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**AN ANALYSIS OF AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS POLICY AND DIN-I-ILAH**

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**Chanderpal Jandu****Assistant professor, History****Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar Government College, Sri Ganganagar (Rajasthan)**

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**Abstract**

*Akbar the Great (1556-1605) is widely accepted as the greatest Mughal ruler of the Sub-continent. He tried his best to unite all religions of India under his supervision. For this purpose, he introduced many policies and one of his most prominent policies is the Akbar Rajput Policy, and the other one is Akbar's religious policy. Din-i-Ilahi was an important constituent of Akbar's religious policy. It occupies a historical place in Mughal History. This work is aimed at describing Din-i-Ilahi as part of Akbar's religious policy, its objectives, rules, principles, its beliefs, followers, and opponents. It also discusses the religion of Akbar, his ancestor's religion, and other religions of the Sub-continent. It sheds light on the conspiracies of Akbar's supporters and opponents regarding his religious thoughts. The work is based on critical, interpretive, and evaluative scanning of the selected original works and the critical literature available on the topic.*

**Keywords:** *Din-i-Ilahi, Akbar's, Religious Policy, Sub-continent, Mughal Empire.*

**Introduction**

After the arrival of Muslim traders in India in the seventh and eighth centuries, interactions and interrelations between Muslims and Hindus have been commenced. In fact the earliest accounts of encounters between Arab Muslims and South Asian Hindus demonstrate a wide range of interactions and mutual relations. Up to today, Muslims and Hindus in many places and times shaped communities in which there were commercial issues, places of collective worship, shared political and economic institutions, and other forms of exchange such as intermarriages. On the other hand, it is clear that at times the interactions have been contentious and violent, yet without understanding the full range of encounters, it is not easy to make sense of either the dissension or the cooperation that compose the fullness of history.

As the historical documents approved the Hindu Muslim relations improved and took many forms during the Mughal/Gurkani<sup>1</sup> period (1526-1857). Certain rulers were quite open not to employing and strategically allying with one another but to pursuing deeper engagement and comprehending at the regional, imperial as well as religious level. Such an attitude taken by competent rulers in a measure can be seen as relevant to benefits of dynasty. When both imperial sources and historical records that have been kept by not only Muslims but other adherents belong to different religious traditions, are examined, many samples of intimate interest and genuine attempts can be found (Mahmud, 2022, pp. 31-39). One of the most famous model of such interest and tolerance to other religions is the third Gurkani ruler Akbar, who not only spoke local languages but also was a master of Hindu poets writing in the Indic language of Brajbhasha, which was, along with Persian, the literary language of north India during his period (Busch, 2023, p. 274).

Abu'l Fath Jalal-al-Din Muhammad Akbar, commonly known as Akbar I, literally „The Great“, was the son of Nasiruddin Humayun whom he succeeded as ruler of the Gurkani dynasty in India from 1556 to 1605 (Smith, 2023). He, as a strong personality and a notable ruler, gradually enlarged his empire to include Afghanistan and nearly the entire Indian peninsula. To unify the vast empire as well as to protect peace and order in a culturally and religiously diverse state, he adopted a distinctive political and religious policy. Akbar first to establish his control over the scattered land then weld his collection of different states, different races and different religions into a whole. For achieving this aim, Akbar firstly improved a religious policy and did his best socio-cultural reforms. Akbar's religious policy basically based on the doctrine of Sulh-i Kul which means universal peace as well as tolerance for every individual. His religious policy did not discriminate other religions and focused on the ideas of peace, unity and tolerance. Akbar accepted all his subject equal regardless with their religious identities and cultural backgrounds. Akbar considered himself the ruler of all of his subjects, including Muslims, Hindus, and followers of other faiths. For this purpose, he firstly fulfilled various significant implements regarding with religious social, imperial and political issues which had an important role in the development of his religious policy and thoughts (Rizvi, 2024, p. 409).

Of all the Muslim rulers in India, Akbar proved the most liberal exponent of universal tolerance 'SulahKul'. Politically endowed with a rare shrewdity of mind, Akbar discerned early that a mere tolerance of the Hindus by itself was not enough. At best, it could only secure him their passive acceptance as in the case of Sher Shah, but deny him their trust and active cooperation which were essential for the consolidation of the empire. Additionally, as he was deeply interested in securing the welfare of his subjects, his policy was equally devoted to eradicating not only the religious but the prevalent social evils too.

The Mughals ruled the Indian sub-continent for more than three centuries. They established one of the great empires in the world. Zaheer-ud-Din Babar first Mughal to come to India. He was a follower of the Sunni sect of Islam. Before that, he had to accept the Shia sect of Islam to get support from Persian rulers for the establishment of his rule in Central Asia. It was a compromise rather than an acceptance. After his death, Naseer-ud-din Humayun ascended the throne of the Mughal Empire. He had to face political problems along with religious issues. He left for Iran to escape the threats of Sher Shah Suri. In Iran, he was supported by the king and accepted the Shia sect of Islam. The support and acceptance gave him a chance to grab India again. The universal family of Mughals followed several religions Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity in different parts of Asia. Other than religion, they followed traditions and customs, and old beliefs. Mughals in India gave new ideas in warfare, arts, construction, and architecture. Abu-al-Fateh Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar is the third and most prominent ruler among the rulers of the Mughal Empire. He was born on 15 October 1542 in Umar Kot, Sindh. He died on 25 October 1605 in Delhi Agra. He is widely accepted as the greatest of the Mughal rulers of the Sub-continent. He ruled from 1556 to 1605 and extended Mughal rule over most of the parts of the Indian Sub-continent. To unite the masses of his empire, he introduced many policies which earned the loyalty of the non-Muslim population especially the Hindus of his empire. He was the first Mughal ruler who married Hindu ladies. He abolished the Jizya tax and the Yatra tax. Mughal Emperor Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar introduced a new religion by the name of Din-i-Ilahi, or the Religion of God in 1582. The new religion was compiled by Abu 'l Fazl, who was a court historian. First, its name was Tauheed-e-Ilahi (oneness of God) (Kennedy, 2024, pp. 13-30). However, this work will check the reason and purpose of the new religion. It will look into the matter of whether or not it helped Akbar to rule India easily. The research is based on secondary data. It will be an interpretive and evaluative work. The following are the details.

## Religions of India and Akbar

Akbar was illiterate, he offered prayers and observed fast. Akbar greatly respected pious scholars and saints and appointed them to various paramount positions. Akbar appointed Sheikh Kamal-ud-din to a higher religious position. Sufi Najam ul Haq was gifted lands, and properties, and appointed many scholars to important positions. Akbar visited the shrines of various pious saints and prayed for the birth of a son. Prince Saleem was born due to the prayers made by Sheikh Saleem Chishti (RA). The department of Hajj was established by Akbar in 1576-77 and appointed Khawajas of Ajmer Sharif as its head. He sent Rs. 1600,000 and 1200 dresses to Mecca. The Hajj was made free and all the expenditures were fulfilled by the state. He was influenced by the thoughts of Sheikh Akbar Mohi-ud-din as his thoughts about Wahdatul Wajood affected him. Besides Sunni Islam and mysticism, Akbar was surrounded by followers of Shia Islam as well (Badauni, 2024, p. 127)

- **Shia and Akbar**

The conflict between Shia and Sunni has been continuously affecting Muslims around the world for years. India was a perfect battleground for these two sects of Islam. Hameeda Banu Begum Akbar's mother was the daughter of a Shia Sufi Sheikh Ali Akbar. It was natural for Akbar to interact with the Shia sect. His teacher Behram Khan was a Shia officer and he nominated Akbar as a king at the age of 16. Behram Khan (known as Khan-e-Khanan or Wakeel-eSultanate) had close relations with Iranian rulers and appointed several Shias as officers in the Mughal regime. The appointment of Abdul Samad bin Jalal bin Fazal Dehlvi as a Sadr-e-Sadoor was highly criticized by Sunni scholars. It was Abdul Samad who taught Quran and hadith to Akbar. Sheikh Abdul Latif-bin-Yahya-Al-Masoom-Al-Hussaini Al-Haifi Al-Qarvaini; a Shia, fled from Shah Tahmasp of Iran. His teachings influenced Akbar profoundly and he spent his whole life on the principles of his book "Sulh-e-Kul". Apart from that, Ahmed-bin-Nasarullah Al-Shihi met with Akbar. He was Sunni but later embraced the Shia sect (Buckler, 2025, p. 83).

- **Akbar and Hindus**

Akbar decided to get Hindu support. He started including them in the Mughal administration. There were employees like Vishvanath as a painter, Maha Dev as a physician, and Chandrus as Surgeon. The famous Navratnas of Akbar constituted four Hindus like Raja Birbal, Miyan Tansen, Raja Man Singh, and Raja Todar Mal. Despite these, Baghwant Das, Bihari Mal, Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner, Raja Jugan Nath, Raja Deep Nath, and Madhu Singh were the other famous army commanders. They had a great contribution to the maintenance of the prosperity of the empire. It made him the ruler of India instead of Muslims. He adopted this policy after marrying the Rajput princess. He extended his relationship with other families including the Bihari family. Akbar was influenced by the honesty and bravery of this family. Therefore, he married the daughter of Bihari Mal, the daughter of Raja of Jaipur, the princess of Jaisalmer, and Bikaner. Prince Saleem got married to the daughter of Raja Baghwant Das and the princesses of Mewar. These marriages strengthened the relations between Mughals, Rajputs, and Hindus vis-versa. These Hindu females were free to act on their religious obligations. Akbar wanted to give religious freedom for the stability of his empire. He started celebrating Hindu traditions like Tilak, Jharoka Darshan, Diwali, Dussehra, Holi, etc, and allowed to build new temples (Choudhary, 2025, pp. 135-39)

### **Ibadat Khana or House of Worship**

Akbar was illiterate, he was fond of learning Islamic teachings and principles. Therefore, Akbar established Ibadat Khana or House of Worship in 1575 at Fatehpur Sikri, which is a turning point in Akbar's religious life. It was established with the purpose to debate on various issues. The debates in Ibadat Khana were mostly based on the existence of God, teachings of the Quran and Hadith, Islamic law, divorce, nikkah, and Muttah, the appointment of the first three caliphs, the garden of Fidak, and the battle of Siffin. Akbar greatly respected Sunni and Shia scholars (Malik, 2025, p. 542).

- **Hindus in Ibadat Khana**

Akbar thought that knowing Hinduism as a religion will help him to end his quest for truth. Therefore, he allowed Hindus to take part in the debates of Ibadat Khana. He ordered his courtiers to translate several Hindu books into the court language. Akbar spent 40 days with the Hindu saint whose songs were very popular among Hindus. The entry of Birbal or Berber into the Mughal court became a source of information regarding Hinduism. He believed that the sun is the largest source of all items provided to mankind. As kings are beneficial to their masses, in this way, the sun is also very useful to the people of the world. Likewise, Birbal tried his best to convince Akbar to worship the sun and stars. Akbar founded Dharampura and Khairpura to distribute food among people which was held separate for Hindus and Muslims. He also established Joghhipura for joghis (hermits). He used to visit Joghis and learn about their religious beliefs. So, after influencing Joghis Akbar decided to eat less and avoid women (Blochmann, New Delhi, pp. 537-47).

- **Jainism**

A Kshatriya prince of the ruling family of Bihar spent 13 years of his life worshipping in jungles. His preaching was based on non-violence. He opposed killing any living organism and called it a sin. The traditions of Mahavira were spread by Tirthankaras, and they were 24. The followers of Jainism do not believe in God. The religion had two sects Digambara (Sky clad) and Svetambara (White clad). The major books of Jainism are Purva and Angas. Sadhu is known to carry the traditions and live with a composed property. Moksha is called the purpose of preaching and teaching religion in Jainism. Akbar called the Peshwa Hira Vijaya of Jainism along with his companions to the Mughal court in 1582. They discussed the basic principles, ways of worship, and traditions of their religion. Akbar was greatly impressed by the principle of non-violence that's why he banned fishing and later all kind of hunting was prohibited. The captive birds were freed. In 1587 slaughtering of animals was considered illegal for 180 days and later for a year. Hira Vijaya left the court in 1584 but his two companions remained in the court. Although the worship of the sun was not a component of Jainism these two Jain scholars read Surya Sahasra Nama with Akbar. Siddhi Chandra was appointed in charge of all holy religious places of Jainism. The tax on pilgrims to the holy mountains of Jainism was abolished. The Adiswara temple, situated in the mountains of Kathiawar was dedicated to Hira Vijaya (Faz'l, 2024, pp. 188-210).

- **Buddhism**

Gautham Buddha born in 557 BC is the founder of Buddhism. He left his family, and wife at the age of 29 and went into the Jungles. He learned philosophy from a few Brahmins in the mountains and after that, he gained Gyan. Buddhists believe that life means suffering, and meditation, physical, and spiritual labor, and kind behavior are the ways to achieve enlightenment or Nirvana. The historians are unable to present any

evidence of the participation of Buddhists in debates of Ibadat Khana. Abul Fazal was in charge of Ibadat Khana who had met with Buddhists and was aware of the principles and the birth of that religion. According to him Buddhists once came to Ibadat Khana with the members of other religions. Akbar used to cut his hair like followers of Buddhism (Faz'l, 2024, pp. 252-253)

- **Sikhism**

Baba Guru Nanak (1469-1539) is the founder of Sikhism, and it has been spread by Gurus in Asia. Guru Granth is the holy book, which was compiled by Guru Gobind Singh on the principles of Music. Amritsar is the holiest place. The followers must practice a specific kind of custom that is they must keep comb, mirror, and avoid smoking. During Akbar's initial phase of rule, Sikhism had less popularity. Guru Amar Das and Akbar had very pleasant relations with each other. Akbar also respected Ram Das and he gifted a piece of land to him who established a pool there and named it Amritsar. Akbar wholeheartedly and with the policy of religious tolerance allowed Sikhism to spread in the subcontinent. Guru Arjan Singh greatly contributed to spreading Sikhism to nearly all of the Sub-continent and made Amritsar a center of Sikhism. According to historians Sikhism greatly developed during the reign of Akbar the Great and he had great respect for this religion in his heart.

### **Factors Influencing Akbar's Religious Policy**

The development Akbar's religious policy in the course of time was a result of his interaction with not only Muslim society but other religious groups as well as local eminent leaders and rulers. In this context, the religious policy of Akbar was one of the most liberal exponent of the policy of toleration among all Muslim ruler in India. However, his religious views wet through a process of slow evaluation and was effected by internal and external factors. From his childhood, Akbar had come in contact with Islam and in particular Sufism. On the other hand he was educated by some scholars who were the follower of Shia tradition. Akbar's childhood tutors, who included two Irani Shias, made an important contribution to Akbar's later inclination towards religious tolerance. Akbar from his early age, therefore, exposed to Sufism and Shia doctrines (Habib, 2024, p. 81)

Akbar's Rajput views and his contact with Hinduism, on the other hand, made an impression on his imaginative mind. Meanwhile, the bhakti movement had created a new atmosphere in India. As a result of this movement, a great deal of rulers in various parts of India adopted a more liberal policy of religious tolerance, attempting to set up communal harmony between Hindus and Muslim from the beginning of fifteenth century. These liberation and quality songs sung by the teachers and popular gurus of the bhakti movement such as Guru Nanak, Kabir and Chaitanya. This outstanding and effective ideas of bhakti leaders have also impacted on development of Akbar's religious attitudes towards others (Chandra, 2025, p. 253). Moreover, in the process of improvement of his religious discourses and ideas other religious traditions and their imminent leaders such as Christian missionaries and Jainist monks had an important role (Siddique, 2024, p. 109). Therefore, in order to comprehend his unique religious policy, which possesses some important stages like the Din-i Ilahi, and to carry out a critical evaluation on his religious policy the factors impacted on his mind should be firstly analyzed.

### **The Impact of Muslim Ulamas and Shias**

It is known that Akbar, whose parents were follower of the Sunni Hanefi way of Islam (Habib, 2024, p. 80), was firstly effected by his religious environment and background. In particular the attitudes of narrow

minded as well as world seeking Muslim ulamas had an important role to shape of his religious mind and policy. His early days were spent in the backdrop of an atmosphere in which liberal sentiments were encouraged and religious narrow-mindedness was frowned upon (Chandra, 2025, p. 253). One of the most significance Islamic leader of that time, Imam Sirhindi, states also that the world seeking ulama of the reign of Akbar were greatly responsible for misleading Akbar from „sirat-i mustaqim“ which means the true and right path. According to him, their intention was to attain worldly power, prestige and honor from the people and ruler of time (Ahmad Sirhindi, Maktub No. I/3)

On the fulfillments of this kind of Sufis, Imam-i Sirhindi mentions that most of the ignorant Sufis of this period were like the world seeking ulama, their contaminating misdeeds had been contagious (Ahmad Sirhindi, Maktub No. I/47). Thus it is clear that influence of so-called spiritual Sufi leaders became a chief cause of the weakening the faith of Akbar in the commands of Islam. With reference to status of true, orthodox and sincere Muslim ulamas in the court, mostly their voices and valuable explanations about religious issues was mostly ignored and their power diminished. Most of them were alienated by those who planned to weak their impacts on Akbar and society. As a result of such an attitude the real Muslim ulama, like Shaikh Badr ud Din, had to leave the court (Badauni, II/212).

Shaikh Mubarak and his sons Abul Fadl and Faidi all were a very clever and members of Shia community. Abul Fadl in particular, had intimacy with Hakim Abul Fath and Mulla Muhammad Yazdi, who were strong Shia by faith (Badauni, II/263). The writer of Muntakhabut Tawarikh indicates that Mulla Muhammad Yazdi in his speeches in the court emphasizes on Shias doctrines by ignoring and accusing “Ahl-i Sunnah wel-Jama‘at” as despicable. Through their views the importance of “wahiy” (revelation to Prophet Muhammad) and basic Islamic beliefs such as faith in observance of five time prayers and the fasts of Ramadan was shaken. Just the reason, thus, was accepted by these Shia thinkers as the alone basis of religious by excluding revelation (Badauni, II/211).

It is clear that under the influence of Shaikh Mubarak and his sons Akbar cut the root of Islam. It is understood from the historical sources that specially due to his influence of Abul Fadl, was one of the famous learned persons of India, Akbar was deviated from the right path of Islam in some respects. On the one side the power of ulama was completely shatter and on the other, same new beliefs which were against the code of Islam became so rampant (Siddique, 2024, p. 96).

### **Impacts of Other Religious Groups**

Akbar’s a special inclination and sympathy for the society of various social identities such as Hindus, Cayinist, Buddhists and Christians as well as a close interaction and association with religious leaders like Brahmins, missionaries, monks and priests was one of the other important factor on the development of Akbar’s religious policy, the Din-i Ilahi, of which main character was based on a huge tolerance to all kinds of religious systems (Badauni, II/161). Akbar come into close contact with Hinduism because of his regular meetings and discussions with Hindu leaders. Thus he impressed by their strong philosophical solution on topics like nature of man, creation of world and existence of god and then he ordered to translate Hindu religious literature and history into Persian.<sup>2</sup> Akbar’s deeply intimacy with Hindus, especially with Raja Birbal and some converted Hindus like Bhavon played a significant role to mislead him from the orthodox way of Islam (Badauni, II/257).

As cited in the Aini-i Akbari due to frank interaction with the both Hindus and Hindu-minded Muslims, Akbar was influenced theory of “samsara” (transmigration) which was the main religious doctrine of all Indian religions (Abul Fadl, 1948, III/303). By the impact of „bhakti“ thinkers, who particularly emphasized on devotion on Hindu gods like Rama and Krishna, Akbar was also appreciated the value of Hindu gods and goddess. He made some coins in which pictures of Ram and Sita were engraved (Aslam, 2023, p. 119).

Besides it is stated in the historical sources that once Akbar in a marriage ceremony observed some rites which were customary among the Hindus (Badauni, II/341). Due to such practices which were observed by Akbar, some prominent Brahmins acknowledged Akbar as an important figure and even an incarnation of god due to his implements for the welfare of both Hindus as well as Hindu religion. To reinforce their views on Akbar Brahmin utilized from some Sanskrit verses in which he was depicted as a hero (Badauni, II/324-25; Busch, 2023). Akbar’s religious policy based on not only respect all people but lovely attitude towards all kinds of existence including animals and planets and so on. In this regard along with Hindu religion Akbar was also influenced by Jainist doctrines like “ahimsa” which teaches principle of non-violence that is cause no injury and do no harm any living entity. Akbar firstly met with Jains in Agra where became a great center for them during the sixteenth century. Later on, after his marriage with the princes of Ambar, he obtained more opportunity to meet and know about Jain beliefs and tradition. Being influenced by Jain monks and teachers like Hiravijaya Suri, Akbar abandoned eating meat, garlic and onion for himself (Ashirabadi, 2023, p. 265).<sup>3</sup> Therefore it is clear that Akbar’s removing of meat and the prohibition of injury to animal life, were basically because of the influence of Jain thoughts (Prasad, 2022, p. 372).

### **Basic Stages of Akbar’s Religious Policy**

The close interaction with Muslim environment and other religious and political leaders influenced on Akbar’s political and social attitudes towards all his subjects. This process also shaped his religious views to others. It means the religious conditions of India at the end of the sixteenth century, in which Akbar lived as a strong figure among people of the peninsula, had an important role in this process. The emergence of Akbar’s religious policy, therefore, was not the sudden outbreak of an idea. Its growth was spread over the years. Akbar’s religious policy could be divided into four stages which are respectively opposing to some traditional practices, “Ibadat Khana” (house of worship, gathering for searching/realization of the Truth), “Mahzar” (the infallibility decree) and “Din-i Ilahi” (religion of God). Before the analyzing of the Din-i Ilahi, main aspects and features of the earlier stages should be stated to understand Akbar’s progressing religious mind in the course of time.

Akbar in order to gain supports of other religious and social groups asserted newly ideas and enforced some innovations in both religious and imperial fields. He gave up some traditional Islamic implements committed by either Muslim rulers or theologians on non-Muslims. For instance, Akbar took the most revolutionary step in 1564 by granting religious freedom to Hindus by abolishing „jaziya“, which was a poll tax, charged from the Hindus in their capacity as “zimmis” (Rizvi, 2024, p. 69). He also removed all restrictions on the construction and maintenance of Hindu temples, churches and other places of worship. Akbar did not discriminate between individuals on the basis of religion or caste instead, he wished to become an impartial rule to whom all people, Hindus as well as Muslims, respected (Rizvi, 2024, p. 156). Such kinds of fulfillments carried out by Akbar should also be regarded as a result of impacts of internal and external factors on Akbar’s mind.essing religious mind in the course of time.

Akbar implemented his religious policy that depends on tolerance and peace, by means of performing different innovations or commitments. He believed that misunderstanding and ignorance in matters of religion caused to discords and conflicts. After evaluating his both socio-cultural and religious-philosophical accumulation, Akbar desired to understand the principles of his religious ideas. On the other hand, driven by a strong desire for truth and knowledge, passionately interested in the mystery of the relation between God and man, he promoted at his court religious debates on a very large ground. From this point of view, he erected a building at Fatahpur Sikri, early in 1575, entitled “Ibadat Khana” (house of worship), in which regular religious discussions were held on Thursdays evenings (Abul Fadl, III/113-119)

As a result of religious discourse or disputations held at the “Ibadat Khana”, not only Akbar’s belief in the orthodox Sunni Islam declined but the value of orthodox Sunni mullahs (local Muslim clerics or leaders) who were holding predominant position in the state politics, was lowered. Along with the discussions in the „Ibadat Khana“, some issues developed in this time, in particular close relationship with Shias, Akbar concluded that their authority also should be decreased.

### **Din-i Ilahi and Its Basic Features**

The appear of the Din-i Ilahi should be regarded as the final stage of Akbar’s religious policy. In other words the first three dominant stages have led to reveal of the Din-i Ilahi. Along with Akbar’s earlier stages of religious policy which mentioned above, his perception and thought on Islam must be considered to carry out a proper assessment on the Din-i Ilahi. At the time of Akbar’s reign there was a strong negative discourse about Islam. In this context some eminent people of that time argued that Islam with its own entire aspects was not a valid religion until the day of judgment. As Badauni writes: “According to Majesty, it was settled fact that the one thousand years since the time of the mission of the Prophet, which was to be the period of the continuance of the faith of Islam, were now completed, which he treated in his heart” (Badauni, II/327). After persuading with this idea, it was not so difficult to Akbar to change and design ordinances of Islam. The outcome of his deliberations was the Din-i Ilahi in the beginning of 1582 (Siddique, 2024, p. 115).

The term “Din-i Ilahi” was used by Badauni in connection with a declaration which Mirza Jani Beg, ruler of Tattha, was said to have signed as follows: “I, so and so, do voluntarily, liberate and dissociate myself from traditional and imitative Islam which I have seen my fathers practice and heard from the speak about, and attend the Din-i Ilahi of Akbar acknowledging the four degrees of devotion, which are the sacrifice of property, life, honor and religion” (Badauni, II/304). On account of this declaration, scholars have put forward different explanations and comments. Mostly it is accepted that this declaration signed by governor of Tattha does not refer to refusing of Islam in all its phases. On the contrary it particularly emphasizes on liberation and disassociation from traditional and imitative Islam (Rizvi, 2024, p. 392). Though Akbar started to conceiving his orthodox noble to abandon “taqlid” but it also do not ignore that in this process he at times damaged to essence of Islam and undervalued some essential Islamic values.

According to Mehta (2022), the Din-i Ilahi was a social religious association of the like-minded intellectuals who had transcended the barriers their orthodox religious beliefs and practices. As a result of his religious policy Akbar never compelled anybody to adopt this movement although it would not be difficult for him to do so. It is also clearly mentioned in the rapport of Abul Fadl. According to him the total number of the member of the Din-i Ilahi was not so much. On the other hand it is known that this religious movement could not attract the masses and it ended with the death of Akbar (Rizvi, 2023).

## Conclusions

Akbar, an outstanding emperor of Gurkani dynasty, is considered one of the most important figure in the field of Hindu Muslim interaction in medieval period of India. As soon as he came to the throne, Akbar accepted himself as the impartial ruler of his all subjects. In this context he managed all the Indian people irrespective of their castes, creeds and religious beliefs and practices, into homogeneous society. Hence his religious policy was based on Sulh-i Kul, universal peace. Along with Akbar's association with Sufis and Shias from beginning of the his early age, his intimate contact with so many people professing different faiths surely had a great impact on the development of Akbar's imperial and religious policy. His religious policy, therefore, was not suddenly broken out; on the contrary, it was improved in the process of time.

The framework of Akbar's religious thoughts, particularly the Din-i Ilahi, formulated by him in end of the sixteenth century, was depended on eclectic selection and ethical system. Though the appeal and influence of the Din-i Ilahi were limited and could not find opportunity to survive after Akbar, as the historical evidence demonstrate that Akbar's religious movement more or less weakened the power of Islam even for a limited time and criticized by many orthodox Muslim theologians. Basic elements of this religious movement were essentially taken from Islam and Hinduism, yet some others were also drawn from different religious systems such as Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Jainism. However, some scholars voluntarily or not neglected the impact of Islam on Akbar's social and religious attitudes towards others without considering the innovative discourses of Islam on religious freedom, tolerance and equality which were already ordered in the main sources of Islam more than nine hundred years before Akbar brought up.

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