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THE IDEA OF *TAJDĪD* IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY INDIA: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE BACKGROUND OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

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ملخص

تشكل فكرة التجديد وبعث المجدد على رأس كل مائة سنة كما ورد ذكرها في حديث نبوي شريف معتقدا واسع الانتشار في المجتمعات الإسلامية بما فيها المجتمع الإسلامية في الهند، وكان الشيخ أحمد السرهندي يعتبر أحد المجددين في الألف عام الثاني، وكان من أهم أسباب ظهور حركته التجديدية، حسبها يصوره معظم الكتابات عنه إن لم يكن جميعها، الممارسات الدينية في المجتمع الهند التي تعتبر منحرفة وبعيدة عن تعاليم الإسلام الصحيح، بحيث انتشرت البدع والخرافات بكثرة بين الناس، بل ولم يكن نادرا أن قاموا بما من شأنه أن يؤدي إلى القضاء على الإسلام، وازدادت هذه الممارسات انتشارا عندما توج السلطان الأكبر إلى عرش دولة المغول مما حمل إلى الاعتقاد بأنه قد ارتد عن الإسلام.

مما يلفت النظر أن هذه المقالة تعيد التساءل حول تلك الفرضية المستقرة، وبعد تتبع مختلف المعلومات التاريخية المتعلقة بالحياة الدينية في عصر الأكبر والسرهندي توصل الكاتب إلى أن هذه الفرضية غير مقبولة أو على الأقل لم تزل بحاجة إلى مزيد البحث، وتأييدا لرأيه استدلل بأن الاختلاف بين الأكبر في جانب وبين السرهندي في جانب آخر كان بسبب تعارض الاتجاهات السياسية بين النخب أكثر منه بسبب القضايا الدينية، وبعبارة أخرى ليس اختلافا بين مذهبين في فهم التعاليم الإسلامية. ونتيجة هذه المقالة جادة: فادعاء أن

السرهندی كان أحد المجددين في الألف الثاني ينقصه تأييد من الحقائق التاريخية
المقبولة عنه معظم المؤرخين إن لم يكن جميعهم.

Abstrak

Ide tentang tajdid dan munculnya mujaddid setiap satu abad sebagaimana disebut dalam satu hadis Nabi merupakan satu faham yang dianut secara meluas, termasuk kalangan masyarakat Islam di India. Salah seorang yang dipandang sebagai mujaddid untuk milinium kedua adalah Syeh Ahmad Sirhindi. Menurut sebagian besar, jika tidak semua, karya-karya tentang Sirhindi, gerakan tajdid tersebut terutama disebabkan oleh praktek keagamaan masyarakat India yang dipandang telah jauh dari ajaran Islam yang sebenarnya; masyarakat setempat dipandang seringkali melakukan praktek-praktek bid'ah dan khurafat bahkan tidak jarang melakukan sesuatu yang justru cenderung menghancurkan Islam. Semua praktek tersebut semakin subur terutama sejak naiknya Akbar ke tahta Kerajaan Mughal, sehingga melahirkan pandangan bahwa Akbar telah keluar dari Islam.

Yang menarik, makalah berikut mempertanyakan kembali tesis yang sudah mengakar itu. Dengan menelusuri data-data sejarah yang berhubungan dengan kehidupan keagamaan pada masa Akbar dan Sirhindi, penulis makalah sampai pada kesimpulan bahwa tesis tersebut tidak bisa diterima, paling tidak masih memerlukan penelitian lebih jauh. Untuk mendukung tesisnya, penulis menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan antara Akbar di satu sisi dan Sirhindi di sisi yang lain lebih banyak disebabkan oleh pertentangan elit yang lebih berorientasi politik dan bukan persoalan keagamaan; atau bukan pertentangan antara pandangan non-Muslim (Akbar) dan Muslim (Sirhindi) tapi lebih antara satu pemahaman dengan pemahaman yang lain tentang ajaran Islam. Akibat tulisan berikut cukup serius: klaim bahwa Sirhindi merupakan mujaddid pada milinium kedua adalah kurang didukung oleh data sejarah yang bisa diterima sebagian besar, jika tidak semua, sejarawan.

Many writers¹ relate the idea of *tajdid* in Islam with the Ḥadīth of the Prophet that "Allah will send to this community at the turn of every century someone who will restore religion."² Another version of this Ḥadīth appears in the *musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal which, gives specific attention to the renewal

of faith : "renew your faith".³ Regardless of the various versions of Ḥadīth which raise this issue, it is conceivable that their general purpose is to praise whoever disseminates true religious knowledge, and mends that which had been distorted.

A factor, which contributes to the possibility of an inevitable social and religious deterioration after the death of the Prophet, cannot be separated from the idea of *tajdid*. This interpretation is based on the idea that the Muslim community always tend to depart from the path of the Qur'ān and the Sunna.⁴ This does not mean however that Islam is an imperfect religion,⁵ as the Qur'ān itself clearly states that Islam, which is brought by Muḥammad, is a perfect religion. The Qur'ān says: "Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and I have chosen Islam for you as religion."⁶ For the Muslim, religious deterioration is not caused by the lack of Islam, but rather it is more related to the condition in which Islam is implemented. Those who lived at the same place and at the same time during the prophet's life have no problem incorporating Islam into their daily lives, as they could take examples directly from the prophet. But for those who lived far from him, long after his death, the situation is very different. The influence of local traditions and the lack of Islamic knowledge of its followers also affect the implementation of Islam. This interpretation is in accord with the Ḥadīth of the Prophet: "the best of my followers are those who are living in my generation, and those who will follow them, and then those who will follow the latter".⁷

It can be understood from this Ḥadīth that the model of the Prophet should always have been the ideal for Muslims. It can lead to the notion that the period of the Prophet has been considered as the model orthodoxy. After the death of Prophet, every religious deterioration must be reconstructed based on this orthodoxy. Since the mission of the *tajdid* is to rebuild the deterioration of religious life; therefore it is logical to say that the idea of *tajdid* can occur only after an orthodoxy has been established.⁸ The already established orthodoxy and the deterioration of religion should respectively have existed before the *tajdid* took place background during the period of Akbar's reign (1556-1605). It is based on a thesis that Islam had deteriorated during this time. This deterioration was due to Akbar's "religious policy" which considerably weakened the religious consciousness of Muslims, and won over his Hindu subjects.⁹ It also connects this religious deterioration to the appearance of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī who is claimed to be a *mujaddid al-fī thānī* (the Renewer of the Second Millenium) in this period. But different from the above thesis, which claimed the fallacy of Akbar's religious policy, this paper will illustrate that aspects of this policy, especially, First, the theological basis, which gives a clear background of the concept of *tajdid*, from which a broader vision of Islamic teaching can be understood. Second, it analyzes some of the

disputed Akbar policies based on the principles of Islamic teaching, the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, in the perspective of the historical experiences of the Muslims in Indonesia. Finally, it will relate all the issues to the claim of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī as a *mujaddid al-fī thānī* in concluding remarks.

A Theological Basis of *Tajdīd*

The idea of *tajdīd* is actually a logical consequence of the characteristic of Islamic teachings. These characteristics are formulated in the beliefs that, first, Islam is a universal religion: "We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples".¹⁰ The universality of Islamic teaching covers all aspects of life which gives the basic principles of the relationships between man and God, human being, and his environment. From the dimension of space and time, Islam is valid for the whole human race in the world without recognizing geographical and ethic boundaries from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad until the end of the time. Therefore, in its specific characteristics, Islam emphasizes on the equilibrium between worldly and non-worldly affairs, the spiritual and the material, ritual and social life. The basis of this notion is explained in the Qur'ān: But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allāh hath given thee and neglect not thy portion of the world".¹¹ The most significant aspect of this understanding, lies in the belief that Islam is a guidance for all mankind in the world, a guidance whose goal is the acquisition of a happy life in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. But it is also recognized that not all this universal teaching is formulated explicitly in the Qur'ān. Some of these are mentioned in general terms, therefore an interpretation is needed to correspond with the purpose of the teaching. For example, the general formulation of the *'ibādah khāṣ* (the special ritual) has been detailed by the Prophet in his Ḥadīth. But for the others, which are concerned with social life, the Muslims have an obligation to interpret and implement them in accordance with the demand of the time. To this end, *ijtihād* is an important effort in the understanding of the meanings and the possibilities of the teaching of Islam.

Second, it is believed that Islam is the final religion, and that it contains in the Qur'ān and the Sunna all essential religious and moral truth required by all human beings, from now until the end of time. The claim of finality, is mentioned in the Qur'ān where Muḥammad is described as "the seal of the Prophets": "Muḥammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets".¹² The universal interpretation of this verse means that Muḥammad is the last of the Prophets, after whom there will be no other. The claim of this finality leads to the idea that after the Prophethood function of Muhammad is over, functionally, however the role of *ulama* is very important to preserve the dynamics of Islam.

This is not exaggerated, as the Ḥadīts also mentions that "The *ulama*" are the heirs of the Prophets".¹³ Institutionally, this idea is manifested in the various movements of thought and *tajdīd* in Islam.

The concept of the universality of Islam and the finality of the prophethood function after Muhammad support the idea that *tajdīd* is an important dimension of the historical experience of Muslims. An important aspect of the mission of Muslims, is the implementation of God's revelation in the actual conditions within human society. The *tajdīd* movement which existed in India during the seventeenth century exhibits this common characteristic and brings into being the condition of orthodox Muslims.

The Dispute on Akbar's Religious Policy

The significance of the claim that Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī is a *mujaddid al-i thānī* cannot be dealt within isolation from the condition of the religious life of Indian Muslim in the seventeenth century, which is considered to have been far from the genuine teachings of Islam. Burhan Aḥmad Faruqi describes that in mystical life a pantheistic belief deity had replaced the monotheistic and transcendent God of Islam. Excessive belief in *karamāt* or the miracles of the saints was commonly cherished. Many non-Islamic means in the development of occult powers had been introduced into *taṣawwuf*. The mystics had gone to the extent to deny the commandments of shari'at as universally binding, and regarded shari'at as external and superficial. Indulgence in *sama'* (the music hearing for the sake of bringing about ecstasy, prevalent in mystic order) had become the order of the day.¹⁴ On the other hand, the '*ulama*' had taken exclusively to *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) as their whole religious learning; they had ceased to refer to the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Consequently only the juristic view of Islam was alive, the spirit of Islam was dead.¹⁵

Anhāri stated such a condition was worsened by the effects of the imperial heresy of Akbar, who initiated policies which were seriously affecting Islamic life. He is said to have launched an eclectic religion of his own making and replaced the religion which was brought by the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁶ Furthermore, Fārūqī mentions that Akbar's religious policy hurt and weakened the religious consciousness of Muslims. Amongst there are: wine was declared lawful, bacon was made an ingredient of wine: *jizyah* or the military tax was abolished, and beef was declared unlawful. Such names as Aḥmad, Muḥammad, Muṣṭafā, and various other names of the Prophet of God, had become offensive to the emperor, and to utter them was a crime.¹⁷ From Badauni's records, it is said that Akbar's religious policy also consisted of the obligatory wearing of silk dresses at prayer times, the prohibitions of Islamic prayers, and the stopping of the pilgrimage to Mekka, the discontinuance of the

ādhan as well as the study of the Qur'an and of the Hadith. They kept to swine and dogs in the Imperial palace, the prayer rooms were turned into stables, and offered *sijdah* to the king.¹⁸ These anti-Islamic ordinances are some of the most important charges that were brought against Akbar. These charges lead to the impression that the emperor had renounced Islam.

Fazlur Rahman argues that on a closer study, these charges seem to be on the whole vague, exaggerated, and somewhat fantastic. Referring to Badauni's record of these ordinances, he says that it is not clear whether these ordinances were enforced throughout the whole empire or that it was confined to the Court circle alone.¹⁹ But one cannot dismiss the charges as entirely baseless, though Sri Ram Sharma has refuted the charges of persecution that were levelled by Badauni against the emperor, and he argues that Badauni is self-contradictory. On the one hand, Badauni says that Akbar ordered "the obligatory wearing of silk dresses at prayer times", while on the other hand, he says that the emperor "prohibited the Islamic prayers". If the prayers of Islam had been forbidden, Akbar could not have made the use of the unlawful silken dresses and ornaments obligatory. The obligation to wear silk dresses at prayer times could only have been imposed on his courties alone and that they also had to say their prayers in his company. On this basis Sharma says, it is rather ridiculous to suggest that the policy involved any persecution of Islam.²⁰ Sharma also rejects that Akbar forbade fasts, as that would have been impossible. He might have discontinued keeping fasts himself, but this would not amount to a persecution of Islam. Sharma supports this argument with the fact that by at least 1582, four years after Akbar was considered as a no longer Muslim,²¹ the fast were still kept by the emperor. The same case arises with the prohibition of *hajj*. The stopping of pilgrimages is mentioned in the year 1582; however, a member of royal family (Gulbadan Begun) returned from Mekka this same year and was royally welcomed. Governor of Gujarat, Khan-i-Azam, went to Mekka in 1593 and returned in 1594. Many men and women in Gujarat went to pilgrimage in 1595.²²

As for the other issues, such as turning mosques and prayer rooms into stables or porter's lodges, this could be true in some cases where Akbar's toleration made the maintenance of mosques in an entirely Hindu center both impolitic and useless. It is possible that in some villages, mosques were maintained simply as an emblem of the Muslim conquest, and the mosques were converted for other purposes. Some mosques were found in a state of ruin because they had not been repaired: but this does not refer to all towns and large cities which were already in a state of ruin.²³ Another source mentions that during the Mulla rebellion of the Bengal and Bahar, pseudo-mosques which had been used as centers of rebellion were destroyed.²⁴ The controversies of Akbar's attitude towards Islam which have been clarified by Sharma lead to

the clear impression that Akbar neither renounced Islam nor persecuted it. It implies that Akbar remained Muslim but he did not consider himself as someone fulfilling all the ordinances of Islam.

Some scholars agree that Akbar remained Muslim throughout his life. Sharma has proven that Akbar was a Muslim to the very end of his life.²⁵ Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury holds the view, that Akbar remained Muslim even after the promulgation of the *Dīn-i-illāhī* on the basis that it was not a new religion.²⁶ Abūl Fadl, that court historian of the emperor, says that the emperor was a firm believer in God and he never forgot Him for a moment.²⁷ Even Badauni describes that Akbar had been a pious Sunnī Muslim from his boyhood until 1578: he was very earnest in his prayers, fastings and other Islamic practices, and he was every respectful towards the '*ulamā*', the shaykhs, and Pirs. He was said to be under to 'Abd al-Nabī in early years that he used to go to his house to hear lectures on the Ḥadīths of the Prophet. It seems that there is no doubt that Akbar was a Muslim, even though Badauni believed that he stopped practicing in 1578. The true analysis of Badauni's information has become complicated by the fact that scholars have expressed differing views on this subject.

Sharma, Choudhury and others held the view that Akbar remained a Muslim until the end of his life. They have proven that some of the accusations of Akbar's religious policy were untrue; however this paper cannot judge whether Akbar was heterodox, rather, it argues that some issues of his religious policy met with the spirit of the universal character of Islamic teaching. An indication of this can be attributed to his intense desire to understand Islam better. He established the "Ibādat Khana" in 1578 where he invited the '*ulamā*' to hold religious discussions. It is said that "Ibādat Khana" was at first provided for the Sunnis. Dissatisfaction with the discussion in this forum, he then invited the Shī'a '*ulamā*' to join in this Sunni assembly, and at the end it was also opened to the Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews, Buddhists, and Christians.²⁹ He became greatly annoyed with the '*ulamā*' for the pride and intolerance they displayed during their discussions in the "Ibādah Khana". Each group of '*ulamā*' would not accept any version or interpretation but their own, as they had a fear of losing their prestige; because of these intentions their discussions were not in the spirit of a search for the truth, but for victory. The discussions were often characterized by bitterness on all sides.³⁰ Such a condition produced a tremendous effect in Akbar's religious outlook. This encouraged Akbar to issue the famous decree of 1579, which was signed by the principal '*ulamā*' of the state, whose leader was Shaykh Mubārak. It was determined that any controversy which arose regarding a religious matter, divided the opinions of the '*ulamā*', Akbar was empowered to decide the issue by accepting any of their opinions.³¹ It is no doubt that the decree was intended

to reduce the bitter impact of the dispute 'among the *'ulamā'* concerning religious life. It is also apparent that by decree, Akbar established his right to intervene in a controversy over a religious matter.

As far as his policy regarding the *dhimmīs*³² is concerned, the historical background of Islam in India, which manifested the conciliatory processes of Islamization,³³ created a precedent of how his predecessors conquered and treated their non-Muslim subjects. Akbar was a Muslim no doubt, but his government was not just what an orthodox theologian would want. In respect to his treatment to the non-Muslim subjects, he offered the widest latitude to all his peoples, on the grounds of their personal security and their freedom of religious worship. Thus, the *dhimmīs* submitted to the rule of Akbar and were allowed to live in the Mughal empire peacefully. He saw no reason as to why being a Muslim should prevent his respect to the religious sentiments of the vast majority of his subjects. This belief prevented him from becoming a blind fanatic. As far as the right to personal security was concerned, Akbar gave a new orientation to the Islamic rule in India by guaranteeing "Peace of the State" to every citizen irrespective of race, religion, or color. By doing so he recognised the position of the Hindus as members of the state. Choudhury said that the criterion of state protection, was loyalty to the throne and not loyalty to the religion.³⁴ In other words, allegiance to the Emperor and not to religion would guarantee protection.

The unjust treatment to non-Muslim subjects, as supposedly done by some overzealous rulers elsewhere, did not happen in India. Akbar's policy, however, was not contradictory to the teaching of Islam. Regarding the full security to every person, the Qur'an mentions: "And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he save the life of the whole of mankind".³⁵ At a number of places, the Qur'an has ordered not to take a person's life because Allāh has made life sacred: "Do not take life which Allah has made sacred, except for just cause".³⁶ The question of taking a life in retaliation for murder, or the question of punishment of spreading corruption on the earth, will be decided only by a proper and competent court of law. Thus, these verses give the foremost fundamental right to live, and the respect for human life. More specifically, the Prophet says "the blood of *dhimmīs* is the blood of a Muslim".³⁷ Therefore the question of depriving the Hindus to the right of freedom from personal violence did not occur.

The status of *dhimmīs* was fixed by the Prophet, and later his was reinforced by the jurists and by precedents of the rulers in different Muslim countries at different ages. Abu Bakr, the first caliph, said "don't kill any of the protected people, for if you do, God will require the protection of them from you and will cast you on your face in hell".³⁸ Abū Yusuf, a chief *qādi* during the reign of Harūn al-Rāshid, in his Kitāb al-Kharāj narrated that the Prophet said,

"if anyone violaters a man to whom a treaty has been granted, or burdens him above his strenght, I am an advocate against him until the day of judgment".³⁹ In the later period, some Muslim rulers legalized the status of non-Muslim subjects in various institutional forms. In Iraq, the department of the protection of *dhimmi*s was *jilbazah*, and in Spain, it was called the *dīwan al-dhimmi*.⁴⁰ Although there are many proof that non-Muslim subjects were treated justly by the Muslim rulers in the history of Islam, there were some instances where they were denied their ordinary civic rights by the rulers.⁴¹ This different treatment may have happened because of the interpretation of the injunctions and laws; their actual application depended upon the attitude of the individual Muslim rulers towards a particular incident.

In respect to the freedom of religous worship, Akbar removed all restrictions regarding non-Muslim public religious worship. For his Hindu subjects, these rights included the abolition of the pilgrimage tax, and the removal of all restrictions on building places of public worship. This led to the building of numerous public temples in the famous places of the Hindu pilgrimage. In many places, Christian churches were also built in many places.⁴² These policies, which were implemented during the period of Akbar, created fierce opposition from some of the '*ulamā*'. But if it is studied carefully, such policies do not contradict the injunction of the Qur'ān. This is based on the verses: "To you your faith and to me mine".⁴³ and, "There is no compulsion in religion, the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error ..."⁴⁴. Another verse emphasizes: "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, all who are no earth, Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will to believe".⁴⁵ Although the Muslims believe that there is no truth and virtue greater than Islam, if somebody does not accept Islam, Muslims will have to recognize and respect this decision and will allow him freedom of conscience and religion, and that no moral, social or political pressure will be put on him to change his mind.

As to question whether Akbar interpreted those verses of the Qur'ān to support his policy, there is no evidence. However his religious background and his capacity as a Muslim ruler, surrounded by prominent religious classes, suggest that Akbar understood this principal injunction. It is quite understandable, that Akbar also forbade forcible conversion everywhere in the empire. At this point Du Jarric reports from his travel that:

"There were in his country some who had been enslaved by his subjects, and who, to regain their freedom, had renounced the Christian faith (for very often the very often the Saracens offer liberty to the Christians whom they capture, on condition that they abandon their faith). It happened at this time that some of the latter desired to revert to their own religion, and, that they might be able

to practise the same without molestation, begged from the King permission to return to their own country, that they might live amongst Christians. His Majesty at once granted their request; and when one of them expressed a desire to remain in Indostan, he not only permitted him to live and clothe himself after the Christian manner, but received him into the service of his own household".⁴⁶

The precedent of how his predecessors treated their non-Muslim subjects also shared the same role in inspiring Akbar's religious policy. Nizami said that Muḥammad ibn Qasim placed the Hindus under the category of *mushabbah ahl al-kitāb* (those who resembled the possessors of revealed Books).⁴⁷ With regards to the Buddhists MacLean says that the problem of the status of the non-Muslims of Sind was resolved by considering the Hindus and Buddhists as *ahl al-kitāb* similar to the Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians.⁴⁸ All the Sultan of Delhi accepted this position of the Hindus. In another article Nizāmī further explains that Alaudin Khalji did not discriminate between the Hindus and the Muslims. Muhammad ibn Tughlug was anxious to introduce measures for the political unification of India by integrating the Muslims and his Hindus. This necessitated the creation of a greater involvement of the Hindus in the functioning such as appointed Hindus to important posts, established contacts with Hindu religious thinkers.⁴⁹ The Muslim administration in India during the period of the early conquest followed the general patterns of their predecessors who had employed local talent and made minimum amounts of charges about local practices. The Caliph, Umar, who was acknowledged as the creator of the Muslim system of administration, laid down the working principle that the Muslims could not acquire property in the conquered territories. Under his system, the conquering general of the new territory became its Governor, but most of this subordinate offices were allowed to retain their previous posts.

Following these policies, Sher Shah's rule is one of the most significant Islamic administrations in India history. His knowledge of earlier history and his practical experience with the people enabled him to utilize what was good in the past and to improve onto it. By doing so, he paved the way for the final phase of the Muslim administration under Akbar, and the later Mughals. With regards to his treatment to his non-Muslims subjects, Ikram tells us that although Sher Shah was rigidly orthodox, Hindus were held in high positions in his army, and Todāl Mal, who later was renowned under Akbar, was originally in his service. One of his best-known generals was Bramajit Gaur, who he sent in pursuit of Humayun; Raja Singh of Gwalior, is also said to have been in his service. His army also included a contingent of Rajputs.⁵⁰

All of the above, created precedents for defining that status of Hindu subjects in the Indian Muslim state. Although there was no discussion of the status of Hindus in Akbar's administration, it is believed that Akbar practiced these precedents and they were a major concern of his policies. These policies not only led the Hindus to have their own right to personal security, freedom from personal violence and freedom of religious worship, but also allowed them to have high official ranks in the Mughal empire. Through her study on Jahangir's policy, Sajida Alvi analyzes that the climate of liberalism characterized by freedom of religion for Muslims as well as non-Muslim subjects posted the Mughlas on the higher respect comparing to the preoccupation of the neighboring powers, the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Uzbeks.⁵¹ These policies caused bitter opposition from the orthodox '*ulamā*'. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindi urged these '*ulamā*' to adopt opposing attitudes towards the Hindus, towards their theological point of view and their position in the government. He believed that the Hindus were not the "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), and that they had no right to have a status of dhimmis in the Mughal state.⁵² In the context of India, Ahmad Sirhindi believed that Hinduism was infidelity (*kufīr*). He regards Islam and Hinduism as opposites, antithetical and therefore mutually exclusive. The two opposites cannot integrate; one can thrive only at the expense of the other. If the unbelievers find an opportunity they will reconvert Muslim to Hinduism or kill them. It should be realized that the honor of Islam is dependent upon the disgrace of the unbelievers and their faith. Therefore, one who holds infidels in affection and esteem or keeps company with them, dishonors his own religion; a good Muslim, as Sirhindi suggested, should avoid contact with non-believers even in daily life.⁵³ With regards to the issue of the non-Muslims, specifically the classification of the *dhimmīs*, there was no unanimous opinion amongst the jurists. Imām Shāfi'ī restricted the application of the *dhimmī* law to the *ahl al-kitāb* (the Jews and the Christians) and the Zoroastrians alone. Abū Ḥanīfa and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal extended its application to all except the infidels of Arabia. Imām Mālik and Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf adopted the most liberal attitude and accorded the status of *dhimmīs* to all non-Muslims, whether Arab or non-Arab without any exception. According to Nizāmī, the consensus of juristic opinion was, therefore, in favor of extending the privileges of *dhimmīs* to all non-believers.⁵⁴

M. Mujeeb has suggested that during the last phase of his career, Aḥmad Sirhindi considerably modified his aggressiveness towards the Shi'ahs and the Hindus.⁵⁵ The change in his attitude, towards the Hindus, can allow one to conclude that contacts with the polytheists have never been forbidden and that in the conditions of India, they were even inevitable.⁵⁶ Friedmann says that the modification of Sirhindi's attitude towards the Hindus does not

indicate a change in his views in regards to their participation in the Mughal administration. All of the violent expressions of hostility towards them, in the first volume of the *Maktūbāt*, are included in letters addressed to nobles of the Mughal court. Sirhindi's intention in these letters was to undermine the position of the Hindus in the Mughal administration, rather than to restrict their contacts with Muslims in other areas of life.⁵⁷ If Friedman's contention is correct, Sirhindi's objection to the Hindus was to their participation in the government officials, who presumably had the power to purge the administration of Hindu influence.

From this point, it is clear that the dispute was actually more political rather than theological. Such a situation usually occurs among powerful groups of elite, who want to have more access within an administration. In the history of Islam, some evidences support this idea. From here one may trace the struggle between Qasis and Kalbis who were of the elite political power in the Umayyad period; the struggle between the elite military leaders who were dominated by the descent of the Turks and the administrative elites of the *mawālīs*, in the 'Abbāsīd period and between the clerical estate of local '*ulamā*' and the religious professionals who came from the Arab lands in the Safavid period. Imposing religious issues on the struggle among the elite groups in the period of the Mughals, supports the idea that Islam should play a prominent role in the conduct of the state as it has been propagated by Aḥmad Sirhindi. Akbar considered the assimilation within his country. The laws of the Qur'an and the Ḥadīth, the decisions of the jurist '*ulamā*' and the precedents of the Caliphs, can be applied differently in a country where the number of *dhimmīs* to the Muslim is comparatively quite imbalanced. Akbar realized that in India, where the number of *dhimmīs* far exceeded that of the Muslims, a strict application of Islamic laws, as the orthodox '*ulamā*' want, would create many administrative problems and would threaten a collapse of the whole administrative machinery. The impossibility of ruling India on rigid orthodox principles, as has been shown by Akbar, has in fact contributed valuable principles for the ruling elite in the history of Medieval Islam.

Concluding Remarks

The religious deterioration of Muslim in seventeenth century India which has been closely related to the effect of Akbar's religious policy demands further research. The information provided by some writers have denied this connection and have shown that some charges of anti-Islamic ordinances which were brought against Akbar were exaggerated. This study concludes that the orthodox ulama opposition to Akbar's religious policy was motivated by the Emperor who had given more freedom to his non-Muslim subjects. They considered that such a treatment not only weakened the religious and political

position of the Muslims but also violated their Islamic teachings. Concerning the latter issue, this study argues that Akbar's policy, which led the Hindus to have their own rights in religion and politics, had a strong base on the spirit of the universal characteristics of Islam which are prescribed in the basic principles of Islamic teaching and implemented in the historical experiences of the Muslim rulers.

With regards to the claim that Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was a *mujaddid al-fi thānī* this study shows that a thesis which raises the religious deterioration in seventeenth century India which was due to Akbar's religious policy is difficult to accept. If a general opinion accepts a theory by which the religious deterioration is regarded as a factor in encouraging the appearance of a *mujaddid*, it is logic to conclude that since Akbar's policy did not prove such a factor, therefore the claim of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi as a *mujaddid* is questionable. This conclusion supports the idea of a recent study on *mujaddid* and *tajdid* in India who were not so acclaimed by many of their contemporaries and later generations.⁵⁸

ENDNOTES

*Asisten Direktur Pascasarjana IAIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya.

¹Ignaz Goldziher on al-Suyūṭī translated by Michael Barry, with additional notes by J.O Hunwick, in *Muslim World*, 68 (1978), p.81; Ella Landau-Tasseron, "The Cyclical Reform: A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition", *Studia Islamica*, 70 (1989), p.79; Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tajdid al-Din: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning, Roots, and Influence in Islam", in William A. Brinner & Stephen D. Ricks. *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions* (Atlanta, GA.:Scholars Press, 1986), p. 100; John O'Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah" in John L. Esposito, ed. *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 33; Sajida S. Alvi, "The Mujaddid and Tajdid Traditions in the Indian Subcontinent: A Historical Overview", Montreal, 1993.

²(inna allāha yab'athu li-hādhihi i-ummatī 'ala ra'si kull *mi'ati sanatin man juhjaddidu laha amra dinaha*) Sunan Abu Daud, 4/156.

³(*jaddidū imānakum*), Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal. *Musnad* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Islam, 1978/1398), 2:359.

⁴John O.Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: tajdid and islah" in John L. Esposito, ed. *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.33.

⁵Commenting on Voll's interpretation, Sajida S. Alvi agrees with Voll's ide, but Landau-Tasseron rejects Volls' interpretation and argues that Islam recognizes its own

imperfection. See Sajida S. Alvi, "The Mujaddid", pp.38-39. Ella Landau-Tasseron, "The Cyclical Reform", p.79.

⁶(*al-yauma akmalu lakum dinakum wa atmamtu alaikum ni'mati wa raditu lakum al-islama dina*). Qur'an, al-Maidah (5):3.

⁷(*khairu ummati qarni thunuma al-ladhina yalunahum thunuma al-ladhina yalunahum*). al-Bukhari, "kitab fada'il ashah al-nabi", *Kitab al-jami' al-sahih* 2 (leiden: E.J. Brill, 1864), pp. 416-417.

⁸Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam" in P.M. Holt, A.K.S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, eds. *Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 632.

⁹B.A. Faruqi. *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid: Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Doctrine of Unity* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), pp. 6-8.

¹⁰(*wa-ma arsalnaka illa rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Qur'an, al-anbiya (21):107; Yusuf 'Ali comments this verse and says that the principle is unversally applied to all peoples without questioning race or nation. See A. Yusuf 'Ali. *The Holy Qur'an, II*. (New Delhi : Kitab Publishing House, n.d.), p. 846.

¹¹(*wa'b taghi fima ataka allahu al-dar al-akhirata wa-la tansa nasibaka min al-dunya*). Qur'an, al-qasas (28):77.

¹²(*ma kana Muhammadun aba ahadin min rijalikum wa-lakin rasullahi wakhatama al-nabiyyin*) Qur'an, al-ahzab (33): 40.

¹³(*al-'ulama warathat al-anbiya*). Bukhari. *Sahih Bukhari, bab 'ilm*, 10.

¹⁴Faruqi. *The Mujaddid's*, p.5.

¹⁵*Ibid*, pp.5-6.

¹⁶M.A.H. Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism* (Leicester, UK.: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 5.

¹⁷Faruqi, *The Mujaddid's*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁸M.K.Md. Fazlur Rahman, "Akbar's Religion", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, 10, 1 91965), p. 132.

¹⁹*Ibid*.

²⁰Sri Ram Sharma. *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 36.

²¹Badauni mentioned that Akbar had been a pious Sunni Muslim from his childhood until 1578, when "Ibadat Khana" was established by Akbar. See Fazlur Rahman, "Akbar's Religion", p. 123.

²²Sharma, *The Religious Policy*, pp. 36-37.

²³*Ibid*, pp. 37-38.

²⁴Mkahn Lal Roy Choudhury. *The State and Religion in Mughal India* (Calcutta: Indian Publicity Society, 1951), pp. 192-193.

²⁵*Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

²⁶Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury. *The Din-i-Ilahi*. (Calcutta: Das Gupta & Co. Ltd., 1952), pp. 195-196.

²⁷Fazlur Rahman, "Akbar's Religion", p. 121.

²⁸*Ibid*, p. 123.

²⁹Roy Choudhury. *The Din-i-Ilahi*, pp. 49-50.

³⁰*Ibid*, p. 46.

³¹Fazlur Rahman, "Akbar's Religion", p. 125.

³²*Dhimmi* is a non-Muslim subject in a Muslim state who has accepted the Muslim sovereignty but not Muslim religion.

³³There is polemical debate on the dual questions of conquest and conversion in India. Maclean studies that the majority of explanations of conversion in Sind have tended to operate on a simplistic and mutually antagonistic coercive or voluntary model of conversion. For details, see Derryl N. MacLean, "Religion and Society in Arab Sind", unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1984), pp. 80-102.

³⁴M.L.R. Choudhury, "Hindu Muslim Relation During the Mughal Period 1526 to 1707 A.D." *The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress Ninth Session, 1946*, pp. 286.

³⁵(*man qatala nafsān biḡhairi nafsīn ... fa ka'annamā qatala al-nās jamī'ā*) Qur'an, *al-Maidah* (5): 32.

³⁶(*walā taqtulū al-nafs al-latī harrama llāhu illa bi'lhaq*), Qur'an: *al-Isra'* (17): 33; *al-An'am* (6): 151.

³⁷Choudhury, "Hindu Muslim", p. 285.

³⁸Ibn Sa'd. *al-Tabaqāt al-Kubra, I* (Beirut: Dār Beirut, 1957), p. 137.

³⁹Abū Yūsuf. *Kitā al-Kharāj*. (Qairo: Matba'at al-Salafiyah, 1352), p. 71.

⁴⁰W. Husain. *Administration of Justice During the Muslim Rule in India* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1934), p. 155.

⁴¹Choudhury records these instances happened in the period of Caliph Umar II, Caliph al-Mutawakkil, and reflected in the *fatwas* of some 'ulamā'. See Roy Choudhury. *The State and Religion*, pp. 234-235.

⁴²Sharma, *The Religious Policy*, p. 20.

⁴³(*Jakum dīnukum wa-liyadīn*), Qur'an, *al-Kafirun* (109): 6.

⁴⁴(*lā ikrāha fī al-dīn, qad tabayyana al-rushdu min al-ghay ...*), Qur'an, *al-Baqarah* (2): 26.

⁴⁵(*wa-lau shā'a rabbuka la āmana man fī al-ardi kulluhum jamī'ā, afa anta tukrih al-nās hatta yakūnū mu'minīn*), Qur'an: *Yunus* (10):99; As a complementary proposition, men of faith must not be impatient or angry if they have to contend against unfaith, and most important of all, they must guard against the temptation of forcing faith, i.e. imposing it on others by physical compulsion; or, any other forms of compulsion such as social pressure, inducements held out by wealth, position, or other advantageous advantages. Forcing faith is no faith. They should strive spiritually and let God's plan work as he wills. Yusuf 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, p. 510.

⁴⁶Pierre Du Jarric. *Akbar and the Jesuits: An Account of the Jesuit Mission to the Court of Akbar*. translated with introduction and notes by C.H. Payne. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1926, p. 28.

⁴⁷K.A. Nizami. *Some Aspects of Religions and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*. (New Delhi: Indarāh-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1974), p. 315.

⁴⁸Maclean, "Religion and Society", p. 107.

⁴⁹K.A. Nizami, "Aspects of Muslim Political Thought in India During the Fourteenth Century" *Islamic Culture*, 52 (1978), pp. 215, 219.

⁵⁰Ikram. *Muslim Civilization*, p. 140.

⁵¹Sajida S. Alvi, "Religion and State During the Reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-27): Nonjuristical Perspectives" *Studia Islamica*, 69 (1989), p. 112.

⁵²His rejection is based on his belief that there was not any reliable information concerning religious community before. Although he believes that Prophets were sent to India, but all were rejected, and none had more than three followers. They were not successful in founding a community. He says that the ruins scattered all over India are those of towns and villages which rejected the Prophets and were consequently destroyed by the divine wrath. See Yohanan Friedmann. *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1971), p. 71.

⁵³Aziz Ahmad, "Religious and Political Ideas of Shaikh Ahmad Sirbindi" *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, 36 (1961), p. 264.

⁵⁴Nizami, *Some Aspects*, pp. 308-309.

⁵⁵M. Mujeeb. *The Indian Muslims* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), p. 244.

⁵⁶Friedman concludes Sirhindi's attitude from his *Maktūbat*, III. See Friedmann. *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi*, p. 74.

⁵⁷*Ibid*, pp. 74-75.

⁵⁸See Sajida Alvi, "The Mujaddid and Tajdid", p.2.