

Towards Inclusive India: State Legislation for Inter-Faith Co-Existence during the Period of Emperor Akbar

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ABSTRACT

The current research focuses on the state legislation during the period of Mughal Emperor Akbar, his attempt to reconcile religion and state legislation and his practical efforts to bring inter-faith co-existence in India of that time. The presupposition of Akbar was based on account of Hindu majority and presence of minorities of various other faiths along with the ruling and martial race of the Muslims. Seeking holistic political and legal legitimacy, Akbar presented Dīn-i-Ilāhī, a divine theory of his own, to introduce a new religious cultural after bringing various religious figures together. The regal attempts for religiosity of the social fabric and holiness of the emperor brought social growth and legal innovations in state legislation and vice versa with the purpose to bring political and legal stability. The present study highlights the long period during which its various acts were promulgated, its impacts on the consolidation of power and social fabric in India during the period of Akbar specifically in terms of inter-faith co-existence and its impacts on the future Mughal administration. The future Mughal administration included Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān after which it lost its worth as well as application. The study finally concludes that Akbar's attempts in the shape of Dīn-i-Ilāhī bore fruits in the shape of the progress and development during the era of two later Mughal emperors.

Key Words: *Mughal State legislation, Dīn-i-Ilāhī, Akbar's Dīn-i-Ilāhī, Impacts of Dīn-i-Ilāhī, Aftermaths of Dīn-i-Ilāhī.*

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Introduction

Although democratic dispensation is essential for state legislation which the Mughal rule does not evince in its shape, structure and dispensation, for it was a monarchic set up. Yet *Farmāns* often show the state legislation having background of Islamic jurisprudence evolved and documented from the Islamic Caliphate and which seemed to have some democratic signs.¹ Exactly like Caliphate system, medieval kingship was not akin to Mughal emperorship,² for a king legitimacy was necessary which is not necessary in dictatorial rulership. Despite solid Caliphate system during the initial period of Islam³ and later the establishment of the sources of legitimacy, pious Caliphate system could not survive⁴ and its center shifted to Syria. This led to outright monarchy which have been witnessed in India too, as R. P. Khosla⁵ argues that despite being Islamic in connotations, this system has been established for “the self-interest of the few and the utter helplessness of the many” but still required legitimacy to pacify the people of varied faiths.⁶ Moreover, two other great Islamic empires of the Ottoman and the Safavids were also representing instances of the promulgation of Islamic jurisprudence.⁷ Khawandamir⁸, a noted legal scholar of the earlier times, rightly stated that extension in the borders of India further added chaos for which the application of purely Islamic legislation was almost impossible.⁹ Therefore, Bābur demonstrated prudence when practicing Islamic jurisprudence in India despite swearing allegiance to the caliph of that time.¹⁰ The major issue before Akbar was to keep that extensive region of India under his rule through state legislation couching it with not only the disparate Indian religious communities but also with the domineering but

¹ John L. Esposito, John Obert Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26.

² *Ibid.*, 35-48.

³ Dr. Muhammad Zaki, *History of Muslim Rule - The Prophet and the Early Rulers* (New Delhi: Beacon Publishers, 2006), 273-74.

⁴ William Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall: From Original Sources* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1891), 280-285.

⁵ R. P. Khosla has been an officer of the Indian Civil Service and a noted historian on the Mughal period. He served the government of India on many important positions.

⁶ R. P. Khosla, *Administrative Structure of the Great Mughals* (Delhi: Kanti Publications, 1991), 3-4.

⁷ Major Waller Ashe, *Personal Records of the Kandahar Campaign* (London: David Bogue, St Martin's Place, 1881), xxviii.

⁸ Khawandamir or Khwanad Mīr was the title of Ghiyāth-ud-Dīn Muḥammad (1474-75), a noted noble and scholar of Humāyūn. He also wrote *Qānūn-i-Humāyūn*.

⁹ Khawand Mīr, *Qānūn-i-Humāyūn's*, trans. by Baini Prasad (Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940), 36.

¹⁰ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948),

opposing Islamic empires of that time to keep India away from polarization and move it toward inclusive and consolidated state of that time. Inclusivity was to be established through inter-faith cohesion which Akbar saw through the prism of the uniformity of religious ideas. Perhaps, that is why it stated that Akbar announced at that time that “no man should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone is to be allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him.”¹ However, in terms of innovation in religion or a new religion, Akbar’s *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* rather led the Mughal administration to form new *ḍawābiṭ* [laws and rules] for running the government as prepared by the king and that it was not a *Sharī‘ah* based government.² In fact, the arrival of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* seems to be the obligation or obligatory duty that Akbar felt he had had toward his subjects as a king and he must perform.³ The given literature review about *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* would further establish this obligation of the emperor where he is stated to have considered himself as a divinely appointed king.

1. Literature Review

This literature review covers the background to Akbar’s rule, his situation of dealing with multireligious society in India, state legislation during the Mughal period and Akbar’s innovation of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* and its major features applicable to his empire. As far as his background is concerned, Akbar came into power during a very turbulent period following the death of Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Humāyūn who fell from the stairs and left the young 13-year old prince to rule the vastly chaotic empire. Various races, ethnicities, nationalities and clans became unruly and started posing problems for him to manage and run his government.⁴ Although administration of having various stations and generals appointed duly by the emperor facilitated the legislation through *Farmān-e-Shāhī* and its enforcement through military commander-cum-administrators, the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims and two major sections within the Muslim community, *Sunnī* and *Shī‘ah*, became an anathema in his monarchical setup.⁵ Furthermore, distance from the central Caliphate of that time and multireligious and multiethnic nature of

¹ Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 18. Also see Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar: The Great Mughal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), 257

² Irfan Habib, *Akbar and his India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ Dr. Khalid Basheer. “Conquest of India by Babur.” *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies* (Jan-Feb, 2016): 1352.

⁵ Khosla, *Administrative Structure of Great Mughals*, 6.

India might have been reasons behind the innovation in Islamic religion,¹ Akbar found it expedient and natural to pay attention to the consolidation of his power through *Farmāns* and then pay attention to legislation and legitimacy of his legislation through mixing different religious dogmas with each other and inventing a new religious narrative to spread the message of peace in his community.² However, it is necessary to have understanding of legislation in modern sense and its application during the Mughal period to have a better understanding of Akbar's *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, its impacts and aftermaths.

As far as legislation is concerned, it has been derived from the English democratic norms and traditions where it has been defined as a set of laws "passed by the parliament" while the word is also used as "the action of making new law."³ *Blackwell's Law Dictionary* defines it as "The process of making or enacting a positive law in written form, according to some type of formal procedure, by a branch of government constituted to perform this process."⁴ However, in terms of state legislation, it means the ruler has the right and the power to make laws and enforce them accordingly. In the light of this interpretation, it seems that state legislation in Mughal Empire was the sole prerogative of the Mughal emperor⁵ as the emperor or the king thought it his responsibility or obligation to form a *ḍābitah* or a rule for the betterment of the people in his empire.⁶ However, there were limits and Akbar faced those limits in the shape of multireligious, multiethnic and multiracial communities living in India among predominantly Hindus and powerful Muslim communities but with entirely contradictory rites, rituals, religious restrictions and ideas. Being himself a Muslim with leanings toward Hinduism, Akbar raised his status as an Islamic emperor and employed clerics, religious scholars and *Muftīs*. On the other hand, there were *Sunnī* and *Shī'ah* Islamic schools of thought both having influence in the court, the reason that Akbar termed himself '*pādshāh*'.⁷ Moreover, he won the loyalties of powerful military commanders and Hindu community by

¹ Ibid., 6-7.

² Ibid., 6-7. See Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, 338, 399. In both instances, *Farmāns* have the same objective.

³ "Legislation," Parliament, <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/legislation/> (accessed May 15, 2019).

⁴ "Legislation," in *Blackwell's Law Dictionary* edited by Bryan A. Garner, (WEST, St Paul, Minnesota, USA), 982

⁵ Irfan Habib, *Akbar and his India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁷ Abū 'l Faḍl, *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, Trans. by H. Bloch Mann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1872), ii-iii.

marrying the daughter of the raja of Jaipur.¹ In fact, this going above “petty religious barriers” made him forge “inter-religious alliances” to consolidate his power over India². This short background led him to ponder hard and consult with his close religious figures to bring reconciliation between disparate religions. This led to the birth of his famous as well as infamous *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*.

As stated, the *raison d'être* of the formation of this new religion, the promulgation of its different parts, too, have reasons including but not limited to Akbar's own background, his religion, the situation in India and the impacts and presence of different religious communities in his court. These communities include the Jains, the Sikhs, the Buddhists, the Jews and the Christians along with other fringe communities.³ It is stated that Bīrbal, Qāsīm Khān, Shaikh Mubārak, his two sons, Mirzā Ṣadr-ud-Dīn, Shaikh Faizī and some others proved the main architects of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*.⁴ As many of them belonged to different races and ethnicities, Akbar's ingenuity “successfully checked the insubordinate Afghans, unruly Turkish followers and rebellions Mirzās during this entire process.”⁵ Needless to intervene into the wrangling of who did what and how much, there is a conclusive agreement among critics that there is no single documents which could be termed as *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*. However, a pedantic reading of various documents gives an idea that there were three major pillars of this religion which were *Ṣulḥ-i-kul* which means absolute peace, *Rāh-i-'aql*, the path to reason and *Rawā-i-rozī*, the maintenance of livelihood.⁶ Whereas *Ṣulḥ-i-kul* intended to bring religious tolerance and promote diversity, *Rāh-i-'aql* intended to open up debates and freedom of thinking and expression⁷. However, *Rawā-i-rozī* is stated to have been the the gist of a social contract or a contract between the people and the ruler.⁸ Generally, the period of this legislation, if evaluated in the ambit of the state legislation definition, starts from 1575 and ends in 1595 after the last act of this series of *Farmāns* is promulgated through his administration. Akbar did not ignore his empire during these polemics

¹ Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *A Comprehensive History of Medieval India: Twelfth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (New Delhi: Pearson Education India, 2011), 242.

² *Ibid.*, 242.

³ Makhanlal Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi, or The Religion of Akbar*, 4th ed. (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941), 135-36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁶ Jawad Syed, “Akbar's Multiculturalism: Lessons for Diversity Management in the 21st Century” *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 28, no. 4 (2011): 409. Accessed May 17, 2019.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 409.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 409.

and kept an eye on the people arriving from Persia, Badakhshan, Nepal and even Kashmir to welcome them to play their role.¹ Although his political and legal moves came under attacks from orthodox sections² he continued with his moves such as permission to *Mut'ah* marriage or temporary marriage, commentary of the holy Qur'ān and the translation of the Artharva Veda in 1575 to 1576.³ During the years, further *Farmāns* were issued for Pilgrimage department, with the first one to start an address in Akbar's name, introduction of *Sajdah* at the court and introduction of new sentences to be read in the court instead of *Bismillāh*.⁴ Some more specific moves included shaving of beard in 1580, 1580, the celebration of *Naurūz-i-Jalālī*, exchange of rebel clerics with colts in Qandahar, full promulgation of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* in 1582-1583 with the introduction of various other un-Islamic rituals and customs.⁵ Further *Farmāns* were issued from time to time to regulate slaughter of animals including boars, dice playing and interest (usury), application of Hindu rituals and customs, prohibition of some of the Hindu restrictions and so on.⁶ However, all these proceedings of the state legislation followed after after the construction of '*Ibādat-Khānah*'⁷ at Fatehpur Sikri and the issuing of *Mazhar*, a decree to declare the emperor as *Imām-i-Ādil*.⁸ In fact, the same year when *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* was introduced, various other Islamic customs or customs considered specifically Islamic were either banned or brought under the regulation of the *Mughal* administration.⁹ These included the permission to wear silk and gold, discouragement of Arabic reading, some changes in the holy names and above all the establishment of an assembly with the name of *Chihil Tanan* or an assembly of the forty.¹⁰ Such and various other acts promulgated through *Farmāns* from time to time invited criticism as well as praise from certain quarters. Some thought it the divine right of the emperor as well as sanguine thinking of the emperor to bring peace and consequential stability. However, some others thought it distortion of the Islamic concepts while people from other communities took these acts of the

¹ Jawad Syed, "Akbar's Multiculturalism: Lessons for Diversity Management in the 21st Century" *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 28, no. 4 (2011): 409. Accessed May 17, 2019, 213.

² *Ibid.*, 218.

³ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.-21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 222-23.

⁷ Syed "Akbar's Multiculturalism" 405.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 409

⁹ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi*, 222.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

emperor as tolerance and broadmindedness of the main head of the state. In terms of political stability, such orders were bound to bring backlash and severe criticism from the hardened and orthodox clerics, 'Ulamā's and *Muftīs* alike.

2. Analysis

2.1 Impacts of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*

It is important to note that a cursory reading of the *Farmāns* issued from time to time to execute *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* and bring consolidation and stability in India evinces that they were against the accepted norms, traditions and even jurisprudence of Islam at that time. The coinage or invention of this new religious order not only sent a wave of discontent among the Muslims of mainly the *Sunnī* sect, it also causes ripples on international order of those times when the Ottoman Empire was representing the *Sunnī* thoughts of Islam and various orders of Akbar were entirely against the *Sunnī* teachings. Moreover, allergic of the *Shī'ah* presence in the court, some *Sunnī* scholars specifically Badā'ūnī and others got incensed over this outright negation as well rejection of the basic Islamic tenets.¹ The objective of Akbar, however, seemed to reconcile all disparate elements and religious sections in India to bring harmony and unification.² It is interesting that the idea of *Dīn i-Ilāhī* - rather seemed to be influenced by spiritualism or *sufism* and have turned people toward it. It seemed that Abū 'l-Faḍl, Bīrbal and Faizī with 18 others were hellbent on bringing mysticism among the masses for pacifism³ to show it to their emperor that their ideas and amalgamation of of those ideas into a religion through coercive enforcement could bring desired results in social transformation of India. Although it pacified the non-Muslims to some extent, another issue cropped up in the shape of *Sunnī-Shī'ah* rift in the court.⁴ This could have been due to some Persian traditions that Akbar inherited but *Sunnī* clerics and people turned against him on account of *Shī'ah* influences in its excessive form.⁵ The impact toward the *Sunnī* 'Ulamā' of that time was of somewhat antagonistic. Several of them left the court such as Badr-ud-Dīn.⁶ Referring to a seventeenth century book about religions, *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*, a

¹ 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī., *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, Vol. 2, Trans. by W. H. Lowe (Calcutta, Indian Archival Society, 1898), 213.

² Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 251-59.

³ Moon Arif Rahman, *Religious Policy of Akbar* (New Delhi: Pratiyogita Darpan, 2008), 648-50.

⁴ Colin Paul Mitchell, *Sir Thomas Roe and the Mughal Empire* (Michigan: Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Michigan, 2000), 120.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 120-21.

⁶ Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, Vol.2, 212.

Turkish researcher, Cemil Kutlurk, has pointed out ten virtues which have demonstrated the impacts of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*. The liberality and beneficence are among the top with forgiveness, abstinence, care of freedom, wisdom, soft voice and good treatment to others, leaving the world and dedication to God's creatures are few of them.¹ Despite these good features and the objective of the universal peace, it seems that Akbar's overtures toward the religious *Ulema* for their less understanding of Islam became a point of contention. Reviewed in the light of these comments, it seems that the introduction and forceful promulgation of the articles of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* impacted the Indian Mughal Empire in three ways. The first impacts were in the shape of reaction from the Muslim public and then from the religious scholars mostly of the *Sunnī* school of thought, the second impacts were in the shape of pacification of the Hindu community, and third were in the shape of uniformity and harmony with consequential political stability and consolidation of power.

The reaction among the Muslims was based on Akbar's attitude which first evinced emerged out of the desire for consolidation² while later he turned to *Sunnī fiqh*.³ Soon his sympathy, then empathy and thirdly total antipathy.⁴ His early sympathy seems to have a religious scholar Sheikh Aḥmad Sirhindī started berating Akbar and others for introducing heretic beliefs in Islam and perverting Islamic tenets.⁵ He introduced fundamental Islamic concepts and beliefs and started canvassing public support to confront the imperial scholars⁶ and arranged a debate with Faizī and Abū 'l-Faḍl.⁷ This shows two important things; the first that there were religious '*Ulamā*'s to inform the public and second that religious '*Ulamā*'s had clout among the public. Another important point that emerged out of it as being a positive addition is open debates which allowed Akbar some space to adjust to such oppositions. This is exactly what *Rāh-i-aql* means that the society should open to debates which would bring change and promote understanding of other cultures.⁸ Moreover, Sheikh also started purifying Islam from *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* and other contaminants to present the pure shape of Islamic religion

¹ Cemil Kutlurk, "A Critical Analysis of Akbar's Religious Policy: Din-I Ilahi," *International Relations and Diplomacy* 4, no. 6 (June 2016): 415.

² Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, Vol. 2, 320.

³ Ibid., 124.

⁴ Khalid Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, (New Delhi: Idārah-i-Adabiyyāt, 1989), 1.

⁵ Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām-i-Rabbānī*, Vol-1, Letter, No, 47. Self-Translation (Lahore: Progressive Books, 2006), 47-48.

⁶ Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, 262.

⁷ Ibid., 264.

⁸ Syed, "Akbar's Multiculturalism" 209.

before the public through his own books and letters. However, it sets a new course for *Shī'ah-Sunnī* debates and open wrangling.¹ This led to the policy of protectionism about *Shī'ah* minority in that various *Shī'ah* scholars were appointed at good positions in the empire such as Shaikh Gadā'ī as the chief legal officer.² This also led *Shī'ah*, which were considered heretics by the *Sunnī* brethren in India, to openly practice their version of Islam and mingled with other Muslims.³ Moreover, this projection of open *Shīism* brought Persian culture in India and its attendant features such the celebration of *Naurūz* (spring festival) as well as mourning period for a dead etc.⁴ It is also seen that such impacts led to to a counterbalance to the *Sunnī* majority in the court and political stability in that both major schools of thought got engaged in religious polemic instead of causing political volatility. It has also created reconciliation between the two sections following the practice of debate in the court and propagation of mysticism in the empire which led to Sunday rituals of bowing down before the emperor in reverence considering him next to divine power.⁵ Perhaps the inclusion of mysticism and *sufism* in Islamic theology came with the Persian impacts.⁶ On the other hand, demonization of *Shī'ah* school of thought continued even with more ferocity than before, for Shaikh Aḥmad exerted more influence on account of regal resistance to his teachings.⁷ Therefore, in terms of impacts on religious resistance to Akbar, it seems that through this version of religion, Akbar not only succeeded in dividing the martial religious sections that supported him, but also divided its two main branches on the line of bringing a polemic instead of causing political and legal instability in his empire. Moreover, politically very astute, Akbar's move brought people to accept other cultural mores to become prominent in the royal court and seek favor from the emperor and his bureaucracy, which further strengthened his grip on the government and thus on the public. He also stayed cognizant of the new

¹ Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Rūd-i-Kausar* (Lahore: Idārah-i-Saqāfat-i Islāmī, 2005), 231.

² S. M. Ikram, *Muslim Civilizations in India*, ed. Ainslee T. Embree, 2nd Ed (New York: 1965), 34.

³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁴ Richard Nelson Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Rpt. 1977), 3.

⁵ Rahman, *Religious Policy of Akbar*, 648-50.

⁶ Muhammad Zia-ud-Din and Abdul Ghafoor Baloch, "Persian's Diaspora: Its Ideological Influence on the Religious Convictions of Mughal India During 1526-1605", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol, 32, No, 1, (2011). 108-109.

http://www.nihcr.edu.pk/latest_english_journal/5.pdf

⁷ Mohammad Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India, 1605-1748* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974), 163-164.

religious as well as social and political public debates to think way outs to pacify such sections of the society. This has been one way toward an inclusive India. However, some of his moves brought both the communities against him. For example, both *Sunnīs* and *Shī'ahs* think it a religious issue to read Arabic prayers and call for prayers which this new religion banned in 1582.¹ However, there are some contradictions in these statements that some are of the view that prayers were stopped, while others think that prayers were not stopped, and that it is a rumor.² Discouragement of learning Arabic and change in the curriculum to bring Renaissance in India are though proven things which antagonized both the communities.³ Both the sections got infuriated more with the unproven unproven rumors spread about an edict of destroying the copies of the holy Qur'ān which too did not prove as it was spread during the rebellion in Bengal.⁴ Some other changes such as the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him)⁵, dice playing and interest (usury),⁶ eating of wild boars and tigers⁷, regulation of prostitution⁸ and wine⁹ proved controversial. However, Akbar counterbalanced them with some other acts such permission of *Shī'ah* prayers in public,¹⁰ while regulation of education and mosques¹¹ brought him good name. In short, Akbar's *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, though antagonized both the sections of Islam, managed to counterbalance both of them despite creating simmering discontent among the *Sunnī* clears such as the rise of Shaikh Sirhindi. Moreover, he also counterbalanced both of these sects with Hindu by marrying in the Hindu families such as his Rajput Policy according to which he married the daughter of Raja Jaipur to pacify this section of the Hindu religious community.¹² Though this marriage did not fall under this specific religion of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, he permitted marriage in Hindu religion and found refuge in *Mut'ah*, a controversial Islamic concept.¹³ His son's wedding in a Hindu family with Hindu rituals observed in letter and spirit point to the

¹ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi*, 252.

² Ibid., 252.

³ Ibid., 254.

⁴ Ibid., 255.

⁵ Ibid., 256.

⁶ Ibid., 258.

⁷ Ibid., 248.

⁸ Ibid., 246.

⁹ Ibid., 244.

¹⁰ Ibid., 252.

¹¹ Ibid., 253.

¹² Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *A Comprehensive History of Medieval India*, 242.

¹³ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi*, 79

fact that he was soft toward Hindus¹ and his *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* succeeded in pacifying this section of the society. In fact, Roychoudhury writes;

“Nearly 50% of Akbar 's army were manned by the Hindus and the revenue department was practically a monopoly of the Hindus ; so he could not be blind to the sentiments, traditions and psychology of such a major section of the state. He was fortunate enough to have the lesson of Sher Shah before him.”²

It shows that by doing so in *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, Akbar managed Hindus in three different ways. The first was permission of marriage between people of different faiths, second by marrying in Hindu families, he won their loyalties and thirdly by permitting Hindus main jobs in the government he tried to improve their financial conditions. Also, it shows that he brought a good section of his military to his side by supporting the Hindus. His finances improved as Hindus were a specialized religious community in this profession. Moreover, he has history before him to learn that purely Islamic enmity toward Hindus may not bring that stability and peace in his empire he wanted to bring.

Moreover, as the objective of the emperor was to create harmony among all the sections, it was imperative to merge all irreconcilable differences among different faiths during those rough times, the reason that he employed various Hindus at good positions including finance.³ Despite his many concessions to Hindus, he declared *Sattī*, a custom of burning of the widow with the dead husband, unlawful which seems to point out that he was not sympathetic to Hinduism of which he is accused of.⁴ However, he allowed the Hindu personal law to work to win their sympathies. For example, in 1585 he followed Shēr Shāh and “requisition[ed] the services of the Brahmins in judicial trials involving Hindus.”⁵ He also started following various manners of Hindus which was also not uncommon, for “It was a purely social matter where no religious implication should come in”⁶ but it has religious implications for Hindus. They became pacified to a large extent on account of such regal broadmindedness. Furthermore, Akbar gave good ears to the Sikh religious community to bring them closer to him than before as ‘Umar Dās, a *gurū* of the Sikh religion found Akbar very cordial and a good listener.⁷ Regarding the Sikh community, it is stated that he gave another

¹ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi*, 144.

² *Ibid.*, 145.

³ Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, 238.

⁴ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi*, 261

⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

gurū some land in Amritsar in the initial stages that Akbar was named “Muḥsin Fānī” by Gurū Arjun which helped his co-religionists to be at par with followers of the other religions in Indian.¹ Therefore, Akbar’s conversation with both *gurūs* shows his sympathy with this religion with the objective to make it his good ally.² Although Akbar showed sympathy toward other religious such as Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism through different behavior and acts, they, too, had had impacts of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* which helped bring stability in his empire. Apart from these religious impacts intended to bring harmony, *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* also brought political harmony and stability in the empire.

Akbar achieved political harmony and stability by including equal numbers of Hindu influential figures in his inner circles of ministers and state officials after granting them land and paying them huge amount of salaries. Some of the influential figures include professional theologians, physicians, musicians and commanders such as Bihārī Lāl, Mān Singh, Rāja Jagannāth, Rāja Askarān etc.³ When Akbar marched to Hyderabad he had more than 14 influential Hindu figures with him to help him in this military adventure.⁴ Although such political and military steps were taken shortly before the promulgation of the major parts of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, these acts helped him forge political alliances later. They also impacted the political stability and consolidation of power where one or the other religious communities formed political fronts and helped Akbar consolidate his rule. It is also that some of the other acts during the legislation period such as regulation of marriages, prohibition of the slaughter of some sacred animals, regulations of education and religious rituals through *Farmāns* and codification of procedural and criminal laws helped him bring social harmony and social cohesion⁵ which brought normalcy in the public life and dealings and better the economy of the empire. They also helped bring further legislation and legitimacy of some acts which one or the other religious community deemed against their basic faith. In fact, it seems that Akbar might have perceived this before consulting his close aides, clerics and other influential figures of the specific communities before issuing *Farmāns* of legalizing such a disparate number of acts.

¹ Roychoudhury, *The Din-I-Ilahi.*, 165.

² Ibid., 165.

³ Ibid., 213-14.

⁴ Ibid., 215.

⁵ Ibid., 220-25.

2.2 Akbar's Consolidation of Power Through *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*

The question of these acts in the shape of *Farmāns* issued from time to time under the single nomenclature of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* to achieve inclusivity in India during Akbar's own rule and that of his predecessors is not hard to answer. It is clear that Akbar tried to end religious as well as racial differences and integrate the people of India into Indians. For the consolidation of power, the first was the attempt and second was the legitimacy. The attempt was made in the shape of different *Farmāns* under the wider ambit of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, while legitimacy was won through canvassing through inclusion of major figures from different races, religious sections, communities and tribes into the *Mughal* army¹, general administration and legal judicial set up. The import of the Persian idea of the king was to equate the royalty with the divine powers.² It worked well when joined with *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* and brought consolidation by removing hitches among different religions, for the king is supposed to have divine wand to remove such hitches to bring peace in his empire. Mundane affairs and their handling such as in the case of Rājput Policy of Akbar helped the regal authority to end petty disputes.³ Regulation of marriage in *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* helped Akbar pacify Rājputs through inter-marriages⁴ which also helped him quell rebellion from that fiercest tribe of India. Furthermore, as the different communities found peace in India, economic activities grew and stability returned to the empire.⁵ Akbar's grip on the main cities of India grew stronger, his coordination and pacification also evolved further over religious sections and racial tribes, and he became strong with the help of his mixed court comprising all types of intelligentsia taken from different religions and tribes.⁶ In fact, Akbar, during his own lifetime, won stability through innovations not only in religion but also in its very terminology. He mixed Arabic, Persian and Indian ways of life and religious terms in a way to spread peace and boost economic activities of the public. However, it turned out to be a new battle-ground for different communities later.

¹ Ibid., 213-14.

² Faḍl, *Ā'īn*, iii-iv.

³ Aditya Gupta, *Babur and Humayun: Modern Learning Organization* (n.p. Lulu Inc., 2009), 48-49.

⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁵ Peter R. Demant, *Islam vs. Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (London: Praeger, 2006), 47.

⁶ Ibid., 48.

2.3 Aftermaths of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* during Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān

As far as aftermaths of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* are concerned, various scholars have different interpretations, but it seems that Akbar's innovations in the religion and coinage of the terms continued beyond his rule during Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān's period. Rājput, though, raised their heads again during the period of Jahāngīr which shows the volatility of the situation, it points to the simmering problems Akbar left behind.¹ However, his ruthlessness quelled the rebellion as he blinded his own son and went for promotion of various Rājput chiefs and military commanders, as Akbar did, to consolidate his power.² The development of feministic trend, too, could be attributed to *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* that women got prominent places even in advising the emperors about the political affairs of the state. Nūr Jahān wielded power equal to the emperor and Jahāngīr's normalcy is attributed to her wisdom.³ Also, there was a renewed interest of the regal authority in Islam which the clerics exploited. Jahāngīr soon learned his father's wisdom about tinkering with the religion and kept the religious scholars at bay during the rest of his rule.⁴ He thought it wise to continue courting all the sects and religions by taking part in festivals of *Naurūz*, *Rākhī* and *Ramaḍān* and keeping happy all the religious authorities.⁵ Moreover, royal titles were changed according to the situation with the touch of Islam which shows his orthodox leanings at least superficially.⁶ Another significant impact of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* was measures against orthodox *Sunnī* clerics. The examples of punishments to Qāḍī Nūrullāh⁷ and Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī are cases in point as the former was killed and later was imprisoned.⁸ Despite punishments, Sirhindī was popular among the Muslim masses. Seeing the harsh reactions, Shāh Jahān abolished some practices of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* out of the fear of the Muslim religious backlash and favored celebrating Muslim

¹ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals Part - II* (Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2005), 234.

² *Ibid.*, 238.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ M. P. Srivastava, *Politics of the Great Mughals* (California: Chug Publications, 1978), 96.

⁵ Sri Ram Sharma, *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors Ed. 1st* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1940), 62-63.

⁶ John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102-103.

⁷ Qāḍī Nūrullāh Shustarī (1542 -1610) was called third martyr and was a *qāḍī* of *Shī'ah fiqh*. He was later punished for some of his decisions in Agra and Kashmir. For details see Early, *The Mughal World*, 223-32.

⁸ Sharma, *Religious Policy*, 62-63

festivals with renewed fervor.¹ There was also renewed favor to *Sunnī* sect and *Shī'ah* got the backseat during his period. He also started anti-Hindu acts to pacify the Islamic community and stopped building of temples such as Bīr Singh Bandela in the province of Orchha.² It shows that *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* might not have gone well within the royal family seeing its worse impacts and reactions from the Muslims, Shāh Jahān started persecuting Hindus and favored forcible conversion in some cases. Converts were given titles as well as rewards and were stopped from re-converting to their original religion. The case of Rāja Bakhtāwar Singh and his sons emerged during Shāh Jahān's period who were rewarded with royal titles along with *jāgīrs* (land).³ Several scholars have mentioned Shāh Jahān for his pro-Islam policies and abolition of customs and rituals propagated by Akbar under *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*. However, whatever measures he took and acts he promulgated seemed to lead to the consolidation of his rule and propagation of Islam. This also seems that Sirhindī and his cohorts' impacts seemed making ripples in the regal court that the emperor turned to the removal of un-Islamic practices that Muslim clerics thought of them. Moreover, the Muslims make up the major chunk of the army and antagonizing them could cost the empire dearly. However, *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* is stated to have given impetus to mysticism or sufism in Indian leading to its inclusion of all communities as Jawad Syed calls it a step toward diversity adding that "Akbar actively promoted crosscultural and interreligious dialogue, thus attempting to create religious and cultural integration and inclusion in Indian society. His annulment of *jizyah* from non-Muslims ensured common citizenship among his subjects. It also ensured that the economic playground was level for all citizens."⁴ In other words, it shows astuteness of Akbar that he saw various cultures breeding in India and sensing fault lines colliding fast resorted to the innovation in religion though various scholars term those innovations just interpretations of Islamic concepts already existing in the Islamic sources. However, it becomes clear that though such theoretical concepts were non-existent at that time, Akbar took courage with the help of his close aides and supportive Muslim clerics and other religious scholars to create a new all-inclusive religious concept for inclusive India though it is another thing that later Mughal emperors did

¹ Ibid., 86.

² 'Abd-ul-Ḥamīd Lāhorī, *Pādshāh Nāmah vol-I*, ed. by Kabīr-ud-dīn Aḥmad and 'Abd-ul-Raḥīm (Calcutta: Bib. India Series, 1867-68), 452.

³ Muḥammad Amīn b. 'Abd al Ḥassan Qazwīnī, *Pādshāh Nāmah* (Calcutta: Buhār Collection, National Library Calcutta, n. d.), 302-303.

⁴ Syed, "Akbar's Multiculturalism" 409.

not see utility of that innovative creed and reverted to politicking instead of sticking to *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* for consolidating their power.

3. Conclusion

This analysis shows that *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* comes up to the yardstick of state legislation on two counts; the source of promulgation and the duration of promulgation. The royal authority not only appointed a full board of clerics and administrative officers to promulgate it, but also took a long time to promulgate every act and article of this entire conceptual framework. It almost took around twenty and some years during the period of Akbar to enforce its major acts throughout India. In terms of impacts, it has three-fold impacts as discussed in the analysis. The first was to create a healthy or unhealthy debate of different sections in Islam and keep the debate continue to make the communities engaged in a polemic instead of creating troubles for the government. The second was the outreach to the majority community of Hindus to include it in the government and administrative process. The third was to create an all-inclusive community to which it aims to bring closer by removing differences and creating uniformity. However, the overarching idea was political stability, peace, consolidation of power and legitimacy. Although legitimacy was hard to come by, Akbar succeeded in pacifying the large chunks of his population through the innovation of *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* and this peace brought at the cost of his own image in the Islamic world continued during his two successors, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān to whom it gave tough time to save themselves from likely apostasy some clerics tried to implicate them with.