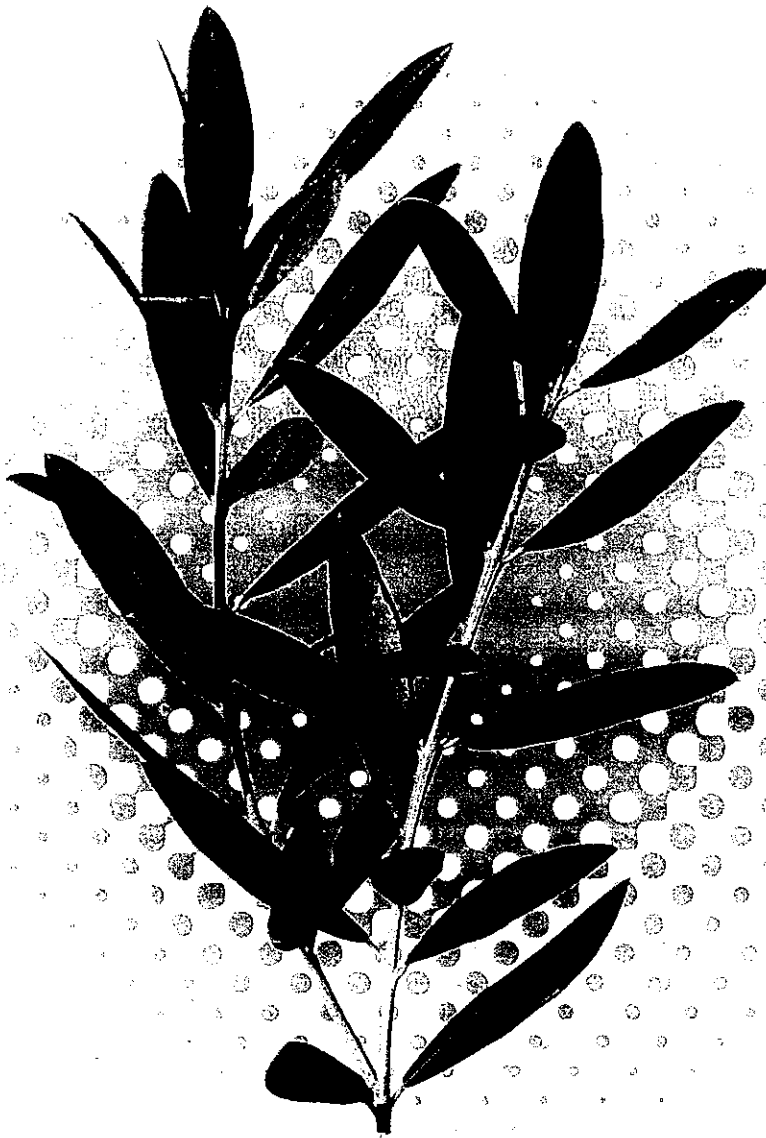


THE EFFECTS OF COMMON VALUES ON EUROPEAN PEACE

"the only important color is the color of the soul"

NO TO RACISM



Erasmus+
Strategic Partnerships for adult education

**THE EFFECTS OF COMMON VALUES
ON EUROPEAN PEACE BOOK**

2017

Editors

**Prof. Dr. Osman AYDINLI
Ahmet GÜL
Süleyman ASLAN**

All rights reserved. No article in this book can be reproduced
partially or completely without permission.
Linguistic, academic and legal responsibility arising from or out of the articles
belongs to the respective authors.

Typesetting-Editing
Süleyman KAYABAŞ

English proof reading
Ali Abdullah AÇIKGENÇ

Cover Design
Başak SOPACI

1st Edition, 1,000 pcs, July 2017
Sude Ajans Reklam ve Matbaacılık Ltd. Şti.
Tel. +90 (312) 4670996
Ankara

ISBN : 9789750197918

AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS AND IMPERIAL IMPLEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURE OF LIVING TOGETHER

Cemil KUTLUTÜRK

Assist. Prof., Ankara University, Faculty of Divinity

Ankara/TURKEY

INTRODUCTION

After the arrival of Muslim traders in India in the seventh and eighth centuries, interactions and interrelations of 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.

From the time of Mahmud of Ghazni in the eleventh century until the nineteenth century, beginning of British direct rule, almost whole of the Indian subcontinent was ruled under sovereignty of Muslims. Muslim-Hindu relations improved and took many forms during the Gurkani/Gurkaniyan period (1526–1857). Certain hukumdars (rulers, emperor) 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 hukumdars 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 1949, 31-39; Bayur 1946; Abdurrahman 2008). The most famous model of such interest and tolerance to other religions is the Gurkani hukumdar Akbar, who not only spoke local languages but also was a master of Hindu poets writing in the Indic language of Brajhasha, which was, along with Persian, the literary language of north India during his period (Busch 2010, 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, Akbar, 1917). He, as a strong personality and a notable ruler, gradually enlarged his empire to include Afghanistan and nearly the entire Indian peninsula. Akbar considered himself the ruler of all of his subjects, including Muslims, Hindus, and followers of other faiths. Therefore, as soon as he ascent to throne, committed to the policy of universal tolerance and peace. Akbar firstly founded his control and sovereignty over the scattered land then weld his collection of different states, races and religions into a whole. For achieving this goal he made outstanding and unusual decisions and fulfilled them through his political and socio-cultural reforms. For instance, Akbar took the most revolutionary step in 1564 by granting religious freedom to Hindus by abolishing jizia tax throughout his dominions. He also removed all restrictions on the construction and maintenance of Hindu temples; churches and other places of worship (Khan 2003, 118). Hence Akbar's legal measures, socio-cultural reforms and operations and innovations such as Sulh-i Kul, Khotba, Mahzar, Din-i Ilahi and Ibadat Khana, the last one is main subject

of this paper, have been a significant role in the sense of consolidation and accomplishment of religious and imperial tolerance in his court.

Based on a review of literature on his rule and philosophy, this paper attempts to illustrate by emphasizing on Akbar's Ibadat Khana, how a Muslim ruler Jalal-ad-din Muhammad Akbar established imperial freedom, social peace and religious tolerance among his all people in the sixteenth century in India; whereas at the same period religious debates and conflicts were deeply felt in most parts of world, especially West (Sen 2005, 18). It firstly deals with emerging and basic features of such a religious structure then examines its significant and function in the sense of achieving of religious and imperial tolerance.

1. Process of Formation of Ibadat Khana

Various factors, both internal and external, such as religious background of Gurkani dynasty, sufi thought, vedanta philosophy, bhakti tradition, religious movements, Akbar's himself mystical experiments, intelligence, truth-finding nature have been impacted on his religious policy. by harmonizing these kinds of components and backgrounds, Akbar finalized his underlying religious policy, centered on the doctrine of Sulh-i Kul (absolute, universal peace), which comprised of some dynamics, one of them was Ibadat Khana.

In Akbarnama, which is the official chronicle of the reign of Akbar, commissioned by Akbar himself by his court historian and biographer, Abul Fazl who was one of the outstanding well educated person in Akbar's court, Akbar's himself stresses on this idea by arguing "even though an ideal hukumdar possess some qualities, he cannot be fit for this lofty office if he does not adopt the principal of universal peace. If he does not admit all conditions of humanity and sects of religion with the single eye for favor he shall not gain the status of eminent glory" (Abul Fazl 1897, II/421).

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 Fazl 1897, III/113-119; Ghodrrollahi 2007, 12).

Furthermore, in Akbarnama the explaining of hukumdar on building of Ibadat Khana was cited as follows: 'I have organized this gathering (majlis) for this aim only that the facts of every religion, whether Hindu or Muslim, be brought out in the open. The closed hearts of our (religious) leaders and scholars be opened so that the Muslims should come to know (essentially) who they are. Because most of them unfortunately are unaware about their religion. They only think of themselves, in a word Muslims, as those who recite kalimah, consume meat and perform sajda on the earth. Whereas; they should know that Muslims are those who wage war or struggle on their 'self' (jihad bin nafs), which was described by prophet Muhammad as the biggest jihad, and control their desires and anger; and surrender (themselves) to the rule of law (Abul Fazl 1897; Rezavi 2008, 197).

Abul Fazl also made a statement regarding the establishment of Ibadat Khana and religious discussions taking place in this building. Hereunder such a structure was built to found a feast of truth. In other words through religious discussion it was aimed that while the essence of manhood and knowledge would be revealed, truth and actions would be examined. Those whose explanations were reasonable and were based on truth accepted the hall of recognition. Those whose arguments depended on just a mannered plane were far from reality were not acknowledged. It is understood that there was a feast of theology and worship in such a structure (Abul Fazl 1897, 112).

2. Functional Aspect of Ibadat Khana

Until the modern time Akbar's Ibadat Khana has been wondered particularly by scholars and there have been various suggestions and attempts concerning its situation, location, structural qualities etc. such as made by Edmund W. Smith during the last decades of the nineteenth century, Sayyid Ahmad Marahrawi, Rizvi and Aligarh University team under the directorship of Prof. R.C. Gaur (Rizvi 1972, 37; Rizvi and Flynn 1975, 43–44). But these issues were not handled in this paper on account of their secondary importance in terms of main purpose of this article which is to bring its socio-religious function into the forefront.

When building imarat (complex) was completed in 1576 (Badauni 1865, 200), in the earlier stages discussions and assemblies were confined to Muslim theologians then Shia ulamas (learned) also were included. However, such weekly meetings were interrupted at times and they were regularly resumed in 1578. It is regarded that after this date, 1578 onward, theologians of many faiths and sects attended in the Ibadat Khana discussions (Rizvi (1975, 125–28).

As a result of such a broader participation, according to Abul Fazl, discussions were not limited to scholars of any one sect or creed. Abul Fazl has clarified this situation by arguing that "the lamp of the privy chamber of detachment was kindled in the banqueting-hall of social life that was Ibadat Khana (house of worship). The coin of the givers of intelligence in colleges was brought to the test. Pure coin, hence, was distinguished from the impure side. The boundless capacity and the toleration of the shadow of God were appeared. Sunni, Shia, Brahman, Jati, Jain monks, Charbak, Nazarene, Jew, Sabian, Zoroastrian, and others enjoyed exquisite pleasure by beholding the calmness of the assembly, and the adornment of the pleasant abode of impartiality. The treasures of secrets were opened out without fear of hostile seekers after battle. The just and truth perceiving ones of each sect emerged from arrogance, and began their search anew. They exhibited profundity and meditation, and gained eternal bliss on the divan of greatness (Abul Fazl 1897, 252–53).

Even though after 1581 there is no any clear evidence on the Ibadat Khana discussions, it can be put forward that the religious discussions might have continued even after the capital was shifted back to Agra due to the continued reference to the term Ibadat Khana in the literature. But it is understood that as a result of these religious and social discussions the general atmosphere of Akbar reign became more conducive to imperial and religious tolerance.

Ibadat Khana, a place for the reception of individuals of learning, genius, and solid acquirement, was divided into four halls. While the northern to be used by shaikhs and men of ecstasy those venerable for their wisdom and their subjection to inspiration, the eastern side was allocated to the nobles and officers of dynasty. The third hall, the western, to be utilized by sayyids, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (puh), and the fourth, southern hall by the ulama, people who had possessed and attained knowledge. Hukumdar Akbar graced each of the four halls with his presence, and supported them with his bounty and presents. Once the Ibadat Khana or hall/house of worship was completed, Akbar instituted weekly meetings, which were held on every Friday evening/nights (it means Thursday after sunset) and on the nights of holy days. These meetings used frequently to last beyond mid-day on Fridays. Hukumdar would go from time to time to these various assemblies, and converse with them and discuss philosophical and religious topics (Smith, *The Site*, 1917, 716). In case of hukumdar's physical and mental power decreased due to other imperial affairs, one of the companions of the court, in whose kindness and gentleness he had confidence, was deputed to carry out this important duty (Smith, *The Site*, 1917, 719). In these assemblies declaration of members of each hall to hukumdar one of their number had become an essential practice and even a rule (Malleon 1899, 123).

Akbar's religious idea and tolerance that have revealed in a various formats, like Ibadat Khana, nonplussed many scholars both in past and present. An outstanding theologian Sheikh Nur al-Haq mentioned that wise and well-informed men from Khorasan and Iraq and Transoxiana and India, both experts and theologians, Shias and Sunnis, Christians, philosophers and Brahmins came together at the exalted court of Akbar. The people who assemble together in Ibadat Khana, discussed the rational and traditional methods of discourse, travel and histories and each others prophecies in here. They expanded the field and scope of discussion by arguing their different religious and social thoughts. In this process each of them not only intent to testify his own argument or assertion but demanded to the propagation of his school, tradition or sect in which he grew up (Syed 2010, 406). In this sense it is understood that main object of hukumdar's was to search the truth and reliable and reasonable knowledge.

The contribution of Ibadet Khana meetings and discussions on a peaceful and respectful attitude towards all religious groups can be seen a wide range of socio-religious ground. For instance, the position and manner of Shias in Akbar period is a good example regarding with this issue. The confident assertion of Shia during the reign of Akbar was probably the result of an atmosphere of open debates and tolerance. Qazi Nurullah Shustari, a well-known Shi'i scholar in Akbar's court, repeatedly asserted his position as a mujtahid and opposed the observance of taqiyya (dissimulation of sectarian identity) in India. In a similar manner a qasida, "Blessed be the Emperor whose patronage in Hind has not made my faith dependent on taqiyya" (Khan 1979, 439; Rezavi 2008, 202), written by a Shia Mulla demonstrates importance of Akbar's Ibadat Khana.

Akbar's period, therefore, became the meeting place of the leaders, prominent and learned men of all creeds and religious sects, who were all acknowledged on an equal ground. By fitting such a principle Akbar established the earliest known multi-religious and multi-cultural discussion group, where representatives of Muslims (Sunni, Shia, and Sufi traditions), Hindus (Shaivite and Vaishnavite), Jains, Zoroastrians, Christians and Jews gathered to discuss and comprehend their disagreements and agreements. In the light of historical documents it is known that in the Ibadat Khana an atheistic group, septic Charvaka School, dating back to 6th century BC, also represented whose basic doctrine was based on the very non-existence of God (Sen, 2005).

Akbar shaped his court with craftsmen and intellectuals, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Furthermore non-Muslims, mostly Hindus, were employed both by Muslim administrator and the entire Muslim ruling class, particularly by giving a significant position and responsibility. For instance, it is known that although Raja Todar Mal was an adherent of Hindu religion, became a finance minister and like this command of Akbar's army was given to a Hindu. Hindus also served as craftsmen, artisans, soldiers, entertainers, and servants at the time of Akbar's court (Hambly 1968). Therefore the two communities, both Muslims and Hindus, mostly approved and respected each other's rights in imperial, political, social and religious life.

Akbar permitted the ranks of his dynasty to Muslims and Hindus alike, and public offices could be achieved by Hindus, Zoroastrians, and others. Various opportunities including imperial and official institutions were provided to whole people of dynasty without regarding their socio-religious back grounds. It is stated in the Dabistan-i Mazahib, literal meaning "School of Religions," written around 1655, that Akbar employed in his service "men of all nations, Firengis, Jews, Iranians and Turanians. . . and without showing partiality to lineage or religion he promoted the skilled in science and law" (Shea & Troyer 1843, 138). These reforms committed by Akbar, resulted in Hindu-Muslim reconciliation, and created one great commonwealth of India. Therefore the elimination of the religious, social, and civic discrimination, and the financial disadvantages of the non-Muslims, put an end with Islam as the state religion, particularly by determined decisions of Akbar Shah. It is understood that he constituted a common citizenship with

equality for all and with merit, loyalty, and devotion as the only test for distinction and promotion through his policy of tolerance which developed and come to be known with building of Ibadat Khana (Fischel, 1948).

From the records of some historical sources it is also understood that some traditional scholars criticized Akbar because of his such a new commitment. Scholars who did not come to terms with Akbar's this kind of implement, argued that he, being a *hukumdar*, should have busied himself with the affairs of the *dawlah*, state, instead of the organizing or dealing with a large number of religious gathering at the Ibadat Khana. However, as the writer of *Akbarnama* also stated that by means of these assemblies and discussions various educated people concluded that Akbar's approach was a right intention. Indeed, God has given to him the power and ability of *ijtihad*, a process of legal reasoning and hermeneutics through which the jurist derives or rationalizes law on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunna (Abul Fazl 1897, 298). Along with this as clarified and emphasized above, by building of Ibadat Khana, in a short span of time a great deal of achievements in the fields of imperial, political, social, cultural and religious proficiently accomplished. The evidences mentioned until here indicates that this building was not just a place in which an organized religious or sectarian debates were done. Akbar's Ibadet Khana, further to that, had a unique functional aspect at the time of Akbar's period by which the principle of reason and tolerance and peace in the socio-religious context of the time was raised.

CONCLUSION

Akbar was the son of Nasiruddin Humayun whom he succeeded as ruler of the Gurkani Dynasty in India from 1556 to 1605. A foresighted leader and a lofty *hukumdar*, Akbar committed to the policy of universal tolerance and peace since he considered himself the governor of all of his subjects, including Muslims, Hindus, and followers of other religious thoughts. His wise tolerance in religious matters, sought to put down the practice of *sati*, or widow burning, and abolished the *jizia*, a tax on all not holding the tenets of Islam. By using his power accomplishedly and properly he achieved to provide harmony and peace by reconciling the various opposing religious groups and different cultures in the *dawlah*, state.

It is clear that Akbar's some political and religious implements or innovations such as *Din-i Ilahi*, removing of *kalimah*, Muslim profession of faith, on current coin, can be criticized due to in-consonant with classical Islamic thought. However, in this article Akbar's notable and commendable philosophies and achievements are mentioned under sample of Ibadat Khana. In this sense it must be emphasized that even though he had a enormous power, he acknowledged human rights of various kinds, including freedom of worship and religious practice, that would not have been so easily tolerated in other parts of the world in his time. He also stressed the acceptability of diverse forms of social and religious deeds. The period of Akbar's rule has therefore, been regarded as one of the most incomparable and important periods in Indian history involving very unique accomplishments on socio-cultural and religious tolerance and harmony.

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. In this sense he instituted weekly meetings, which were held every Friday evening in the Ibadat Khana (house of worship) in Fatehpur Sikri near Agra. While outstanding leaders of different religious groups such as Sunni, Shia, Jain, Brahmin, Jesuit missionaries, Buddhist, *sadhu* and *yogi* propounded their beliefs and refutations in heated, *hukumdar* himself most of time was present in there. Particularly, designed for accommodating the selected persons representing various schools of theological and philosophical thought, where, under his patronage, religious discussions were held over a period of almost one decade (1575–1584), interrupted only when he so tired and the

necessity of war caused his absence from his residence. Therefore it is understood that discussions were regulated not only among the leaders of the different Islamic philosophical schools but, beginning in 1578, among outstanding figures of various non-Muslim groups, such as Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, and Christians. This functional aspect of Ibadat Khana exhibits either its contribution to improving of religious tolerance and progressing of using of reason, aql, or a Muslim hukumdar's religious and imperial policies that is utterly based on peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and equality among entire subjects of state.

REFERENCES

- Abdurrahman, Şahabuddin, Siddiqi, H. 2008. *Hindustana ke Atita mem Musalamana Şasakom kī Dharmika Udarata (I-III)*, Rampur: Rampur Raza Library, Rampur.
- Bayur, Y. H. 1946. *Hindistan Tarihi (I-III)*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Busch, Allison. 2010. "Hidden in Plain View: Brajbhasha Poets at the Mughal Court." *Modern Asian Studies* 44 (2):267-309.
- Fazl, Abul. 1873. *A'in-i Akbari*, Vols. I and II: trans. H. Blochman. Calcutta: Ess E. Publication.
- Fazl, Abul. 1897. *Akbarnama*. trans. H. Beeridge. Calcutta: Ess E. Publication.
- Fischel, W. J. 1948. "Jews and Judaism at the court of the Moghul Emperors in Medieval India." *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 18:137-77.
- Ghodratollahi, Ehsan. 2007. "Akbar, the Doctrine of Solh-i Koll and Hindu-Muslim Relations." *Journal of Religious Thought* 21:3-24.
- Hambly, G. 1968. *The cities of Mughal India*. New York: Putnam.
- Khan, Bakhtawar. 1979. *Mirat al-'Alam*, edited by Sajida Alvi, Vol. II. Lahore
- Khan, Iqtidar Alam. 2003. "The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of His Religious Policy, 1560-80." In *India's Islamic Traditions, 711-1750*, edited by Richard M. Eaton, 120-133. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mahmud, Syed. 1949. *Hindu Muslim Cultural Accord*. Bombay: Vora & Co. Publishers.
- Malleson, G. B. 1899. *Akbar and the rise of the Mughal Empire*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rezavi, Syed Ali Nadeem. 2008. "Religious Disputations and Imperial Ideology: The Purpose and Location of Akbar's Ibadatkhana." *Studies in History* 24(2):195-209.
- Rizvi, S. A. A. 1975. *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign, with Special Reference to Abul Fazl (1556-1605)*. New Delhi.
- _____. 1972. *Fatehpur Sikri*. New Delhi.
- Rizvi, S.A.A., and V. J. A. Flynn. 1975. *Fathpur Sikri*. Bombay.
- Sen, A. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Shea, D., & Troyer, A. (trans.) 1843. *The Dabistan, or School of Manners*. 3 Vols. Paris.
- Smith, E. W. 1894-99. *The Mughal Architecture of Fathpur-Sikri*. Allahabad.
- Smith, V. A. 1917. *Akbar, the Great Moghul, 1542-1605*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- _____. 1917. "The Site and Design of Ibadatkhana or House of Worship." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 720-24.
- Syed, Jawad. 2011. "Akbar's Multiculturalism: Lessons for Diversity Management in the 21st Century." *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 28:402-12.