality precedes all else. Indeed, it is through this very light that all the subordinate "Perfect Men" are sustained, and thereby the cosmos is sustained.

After this lengthy, but necessary examination of the doctrine of the Pefect Man in Ibn al-'Arabi, we are in a much better position to comprehend Ibn Khaldun's harsh condemnation of works like the *Fusus* which espoused this doctrine. Ibn Khaldun was opposed to Ibn al-'Arabi and those closely associated with him or his school because of the radical implications and potentialities of the doctrine of the Perfect Man for uniting spiritual authority and temporal power. Ibn Qasi made mahdist claims and led a rebellion against the ruling Almoravids (*al-Murabitun*) in the Algarve region of Andalusia (*gharb al-Andalus*) and created a short-lived polity. Ibn Barrajan played an equally important and prominent role in the rebellion and was acknowledged as *imam* in 130 villages. In addition to his prowess in *'ilm al-huruf* he authored an esoteric commentary on the Qur'an as well as a similar work devoted to the Divine Names, which is *the central concern* in the arcane theurgy of all of these Sufis. Ibn Khaldun was an expert in the history of Andalusia and the Maghrib and was well aware of this revolt and others like it, including the role

played by chiliastic claimants and doctrines in generating the necessary *'asabiyya* — as he called it — for the success of such millenarian political adventures.[63] Ibn al-'Arabi, especially in his work entitled *al-'Anqa al-mughrib* ("The Fabulous Gryphon") had himself made claims of being the seal of sanctity (*khatm al-wilaya*), as well as of playing a key role in an apocalyptic vision of the future heralded by the impending appearance of a world-redeemer.[64] Both the *Fusus* as well as the *Ta'iyya* were read as extended commentaries on the notion of the Perfect Man by the commentators on these works singled out for condemnation by Ibn Khaldun. *All of this leads one to the conclusion that these figures all shared notions of a kind of apotheosis of the saint much akin to the Twelver and Isma'ili doctrine of the Imamate.*[65] Ibn Khaldun not only rejected all such notions of spiritual authority, but even went so far as to dismiss all hadiths regarding the Mahdi as either being weak or forgeries, amounting to a rejection of the Mahdi doctrine itself.[66] Also in the *Muqaddima*, he explicitly identifies this sort of sufism with "shi'a extremists," but does not mention the doctrine of the Perfect Man.[67]

Ibn Khaldun's position on the debate which arose in Andalusia on the need for a shaykh as set out in detail in his *Shifa' al-sa'il* indicates he favoured a sober, ascetic sufism based on his three cycles of *mujahada*. His rejection of the "monistic" teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi and Ibn Sab'in in his *fatwa* and in key passages of the *Muqaddima*, also amount to repudiation of Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine of the Perfect Man as well. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's *fatwa* of condemnation must be seen as a rejection of all notions of individual, saintly

[63] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 2nd ed. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2:195–96.

[64] See Gerald T. Elmore's monumental study and translation of this work, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time. Ibn al-'Arabi's* Book of the Fabulous Gryphon (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), *passim*.

[65] On the doctrine of the imamate see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Shi'i Islam*, Trans. David Streight (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), *passim*; and his *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2011), 103–304.

[66] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 2nd ed. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2:156–200, esp. 157, 195, 196.

[67] *Ibid.* 3:92. See also Alexander Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in Later Islamic Tradition*, 192–97 and James Morris, "An Arab "Machiavelli"? : Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun's Critique of Sufism," 14–18.

apotheosis that he saw as resulting in the coinciding of spiritual authority and temporal power.

AL-BĪRŪNĪ, SULTAN MAḤMŪD AL-GHAZNAWĪ AND ISLAMIC UNIVERSALISM: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Shafiq Flynn[1]
Ibrahim M. Zein[2]

Abstract

By referring to certain politico-economic factors as a means to justify his work, this paper argues that al-Bīrūnī's framing of his Taḥqīq mā li al-Hind (AlBeruni's India) was a religious interpretation of the events surrounding Sultan Maḥmūd al-Ghaznawī's Somanāth campaign and does not bear in mind the broader canvas of Muslim-Hindu relations. This is argued by the fact that al-Bīrūnī's the only sustained reference to Sultan Maḥmūd is the Taḥqīq in reference to his decisions pertaining to the destruction, looting, and subsequent humiliation of the Somanāth liṅga. Al-Bīrūnī's claim of Maḥmūd's destruction of Hindu economic prosperity, his heavy handed treatment of Hindus, and the profound Hindu hatred of Muslims all seem to be consequences resulting from the events that transpired on the Somanāth campaign, as opposed to a more general appreciation of Muslim-Hindu relations. Moreover, the paper argues that al-Bīrūnī's interpretation of these events in this manner must be understood in reference to the intended purpose of the Taḥqīq, namely a treatise aimed at promoting meaningful and sophisticated Muslim-Hindu engagement based on a tacit acknowledgement and subtle propagation of Islam's universalistic assumptions. This interpretation of al-Bīrūnī explains why he chose to ignore the many existing platforms upon which Muslims and Hindus appeared to have developed working relationships. This paper brings to light various Muslim-Hindu relationships to ensure al-Bīrūnī is not misunderstood

[1] Ph.D. candidate, Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM).
[2] Professor of Islamic Studies, Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, IIUM.

and that his framing of Maḥmūd should not be generalised to all forms of Muslim-Hindu engagement. Rather, al-Bīrūnī was concerned with the meaningful advancement of Muslim-Hindu relations for which he chose to focus on representing Islam as a somewhat open religious and intellectual framework to appropriate various aspects of Hindu learning. It is in this manner that the universalism of Islam is emphasised

Key Words: al-Bīrūnī, Sultan Maḥmūd, Islamic universalism, Somanāth

Introduction

The idea of Islamic universalism in al-Bīrūnī's *Taḥqīq* is significantly embedded in evidences found in the introductory chapters of this major treatise. Although the methodology designed and adopted by al-Bīrūnī when approaching the study of Hindus and Hinduism is central to the theme of Islamic universalism, such a discussion is preceded by its historical settings. These settings pertain to the politico-economic settings of the budding Ghaznavid Empire under the leadership of Sultan Maḥmūd al-Ghaznawī (d. 1030 AD). A thorough investigation of these factors is required for an accurate reading of al-Bīrūnī's *Taḥqīq*.

By way of justification, al-Bīrūnī positioned his narrative against several key factors. He purposely identified the issue of Islamic governance as embodied in the leadership of Sultan Maḥmūd, the socio-economic devastation that threatened Hindu prosperity,[3] and the socio-religious dichotomy between Muslims and Hindus. From al-Bīrūnī's account of these platforms of Muslim-Hindu engagement, readers are left with an indeed dire environment in which Muslims and Hindus seem to live completely separate lives

[3] "Maḥmūd utterly ruined the prosperity of the country (Hind) and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards Muslims." [3] Sachau, Vol. 1, 25. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 12

and any and all interaction seems to favour the Muslims due to their political domination and military prowess.[4] The single glaring fault of the Hindus seems to be their attitude towards Muslims and all foreigners for that matter,[5] which is not conducive to dialogue or mutual understanding. What is curious however is that research on these factors reveals many instances of what appear to be cordial relations between Muslims and Hindus. Contrary to al-Bīrūnī's representation, so numerous are the evidences of these realities that claiming al-Bīrūnī's ignorance of such matters in untenable. An alternative explanation is therefore required, for which this paper endeavours to provide.

As a preliminary, one must first acknowledge that the highly technical nature of the *Taḥqīq* in addition to its thorough subjection to the standards of objectivity is good indication that the targeted readership of this work were learned Muslims. If this can be accepted, then the contrast of the Greek civilization with that of the Hindu civilization becomes relevant. Having been exposed to the contributions of the Hindu civilization to astronomy early in his life, al-Bīrūnī was aware that similar to Greece, India managed many attainments in the various sciences and therefore had much to contribute to human learning. However, as familiar as Muslims were with the Greek heritage, they were little conscious of Hindu learning. There was therefore a need to present Hindu learning to an audience of learned Muslims, if only to draw their attention to the fact that

[4] According to al-Bīrūnī, "All these events planted a deeply rooted hatred in their hearts." Sachau, Vol. 1, 21. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 11

[5] "…all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and the water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two elements." Sachau, Vol. 1, 20. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 10; In reference to the causes of hatred, al-Bīrūnī also mentions, "…there are other causes. The mentioning of which sounds like a satire—peculiarities of their national character, deeply rooted in them, but manifest to everybody. We can only say, folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs, They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited, and stolid." Sachau, Vol. 1, 22. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 11

there is much more to Hinduism than its palpable idolatry. However, unlike Muslim exposure to Greek learning, the Hindu intellectual legacy existed in a living civilization; one with which the Muslims were now at war with and in which they were beginning to call home. There was therefore a need to propose an approach to the study of Hinduism that would include ways in which they could be engaged practically and upon foundations conducive to a sincere and lasting cross-cultural relationship. Therefore, the religious foundations of Hindu sciences was emphasised not only by way of academic accuracy, but also for its practical value for promoting Muslim-Hindu exchange that would agree with both Muslim and Hindu religious sensitivities.[6]

Contrasting al-Bīrūnī's narrative against the broader landscape of political and human interactions between the Muslims and Hindus, the many presumptions of that period that have seemingly been accepted *a priori* by the majority, if not all, of the studies on al-Bīrūnī are addressed. From here, this paper seeks to demonstrate that although on the face of it, al-Bīrūnī appears to have supported what may perhaps be considered the canonisation of how Muslim-Hindu relations during the 10-11th century has come to be understood, namely the characteristic iconoclasm of Sultan Maḥmūd and his severe treatment of Hindus, the economic devastation associated with Maḥmūd's campaigns, and a profound antagonism between Muslims and Hindus, al-Bīrūnī's motives in making such claims were a reflection of consequences of a single event, namely the campaign of Somanāth and should not be interpreted as a description of the practical relations between Muslims and Hindus. Arguing this claim will consist of a collection of evidences that establish, beyond fear of contradiction, that the practical realities of the three aforementioned factors differed completely to al-Bīrūnī's account.

In short, this paper seeks to better understand al-Bīrūnī's framework by questioning the finality of his assertions concerning Maḥmūd's governance of Hindus, the devastation of Hindu economic

[6] For a contrast between Greek and Hindu learning, see. Franz Rosenthal, 'Al-Bīrūnī between Greece and India.' in *Science and Medicine in Islam*. (U.K.: Variorum, 1991).

prosperity, and the social schism between Muslims and Hindus. From this endeavour, it is hoped that the political, economic, and social contexts can be better appreciated and more accurately understood. More importantly, a new understanding of the *Tahqīq* is offered that would place the *Tahqīq* in its correct perspective while making sense of what many have misunderstood as the al-Bīrūnī's disparate narrative of Hindus and Hinduism.

Sachau's Overstatement of Maḥmūd

There is little doubting the lasting contributions of the most scholarly Professor. Edward Sachau to the study of al-Bīrūnī. Without his pioneering work, one may question whether or not al-Bīrūnī would be known to the world in the way he is known today. However, despite his prominence in the study of al-Bīrūnī, his introduction to the translation of the *Taḥqīq*, although very insightful, seems very much focused on contrasting Maḥmūd as the complete opposite of al-Bīrūnī. Where al-Bīrūnī was open and objective, Maḥmūd was bigoted and oppressive. Doubtless al-Bīrūnī differed from Maḥmūd in many aspects, the attention given to Maḥmūd in Sachau's introduction is rather disproportionate and distracts from the more important issue of al-Bīrūnī's purpose of the *Taḥqīq* and his intended readership. Sachau's references to Maḥmūd clearly emphasised the issue of Muslim antagonism of Hindus and that al-Bīrūnī was the exception. This can be seen in statements such as, "If the author and his countrymen had suffered and were still suffering from the oppression of King Maḥmūd, the Hindus were in the same position…To Maḥmūd, the Hindus were infidels, to be dispatched to hell as soon as they refused to be plundered."[7] "…trodden down by the savage hordes of King Maḥmūd…"[8] "The author has nothing in common the Muhamadan Ghazi who wanted to convert the Hindus or to kill them."[9] There is little balance in Sachau's estimation of Maḥmūd. Admittedly, the little reference al-Bīrūnī made to him was not very positive, it was not this dire, indication that much of this was the interpretation of Sachau. What concerns us here is that Sachau

[7] Sachau, Vol. 1, xvii.
[8] Ibid, Vol. 1, xix.
[9] Ibid. Vol. 1, xxiii.

did not sufficiently focus on the religious and scholastic dimensions of al-Bīrūnī's narrative. The axiological significance of the narrative for example is almost entirely ignored. One would have expected that a comparison with the Muslim engagement with the Hellenic tradition would have been a more fitting component to introduce the *Tahqīq* in its correct perspective rather than a preoccupation with Maḥmūd as a Muslim conqueror.

The Religious Dimension as Embodied in Maḥmūd's treatment of Somanāth

The location of Somanāth was earlier referred to as Prabhasa Pattana, a well-known *tirtha* or place of pilgrimage in Saurashtra. According to al-Bīrūnī, the origins of the Somanāth temple can be found in an ancient Hindu legend in which Prajâpati, the father of the lunar stations, curses Soma, a deity associated with the moon, who was married to Prajâpati's daughters, for causing disorder in the lunar stations by preferring Rohiṇî over her sisters. The curse caused Soma's face to become leprous. Soma became penitent and in order that its shame is covered for half of every month, Prajâpati requested that a temple be erected as an object of the worship of the moon. Al-Bīrūnī says,

> ...Thereupon the moon spoke to Prajâpati: "But how shall the trace of the sin of the past be wiped off from me?" Prajâpati answered: "By erecting the shape of the liṅga of Mahâdeva as an object of thy worship." This he did. The liṅga he raised was the stone of Somanâth, for soma means the moon and nâtha means master, so that the whole word means master of the moon.[10]

Al-Bīrūnī further explains that,

> "...the liṅga of Somanâth was originally erected on the coast, a little less than three miles west of the mouth of the river Sarustî, east of the golden fortress Bârôi...Each time when the moon rises and sets, the water of the ocean rises in

[10] Sachau, *India*. Vol. 2, 102-103. Al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 390.

> the flood so as to cover the place in question. When, then, the moon reaches the meridian of noon and midnight, the water recedes in the ebb, and the place becomes visible. Thus the moon was perpetually occupied in serving the idol and bathing it. Therefore the place was sacred to the moon."[11]

As regards to the practical religious devotion the Somanāth Temple received and its eminence in the religious conscience of Hindus, al-Bīrūnī says,

> In the south-west of the Sindh country this idol is frequently met with in the houses destined for the worship of the Hindus, but Somanâth was the most famous of these places. Every day they brought there a jug of Ganges water and a basket of flowers from Kashmir. They believed that the liṅga of Somanâth would cure persons of every inveterate illness and heal every desperate and incurable disease.[12]

This passage, along with the passage that provides a detailed description for the construction of the liṅga that precedes it, indicate the religious importance awarded to the temple of Somanāth from the perspective of Hindu legends and religious texts and from the practices and attitudes of the Hindus during al-Bīrūnī's era. Doubtless, it formed a place of pilgrimage and as such would have formed a meeting point for many groups from various regions. Moreover, the spirit of pilgrimage dulls the edge of social differentiations and sectarian demarcations to effect a community united by common religious purpose who would relate to each other as equals irrespective of their sectarian or caste identities. Such a centre must have attracted a number of religious adherents from near and far. Based on this, it is hard to perceive the destruction and subsequent humiliation of the temple by Sultan Maḥmūd as being other than an act of iconoclasm aroused by religious fervour. Al-Bīrūnī advocated that it was a humiliating act, however, he was

[11] Sachau, *India*. Vol. 2, 105. Al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 391
[12] Sachau, *India*. Vol. 2, 104. Al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 390

careful not to attribute the act to any single motive and opted to remain silent on the issue. He neither argued for or against the destruction of the temple, but one can't help but feel that al-Bīrūnī believed it to have left a bad taste in the mouths of the Hindus irrespective of the motive. Al-Bīrūnī's attitude neatly suits the postulated argument that his treatise on the Hindus was predominantly aimed towards an exposition on Islamic universalism as the event is much more nuanced than al-Bīrūnī's description of events.

In 1026, the Ghaznavids raided Western India which resulted in a general exodus of Hindu religious symbols. Of this al-Bīrūnī says,

> The image was destroyed by the Prince Maḥmūd-may God be merciful to him!—A.H. 416. He ordered the upper part to be broken and the remainder to be transported to his residence, Ghaznin, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels, and embroidered garments. Part of it has been thrown into the hippodrome of the town, together with the *Cakrasvâmin*, an idol of bronze, that had been brought from Tâneshar. Another part of the idol from Somanâth lies before the door of the mosque of Ghaznin, on which people rub their feet to clean from the dirt and wet.[13]

To debase and humiliate an enemy's sign of prosperity and religious symbols can hardly be considered out of the norm during that period. Governing Muslim authorities treated in an equal fashion Muslims they considered as heretics or threats to their rule. However, for the liṅga to have been placed on display in Ghaznah's hippodrome in front of all Muslims and for its doors to have been made a floor mat for the grand masjid of Ghaznah, the liṅga of Somanāth must have had some added significance that distinguished it from other liṅgas dedicated to the worship of Mahādeva that were ignored by Maḥmūd. Perhaps the reason for such exclusive treatment can be found in al-Bīrūnī's statement; "The reason why in particular Somanâth has become so famous is that it was a harbour for seafaring

[13] Sachau, *India*. Vol. 2, 104. Al-Bīrūnī*, Tahqīq.* 390

people, and a station for those who went to and fro between Sufâla in the country of Zanj and China."[14] Being an active port, its fame was probably carried to distant ports through sailors who worshiped the liṅga of Somanāth. By destroying this temple not only is Maḥmūd replacing Somanāth's fame with his own, he is also curtailing the potential religious threat of Hindu beliefs spreading to ports between China and Africa. Based on evidence suggested by Farrukhī Sistāni, who claims that he accompanied Maḥmūd to Somanāth, Nāẓim further adds that the devotees of this idol, in their attempt to rationalise why other idols had been destroyed and their religion humiliated, boasted that the only reason for this was due to Somanāth's displeasure with them. The aim of this boast was to lift the spirits of Hindus who had fallen of late to a confound state of melancholy which led to a significant increase in the numbers of pilgrims to Somanāth especially at the time of the lunar eclipse.[15] This further convinced Maḥmūd of the need to strike a decisive blow to the Hindu conscience in regards to the worship of idols while at the same time establishing Muslim authority (perhaps Maḥmūds authority) in the region. Through an exhibition of his military prowess, Sultan Maḥmūd effectively reminded the Rajput kingdoms that had signed treaties with the Ghaznavids of the consequences of reneging on their agreements.

The raid on Somanāth by Maḥmūd is a fact but what is of greater interest is the question of how this event has been interpreted. In one way or another, such interpretations contribute towards defining Muslim-Hindu relations, which, it seems, often served some political purpose. Why for example has Maḥmūd continually been pictured as a warmonger; inadvertently suggesting that Islam is brutal and Islamic governance uncompromising? Interpretations of Maḥmūd's expeditions into India and his governance of Hindus are wrapped up in the histories of communities and their identities which lend themselves to descriptive narratives that reflect a variety of interests. Some of these are sober descriptions while others are exaggerated and at times fabricated narratives. It would appear that al-Bīrūnī himself was not immune from depicting Maḥmūd's

[14] Sachau, *India*. Vol. 2, 104. Al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 390
[15] Nāẓim, *The Life and Times.* 210-211

governance with a particular interest in mind, namely to neatly frame his discussion on Islamic universalism. The accounts of Maḥmūd's reign appear to suffer from inconsistencies particularly in regards to his management of the Hindus. One expects some consistency in the various accounts of what happened so that fantasy can be sifted from fact, but the variations are quite striking.

Perhaps a good place to begin in elucidating the many voices of Muslim-Hindu relations as embodied by Maḥmūd is al-Utbi's account of Maḥmūd's activities in the *Tarikh-i-Yamini,* written in 1031. As the official chronicler of Maḥmūd's life, al-Utbi was clearly preoccupied with the narrative more than the actual facts. His literary style is poetic with a noticeable tendency to render all Maḥmūd's activities as epic. From al-Utbi's account of Muslim-Hindu relations, Hindus were seen as infidels and Maḥmūd the poster child of Islam with the specific honour and responsibility to personally oversee the eradication of idol worship and the establishment of Islam. There is a clear lack of detail in al-Utbi's narrative and the ornate and often verbose style of the author leads one to imagine that this narrative was designed to elevate and advance Maḥmūd in the eyes of Muslims, more specifically the eyes of the Caliph in Baghdad. The following passage sums up Muslim-Hindu relations according to al-Utbi,

> "He (Maḥmūd) therefore commanded the army to fly forth into the provinces of Hindustan, and took possession of those territories. And with regard to all the soldiers of India in the hills and castles of those frontiers who stirred up violence, and wickedness, and perverseness, he made them all the food of swords and the subjects of justice; and he claimed the imputation of merit for filthy ungodliness, and thus with glorious victories, and illustrious conduct, he arrived at his capital, making the rosy cheek of Islam brilliant with the rosy blush of victory, and the broke the back of the innovators and idolaters with the sword of vengeance."[16]

[16]Abū al-Nasr 'Abd al-Jabbār al-'Utbī , *Kitab –i-Yamini Historical Memoirs of The*

A similar account of Muslim-Hindu relations is presented in the poetry of Farrukhi Sistani who was a major poet of the eastern Islamic world and was attached at the court of Ghaznah, which was fast becoming the focus of an extensive empire. He excelled in the literary form known as the qasidah (lyrical eulogies) and even if given to exaggeration, was regarded as among the finest poetry on Persian at that time. Many of his qasidahs or eulogies are on his patron, Maḥmūd. Farrukhi claims that he accompanied Maḥmūd on his campaign to Somanāth and provides an itinerary but there is no blow-by-blow eyewitness account as might be expected. Of Maḥmūd, he writes, "*You have emptied the lands of India of fighting men and horrendous elephants.*"[17] The flattery of the poet helped in building an image of Maḥmūd as a person of considerable accomplishment.

Another contemporary authority is Gardīzi. His writing is more prosaic but he does collate some information on Indian society and caste which suggests that there was a fair degree of interest in the people who lived in northern India.[18] Gardīzi was drawing on earlier writers, some of whom had visited India in search of information on medicinal plants and on various religious beliefs and practices. Indian scholars resident at the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd in Baghdad in earlier times, had discussed Indian mathematics, astronomy and medicine with their Arab counterparts and doubtless the curiosity on both sides still continued.

Amir Sabaktagin, and the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, Early Conquerors of Hindustan, and the Founders of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. Translated from Persian by Rev. James Reynolds. Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland: London. p. 284

Please note that this translation by Rev. James Reynolds of al-Jurbādhqānī's Persian translation into English has been met with some criticism. Nāẓim says of his translation, "The translation of Jurbādhqānī into English by Rev. James Reynolds is hopelessly incorrect." Nāẓīm, M. (1971). The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna. Munshiram Mahoharlal: New Delhi. p. 5.

[17] Scot-Meisami, 'Ghaznavid Panegyrics: Some Political Implications'. *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*. (London: British Institute of Persian Studies, 1990), Vol. 28. 31-40

[18] V. Minorsky. 'Gardizi on India' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African* Studies (London :School of Oriental and African Studies, 1948), Vol. 12, 625-640

Maḥmūd's Indian expeditions were successful and he carried back with him to Ghaznah enormous amounts of loot. He destroyed a good number of idols among them the venerable lingham located at Somanāth, which the Hindus had asserted was their chief idol capable of reinstating Hindu pride after the mass desecration of their temples and religious symbols by Maḥmūd's armies. On his return journey from Somanāth, Maḥmūd took a route through the difficult environment of Kaccha and Sind, explained by some as due to his fleeting from the Chaulukya king who decided to pursue him, but Maḥmūd escaped. Maḥmūd must have felt that his mission was accomplished and thus his return was merited. That this took place after the conquest of Somanāth is somewhat curious. It suggests that something was achieved at Somanāth but we are left to wonder as to what that might be. Was Maḥmūd's disapproval of Hindu idol-worship appeased by the destruction of their chief idol, or was it the lure of wealth and booty, or possibly even the wish to intervene in the Arab supply of horses to western India which might have threatened the trade in horses going through Ghaznah, or did he intend the acquisition of special elephants for his army, [19] or was it a combination of all these features? In view of these considerations, there are certainly reasons other than iconoclasm that prompted Maḥmūd to wage campaigns against the Hindus and annex resource rich Indian territories. One may ask at this juncture if al-Bīrūnī's failure to mention such motives results from his belief that such were trivial and that Maḥmūd's underlying attitude, which presumably represented the official attitude of the empire, needed to be rectified.

Returning from the Somanāth campaign via Sind, Maḥmūd faced an Isma'ili centre at Mansura. Attacking him caused much destruction all around.[20] Implicit in the narratives of these attacks on non-Sunni Muslims is a hint of the fear of the heretic. Such a fear was perhaps based on there having been many movements regarded as heresies against orthodox Islam in the previous two centuries some of which were politically hostile to the Caliph.[21] Earlier, Maḥmūd

[19] Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids*. 116

[20] Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1, 184-189, 217-218

[21] Arnold Hottinger. *The Arabs:Their History, Culture and Place in the Modern World*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 86

had attacked Multan, ruled by an Isma'ili ruler, a sect which was anathema to the Sunni Maḥmūd. He had then discontinued the use of the Isma'ili mosque but did not destroy it, and the Sunni mosque was put into use. This gave Maḥmūd the excuse to attack Multan again and put the Isma'ili Muslims to death. Multan was a rich city and the attack resulted in more plunder for Maḥmūd. The Isma'ilis, whose major concern was trade, were however able to rehabilitate themselves through their trading contacts.[22] Again, this is said to be a victory for Sunni Islam, but it also brought considerable wealth and would have affected the Arab trade in Sind for a while. His letters to the Caliph suggest a person who combines flattery with an aggressive self-righteousness, claiming that he has set forth exactly what God gave him the power to do in bringing victory to the Caliphate. Not only did Maḥmūd attack the Hindus, well-known idol-worshippers, but was also able to carry out the command of the Prophet regarding the destruction of idols and, further, was exterminating Muslim heretics. This was not intended to equalize the killing of Hindus with Muslims, but to claim a double championship. Maḥmūd himself, while communicating his victories to the Caliphate, exaggerated the size, wealth and religious importance of the Somanāth temple and implied that his action had considerable political and religious significance. Not surprisingly, he became the recipient of grandiose titles from the Caliph.[23] This established his legitimacy in the Islamic world and perhaps explains why, although other idols were broken by him and temples plundered, the event at Somanāth carries a special importance and is more frequently quoted.

By considering the sectarian differences among Muslims and Muslim rule in the regions of Central Asia and India, Maḥmūd's vehement support of Sunni Islam appears to have been partly

[22] Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1, 218

[23] Ibn Jawzī, Abī al-Farj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAlī bin Muḥammad. D. 597. *Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa al-Umam.* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʾIlmiyyah, 1992), 84, 125, 133, 159, 246; Nāẓim, *The Life and Times.*
165; Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids*. 53; Mohammad Habib. Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin. (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1967), 2; Clifford E. Bosworth 'Mahmud of Ghazna in Contemporary Eyes and in Later Persian literature' *Iran*: *Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies.* (London: British Institute of Persian Studies, 1966), Vol. 4, 85-92

religious but clearly political as well. The fierce competition between the Sunni caliphate seated in Baghdad and the Fatimid caliphates in Cairo, especially in the frontier regions of Islam, further explain the rhetoric of conquest and Maḥmūd's staunch support for Sunni Islam. The rivalry between Baghdad and Cairo over the legitimacy of the Caliphate impinged on the politics of eastern Islam. Maḥmūd along with his chroniclers would have no doubt played up this rhetoric for the purpose of earning the pleasure of the Caliph in Baghdad as a means to legitimize his position as the Sultan, who physically usurped his brother's throne, and to consolidate his authority in the eyes of his subjects and neighbouring kingdoms.[24] Although politically weakened, the Caliph in Baghdad remained a religious symbol among Muslims with the sole authority to award titles to those vying for power. Maḥmūd engineered a calculated outward obedience to the Caliph who in turn awarded him with grandiose titles. This underlined his claims to legitimacy in ruling the empire of eastern Islam, more especially among the Turks who were impressed by the titles. Moreover, the *ghulam* (slave) origins of his family would have made such legitimacy politically useful to his ambitions.

Perhaps this may partially explain why al-Bīrūnī chose to present Maḥmūd in the manner that he did, namely because in so far as written materials are concerned, there appears a general attitude to glorify the military prowess of Muslims and to depict them as being in a holy war with the infidel. What is certain however of al-Bīrūnī's *Tahqīq*, is that it is far from political and targeted a more reasonable audience.

It is apparent from these accounts of Maḥmūd's interaction and governance of Hindus that Muslim-Hindu relations must be understood through the purview of the chroniclers who described the events and the motives that coloured their narratives. The narrative of conquest predominant in contemporary narratives are closely entwined in the political currents that permeated those events and conveniently couch their terms in religious rhetoric as if to give the impression that the expansion of *Dār al-Islām*, the establishment of Islamic rule, and the destruction of idols and idol worship were the only objectives for their exploits in India. The greater canvas of civil

[24] Nāẓim, *The Life and Times.*164

interactions of a mutually beneficial nature is often overlooked and seldom packaged in convenient interpretations of a single historian or chronicler. By acknowledging that Maḥmūd did not singularly act in the name of religion and was influenced by political expediency and the practical needs of growing an empire, al-Bīrūnī's alignment of the deeper beliefs of Brahman Hinduism with the theological monotheism and ethical erudition of Islam should not be overshadowed by the prominent one-dimensional historical narrative that Maḥmūd was an iconoclastic and bigoted Muslim who represented a barbaric and aggressive religion.

Al-Bīrūnī's comparatively different approach to Hindus and Hinduism and his proposal that they share similar views to tawhīd was the voice of reason and religious conscience. Unlike his predecessors and many of his contemporaries, al-Bīrūnī's *Tahqīq* was neither political or partisan.

It is interesting to note that historians who have attempted to reconstruct early Muslim rule in India have predominantly focused on the narrative of conquest and relations reflecting mutual benefit between Muslims and Hindus, including the early Arab presence in North West India have been largely ignored. Curiously, the Arabs received little attention. Perhaps this is because this event was transitory and did not amount to a political presence. The seemingly cordial relations struck by the Muslim Arab settlers and Hindu society does provide an example of how non-politicized relations can represent the more accepting nature of Islamic beliefs and Muslim sensibilities.

In order to repress heresies of all types, some Sunni Muslim rulers believed that they had to demonstrate their willingness and ability to destroy the symbols of heretics and non-believers, and to repeat their accounts, however exaggerated, of destroying these symbols, in order to continually legitimize their rule. The specifics of what was destroyed become unimportant, since the claim is to destruction. Through these narratives, Somanāth comes to be imbued with symbolic significance for Sunni Islam: a significance that is affirmed in an inverse form, as it were, in later times in colonial and communal histories.

The repeated claim to destroying the temple reads like an exaggerated attempt on the part of the chroniclers to proclaim the greatness of their patrons and to prop up their self-importance. It would seem that after the first raid, the claim ceases to be history and becomes rhetoric. By now, the destruction of the temple had in itself become part of the rhetoric of conquest, and it did not matter too much whether it was actually raided every half-century. Yet, it continues to function as a temple. The elevation in importance of the Somanāth temple in Turko-Persian accounts subsequent to Maḥmūd's raid was a way of giving added importance to the raid. Was Somanāth being elevated as the Hindu equivalent of Mecca or of Baghdad and Maḥmūd's raid symbolic of the conquest of India?[25]

Maḥmūd's attack on Hindu temples and on Shī'a and Ismāʿīlī mosques was, at one level, an attack against both the infidel and the heretic. The community of the victors was not a hegemonic or monolithic one but was segmented by the broader religious/political identity which consisted of Muslims of various sectarian persuasions and Hindus who were gradually integrating with and shaping the new political identity.

The narratives from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries shift in their assessment of Maḥmūd. From eulogizing iconoclasm as well as the bashing of infidels and heretics and fantasizing about the wealth of India, they begin to have a greater concern with projecting the ideal Muslim ruler. This concern became problematic when rulership involved governing a largely non-Islamic society and where even large Muslim communities were not followers of orthodox Islam.

It appears that for many chroniclers, the coming of Islam in India was depicted as the success of the warrior, however for the most part the authors of the narratives were poets and court chroniclers. Fantasy would be almost a requirement in the case of the former. The latter would write to please and legitimize the reigning Sultan, often within the context of a distinct perspective. There would have been attempts to revise versions of earlier histories and write narratives reflecting contemporary demands. Even in their courtly

[25] Richard. H. Davis. *The Lives of Indian Images.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 94

segregation from the rest of the society, there were aware that the religion of their patron was not necessarily that of the larger population. In the court circles of the Sultan's, the identities of Sunnis and Shi'as would have been important but perhaps not so outside those circles. The narratives of Maḥmūd were therefore bound to carry variations, depending on how the role of Islam among the elite was being perceived.

By way of example, several anecdotes in the *Siyāsat-nāma* of Niẓām al-Mulk portray Maḥmūd as the ideal Muslim hero and champion of Sunni Islam. This conception of the sultan is in line with the policies of the great vizier who was concerned with the establishment of Sunni Islam as both a political authority and religious interpretation against the radical views of Shīʿism in general, and Ismāʿīlism in particular, that posed a constant threat to Sunni Islam politically and religiously. Niẓām al-Mulk wished to model the Seljuq Empire after forceful monarchs like Maḥmūd of Ghaznah.[26]

It is not surprising that al-Bīrūnī cast Maḥmūd in the light of his military prowess as the sultan had achieved great contemporary repute in the Islamic world particularly for his *jihād* campaigns in India. The Muslim world had seen little expansion of late and the inroads into Hind achieved by Maḥmūd came with wondrous imaginations of rich spoils of a mythical land. Furthermore, Maḥmūd's glory in the eyes of Muslims became assured as a counterbalance to the losses Muslims incurred in the west. The northern regions of *Shām* were under increasing pressures from Macedonian Byzantine emperors who captured Cyprus, Crete and a considerable portion of northern Syria. Jerusalem itself came under considerable pressure from the Byzantines who neared its borders. The threatening presence of the Byzantines and the losses incurred by their advances inflicted a general sense of sorrow and weakness among Muslims and struck a formidable blow to Muslim confidence. To offset the losses in Syria, news of the spectacular victories in the Indian subcontinent by Maḥmūd and father Sebuktigin spread far and

[26] Bosworth. *Maḥmūd of Ghazna in Contemporary Eyes and in Later Persian Literature*. 89

wide and it is not unlikely that the narrative of conquest was further supported and promoted through fancy story telling.[27]

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that authorship on the Islamic presence in Hind was strictly structured to the established norms of conquest literature that sought to inspire the religious fervour of frontier communities and coax the Caliph for greater endorsements. The majority of readily available literature on early Muslim interaction with Hind and Hindus appears to be very one-dimensional. Muslims are portrayed as champions of the faith and the conquered Hindus the infidel. It all feels rather artificial. In such an environment, it is easy to overlook the fact that the conquest of Hind was actually a bargain, not between two clearly defined and opposing parties i.e. Muslims and Hindus, but a negotiation of common interest. This is not to say that Maḥmūd was not victorious on the battle field, rather that considerations associated with the desire for political stability and sustainable forms of revenue would have certainly occupied a large part of Maḥmūd's overall thought process regarding his campaigns in Hind. Moreover, the earlier model of Muslim conquest which was also projected through the vocabulary of Islamic *Jihād* and conquest by Muḥammad al-Qasim was in truth, more accommodating toward Hindu sensitivities. This is known through al-Hajjāj's orders to Muhammad al-Qasim, "Give them money, rewards, promotions...give them immunity (amān)...try to grant every request made by the princes and please them by giving bonds for the fulfilment of mutual promises."[28]

A review of the historiographical tradition developed and maintained by the vast majority of historians of medieval India reveals that students of medieval Indo-Muslim rule have focused their reconstructions of the past on predominantly one class of source material namely the 'readymade' historical narratives of official court chroniclers employed by the Sultan. These politically oriented narratives, often the only credible window into that era, have led historians to aim their writings toward political narratives rather than social movements as the more instructive form of understanding

[27] Ibid. 87

[28] Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol.1, 200

medieval India.[29] This single trajectory of historical undertaking has, in its abundance, overshadowed the comparatively limited attempts to portray Indian medieval history in a more holistic manner that examines, beneath the surface of court intrigue and political turmoil, the social forces instrumental in the understanding of that turmoil. Perhaps more poignantly, the nature and course of religious and social activity between Muslims and Hindus has, as a result, been ignored or overlooked.

Furthermore, a matter that adds to this disturbing realisation is the apparent divorce of Islam's role in the shaping of medieval India from the broader study of Islam as a religion and a system of belief, thought and practice in its wider, more global setting.[30] Thus, such questions as whether Sultan Maḥmūd's political and administrative policies reflected Islamic teachings or the actual currents of religious thought and feeling in the Muslim community during his rule have been disassociated from the alternative non-political representations of the Muslim consciousness towards Hind and Hindus. Little to no attempt has been made to build on non-politicised windows into Islam in medieval India such as al-Bīrūnī's *Tahqīq* and Gardīzi's *Zain al-Akhbār* as representations of an Islamic consciousness and its role in the formation of Indian Islam. Historians have chosen instead to focus on the military exploits of Sultan Maḥmūd in what appears to be an attempt to suggest that such a factor is the sole determinant in the trajectory of future Muslim-Hindu relations, and the single blueprint for subsequent Muslim rule in India. Islam is presented by both contemporary chroniclers and later historians as a political order more so than a religious order.[31]

In view of the form of literature available regarding the classical sources of medieval India, it is readily understandable why a political theme has been emphasized over others. The historical evidences written by classical Muslims are clearly bent toward the

[29] See for example Doctors Lane-Poole, Vincent Smith. Sir Wolseley Haig, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Ibn Hasan, Sir Henry Elliot, Professor Dowson, and Montstuart Elphinstone among others.

[30] P. Hardy. *Indo-Muslim Historical Writing*. 3

[31] Consider for example al-Utbi, al-Bayhaqī, Farrukhī Sīstānī among contemporaries, al-Barānī a few centuries later and Montstuart Elphinstone, Sir Henry Elliot, and Professor Dowson among later historians.

political. They focus on a single Muslim authority namely the Sultan as the representative of Islam and are characterised by the narrative of conquest. In the case of the early Muslim presence in Hind, it is clear that officially appointed chroniclers composed their political histories in the attempt to legitimise the Sultan's rule in the eyes of Muslims for which they evoke the religious sentiments of the greater Muslim public by way of the Sultan championing the establishment of Islam and abolishing idol worship. Although there are clear and concrete examples of such activities, it is doubtful that they emanated from purely religious sentiments. Political stability and economic gain were important practical considerations that permeated all decisions and as such the invocation of religious sentiments can partially be seen as rhetoric.

The Economic Devastation of the Hindus Revisited

This section argues that al-Bīrūnī's claim that the economic prosperity of the Hindus was utterly devastated by Maḥmūd must be qualified. Given the numerous following evidences of Hindu economic prosperity, al-Bīrūnī's description did not reflect the economic state of affairs during his time, but rather, was in reference to the destruction of the Somanāth temple; a region which saw significant maritime trade, as evidenced by the amount of booty collected by Maḥmūd.[32]

In regards to West India, which is the main scene of the drama that was to unfold between Muslims and Hindus, some familiarity with the historical background of this region leading up to the period under discussion may be useful as a preliminary. Since Gujarat was the hinterland to ports and trading centres from the time of the Indus civilization, its history is inevitably chequered. It has hosted diverse peoples and cultures apart from those already settled there and wove them into a society specific to the region.[33]

Subsequent to the campaigns in Sind led by Muḥammad bin Qāṣim in the eighth century A.D., Muslim migrants steadily settled down to trade rather than conquest. The descendants of those Arab

[32] Nāẓim, *Life and Times*. p. 118

[33] H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson. *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians.* (New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990), Vol. 2, 201

traders who had settled on the western coast, coming probably from southern Arabia, were seen as the *biyasara*, many of whom married locally and observed various local customs.[34] They had links with trading centres in West Asia such as Siraf, Oman, Basra and Baghdad and increasingly from Yemen.

The western seaboard was a bustling, thriving area, with intense trading activities and therefore became the habitat of settlements of a large range of people. The four core areas were the Indus delta, Saurashtra and the coast of Gujarat, Konkan, and Malabar. The first of these declined largely owing to the frequent silting of the branches of the Indus River in the delta, making ports dysfunctional and requiring them to shift location. The other three areas not only had long distance maritime trade but also traded among themselves and had extensive hinterlands.[35]

Saurashtra had a scatter of chieftains and minor rulers who were heads of clans and governed small principalities. The major royal patrons in Gujarat, from the tenth century to the thirteenth century, were the Chaulukyas, also known as the Solankis, who ruled from their base at Anahilavada.[36]

The period from AD 1000 to 1300 saw an upward sewing of the economy of Gujarat, partly due to the trade with West Asia but perhaps more because of the interest that the Chaulukyas took in encouraging this development.[37] The capital, Anahilavada, was a political centre with extensive commercial links. This is the period of the immediate aftermath of Maḥmūd's raid on Somanāth and clearly, despite what al-Bīrūnī says about the raids of Maḥmūd devastating the local economy,[38] this did not happen in Saurashtra and Gujarat where there were continuing and spectacular profits from trade.[39]

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[34] V.K. Jain. *Trade and Traders in Western India*. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1990), 72, Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1. 68

[35] M. Husain. *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*. (Baroda, 1953) 184-185 as found in Jain. *Trade and Traders*, 79

[36] A. K. Forbes. *The Ras Mala: Hindu Annals of Western India.* (New Delhi, 1973), 39

[37] Jain. *Trade and Traders.* 250-53

[38] See Sachau, *India*. Vol.1, 22; al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 19-20

[39] Jain. *Trade and Traders.* 14, 48, 77, 80.

Perhaps the devastation was immediately after the raid and for a brief period. Perhaps the economic recovery may have been effective subsequent to al-Bīrūnī's departure from that region.

Agriculture was improved through systems of irrigation, as the hinterland of Saurashtra was prone to drought. Road links between rural areas and markets were established which also helped in better administration. The transportation of agricultural produce was made much easier. Cotton and indigo were taken to centres for the production of textiles, a substantial item of export. Financiers and the more wealthy merchants were sometimes large-scale landowners. These may have been the kinds of merchants who might buy the cargo of an entire ship in a single deal.[40] Organizations of artisans and merchants often formed guilds that were important organizationally both for the production of goods and for their distribution and sale. These covered the entire range of production and sale, from potters and betel-sellers to horse dealers and ship owners.

Brigandage and piracy, virtually normal to the area, was gradually controlled.[41] Attacks by local chiefs such as the Abhiras on rich commercial towns were frequent and the Chaulukyas were constantly running into problems with these rajas on this count.[42] Pilgrims to Somanāth had to pay a tax and this together with other valuables carried by them for making donations was looted by local rajas. Customs duties could be exorbitant and should have sufficed as a tax income from commerce. But presumably the rajas were used to obtaining coerced presentations as gifts. Piracy remained a lucrative source of income even into British times. Moreover, sea piracy is an indicator of successful maritime trade. Al-Bīrūnī refers to pirates in the region of Kacch and Somanāth as *Bawārij*.[43]

The success of maritime trade is also marked by the presence of extraordinary wealthy ship-owning merchants, the *nakhudas* as they were known to Arab sources, and the *nauvittakas* as referred to in Sanskrit texts and inscriptions. They were Persian, Arab, Jewish.

[40] Ibid. 219
[41] Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India*, Vol. 1, 118
[42] Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 48
[43] Sachau, Vol. 1, 208.

and Indian and were from different places such as Hormuz, Siraf, Aden, and Mangalore. They commanded the seas and the coasts and saw the pirates as inveterate enemies.[44]

From all accounts, Somanāth was a significant centre for both inland and maritime trade. Its port, Veraval, adjoined the city and was one of the major ports of the region. The period from the ninth to the fifteenth century was one in which western India had a conspicuously wealthy trade with ports along the Arabian peninsula and with places such as Hormuz, Qays, and Siraf in the Persian Gulf. According to visiting traders, the Gujarat region was rich in resources and its merchants traded widely.[45] Undoubtedly, the most lucrative trade was in horses; each horse being purchased by Indian traders for 220 dinars of red gold.[46] According to the same source, as many as 10,000 horses were sent annually from ports and trading centres on and around the Gulf to Cambay and other ports in the vicinity, as well as further south along the west coast to Malabar in order to reach trading centres in the peninsula. Horses were in demand in order to maintain the army's cavalry wing and for ceremonial occasions. Horses of quality were not bred in India and were imported either from Central Asia via the north-western passes of by sea from the Persian Gulf. The constant demand for horses kept the trade alive. The antecedents of this trade go back many centuries and, irrespective of changing political control in this area, the trade in essential commodities was never seriously discontinued. Concern with extending and safeguarding this trade may well have been one of Maḥmūd's primary reasons for the attempting to control the western coast. The economic justification for meriting al-Bīrūnī's discourse on Islamic universalism must be questioned. Although to conquer a region in any form will certainly bring about a measure of economic instability, clearly the Ghaznavid mechanisms for economic justice were not overtly in favour of the Muslims otherwise

[44] R. Chakaravarti. 'Nakhudas and Nauvittakas: Ship-Owning Merchants in Coastal Western India.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 36-64

[45] Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India.* Vol. 1, 5, Vol. 3, 31-32

[46] Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India.* Vol. 3, 33

local merchants would not have prospered in the number and manner they so clearly did.[47]

In light of the extensive evidences of the rich trade in the region of Somanāth, it is understandable why al-Bīrūnī would make the claim that Maḥmūd utterly destroyed Hindu prosperity after sacking the temple and subjecting the region to his suzerainty.

Social Interaction through Trade

So important was the trade that it introduced flexibility in relations between different religious groups. Thus, despite the political confrontation between the local rulers and the Ghaznavids, it did not prevent them from striking a working relationship. Moreover, it would appear by all sober accounts that such actions were not regarded as exceptional. Even if one argues that the motivation was to enhance commercial profit, nevertheless, the spirit of accommodating the religious institutions of others was impressive. An interesting contravention of the norms of caste functions was that the Brahmans were active in this commerce in northern India and particularly in the trade in horses with its substantial profits.[48] Al-Bīrūnī, writing in the eleventh century, states that Somanāth-Veraval was the port for people going to Zanj in east Africa and China.[49] Marco Polo comments in the thirteenth century that the people of Somanāth live by trade. He also mentions the trade in horses from Hormuz as being very valuable.[50]

The counterparts to the Arab traders were Indian merchants in the commercial centres in Gujarat and Veraval, and those who settled in Hormuz, or for that matter, even in Ghaznah after the eleventh century, who are invariably described as being extremely prosperous.

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[47] An example of this is the Hindu merchant, Aṇahilavāda also called Wasa Abhira in Ghazni. Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 49

[48] Abū Raihān Al-Bīrūnī, *Al-Bīrūnī's India An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, translated from Arabic by Edward C. Sachau (London: Routledge Trübner's Oriental Series, 2000) Vol. 2, 149; Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 179-180

[49] Sachau. India. Vol. 2, 104

[50] W. Marsden. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1953), 46-50, 61

Wealthy merchants such as Jagadu, or Wasa Abhira from Anahilapattana, had their agents, often Indian, in Hormuz and Ghaznah, respectively, through whom they conducted trade. The trade focused on imports from West Asia that included horses, wine and metals and with exports from India consisting especially of a range of textiles, spices, semi-precious stones, timber and swords.[51] The existence of Hindu merchant communities settling within Muslim cities is another point that questions the sense of complete separation between Muslims and Hindus offered by al-Bīrūnī's narrative.

The commercial centres of Gujarat had access to the hinterlands of northern India as well as their coastal trade. Commercial wealth steadily increased from the tenth century and the noticeable prosperity of Gujarat was due both to inland trade as well as trade with Arabs and Persians, particularly at centres in Saurashtra and Cambay. These were points of exchange in the far larger trade across the Indian Ocean, which together with the overland trade through Central Asia was creating an economy that may be called virtually global.[52]

In the eighth century, under the command of Muḥammad bin Qāsim and during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd the Arabs raided Sind. India's invasion by foreigners largely unknown to the Hindus led to the migration of Hindu religious learning and religious images and symbols to India's fortified hinterlands where they would be safe from foreign desecration.[53] Subsequent to this campaign, the Arabs gradually settled down to trade rather than conquest. The descendants of those Arab traders who had settled on the western coast were seen as the *biyasara*, many of whom married locally and observed various local customs.[54] They had links with trading centres in West Asia such as Siraf, Oman, Basra, Baghdad, and Yemen and as a result

[51] Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 65, 66, 81

[52] See Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European hegemony: the world system A.D. 1250-1350*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)

[53] Sachau, Vol. 1, 22. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 12

[54] Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 72. Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1, 68

maritime commerce flourished particularly at the hands of the newly settled Arabs.

Though the Indian kings resisted Arab/Muslim attacks, they nonetheless welcomed Arab/Muslim merchants and accorded them significant treatment. Some even showed an interest in better understanding Islam and engaged Muslim visitors in dialogue and debate. Al-Masʿūdī explains how he visited the town of Cambay, which was ruled by a Brahman called Banīyā[55] who was appointed by al-Balharā of Malkhedh. Al-Masʾūdī describes him as having, "...a keen interest in debating with Muslim visitors and those of other creeds who came to his country."[56] Al-Masʿūdī further remarks that, "Islam in his country is protected and respected; there are mosques, large and small, where the daily prayers are performed."[57]

The individual and often warring kingdoms of India however, do not allow for generalisations to be drawn. Although there were kingdoms that welcomed Muslims, there were others that did not. The king of Kanauj for example was hostile to Muslims particularly the Muslims of Multan.[58]

The kindness showed by Hindu kings towards Muslims informs us that although the Arabs no longer enjoyed political authority, they continued to remain in Hind as traders and enjoyed relatively complete religious freedoms. In spite of the political animosity between Hindus and Muslims as reflected in the campaigns of Sultan Maḥmūd, the policy and attitude of the local kings towards Arab-Muslim traders was one of peace and toleration. Why the Hindus would allow Arab settlers to dominate the maritime trade is on consideration a particularly curious matter given that by doing so the Arabs took a large chunk from the economic prosperity of the Hindus. The answer to this question is found in the commercial benefits of allowing the Arabs to engage in international trade as it led to a significant influx in trade and increased prosperity. Ibn

[55] Ahmad M. H. Shboul. *Al-Mas'udi & his world: a Muslim Humanist and His Interest in Non-Muslims.* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979), 159 Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India.* Vol. 1, 27, 34

[56] Shboul. *Al-Masʾūdī and His World*. 6-7

[57] Shboul. *Al-Masʾūdī and His World*. 159

[58] Shboul. *Al-Masʾūdī and His World.* 158

Batutta notes that Hindu kings wished to profit from the international trade connections of the Arab settlers.[59]

Gujarat in the period from AD 1000 to 1400 witnessed, what might be called, a 'renaissance' culture of the Jaina mercantile community. Rich merchant families were in political office, controlled state finances, were patrons of culture, scholars, and liberal donors to Jaina temples. Amazingly, these activities were maintained throughout a period which, as assessed from Muslim sources, was one of considerable disturbance—if these sources are to be taken literally—and the disturbance largely originated with the expeditions of Maḥmūd.

Apart from the stability of the Jaina merchants, the commercial wealth of Gujarat was tied to traders who had connections with the seaports and commerce to the west. They were not all visitors since there were small communities of Arab traders settled in Gujarat.[60] Many of these were Ismāʿīlī Muslims and had their own mosques, distinct from those of Sunni Muslims, but in many other ways they conformed to local usage. The Ismāʿīlīs resisted the Sunni Turks and, to that extent, seem not to have been seen as a threat by local rulers. The two communities that gradually became dominant were the Khojas and the Bohras, both claiming roots in West Asia. There were some borrowing of non-Sunni ideas, and some from the religions of Gujarat. The Khojas were close to the beliefs and practices of the Ismāʿīlīs and Shīʿas while the Bohras had Vaishnava elements in their beliefs, supporting the theory of incarnations and observing Hindu inheritance laws.[61]

The intermixing of ideologies and social practices is evident. Acceptance of some local beliefs and practices makes it easier for traders to be accommodated in the local trading diaspora. These Arab merchant communities that evolved at the time were different from those influenced by the Turks, with their emphasis on conquest and

[59] Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 79.

[60] S.C. Misra. *The Muslim Communities in Gujarat*. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1985), 10

[61] M. N. Pearson. *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: the Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 27

dominance. The Arab interests shifted from dominance through conquest in the initial phase to participation in the local economy in the later phase. For the Turks at this time, dominance was through conquest and through governance, as seen by the example of Maḥmūd. The rising prosperity of Jaina merchants was dependant on the trade with the hinterland and with the Gulf. This meant that Indian merchants had bases in the entrepots of the Gulf and merchants from there visited India. The Indians visiting the Gulf have left us no accounts of the narratives of what they saw and did. Fortunately, the Arab visitors and traders did write about the Indian scene.[62]

It appears that establishing international trade and the promise of substantial profits was sufficient motive to put aside religious and cultural differences. Hindu traders were ready to see trade grow and there are cases where Hindu traders established flourishing trade with Ghaznah.[63] It is through the consideration of such facts that causes the image of a predatory Ghaznavid empire dedicated to the complete subjugation of Hind and Hindus to come into question. More poignantly, in the context of al-Bīrūnī, the complete foreignness of Muslims to Hindus must be qualified. One should not mistake al-Bīrūnī's narrative to mean that there was absolutely no contact between Muslims and Hindus, despite this being easily understood from his narrative in view of how al-Bīrūnī paints a picture of Hindu alienation of Muslims and for that matter all foreigners.[64] Al-Bīrūnī's narrative offers an extreme picture of the social relations between Muslims and Hindus through his assertion that the Hindus went so far as to frighten their children by the mention of Muslims and that they would refuse to touch anything that a Muslim has touched, or associate with anyone with whom a Muslim has associated. Clearly, such blanket sentiments did not apply to all Hindus and were not borne out of economic factors. There are clearly many important forms of interaction outside of the narrative of conquest that equally help form a more dynamic and complex

[62] Jain. Trade and Traders, 72-77

[63] Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India*. Vol. 2, 200-201, Jain. *Trade and Traders*. 81

[64] Sachau, Vol. 1, 21. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 11

relationship between Muslims and Hindus. The kindness shown to Muslim settlers is an expression of how issues of mutual benefit help create culturally and religiously diverse trading centres. Hindu kindness must have been reciprocated by Muslims because if it was not, it is hard to imagine the continued political patronage shown by Hindu rulers towards Muslim traders.[65] India was not as insular as al-Bīrūnī would suppose. The Indo-Iranian borderlands and north-western India had witnessed the continuous movement of peoples going back and forth since early times. Among such movements was the conquest of the tukharas/Turks by Lalitaditya of Kashmir in the eight century A.D. Turkish mercenaries were employed by the later kings of Kashmir as they were skilled cavalrymen with battle-seasoned horses.[66] Kashmir established close links with the Kingdom of Gandhara and to some extent Tokharistan. This area became a pool for the recruitment of mercenaries for any army that required soldiers with little concern for their religious affiliations.

One is therefore left wondering why al-Bīrūnī's narrative failed to mention such important platforms of interaction and coexistence. It is difficult to imagine that a learned and curious

[65] An important issue here is the legal status of Hindus. Classical Islamic sources remain silent on the issue. Islamic literature when addressing the legal status of non-Muslims under the Muslim state mainly addressed Jews and Christians as ahl al-Kitāb (people of the book) who are awarded special status as associated faiths (stemming in origin from a single divine source) and who are thus under the protection of the Islamic state. This meant that Muslim jurists were required to search for a decision regarding the legal status of Hindus under the Muslim state from authorities not directly related to the legal texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. It was during the first conquest of the western coast of Hind by Muḥammad al-Qāsim in the eighth century that we find Muslim scholars associating Hindus with the vague religion of the Sabians; a religion recognised in Islam as being among the people of the book. This interpretation was first applied to the Zoroastrians in Persia and was now applied to the Hindus in Hind. This ruling never saw consensus among Muslim scholars and was a matter of heated debate among Muslims as some perceived the ruling as a form of compromise with idol worship for presumably what could have been for political and economic reasons. See Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1, 195.

[66] Kalhana. (12th Century). *Rajatarangini the saga of the kings of Kasmir*. (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1990), 4.v.166 (p. 133), 4.v.179 (p. 134)

scholar such as al-Bīrūnī was ignorant of such matters. By indulging in a measure of speculation, one may wonder if al-Bīrūnī failed to mention such platforms of exchange because he thought them superficial as on the creedal level, within the Hindu belief system foreigners have no meaningful status and as such a platform for meaningful appreciation of each other was still very much in need despite the existence of what was seen to be a manageable working relationship. One may also speculate if al-Bīrūnī intended his narrative for such environments, i.e. the settled Muslim merchant coastal communities, or if he wished to address the learned community of Muslim scholars. It would seem that the second possibility is more likely for several reasons. Firstly, much of the *Taḥqīq* consists of specialised scientific discourse, which was clearly meant for a learned readership. Secondly, al-Bīrūnī's criticism of Muslim approaches to the study of other religions by Muslim scholars was a methodological criticism aimed at rectifying the analytical framework and mind set of Muslim scholarship of other religions and civilizations. Thirdly, what some have considered to be the disparate nature of the *Taḥqīq* and al-Bīrūnī's scholarship on the whole, would make coherent sense when one assumes that al-Bīrūnī had a certain theory in mind when venturing to make sense of the many facets of a religious civilization, particularly one as old and nuanced as Hinduism. In this context, our proposed theory of Islamic universalism stands a good chance of begin such a theory and although it is broad in scope, one's theory must be as broad as civilization if they are to interpret a civilization.

Maḥmūd, Somanāth and Muslim-Hindu Relations

Any notion of Islamic universalism rests on the premise that Islam can acknowledge and embrace any given human being regardless of their initial belief, ethnicity or culture. The history of Islam is replete with instances of such an embracing sense of universalism. One such example is the spread of Islam in India. Although any single event cannot be attributed as the sole cause of Islam's spread in India, the historical time frame of Sultan Maḥmūd's many conquests in India and the establishment of Ghaznavid authority in the region led to Islam being permanently established in North West India and

constitutes perhaps the earliest organised and sustained example of Muslim authority in India. Accordingly, the administrative policies, modes of governance and social acceptance and/or rejection of this recently established Ghaznavid Empire enjoyed the share of the predecessor in determining the trajectory of its relationship with India in its totality to effect the shape and form of future relations with the country as a strategic geographical partner, as a new religious identity, as a source of economic resources, as a culture and as a people. As such, the immense significance of early Ghaznavid rule in the Punjab region of India in determining future Muslim-Hindu relations can hardly be ignored if a credible exposition on an embracive ideal such as Islamic universalism during the fourth and fifth century hijra is to be achieved.

There is little doubting the significance of the person of Maḥmūd in framing al-Bīrūnī's narrative. In his narrative, it is easy to mistake from al-Bīrūnī's description of Maḥmūd that he was a warmonger who lacked the proper methods of Islamic governance. This is chiefly seen in al-Bīrūnī's recollection of the events surrounding the conquest of Somanāth.

There are contending theses regarding the overall impact of Mahmūd's governance in India. Al-Bīrūnī says of Mahmūds exploits in India, that he "utterly destroyed the prosperity of the Hindu's."[67] This statement does not afford much in terms of details and remains silent on the context in which Mahmūd 'destroyed' Hindu prosperity. Nāẓim's sober study of the life and rule of Mahmūd describes his reign to be principally a time of conquest and in such a context infringing on the finer sensibilities of the conquered and inspiring some degree of contempt can hardly be avoided. Maḥmūd wielded the sword of Islam so successfully that the "Hindu's were like dust under his feet."[68] With this in mind, Nāẓim was critical of the contending thesis expressed by Mohammad Habib[69] that due to Maḥmūd's exploits in India; "a burning hatred" for Islam was created in the Hindu mind because Islam was presented "in the guise of

[67] Sachau, *India*. Vol.1, 22; al-Bīrūnī,. *Tahqīq.* 19-20
[68] Sachau, *India*. Vol.1, 22; al-Bīrūnī,. *Tahqīq.* 19-20
[69] Mohammad Habib. *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin*. (S. Chand and Co: New Delhi, 1967)

plundering armies."[70] Nāẓim regarded this argument to be less than convincing. He cites as an alternative cause to the soured relations between Muslims and Hindus, al-Bīrūnī's explanation that the Hindu rejection of Islam and Muslims was a natural consequence of the irreconcilable differences between Islam and Hinduism.[71] This claim appears to the researcher to have overlooked al-Bīrūnī's exposition on the Brahman—styled Hindu belief system, which consists of several comparisons between Islam, Greek philosophy, Christianity, and Hinduism. Interestingly enough, al-Bīrūnī's limited references to Mahmūd in his *Kitāb al-Hind* collectively depict him as a successful Muslim warrior who trampled all Hindu resistance with the utmost ease. Furthermore, there can be little ignoring the value and credibility of al-Bīrūnī's narrative as he experienced first-hand, events as they unfolded and his somewhat favourable status among Hindus allowed him insights into their reception and perception of these events. We know from al-Bīrūnī that one result of Maḥmūd's expeditions was the migration of Hindu religious knowledge into the impregnable strongholds of Kashmir and Benares.[72] With this in mind, Habib's emphasis on Mahmūd's military exploits as a cause for tension between Muslims and Hindus appears to have a good deal of credibility and should not be easily dismissed.

However, the question is not whether or not Mahmūd's military success led to Hindu hatred of Islam and Muslims as this is only a natural consequence of conquest and victory, rather, but whether or not this was the only platform upon which Maḥmūd engaged the Indians and whether or not it constituted the deciding factor in defining Hindu perceptions of Islam and determining the course of future relations between the two religions and societies. Al-Bīrūnī's account of Maḥmūd is very one dimensional, namely that he was a conqueror. Certainly, Maḥmūd's relations with the Hindus were much more complex. This paper contends that this was a deliberate move on behalf of al-Bīrūnī to emphasise the lack of a religious underpinning to existing platforms of Muslim-Hindu

[70] Nāẓim, *The Life and Times.* 162
[71] Ibid. 162
[72] Sachau, Vol. 1, 22. and Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq*, 12

engagement; one in which the value of a human beings and the essential religious foundations of Hindu civilization were ignored.

Perhaps the study of history will remain uncertain as regards the exact nature of Maḥmūd's treatment of the Hindus, what is certain however is that there are several conflicting narratives each with its own set of bias and structures of interpretation. Accordingly, identifying the background, objective, and approach of each narrative will lead to a mature and enlightened understanding from which a more reasonable conclusion can be drawn. The popular image that Maḥmūd was an uncompromising, uncompassionate protagonist of orthodox Muslim belief at the expense of the religious and human rights of the Hindus cannot and should not be accepted without proper inquiry as to the real affairs of his government.[73]

Perhaps the most controversial incident in Maḥmūd's varied repertoire of Hindu engagements that has attracted the attention of a good number of scholars and politicians is his raid of the temple of Somanāth and its subsequent destruction. This paper seeks to better understand official Muslim treatment of Hindus by employing Maḥmūd's management of this specific incident as a catalyst for the general treatment of Hindus by Muslims. The various interpretations awarded to this event that have effectively made it the epitome of Muslim-Hindu relations are investigated for their merit and for the biases peculiar to each interpretation. During the course of this line of inquiry, it will be seen that al-Bīrūnī's narrative was restricted by the methodology he had set upon himself and it is by such means that his *Taḥqīq* can be considered a refreshingly objective account of the religion and culture of the period. This causes the *Tahqīq* to be seen as a work that does not target a political audience but one that is or should be interested in a learned exchange of ideas for more sophisticated and meaningful relations between Muslims and Hindus.

To position the raid in its historical context requires a consideration of the wider spectrum of Maḥmūd's ambitions in relation to his being the leader of a rapidly growing empire consisting of both urban and rural communities. These ambitions constitute an

[73] See for example Doctors Lane-Poole, Vincent Smith. Sir Wolseley Haig, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Ibn Hasan, Sir Henry Elliot, Professor Dowson, and Montstuart Elphinstone among others.

important light for understanding Maḥmūd's motives for his campaigns into India. On face value, Maḥmūd's activities in the Indian subcontinent on the one hand, and in Afghanistan and Central Asia on the other, appear to be dichotomous, but after considering the needs of a growing empire and an increasingly affluent, and hence demanding, courtly culture, connections between his management of Afghanistan and Central Asia and his expeditions into India are more readily discernable. To better understand the motives for Maḥmūd's expeditions, basic knowledge of what was transpiring on the other side of the boarder is needed. The purpose of the expeditions was multiple, among which fortifying his boarders, establishing additional sources of state revenue, and establishing Islam in the region were undoubtedly central motivations. Maḥmūd was not singularly motivated by religion but other motivations, at least in terms of practical worth, were equally important. In origin, the Turks were pastoralists and raiding was an accepted means of obtaining wealth.[74] By no means is this historical footnote an attempt to exonerate them, it is merely an attempt to help explain certain psychological factors that may have contributed toward facilitating Maḥmūd's revenue seeking exploits in India and perhaps more pointedly suggest that his raids were a means of augmenting much needed wealth to feed his empire. Among the commonly associated spoils of his expeditions were the capture of animal herds, usurping urban treasures and capturing prisoners of war to be sold, put to work, or recruited into the army. A vast and active army like Maḥmūd's must have needed regular supplies to supplement the losses incurred when at war and to feed and maintain the troops and horses. Moreover, establishing supply lines to the more fertile lands of India as opposed to the more barren landscape of Central Asia would have constituted a significant strategic and perhaps necessary military feat. Judging by the rate and frequency of Maḥmūd's military campaigns both within and beyond his boarders, his army was a disciplined body of fast-moving, horse-riding warriors, well

[74] A.K.S. Lambton. *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia, Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History, 11th to 14th Century.* (London: Sunny Press, 1988)

weathered by unrelenting climatic conditions, constant movement and regular battle.

Maḥmūd was not alone in this image of a menacing adventurer trying to establish for himself a kingdom, in India too there were similar self-styled adventurers trying to create a small principality for themselves. The origins of dynasties frequently refer to the feats of such daring figures who managed to conquer a region and establish themselves as rulers.[75] In light of this, similar to the constant political struggle and ensuing geographic flexibility of political domains within the Muslim world, the constant increment, decrement, and conquest of political boundaries within India would not have been any more alien. However, there is a quantitative difference between the raids of local adventurers and those of Maḥmūd.

Although Maḥmūd was raised in urban environments and socialised with the society's upper crust, he did however spend a considerable portion of his young and adult life in military environments which intimately acquainted him with the demands of the military and constituents for effective military machinery.[76] His authority in the empire he was expanding and consolidating which incorporated Afghanistan, northern Persia, and Khurasan in Central Asia, rested in his ability to inspire obedience or force submission over two symbiotic but variant societies. One was of the pastoralist communities on the frontiers and steppe lands, and the other, the vibrant commercial mercantile communities of oasis towns and trading centres of Persia and Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, the contrast between both types of communities would have presented Maḥmūd with different demands each with its own set of challenges.

As for the many temple towns that dotted the Indian landscape and that housed religious monks and aesthetics, they were unfamiliar to the Turks and would have been seen as easy targets for plunder. In his expedition to Somanāth, Maḥmūd would have passed by a good number of temple towns, but given their relative distance and

[75] See for example the discussion of regional configurations in Upinder Singh. *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India from the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. (Delhi: Pearson/Longman, 2009), 550-572

[76] Nāẓim, *The Life and Times.* 34-38

isolation from commercial centres and significant urban areas, they would not have merited any significant mention by Muslim chroniclers. The temple towns and commercial centres of Thanesar, Multan, and Somanāth that dotted the coast of the Indian Ocean would have, and indeed did, attract the attention of Maḥmūd's army and captured the imagination of Muslim chroniclers as they presented much more formidable targets and were associated with sizeable economic benefits. The wealth from such expeditions was used to finance the army and to maintain the Ghaznavid state. This Indian expedition, like those before it, was largely seen as successful from a military, political, and economic point of view and there is no reason to suggest that it does not form part of what al-Bīrūnī meant when he referred to Hindus as being like 'scattered dust under his (Maḥmūd's) feet'. However, to say that this particular expedition led to the utter ruin of the economic prosperity of this particular region in India appears to pertain to the immediate aftermath of the expedition, as there are a number of sources that attest to the vibrant commercial activities of the coastal ports in the Punjab.[77] Perhaps al-Bīrūnī left immediately after the expedition and did not revisit the region and as such did not witness what appears to be a rapid rejuvenation of commercial trade. Moreover, to associate this region with al-Bīrūnī's description of Hindu perceptions of outsiders, particularly Muslims, as *mlechha*[78] appears to be incorrect as Muslim communities largely associated with trade, had established themselves in the region and regularly interacted with various Hindu classes including the Brahmans. This must have been more of a religious interpretation of events as clearly they were not economic. It appears that the relationship between Muslims and Hindus rested on their shared economic value and as such religious knowledge and symbols may have been outside the boundaries of this relationship that appears to have been forged on convenience. In light of this, al-Bīrūnī's description of complete Hindu rejection of Muslims and to a larger extent the outside world would have concerned the Hindu communities distantly located from commercial centres such as in the north east or towards Kashmir. An alternative explanation is that

[77] As demonstrated earlier in the paper.

[78] Sachau, *India*. Vol.1, 19; al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq.* 17.

al-Bīrūnī chose to ignore the daily interactions between Muslims and Hindus and opted instead to understand and portray things from a more creedal point of view as earlier mentioned. Moreover, in regards to the rapid rejuvenation of coastal trade, it should be borne in mind that the coastal region was now under the suzerainty of Sultan Maḥmūd. It is highly unlikely that Maḥmūd lacked the foresight to recognise the financial potential of the trading ports and towns to sustain his empire and was content with a one-off payment from his conquest.

Greater insight into Muslim treatment of Hindus via the governance of Maḥmūd is afforded by an anecdote in which it is reported that after conquering Somanāth Sultan Maḥmūd held a council with the people of Somanāth for the appointment of a governor, which resulted in the recommendation and subsequent appointment of a member of the Dabishlim family.[79]

Another example of Muslim-Hindu relations is the subscription of Indian mercenaries, presumably Hindu, into the Ghaznavid army. Indian soldiers were referred to as Suverdhray and there is nothing to suggest that they were not loyal to Maḥmūd. They formed a not insubstantial part of his army and were assigned a Turkish commander referred to as *Sipahsalar-i-Hinduwan.* They were assigned their own quarter in Ghaznah and were allowed to continue practicing their own religion. There is one recorded instance whereby the Turkish commander of this contingency rebelled and the command was given to a Hindu named Tilak who was commended for his loyalty.[80] This act leads one to question the often single minded assertion of researchers that Maḥmūd was an unforgiving iconoclast with no tolerance of other beliefs, and by questioning this popular assumption, new meaning is possible regarding Muslim-Hindu relations. Establishing a Hindu presence in the capital

[79] Captain G. Roos-Keppel's translation of the *Tarikh-i-Sultan Mahmud-i-Ghaznavi* (The History of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni). (Lahore: Anglo-Sanskrit Press, 1908), 45-47

[80] Clifford E. Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994:1040*. (Beirut: Libraire Du Liban, 1973), 101. Muḥammad Nāẓim. The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna. (New Delhi: Munishiram Mahoharlal,1971), 162

of an empire at war with Hind starkly contrasts with the popular view depicting the Ghaznavids as being insensitive to the religious sentiments of Hindus. Maḥmūd's decision to allow Hindu mercenaries to practice their religious beliefs is evidence the he was willing to give concessions albeit for reasons other than religious and expresses a form of openness in governance that permits the expression of an individual's religious convictions within the Muslim polity.

An interesting event in Maḥmūd's relations with Hindus, which once again questions the popular image of Maḥmūd as an unforgiving iconoclast, is the administrative system he adopted for managing the sequestered Indian territories. Ghaznavid control largely continued in the existing administrative system. To this end, Ghaznavid coins issued in north-western India have bilingual legends written in Arabic and Sharda scripts. Islamic titles together with the portrayal of the Shaiva bull, Nandi were struck on the coins. A *dirham* struck at Lahore carries a legend in the Sharda script and a rendering in colloquial Sanskrit of the Islamic *Kalima* and reads: *avyaktam ekam muhammada avatara nripati mahamuda*, 'There is One Unmanifest [or invisible], Muhammad is the avatar, the king is Maḥmūd.'[81] Flood explains,

> "The attempt to translate between the concept of avatar and messenger conforms to the absorption and co-option of autochthonous deities as a common part of the process of medieval Indic state formation. It also cuts also both ways, finding a counterpart in some of the earliest surviving Arabic and Persian works on Indian religions, which describe the belief of certain Brahmans in prophethood (*al-risāla*), and refer to Mahadeva and Vasudeva (avatars of Shiva and Vishnu respectively) as the "prophet of God"

[81] Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*. (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2009), 41. See also A.K. Bhattacharya. 'Bilingual Coins of Maḥmūd of Ghazni,' *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*. (Bombay: The Numismatic Society of India, 1964), Vol. 28, 53-56

(*rasūl Allāh*), adopting the terminology of envoyship central to Islamic thought."[82]

This was a considerable compromise with the orthodox sensibilities Maḥmūd is often heralded as having championed and can be explained as a means to assert his authority in the region by issuing new coinage that reflected Muslim rule while at the same time ensuring its public acceptance by including some familiar features from the old money in order to make it more easily acceptable as legal tender in the market. Such is evidence of the political foresight of Maḥmūd and what appears to be broad Muslim-Hindu relations that was tacitly ignored by al-Bīrūnī. Moreover, this once again questions al-Bīrūnī's picture of Maḥmūd and how al-Bīrūnī rendered Maḥmūd's obstinacy part of the frame for his narrative. Clearly, Maḥmūd was much more complex than al-Bīrūni gives credit and although al-Bīrūnī's exposition does not centre on Maḥmūd, he does nevertheless form an important factor for the justification of the *Taḥqīq*, This can be interpreted as being due to the fact that such Hinud engagements by Maḥmūd did not reflect truly Islamic sentiments, and were more for economic advantage and political strategy. Clearly, this does not fit in well with al-Bīrūnī's advocacy of on axiological platform for advancing Muslim-Hindu relations.[83] What is interesting, if Maḥmūd did in fact endorse this coinage, and there is no reason to reject this claim, then it constitutes a concrete measure towards co-existence, which is a major by-product of Islamic universalism. Why then would al-Bīrūnī choose to ignore, what seems to be an important development in Muslim-Hindu relations? Perhaps he thought this material culture was superficial and that real and lasting co-existence can only take place when a much more profound appreciation of each civilization is achieved, namely on the level of religion.

Another feature of Muslim-Hindu relations is that the social architecture of Muslim administered India saw Indian slave soldiers become prominent under Ghaznavid rule, some of whom were

[82] Flood, *Objects of Translation.* 41-42

[83] As evident in his discussion of the values of al-Ṣidq and al-ʿAdālah in which al-Bīrūnī draws on examples from the Muslim, Christian, and Greek traditions. Taḥqīq, 14, Sachau, Vol. 1, 4-5

awarded respectable posts within the Ghaznavid administration. Indian mamlūks served as an important counter weight to the ethnically Turkish Muslim leaders particularly in the administration of Indian territories. Judging by the common Ghaznavid policy of allowing the local administrations of conquered territories to maintain running their region, in addition to the mamlūk origins of the Turks themselves, it is not surprising that Indian natives resumed their administrative posts albeit under Turkish suzerainty to the effect that Indian natives maintained a degree of affluence throughout the various Muslim dynasties in India. Although it was not uncommon to find Indians traded as slaves, India never constituted a centre for slavery comparable to say the Turks or Africans. It was Indian trade that captured the attention of Muslim conquerors.

Augmenting new sources of wealth helped finance an increasingly affluent courtly culture and was used to extend patronage and attract notable Muslim scholars and litterateurs to the court at Ghaznah. Al-Bīrūnī can be considered among such persons and his forced migration to Ghaznah was also part of Maḥmūd's political policy to have all those who could possibly fuel rebellion in one form or another close at hand. As unfortunate as the terms of his detainment were, his migration to Ghaznah permitted al-Bīrūnī to undertake a sizeable study of the Hindus which left us with perhaps the most insightful observations on Indian society. Al-Bīrūnī's *Kitāb al-Hind* is a monument in Indian studies and a lasting reminder of the sense of mankind's universal fraternity and universal human knowledge and experience present in the minds of some learned Muslims.

One should note that for the Muslim Ghaznavids, conquering new territories was not aimed solely at non-Muslims, in this case the Hindus. As such, al-Bīrūnī's reference to Maḥmūd's economic devastation of Hindus, if it can be validly accepted, should not be misunderstood as targeting Hindus alone. Far from it, the potential for monetization by raiding temple villages can be seen as part of a greater process to fund the state and to generate funds for further investment in other projects. So grand were the stories associated with the wealth of India that the spoils of Maḥmūd's conquests have

been described by some as a 'goldrush'.[84] The figures mentioned regarding the amount of bounty must be nominal as they are rather extravagant. Court chroniclers and historians, in their awe of the spoils and their general intrigue for the wealth of India, likely exaggerated the figures. The spoils from Somanāth are said to have amounted to 20 million dinars, and that from the raid of the Shi'a centre of Rayy in Persia in 1029 was only a little less. The figures mentioned for Rayy are 5,00,000 dinars worth of jewels, 30,000 dinars worth of gold and silver vessels and 2,60,000 dinars worth of coined money.[85] Maḥmūd, therefore, raided both Hindu and Muslim centres, the latter it they were not Sunni Muslims. If the figures for the wealth obtained are even halfway correct, they are enormous. Possibly, the figures have been exaggerated to glorify Maḥmūd since it is debatable whether these towns could have generated so much wealth and, even after its loss, continued to flourish. But even if a fraction of this wealth were obtained, it would be impressive. The rise of Ghaznah as the seat of the Ghaznavid Empire must have been rapid as only a few decades earlier, Maḥmūd's father, Sebuktagain carved out a relatively marginal commercial centre in the transit trade between Khurasan and Transoxiana with Ghaznah as the seat of his power.[86] Understanding the importance of augmenting sources of wealth is an important prelude to understanding the way in which the Somanāth expedition should be understood.[87]

[84]Wink. *Al-Hind the Making of the Indo-Islamic World.* Vol.1, 23

[85] Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids*. 78

[86] Ibid p. 36

[87] This is of particular significance in regards to the historical understanding of Muslim-Hindu relations given that the even has been grossly manipulated and misrepresented to serve contemporary political agendas. Through a Hindu nationalistic agenda for India advocated by the Indian National Congress (INC) particularly by K. M. Munshi, The historical events concerning Somanāth has been politically manipulated and has now become a byword for Hindu orthodoxy and Hindu-Muslim conflict. For further details see Manu Bhagavan, 'The Hindutva Underground: Hindu Nationalism and the Indian National Congress in Late Colonial and Early Post-Colonial India.' *Economic and Political Weekly.* (Mumbai: Economic and Political Weekly, 2008) Vol. 43, No. 37, 39-48. See also Manu Bhagavan, 'Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India'. *The Journal of Asian Studies.* (Chicago: Cambridge University Press, 2008) Vol. 67, 881-915

In order to avoid one mistaking that this trajectory of inquiry is a sort of digression from the topic of Islamic universalism, it is perhaps worthy to remind readers that by discussing Maḥmūd's relationship with India and Hindus, the context of al-Bīrūnī's contribution can be better understood and the popular image of Maḥmūd as being a single minded warmonger can be corrected. During the course of this discussion, greater dynamics of Muslim-Hindu relations will become apparent and readers will notice how the practical demands of managing civil society, among other considerations, form a basis for Muslim-Hindu cooperation. On acknowledging the existence of a more sophisticated Maḥmūd-India (Muslim-Hindu) dynamic, one is compelled to question the popular perception that Islam is a rigid and selfish faith by virtue of the evidence that suggests that Islam is flexible and embracing. Maḥmūd's management of Hindus was is no way similar to the governance of the Romans who conquered and imposed a foreign system of governance wherein local inhabitants (anybody who was not Roman) did not enjoy any significant rights or protections from the state. Clarifying this point is important in order to prevent al-Bīrūnī's sense of Islamic universalism being overshadowed by a particularistic leader.

Conclusion

Over the course of this paper, it has been argued that the variables identified in al-Bīrūnī's introduction to the *Tahqīq* appear to be in reference to the campaign of Somanāth. Quite surprisingly, a broad canvas of the Muslim-Hundu encounter offers a completely different image. Muslims and Hindus had already established several areas of cooperation that centred largely on commerce. The many and daily interactions between Muslims and Hindus offer an entirely different picture to the social schism proposed by al-Bīrūnī. From their first settlement during the expedition of Muḥammad bin Qāsim in the seventh century, Muslim merchant communities became the instrument for Hindu rajas to access international trade with Persia, the Middle East and beyond. There was a clear working relationship between Muslims and Hindus, which was respected by both parties to the extent that in certain kingdoms special courts were established to

govern the internal issues among Muslims. Furthermore, in cases where there were grievances between Muslims and Hindus, Muslims were often supported by the rulers as they trade partnerships were often formed between the ruling classes and Muslim merchants. With such a background, it is difficult to accept that Hindus reacted to foreigners, especially Muslims, in such a violent manner as to depict Muslims as devils and exclude and isolate all those who associated with them.

However, an explanation for al-Bīrūnī's assertions is that al-Bīrūnī was talking on a creedal level and was addressing learned Muslims, and as such believed that existing platforms of exchange and interaction were superficial and were not conducive to lasting and meaningful cross-civilizational and cross-cultural understanding. The Muslim settler communities also existed under the political auspices of the Hindus, when this changed during the expeditions of Maḥmūd, this created a new social order in which Hindus no longer felt their lands were secure and may have blamed Muslims for it. Furthermore, we know the Hindus were deeply upset over the destruction of the Somanāth temple, which cultivated a heightened aversion to Muslims. However, such an image appears to have been relevant only on a religious or theoretical level. What is certain is that overall, the coastal region of Gujarat and south-west India was home to a successful, vibrant, and continuous international trade that saw Muslims and Hindus work together for the economic prosperity of all.

In regards to Maḥmūd's governance, although it is evident that Maḥmūd's military prowess was no match for the Hindus, his governance as suzerain of Sind was largely driven by political and economic motives. On one hand, Maḥmūd sought legitimisation from the Caliph in Baghdad for the expansion of his empire through the rhetoric of *jihād*. On the other, he sought to consolidate the newly augmented sources of wealth by ensuring that a degree of stability was achieved through minting new currency containing Hindu symbolism that was in line with Muslim sensibilities, and by appointing local rulers to manage those territories. One should not mistakenly believe that the expeditions were solely aimed at plundering Hind and that after conquest the Ghaznavids returned to

Ghaznah and left the Hindus to their devastation. The Ghaznavids introduced systems to govern what they believed to be strategic conquests in order to secure ongoing sources of income to fuel the Ghaznavid Empire. Doubtless, this is a far cry from the type of Muslim-Hindu relations demanded by al-Bīrūnī, however, it is nonetheless better than the image of Maḥmūd as a devastator of lands. In such a context, Maḥmūd is depicted as a politician in charge of a vast and rapidly growing empire.

With all this being said and done, the fundamental postulate of al-Bīrūnī that Maḥmūd's military prowess was a source of indignation of the Hindus stands. However, what should be borne in mind is that such a sentiment is a natural consequence of defeat and would have been easily associated with the most conscientious and compassionate of conquerors. Al-Bīrūnī is therefore justified for considering it an important factor necessitating a discourse on Islamic universalism, as there was a need to console the Hindus to the fact that the Muslim presence in the region was eminent, and therefore there is a need to forge new bonds of fraternity that appease the political, economic, social, and religious conscience of all parties. Such foundations were sought by al-Bīrūnī in the form of a thorough understanding of the religious civilization of the Hindus that would agree with Islamic sensibilities. For this reason, al-Bīrūnī opted to focus on the tawhidic strain of Brahman Hinduism as a means for effective integration between to religious communities. Clearly he intended to advance Muslim-Hindu relations to an entirely different level whereby the study of Hindu sciences along with their religious underpinnings would lead towards forging a much more fruitful, meaningful, and lasting relationship compared to one based on economic interests.

Another important observation that must be kept in mind when thinking of the past and Muslim-Hindu relations is that diverse interpretations and representations are not a refusal to accept the event but reflect different strategies of representation and the various ways in which the narrative is politicized to give shape to identities. This is particularly true of the interpretations given to the events surrounding Somanāth, which has been used as a catalyst to explain Muslim-Hindu political relations, whereas al-Bīrūnī used it to

emphasise the need for Islam to be represented in the context of Muslim-Hindu relations. What adds to the complexity of the issue is that there is an underlying attempt to project a single authoritative version of events. In reading these narratives, their politics and the role of these politics in legitimizing power and sectarian authority have to be understood. The narratives are not literal descriptions of what actually happened although some claim to be so.

There is an unavoidable non-religious character of Maḥmūd's expeditions which is made obvious once the salient features of the spirit of the age and the imperial ambitions of Mahmūd to establish a strong empire seated in central Asia are properly recognised and understood. There is a strong case to argue that Maḥmūds designs in Hind were largely economic in nature and religion played a convenient political and military tool at best. The Ghaznavid army was not made up of religious zealots but with enlisted and paid troops accustomed to fight for the cause of their employer. There is no credible evidence to suggest that Maḥmūd sought Hindu conversion to Islam and the administrative system left in Hind appears to have been structured more so for the augmentation of new revenues rather than any meaningful attempt for governance. Maḥmūd's introduction of bilingual and multicultural currency can be seen as evidence of his readiness to compromise in order to affect some form of workable relationship with the Hindus. However, Ghaznavid administration would have undoubtedly fallen to his ministers as Maḥmūd spent his life occupied with military exploits.

Based on this understanding, the pillage of temples and destruction of Hindu religious symbols should be viewed under the pretext of political and military strategy and should by no means be attributed to Islam. The search for Islamic universalism is thus left to a more academic pursuit and should be sought for not in the example of Maḥmūd but in al-Bīrūnī's narrative in the *Taḥqīq* which for all intents and purposes, consists of a blueprint for human and cross-civilizational integration.

Al-Bīrūnī explained that his *Taḥqīq* was designed to serve as a means to discuss and interact with the Hindus. Were Muslims not already interacting with them? What was absent within existing platforms of Muslim-Hindu relations that encouraged al-Bīrūnī to

endeavour his work in the *Taḥqīq*? There were established commercial relations and some system of governance. Although al-Bīrūnī must have almost certainly been aware of these existing platforms of exchange and interaction, this paper argues that he purposely chose not to mention them because firstly he thought them to be superficial and perhaps emanating from "motives of questionable cupidity and animosity". [88] More importantly, there had been little to no interaction between learned Muslims and learned Hindus. This justifies al-Bīrūnī's endeavour whilst explaining the sense in which he referred to Maḥmūd, in that the political and economic interaction were the more dominant platforms of exchange. These platforms clearly did not express purely Islamic sentiments and as such failed to represent Islam. As was the case of Muslim scholarship on Hindus and Hinduism, the existence of platforms of exchange is no guarantee that such platforms, in the manner they currently exist, are conducive to forging a new society consisting of both Muslims and Hindus. As has been demonstrated, the motives for the economic and political interaction with the Hindus were all the result of motives other than religious, and as such, they lacked the power of religion to transcend petty disputes and differences and consolidate a new community based on meaningful and lasting foundations. A new vision was needed of how Muslims perceive the Hindus. It is with this in mind that al-Bīrūnī drew in the propensity of Islam to overcome apparent differences and identify points of similarity recognisable to objective learned Muslims. In al-Bīrūnī we find an attempt to approach Muslim-Hindu relations from the point of view of a learned and committed Muslim scholar, not a politician or merchant with their mundane and worldly pursuits. In short, al-Bīrūnī approached the *Taḥqīq* with a certain purpose in mind, namely to set the scene for a narrative on Islamic universalism that would facilitate the application of Islamic values in the study and appropriate of Hindu learning. Irrespective of the greater complexity inherent within the variables with which al-Bīrūnī framed his discussion, fundamental changes to the frame of mind of both Muslims and Hindus were still very much needed to bring about a meaningful and sustainable relationship between Muslims and Hindus.

[88] Sachau, *India.* Vol. 1, 4; al-Bīrūnī,. *Tahqīq,* 2

A TRIBUTE TO *AL-MARHUM* PROFESSOR DATUK MOHAMED MACKEEN (1928–2013)

Mohd. Kamal Hassan

Professor Mackeen, together with the late Tan Sri Dr. Abdul Rauf, laid the foundation of Islamic Religious Studies in the then newly established Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, in 1961.[1] The department offered courses on Islamic thought, law, mysticism, history, literature, Qur'anic exegeses and Arabic language. I joined the department as an undergraduate student in1963 when the late Tan Sri Dr. Abdul Rauf was the head. A few years later Tan Sri left Malaysia to work in the U.S.A. and Professor Mackeen took over as the head for several years.

As an undergraduate at the University of Malaya, I benefitted and enjoyed the course on Islamic Thought and Sufism taught by Professor Mackeen, an outstanding lecturer who was highly respected by students for his deep knowledge of the subjects he taught, his serious demeanour, and his immaculate English. In the second year of my study, there were only two students who decided to specialize in Islamic Studies, namely, the late Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady and me. So our classes with Professor Mackeen in Islamic Theology and Islamic Law were like getting a special private tuition from the learned professor. My relationship with Professor Mackeen grew when I became an M.A. student under his close supervision from 1966-1968. It was he who suggested that I should work on the writings of the Egyptian Sufi-Faqih, 'Abd al-Wahhab bin Ahmad al-Misri al-Sha'rani (1493-1565) who was a Shafi'i scholar and prolific author of works in Sufism, Sacred Law, and tenets of faith. He was also a Sufi *shaikh* who maintained the unity between Islamic spirituality and Islamic law in his writings, especially in the well-known work *Al-Mizan al-Kubra* "The Supreme Scale". His other works include *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* "The Supreme Levels", *Lata 'if*

[1] **A Keynote Address delivered at the** Seminar in Commemoration of the late Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohamed Mackeen bin Abdul Majid.

al-Minan wa al-Akhlaq "Subtleties of Gifts and Character", *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah* "The Fecundating Sacred Illuminations" *Kitab al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir fi Bayan 'Aqa'id al-Akabir* "The Book of Rubies and Jewels: An Explanation of the Tenets of Faith of Mystic Luminaries". After working under his direct supervision and mentorship for two years, he managed to get my admission into Columbia University, New York, to continue my M.A. studies at the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures, where the late Joseph Schacht with whom Professor Mackeen had been in communication, taught. I will never forget my first encounter with the well-known Orientalist in his office in late 1968 to inform him of my plan to work on al-Sha'rani and that I had made good use of his scholarly article on al-Sha'rani in the old edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

My two years of postgraduate study under Professor Mackeen at the University of Malaya were most important for the foundation of my academic career. The most unexpected and challenging assignment the learned *shaikh* made me (his *murid*) do was to study German at the Goethe Institut once a week for a year to be able to eventually refer to the articles written in German on Islamic religion. (My colleague `Uthman El-Muhammady was required to study French by his supervisor, the late Dr. Hasan). He introduced me to the rigours of academic discipline in a systematic way by teaching me how to use the important references ("tools") for research in Islamic religious studies, such as the classical Arabic dictionaries including the *Lisan al-'Arab* and *Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi's al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfaz al-Qur'an*, the biographical works on Muslim scholars, the authoritative references of Qur'anic and Hadith exegeses; Carl Brockelmann's (1868-1956) original volumes *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (GAL), as well as the three supplement volumes, including the indexes, which together, offer bio-bibliographic information about works written in Arabic and their authors, with an emphasis on the classical period; the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (ZDMG) "Journal of the German Oriental Society" on Oriental and Middle Eastern studies, published by the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft since 1847; Wensinck's *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane* (8

vols); and Fuat Sezgin's voluminous *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, a standard reference in the field. Professor Mackeen also taught me how to look for Arabic manuscripts from overseas universities or libraries, particularly on works written by al-Sha'rani. In those days one could purchase microfilms of MSS one needed and then one would have had to spend hours studying those MSS using the microfilm reader in the university library. Fortunately for me, I was able to purchase the published work of al-Sha'rani, i.e., *al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah fi Ma'rifat Qawa'id al-Sufiyyah*, his famous book on the principles of *tasawwuf* and spiritual purification, and my supervisor for the M.A. thesis at Columbia University, the late Azhari scholar, Dr. Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, who wrote his Ph.D thesis on *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd: A Study of the Third/Ninth Century Mystic* (E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, 1962), kindly agreed to my choice of al-Sha'rani's text. I must admit that I probably would not have been able to stand the long dreary hours poring over an Arabic MSS through the microfilm reader in the cold basement of the library of Columbia University if not for the support I received! Of course, my Professor Mackeen was used to that kind of routine scholarly investigation because he had to study and compare many MSS collected from different universities for his Ph.D study of the origin and development of the Shadhiliyyah Sufi movement. Let me now turn my attention to the intellectual life and thought of the learned Professor. At this point I must express my gratitude and indebtedness to the family and children of the late Professor – in particular Brother Mukram and Professor Dr. Akram -- for providing me with all the biographical information that follows:

Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohamed Mackeen bin Abdul Majid was born in Colombo, June 1928, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) from the community of Muslims who were descendants of the Arabs who settled there and officially designated as "Moors" by the government. He was the fourth child from a family of five (three boys and two girls). His primary education was in Hameediah Boys School (original name "Al Madrasatul Khairiyyatul Islamiah", 1884), while his secondary school education was at the Zahira College (founded in 1892 as Al Madrasatul Zahira), both in Colombo. He obtained his Ph.D in 1961 from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of

London, after getting a first class honours Bachelor's degree at the university which entitled him to go straight into the Ph.D programme without having to do the Master's degree.

Being a very bright student, he was always keen to pursue university level education in Islamic Studies and Arabic having done well throughout his schooling years in these subjects. Unfortunately his desire to enroll into the only existing university degree in Islamic Studies/Arabic that was offered by the University of Ceylon was thwarted by the closure of the relevant department due to a lack of applicants, which ultimately resulted in the termination of this degree programme. Due to this development and having lost both parents at a young age (mother around 2 years and father during his early teens), he started working after his A-levels at the Road Transport Department to contribute towards supporting the family along with two older brothers. During this period though, he never gave up his commitment to Arabic and Islamic Studies as illustrated by his studentship under the late Shaikh Abul Hassan from Kayalpatnam, India, who was a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Ceylon prior to its closure. His close association with Shaikh Abul Hassan, who for all intents and purposes was his Shaikh/Guru, enabled him to receive further training in the study of the classical texts, especially of Shafi'i *fiqh*, Imam al-Ghazali and *Tasawwuf*, from his teacher who was himself a product of a classical education in Islamic religious studies. Both he and Shaikh Abul Hassan were devout followers of the *Shadhiliyyah tarīqah*, having both come from families that were staunch practitioners of the *Shadhiliyyah* order. Sadly, his Shaikh fell ill and passed away soon after which left a deep impact on his intellectual and spiritual life. After many years of instruction from his late teens under his Shaikh, he went ahead with his original plan to study for a degree in Arabic/Islamic Studies.

By this time, he had obtained a scholarship from the government of Ceylon to pursue this goal at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in the mid 50s. Interestingly, because of his sound command of both Arabic and English, as well as his pre-existing knowledge of the classical Islamic texts and Arabic, he completed his undergraduate degree in less than a year after which

he continued with his PhD over the next three years producing a dissertation entitled "The Origin and Development of the *Shadhiliyyah*" in the process acquiring a working knowledge of both French and German. The selection of this topic was not surprising given his strong links to the *Shadhiliyyah* order beginning with his own father, other family members and his Shaikh. During these three years, he spent time doing field work in North Africa collecting primary and original data on the *Shadhiliyyah*, which till today remains among the definitive articles on the analytical history of the subject.

At that time, he harboured a desire to move to the Maghrib and possibly settle there because of his love of the region and of the *Shadhiliyyah*. However, all this came to a fortuitous change, when he met another doyen of Islamic Studies in Malaysia (Malaya then), the *al-Marhum* Tan Sri Prof. Dr. Abdul Rauf who, at that time, was Head of the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, who invited him to join him at University of Malaya. *Al-Marhum* Tan Sri Prof. Abdul Rauf had been invited to give a talk organised by the SOAS Islamic Society of which Professor Mackeen was the President. This chance encounter and Tan Sri's persistent persuasion eventually led to his decision to come over to Malaya and start an academic career during an interesting and exciting period in the newly independent former British colony of Malaya.

The academic operation of the department of Islamic Studies at University of Malaya was run by a small closely-knit team of lecturers from overseas, mainly the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent, and administered via the Klang Muslim College. This small group of dedicated lecturers-cum-educators which included Ismail Nawwab, Dr. Abul Hasan, Dr. Syed Jeffrery, Hussain Dabbagh, Hussain Safadi and Encik Ali Taib was initially led by the *al-Marhum* Tan Sri Prof. Abdul Rauf who later left for the United States (and returned again in the 80s as the first IIUM Rector in 1983). Considering global developments of the period in the teaching of Islamic Studies at universities, Professor Mackeen published an insightful article in two instalments with the self-explanatory title "Islamic Studies: a University Discipline," in *The Muslim World* (Volume 55, Issue 3, July 1965, First & Second Instalments, pp. 246–260 & 297-303) on

the position of Islamic Studies at universities worldwide. By the mid 60s, he took sabbatical leave from the department to carry out postgraduate legal studies at Gonville and Caius College at the University of Cambridge in Islamic Law and its administration in Malaysia. This led to his admission to one of the Inns of Court in London (Gray's Inn) and resulted in a seminal publication on the administration of Islamic law in Malaysia entitled *Contemporary Islamic Legal Organization in Malaya* (Yale University Press) which continues to be an important historical reference text on the subject till today. Both he and *al-Marhum* Tan Sri Prof. Ahmad Ibrahim were good friends who pioneered the modern study of Islamic Law in Malaysia. Both of them worked at UM at the same time, but served in different faculties, i.e. the Faculties of Arts (Dept. of Islamic Studies) and Law, respectively.

Many of the lecturers in the department who were from overseas eventually left the country after the change of the medium of instruction from English to Malay. As a natural linguist, he embraced the idea of learning the Malay language which he did in a relatively short period of time to a university level proficiency to teach his courses in Malay (in fact, he even taught his wife Malay). By this stage, more and more local academic members were recruited to join the department, and he had become the Head of Department. However, *al-Marhum* Professor Mackeen stayed on due to his commitment to contribute to the development of Islamic Studies in Malaysia and was later awarded a Malaysian citizenship. His contribution to Islamic Studies in Malaysia during its embryonic and formative years, right after independence from the British, brought him into contact with political leaders of the period such as the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of the country. This interaction and contribution involved the Shariah courts, National Fatwa Committees, Islamic Studies Academy at UM (Kuala Lumpur and Nilam Puri branch). Many of his UM students went on to become important holders of public office as illustrated by His Excellency Tun Abdullah Badawi, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz and others too numerous to mention.

Besides his deep-rooted and lifelong interest in the *Shadhiliyyah tariqah*, he was also very interested in the fields of

Islamic Law, in general, and specifically the study of its administration within the legal framework in Malaysia, Islamic thought based on revelational criteria (Revealed Knowledge), and tertiary Islamic education at universities. Some of his works on Islamic thought also included the importance of following the Sunnah and the theological and Sufi thought of Imam al-Ghazali. His foreword in the book *Fath al-Dayyan* which is traditionally used as a practical reference for *fiqh* of the Shafi'i Madhhab by the Muslim community in Sri Lanka encapsulates the timeless significance of this religious text to the history of the community.

In 1968 Professor Mackeen was awarded a Carnegie Grant for a lecture tour of 12 well-known universities in the U.S.A. He became a member of various international and national organizations such as the Royal Academy of Jordan. Along with some other Islamic scholars, he represented the Muslim World at the Interfaith Dialogue in 1984 held at Windsor Castle under the joint patronage of the late King Hussein of Jordan, and the Duke of Windsor, Prince Phillip. He was also appointed as a member of the National Hijra Council of Pakistan.

After retiring from UM in 1984, he started a project and company called the Islamic Publishing House to publish books on Islamic Classical works. However, due to ill health, he was unable to complete this project. After recovering his health, he then joined the Department of Usuluddin, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM, where he very happily came into contact with many of his former colleagues and students such as the present writer, then Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs of IIUM. It was here that he met many of his future colleagues and taught many students who benefitted greatly from his wisdom, knowledge and spiritual aura. He was delighted to be part of this Kulliyyah (Faculty) because of his strong belief in the primacy of Revelation, an idea that he has espoused as the "revelational criteria' which he presented in a paper entitled "The Revelational Criteria in Islamic Thought" in Japan in 1981. At a later stage of his sojourn in IIUM, he developed a very strong interest in Islamic Spiritual Healthcare based on Revealed Sources such Hadith related to Prophetic Medicine. He strongly believed in, and advocated, the rediscovery and promotion of this heritage of Islam in our daily lives. Sadly, his health gradually began to deteriorate

towards the end of his time at IIUM, and he suffered a major stroke in 2009 after retiring in 2008 at the age of 80. Despite his deteriorating health, he continued to enjoy seeing visitors, especially his former students. Allah (swt) extended his life for several more years until his demise on the 12th of October, 2013. He was honoured by the King of Malaysia with the PJN (Pingat Jasa Negara, which carries the title "Datuk") in 2009 for services rendered to the nation. The list of his works known to the present writer is as follows:

1. "Studies in the Origin and Development of *al-Shadhiliyyah*". Ph.D thesis at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), 1961.

2. "The Sufi-Qawm Movement", *The Muslim World*, Volume 53, Issue 3, 1963 pp. 212-225.

3. "Islamic Studies: a University Discipline", *The Muslim World* , Volume 55, Issue 3, July 1965, First & Second Installments, pp. 246–260 & 297-303.

4. *Contemporary Islamic Legal Organization in Malaya*. New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1969.

5. "The Rise of *al-Shadhili*" (d. 656/1258), *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1971), pp. 477–486

6. "The Early History of Sufism in the Maghrib Prior to *Al-Shādhilī* (d. 656/1258)" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1971), pp. 398-408

7. "The Rise of *al-Shādhilī* (d. 656/1258)" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1971), pp. 477-486

8. "Some Thoughts on the Meaning of 'Following the Sunnah' "*Ittiba' al-Sunnah*", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 1981), pp. 357-373 (Paper presented to the Third World

Conference on the Sirah and the Sunnah—24—29th November, 1979 in Doha, Qatar).

9. "Islamic Thought in the Modern World: The Need for an Integrated Approach" in *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge (Proceedings and Selected Papers of the Second Conference on Islamization of Knowledge (1402 ah/ 1982 ac), Herndon, Virginia, U.S.A., I.I.I.T., 1988, pp. 67-72.*

10. "The Revelational Criteria in Islamic Thought" *Islamic Quarterly* 30.1 (Jan 1, 1986): 45.

HIS CORE IDEAS

One of his core ideas and beliefs was great respect for traditional Sunni religious scholarship and the necessity of upholding an integrated worldview. He had strong reservations for the modernist critics, as reflected in the following statement:

> I suspect that in most cases they are devoid of any philosophical content and reflect an attitude of complacence with the prevailing situation rather than one of introspection. It was not so much the intrinsic nature of these components of classical Muslim education that barred progress in the past as the tragic dichotomy in its system which resulted in the virtual divorce of liberal education from the so-called ideal of Muslim learning and intellectualism…. What these advocates of educational reform strove to achieve was the integration of a shattered thought-world, the establishment of lines of communication between the artificially created compartments of knowledge, and the reinforcement of Muslim civilization with the stupendous potentialities of modern thought and knowledge. They visualized a system of education which would produce scholars possessing an intellectual curiosity sufficient to challenge them to seek new answers to new problems (Mackeen 1965: 299).

His penchant for thoroughness in the study of Islamic religious discipline is reflected in the long quotation of the British expert on Sufism, A.J.Arberry who opines:

> It goes without saying that the most important of all preliminaries must be a very thorough knowledge of the Qur'an, Traditions, and the important schools of Muslim theology. Unless we are prepared to undertake very arduous mental discipline imposed by these conditions of our studies, we cannot hope to produce work that is likely to have a permanent value, and would be more profitably employed in some other study making less exacting demands. Stern and selfless discipline has ever been required of all aspirants to the mysteries of the Sufi way, and it is but appropriate that we who may not be practicing Sufis, but rather theoretical investigators should find our path no less beset by hardships. Finally, I may perhaps be permitted to say something on the psychological approach to Sufi studies. Having regard to the nature of mysticism, which is surely at once the most profound and the sublimest of human activities, it will not be extravagant to require of those intending its study at least some natural inclination towards the higher metaphysic, some sincere understanding and sympathy for the upward strivings of the spirit, so that their researches may be undertaken not out of mere curiosity, even the curiosity of the scientist, but because believing themselves that mystical knowledge is the goal of all science, they desire to apprehend how far the great initiates within Islam have penetrated to the essence of such knowledge, and thereby to increase their own inward comprehension of its mysteries. It follows as a natural consequence that they are not best qualified to study Sufism whose attitude to religion in general, or to Islam in particular, is conditioned by hostility or bigotry; nor, in truth, if I may be allowed to make this point, will

> those Muslims be ideally fitted to take up this research who find themselves unable to appreciate the mysticism of other faiths than their own. In brief, the student of Sufism ought himself to be something of a Sufi (Mackeen 1965: 301).

He anticipated the possibility of extending the relevance of Islamic religious values and perspectives to the social sciences when he said:

> It has often been said that Islam is not merely a faith, but also a civilization. This would make it possible to transpose Islamic studies in terms of social sciences. There are sufficient original sources to justify subjects like economic ideas in Islam, political science, sociology, international affairs, and so on. To this may be added the dialects, folklore, and cultures of the various Muslim regional entities. Whatever be the theme of study, whether theology, music, history or sociology, a specialist in Islamic studies must display the highest standard of scholastic integrity. He must be competent in the use of the primary sources of Islam and in Arabic philology and semantics. To depend on secondary sources and forms of field techniques would be to circumscribe the area of scholarship to lamentable limits (Mackeen 1965: 301).

A more fundamental core idea and conviction of Professor Mackeen's thought and personality is the supremacy of what he called " Revelational Criteria" in Islamic thought which guarantees Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy, while at the same time safeguarding the authenticity and Islamicity of Muslim scholarship, discourse and intellectual growth in the face of the new modernist and rationalist trends. First he highlights in his paper presented at the 1982 Second Conference on Islamisation of Knowledge, held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the tragedy of the dichotomy of "socially realistic 'secular' thought and the faith-oriented 'religious' thought:

> The conflicts and tensions in the world today have resulted largely from conflicting systems of thought, which in turn provide contradictory stimuli and breed contradictory human motivations and responses-a situation that has brought about a serious imbalance in the human behavioral and thought patterns. This tendency was particularly marked in countries that came under the political and economic determinism of alien ruling powers. In the lands of Islam, the process started much earlier with the disintegration of Islamic political authority, which weakened the political existence of the *'Ummah* and gradually paved the way for the infiltration of a kind of "foreign thinking" among the ranks of the Muslims.
>
> The ultimate result was the creation of a distinction between the socially realistic "secular" thought and the faith-oriented "religious" thought, with little or no prospect of ever closing the gap between them as these distinctions were perpetuated by powerful vested interests. The eventual outcome of this development was the insulation of Islamic thought from the main currents of thought predominating the minds of Muslim thinkers, planners, and administrators in the contemporary Muslim world. Though denied its proper place in modern planning and thinking, Islamic thought refused to be crushed out of existence, but withdrew instead into sheltered precincts of its own and closed its door to the challenges flung at it by the vast expansion of knowledge in the modern world. This state of Islamic thought continues to prevail among the ranks of Muslims the world over (Mackeen 1982).

The assimilative and creative potential of Islamic scholarship grounded in the integrity of the Islamic worldview, in his mind, was the driving force of the enormous intellectual development in the classical period such that the stability of the foundation of Islamic

civilization was maintained intact:

> They accomplished this not by rejecting the tools of intellectual argument and the standards of rational criteria, but by a careful and extensive study of the nature and potential of these tools in order to convert them into new Islamic modes of expression within the framework of the first-principles set down in the revealed bases of Islam, the Quran and the *Sunnah*. The enormous intellectual development and literary activity which followed during the Abbasid period is a clear testimony to the assimilative and the creative potential of those men who understood the first-principles of the ideology of Islam. The understanding and preservation of the integrity of the Islamic world-view in all segments of human thought and behavior were the basic factor that provided the stability and resources to withstand the strains and stresses accompanying the internal expansion of Islam in the early centuries.
>
> The sense of the integrity and wholeness of Islam was at its highest during the life time of Prophet Muhammad, (SAAS). Its impact was absorbed in the following centuries and found itself permanently enshrined in the entire range of Islamic literature. If we look at the titles of books produces by the early Muslim scholars-whether in the field of historiography, law, theology or science-we cannot escape the conclusion that every single work authored by Muslim scholars, until very recent times, bore the imprint of a category of knowledge that had its roots in the *revealed* guidance of Allah (Mackeen 1982).

The need to filter the new knowledge of the social and natural sciences, and the vigilance of the pioneering Muslim scholars "in maintaining the integrity of Islam as communicated in the revealed sources" is forcefully argued in the following paragraphs:

The impending challenge of the problems caused by the expansion of unfiltered knowledge, the active evolution of behavioral patterns of humans, and their conflicts with rationally accepted conclusions and morally approved norms of behavior, is enormous. *We must mobilize the resources at our command to produce the minds and the books to ensure the proper understanding and realization of the relationship between the knowledge of Allah and the knowledge of man, the act of man, and the power of Allah and the power of man* [italics added].

Although the predicament of the Muslims of this age may be compared in one sense with the position of the early Muslims on whom fell the onus of pinning down with precision the terms of Islamic Civilization, yet the contrast between them in the natural ability of their striking power seems so helplessly marked that nothing short of a major offensive to halt the further disintegration of the mentality of the Muslims can save the situation. *The early Muslims had accepted, without reservation, the postulates of a revealed thought-world and the integrity of Islamic thought and channeled their energies toward the realization of these concept both in thought as well as in deed. This stamp of an integrated mind, that had understood the first principles of Islam, has disintegrated dangerously and needs immediate corrective measures* [italics added].

The corrective measures at our disposal seem limited in their capacity to prevent the collapse; the seeds of Islamic knowledge are being sown on shallow soil and are germinating in a restricted area. Our energies should be directed toward a re-exposition of the first principles of Islam with the aid of all the useful and effective weapons at our disposal. Let the Muslims re-construct

> upon the foundations of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS), the first principles of Islam, test them in their own lives, and bestow the benefits of their re-discoveries to the world at large.
>
> In the exposition of first principles, care must be taken to ensure finding one perfectly in accord with the will of Allah, for by definition a Muslim must submit to the Will of Allah, and the Will of Allah is represented in the revelationally-guided behavior patterns of all matter and thought. But what is important is not just to verbalize our submission to the Will of Allah and to witness the natural behavior of the universe as a manifestation of His Will but to understand and surrender to the law of Allah with full awareness of its implications. This alone can protect man from the consequences that may follow the rejection of this law of Allah (Mackeen 1982).

It is obvious that al-Marhum Professor Mackeen realizes the tremendous challenge in the endeavor to integrate human knowledge with divine revelation, to filter the praiseworthy from the blameworthy aspects of the social and natural sciences or to Islamicise some aspects of modern acquired knowledge. But with the precedent of the success in producing the integrated minds of early Muslim scholarship so apparent in the history of Islamic thought, the new paths to be trodden, with all the slippery slopes, can only be guided and made safe by the light of revealed truths embodied in the Glorious Qur'an and the Blessed Sunnah. In the end, it is perhaps worth recapitulating and pondering upon what the learned Professor said and cautioned earlier:

> *The early Muslims had accepted, without reservation, the postulates of a revealed thought-world and the integrity of Islamic thought and channeled their energies toward the realization of these concepts both in thought as well as in deed. This stamp of an integrated mind, that had understood the first principles of Islam,*

has disintegrated dangerously and needs immediate corrective measures (Mackeen 1982).

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Sayyid Mohamed Ajmal Abdul Razak Al-Aidrus is the Head of Research and Publication at ISTAC. He obtained all his tertiary education from the United States. Ajmal translated the complete *Mathnawi* of Jalaluddin Rumi into Malay in 2009. His Fitzgerald's Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam is due to be published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka this year.

Mohammed Farid Ali is a Research Fellow at IAIS. He was formerly the Mufti of the Fiji Islands. He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy (Muslim World Issues) in 2011 and Masters in Islamic Civilisation in 2006 from ISTAC, IIUM. His dissertation was entitled, "Principles of Issuing *Fatwā (Uṣūl Al-Iftā)* in the Hanafi Legal School: An Annotated Translation, Analysis and Edition of *Sharḥ ʿUqõd Rasm Al-Mufti* of Ibn ʿĀbidīn Al-Shāmi." Farid studied classical Persian, Arabic, the Qur'an and *Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*, the six authentic *hadīth books*, *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth*, *al-Muwatta* of Imam Malik and al-Muwatta of Imam Muhammad, *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, Logic, *Kalām*, and tasawwuf.

Bican Şahin is an associate professor of political science at Hacettepe University, Ankara. He is the former president of the Association for Liberal Thinking. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2003. His area of interests is toleration, liberalism, democracy, the compatibility of Islam and liberal democracy. His two relevant publications are his article "Toleration, Political Liberalism, and Peaceful Coexistence in the Muslim World", The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 24, No. 1 (2006):1-24; and his book, *Toleration: The Liberal Virtue*, Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2010.

Nafiz Tok is an associate professor of political and social sciences in the Department of Public Administration at Niğde University. He received his undergraduate degree (BA) in the Faculty of Political Science, Ankara University, between 1987-1991. He began his

academic career as a research assistant in Political Science, at Niğde University in 1993. Tok completed his MA and PhD degrees in Political Theory at the Department of Politics, at Exeter University, England between 1994-2001. He is the author *of Culture, Identity and Politics (Kültür, Kimlik ve Siyaset)* published by Ayrıntı, and he is the editor of *Republicanism* (Cumhuriyetçilik) *published* by Orion.

Bilal Sambur is a professor of psychology of religion and chairperson of the Department of Psychology at Yıldırım Beyazit University. Previously he taught at the Department of Religious and Philosophical Sciences at the University of Süleyman Demirel, Isparta-Turkey. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham, Department of Theology, Birmingham, UK in 2000. His dissertation is entitled "Prayer in the psychology of religion with special reference to al-Ghazali, Ata Allah al-Iskandari, and Muhammad Iqbal." Prior to his appointment at the University of Süleyman Demirel, he worked as lecturer in Islamic Studies at various universities and colleges, including Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham-UK (2000–2001), The University of Birmingham, Birmingham – UK (1999–2000), and Woodbrook College, Birmingham – UK (1999- 2000). In summer 2007, he was visiting fellow at Acton Institute, Grand Rapids, MI, USA.

Peter C. Mentzel, Ph.D. is a Senior Fellow at Liberty Fund, Inc. He received his Ph.D. in History from the University in Washington in 1994, after which he taught History at Utah State University, where he regularly taught courses on Islam and the History of the Middle East. His research focuses on the social and intellectual history of South Eastern Europe and the Middle East in general, and on the late Ottoman Empire in particular. His publications include *Transportation Technology and Imperialism in the Ottoman Empire*, and (as editor) *Muslim Minorities in the Balkans.*

Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad received his PhD from Princeton University in 2000. His dissertation which was published by ISTAC in 2006, was entitled, "Fatwas of Condemnation: Islam and the Limits of Dissent." He has presented papers at the Warburg Institute,

School of Advanced Studies, London University, and Cambridge. Saiyad Nizamuddin is presently at the American University in Cairo.

Shafiq Flynn was born in Hamilton, New Zealand. He graduated with a Diploma in Arabic language from the Institute of Arabic Language, International University of Africa (IUA), Sudan, followed by a Bachelor Degree in Islamic Studies from the Faculty of Islamic Studies, IUA. He completed his Master Degree in Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, from IIUM. His thesis was entitled, "Al-Bīrūnī's Emic-Etic Paradigm in Comparative Religious Studies." Shafiq is currently a PhD candidate with the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, IIUM under the supervision of Prof. Ibrahim Zein.

Ibrahim M. Zein is a senior professor with the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, IIUM. The author of numerous academic works, he completed his PhD from Temple University, Philadelphia, in Islamic studies and philosophy. He is currently dean of the Kulliyyah of the Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences.

Mohd. Kamal Hassan was born in Pasir Mas, Kelantan in 1942. He obtained his first degree in Islamic Studies from Universiti Malaya (UM) in 1965, and his Masters (MA) and PhD (1975) degrees from Columbia University, New York. He began his career at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) as Shaikh al-Kulliyyah in 1983. He became the first Dean of the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS), IIUM and the Rector of IIUM from 1999 to 2006. He is currently a Professor at ISTAC and a national Distinguished Professor (Profesor Ulung).

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