

An Argument in Favor of Tolerance: Muslims and Hindus

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Abstract for the Thesis

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*This project is going to explore Muslim interactions with Hindus from the Classical Period through the Modern Period through an Islamic lens. Due to a deterioration of relations and discourse between the two groups, a framework will be provided through Fed Donner's Muhammad and the Believers and Ibn Qayyim's discussion of Ahl al-Kitab (People of the Book) to show that a discourse between the two groups should not be seen as alien. Then a survey of early interactions, the Mughal period, and the Modern period will be provided through discussions of scholars and their scholarship from their time. Through these discussions, sufficient evidence will be provided to show that Hindus have been seen in a tolerant light from Muslim scholars, even possibly People of the Book.*

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## **Introduction:**

In South Asia today, a once beautiful history of tolerance and dialogue has been all but forgotten, lost to violence and intolerance. One cannot discuss Muslim-Hindu relations without mentioning animosity between the two communities. This is not to say that the history of Muslim and Hindu interactions is without blemishes. But when we look at the history of their interactions, we see that many of these animosities and tensions are recent developments. Communities within South Asia that have documented histories of dialogue seem to be reaching new heights of intolerance. Hindu nationalists claim that Muslims and Islam have no rightful place in India. Common Islamic discourse describes Hinduism as heathen polytheism that has influenced and corrupted Muslims and that its adherents are destined for the flames of hell. This discourse seems to have peaked after the violent partition of Pakistan and India. Concerning the partition, Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal write in *Modern South Asia*, “That the dawn of independence came littered with the severed limbs and blood-drenched bodies of innocent men, women and children was a nightmare from which the subcontinent has never fully recovered” (Bose & Jalal, 178). Since the partition, there have been numerous instances of communal violence, most notably the destruction of the Babri Masjid and the riots that ensued, and the Gujarat riots of 2002.

However, Muslim-Hindu relations were not always at odds. In fact, Muslims and Hindus were very tolerant of each other and lived harmoniously for centuries. Reza Shah Kazemi writes in *The Spirit of Tolerance* concerning the historical relationship between Muslims and Hindus, “... elements of Indic culture had entered into and enriched the forms taken by the Islamic faith in India, and Islam in its turn, influenced the development of certain expressions of Hindu religious and social life” (Kazemi, 32).

Kazemi shows that these two groups heavily interacted and also borrowed heavily from each other. Muslim scholars who went to India and interacted with Hindus had to figure out how classify and deal with them theologically. Of course there has been no correct answer to this question due to this being a new situation and a wide variety of answers given. But historically many Muslim scholars have tried to approach this endeavor in a tolerant light, even including Hindus in specific categories of belief such as People of the Book, which will be explained in this project.

Unfortunately, much of this history has been overshadowed by the more recent rise of sectarian tensions. The aim of this project is therefore to recover the history of theological arguments in favor of a more tolerant and expansive definition of the idea of “People of the Book.” While the project’s core focus is on South Asia, the thesis will also examine the broader global evolution of ideas of tolerance from the time of the Prophet through to the fourteenth century. This context is crucial because South Asian Muslim thinkers themselves supported their arguments by referring to this wider tradition.

The primary method of this project will be a historical analysis of four major periods of Islamic history. The first major period that will be analyzed will be the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It is important to keep in mind that there are many competing narratives about the life of the Prophet and the revelation of the Quran, which includes a vast corpus of prophetic biography and hadith literature. Therefore an analysis of an existing model of the Prophet and the Quran is necessary. Fred Donner’s *Muhammad and the Believers* will be analyzed to show that the Prophet’s mission was based on tolerance and inclusion. The next period that will be analyzed is the scholarly classical period, particularly a discussion of the scholar Ibn Qayyim and how he uses the Quranic category

of People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab). Following this discussion, there will be a brief discussion of Muhammad bin Qasim and Al-Biruni. Muhammad bin Qasim is one of the earliest Muslim rulers in India, and it is important to see how he governed his subject. AlBiruni is one of the first Muslim scholars to analyze the religious traditions of India in depth. He managed to learn Sanskrit, translate the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, and write an analysis of what he read and witnessed in India. After this discussion, it is only natural to include a discussion of the Mughal Empire. The Mughals held control of South Asia for nearly three centuries, and it is crucial to see how they interacted with the religious traditions of the majority of the population. This will primarily be done through a discussion of the Mughal Prince Dara Shukoh's life and an analysis of his *Majma alBahrain*. Lastly, this project will conclude with an analysis of two voices from the modern period to situate where relations are at today. This portion will include an analysis of Abul Al'a Mawdudi to show the deterioration of relations between Muslims and Hindus from a Muslims point of view. This conversation will be followed by a modern example of tolerance, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad.

It is important to keep in mind that when discussing religious groups and religious identity there is a discussion of sociology to be had. Ivan Stenski writes in his book *Understanding Theories of Religion*, "Émile Durkheim thinks that the best strategic level to access religion is through the group, since the group makes the individual, not the other way round" (Strenski, 129). According to Durkheim, individual outlooks are produced by the membership of a group. A Muslim living in South Asia is going to be using Islam to respond to their situation, thus this project's focus on the theological context for inter-faith relations.

Additionally, when analyzing these scholars, it is important to understand that they are living in very specific periods of time and have their own experiences to which they are reacting. Ibn Qayyim is writing from a juristic perspective. Dara Shukoh is writing from the perspective of a soon to be ruler who has a deep commitment to mystical understandings. Mawdudi is writing from the perspective of a scholar during a very tumultuous period in history. Also, Islamic institutions and perceptions of Islam have changed dramatically from each time period. During the classical and Mughal periods, Sufism and mystical understanding dominated Islamic thought. By the time we get to Mawdudi, the Wahhabi and Salafi purity movements have gained enormous importance and power in the psyches of Muslims and Muslim scholars. It crucial to understand that the Islam that each of these individuals is not a static and unchanging entity. These scholars have their own deep understandings of Islam that differ greatly from each other, which were also shaped by their circumstances, material conditions, and institutional changes.

### **Belief, Disbelief, People of the Book:**

Before it can be argued that Hindus should fall under the category of People of the Book, there needs to be a sufficient explanation to what this category is, and why this matters in the first place. The most important purpose of this section is to provide evidence that the ideas of belief and disbelief are malleable. Much of this discussion will be guided by Fred Donner's book *Muhammad and the Believers*. As stated in the introductory section, there are many competing narratives regarding the life and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad and the revelation of the Quran. Donner's analysis will be outlined in order to provide a context and framework for later discussions.

In accordance with the Quran and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, the People of the Book have been given specific protections and status under Islamic Law. Most importantly, religious traditions classified under the category People of the Book are given a sense of tolerance and protection. This is due to the belief that God had sent messengers and messages to People of the Book before the Prophet Muhammad. In Donner's previously mentioned book, he does not use the terms Islam and Muslim to describe the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. Instead he uses the term 'believers'. He writes, "The Qur'anic evidence suggests that the early Believers' movement was centered on the ideas of monotheism<sup>1</sup>, preparing for the Last Day, belief in prophecy and revealed scripture, and observance of righteous behavior" (Donner, 68-69). Donner describes the characteristics of the Believers movement in the Quran, and surprisingly it is not as strict as some may think. He points out the articles of faith that are attributed to the Believers movement are general observances that are not exclusive to Islam. He continues, "...including frequent prayer, expiation for sins committed, periodic fasting, and a charitable and humble demeanor toward others" (Donner, 69). In this quote, he shows that even outward expressions of faith are general and are also common to other faiths. He goes on to write, "On the other hand, there is no reason to think that the Believers viewed themselves as constituting a new or separate religious confession" (Donner, 69). Donner sets up the core of his argument: that the Believers movement was

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a pluralistic movement. He describes that some passages in the Quran indicate that the

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to keep in mind that different religious traditions hold different ideas of monotheism. When monotheism is discussed in the project, it is primarily Muslim conceptions of monotheism.



Prophet did not bring a new message and cites, “Say: I am no innovator among the apostles; and I do not know what will become of me or of you. I merely follow what is revealed to me; I am only a clear warner (Q. 46:9)” (Donner, 69). He makes the argument that the message that was given to the Prophet Muhammad is one that would be familiar to the people around them and would not necessarily cause them to see themselves as different.

Donner argues that a significant quality that defined Believers was the recognition of monotheism. He writes, “At this early stage in the history of the Believers' movement, then, it seems that Jews or Christians who were sufficiently pious could, if they wished, have participated in it because they recognized God's oneness already” (Donner, 69). He claims that there is evidence to support the idea that Jews and Christians were considered Believers due to their acceptance of the monotheistic nature of God. However, he goes on to write, “The reason for this ‘confessionally open’ or ecumenical quality was simply that the basic ideas of the Believers and their insistence on observance of strict piety were in no way antithetical to the beliefs and practices of some Christians and Jews” (Donner, 69). Here Donner continues to describe the Believers movement of Prophet Muhammad as being inclusive to Jews and Christians due to their devotedness to God. He also writes, “Indeed, the Qur'an itself sometimes notes a certain parallelism between the Believers and the established monotheistic faiths (often lumped together by the Qur'an in the term ‘people of the book,’ *ahl al-kitab*; Q. 48:29)” (Donner, 69). In the previous paragraph, Donner notes that the Quran affirms that the Prophet is confirming previous messages that have been sent by previous prophets. Here he argues that there is a sense of commonality through the Quranic discussion of People of the Book.

Donner also goes on to explain that there is a quality in the Quran that is a defining characteristic of the People of the Book. He writes, “Closer examination of the Qur'an reveals a number of passages indicating that some Christians and Jews could belong to the Believers' movement not simply by virtue of their being Christians or Jews, but because they were inclined to righteousness” (Donner, 69-70). He then cites Chapter 3 verses 113-115 from the Quran, “They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book is an upright community who recite God’s signs in the watches of the night, while they prostrate. They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin right and forbid wrong, and hasten unto good deeds. And they are among the righteous. Whatsoever good they do, they will not be denied it...”<sup>2</sup> (Nasr, 162-163). In this verse, the Quran states that there are People of the Book who believe in God, are righteous, and will be rewarded for it. An interesting question to ask that specifically relates to this project is “What of righteous monotheists that are not Christians and Jews”?

Fred Donner’s discussion is primarily concerned with the inclusion of Jews and Christians under the concept of what is considered a valid believer, and he admits that the Quranic evidence he provides is usually in conjunction with discussion of People of the Book. Interestingly enough, the Quran does not lay out a clear definition for the category of the People of the Book, and scholars have debated different interpretations. There are certainly conversations within the Quran that relate the concept of the People of the Book to Jews and Christians, but there does not seem to be sufficient evidence that it is

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exclusive. To support this idea, Yohanan Friedmann writes in his book, *Tolerance and*

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<sup>2</sup> This verse is from Professor Hossein Nasr’s Study Quran

*Coercion in Islam*, “Ibn Hanbal observed that the Quranic references to the People of the Book do not specify the books which are intended by this phrase; hence people who believe in any book revealed by God should be considered People of the Book and should be treated like the Jews and the Christians” (Friedmann, 81). Friedmann cites Ahmad ibn Hanbal to show that there are pluralistic views on the category of People of the Book. Two verses in the Quran that may support this idea can be found in Surah 16 Verse 36, “We indeed sent a messenger unto every community, ‘Worship God, and shun false deities!’ Then among them were those whom God guided; and among them were those who were deserving of error. So journey upon the earth and behold how the deniers fared in the end!” (Nasr, 664-665) and Surah 5 Verse 24, “Truly We have sent thee with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and as a warner. And there has been no community but that a warner has passed among them” (Nasr, 1062). Now according to Donner’s model, the Prophet’s Believers Movement was a pluralistic movement that included the surrounding Christians and Jews. After the death of the Prophet and the spread of Islam, scholars naturally needed to deal with the question of other religious groups that were not contemporary with the Prophet and the Quran. In accordance with the study that was presented, it would not be out of the question to believe that Muslim scholars would be tolerant when coming into contact with these groups.

Jacques Waardenburg documents some of these instances in his work *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions*. In an evaluation of scholar Shams al-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad Abi Bakr al-Zari Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya, or simply Ibn Qayyim, he describes him to be popularly known as a literalist like his teacher Ibn Tamiyya

(Waardenburg, 162). However he admits that, “In recent years George Makdisi has shown that Ibn Qayyim must be viewed not as a literalist-legalist, but more accurately as a ‘Sufi-Hanbalite’” (Waardenburg, 162). Waardenburg most likely mentions this point to try to separate Ibn Qayyim from the modern literalist Salafi movement and their abandonment of traditional methodologies. The next few paragraphs will include an analysis of an opinion of Ibn Qayyim, from his *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma*, by Waardenburg. A English translation of Ibn Qayyim’s work is not easily accessible, however Waardenburg’s citations are sufficient.

Regarding the concept of People of the Book, Waardenburg begins the discussion by outright stating Ibn Qayyim’s stance. He writes, “Ibn Qayyim himself sides with a certain Marwazi’s<sup>3</sup> opinion, that the apparent contradiction of the master was due to his having been corrected in the course of his original argument, at which point he consequently switched to the correct position, that the Samaritans were indeed fully *ahl al-kitab*” (Waardenburg, 162). Ibn Qayyim is fully convinced that the Samaritans fall under the category People of the Book. In his argument, he begins with the concept of *jizya*, or tax for non-Muslims<sup>4</sup>. Waardenburg writes, “In his *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma*, he devotes two pages to a long-unresolved question of Muslim jurisprudence. This question, in his words, relates to the Samaritans, and ‘the disagreement of the *fuqaha* (jurists) concerning them: Should the *jizya* be imposed on them or not?’” (Waardenburg, 162). In

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<sup>3</sup> A Persian Scholar

<sup>4</sup> The *jizya* should not be seen as a penalty for being non Muslim in Muslim majority lands. Muslims were liable to pay taxes that non muslims did not have to pay and the *jizya* was a tax that contributed to the society at large.

this section, Ibn Qayyim engages in the proper methodology of analyzing a situation and all sides of an argument. Waardenburg also acknowledges that his question has been long

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debated and unresolved. It should be noted that there is a difference of opinion amongst Islamic schools of law on who is liable to pay the *jizya*. This is why Ibn Qayyim discusses the issue of *jizya* in conjunction with the category of People of the Book.

Ibn Qayyim then moves on to an argument involving comparison to another religious group. Waardenburg writes, “Ibn Qayyim strongly dissents from those jurists who say that the Samaritans are not liable to pay *jizya* while the Majus (Zoroastrians) are” (Waardenburg, 162). During this conversation, Ibn Qayyim draws a comparison to the ‘Majus’ who are classified as Ahl al-Kitab and are subject to paying the *jizya* tax. Waardenburg writes, “He (Ibn Qayyim) then lists a number of blatantly non-Scriptural<sup>5</sup> traits of the Majus —fire-worship, metaphysical dualism, want of divine revelation, mother–son marriage, and lack of apostolic proscriptions—as counterpoints to the characterization of the Samaritans as fully *ahl al-kitab*” (Waardenburg, 162). Ibn Qayyim points out that Zoroastrians clearly have practices that fall out of the realm of what is relatable to Islam, but they are in fact seen as People of the Book. Interestingly enough, he does not try to claim that Zoroastrians are not People of the Book regardless of them not fitting neatly under an Islamic model. Waardenburg goes on to describe Ibn Qayyim’s conclusion: the Samaritans are liable to pay the *jizya* due to their relationship with and resemblance of Jews (Waardenburg, 164). This point is important because the

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<sup>5</sup> This statement refers to how different Zoroastrianism is from Islam and the other Abrahamic faiths. While Judaism and Christianity have a relatable lineage and set of practices to Islam, Zoroastrianism has elements to it that would fall out of the scope of this model.

Samaritans seem to have had a closer relationship with already classified People of the Book than the Zoroastrians. This is particularly crucial when discussing Muslim interactions with new religious groups because a natural inclination from some scholars is

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going to be to liken Islamic beliefs to other systems. Ibn Qayyim provides an insightful model for extending Quranic concepts to groups that are not specifically mentioned in the Quran as being protected.

The purpose of including this discussion of Ibn Qayyim after Donner's model is to show that Muslim scholars had to classify religious groups when they came into contact with them. As previously shown in Donner's discussion of Ahl al-Kitab and the Believers movement, these categories are commonly reserved for Jews and Christians. However, Ibn Qayyim felt it was proper to extend this classification to the Samaritans. As shown, this was due to the commonly held idea of his time that Zoroastrians, who did not neatly fit in an Islamic model, were considered Ahl al-Kitab and that the Samaritans resembled the Jews. It is important to keep in mind that scholars debated these issues, and also disagreed. Now when discussing the history of Muslims and Hindus, Muslim scholars needed to perform more work and study harder due to their interactions being completely new and many practices being unfamiliar. In a modern context, it will be shown in a later section that some modern scholars like Mawdudi do not believe this to be a valid discussion. This is why it is crucial to keep scholars like Ibn Qayyim in mind, because classical scholars did not shy away from questions like this.

### A Relevant Caveat: Hindus as Dhimmi

While this project is not concerning the concept of dhimmi (protected people), disregarding this concept would do an evaluation of Muslim-Hindu relations a disservice. It should be noted that modern scholarship seems to make a clear distinction between dhimmi and People of the Book. Specifically, while all Peoples of the Book are considered dhimmis, dhimmis don't technically have to be People of the Book. However, it does not seem to be clear on whether or not this is true for classical scholars and definitions. The *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* defines dhimmi as, "Non-Muslim under protection of Muslim law. A covenant of protection was made with conquered 'Peoples of the Book,' which included Jews, Christians, Sabeans, and sometimes Zoroastrians and Hindus. Adult male dhimmis were required to pay a tax on their income and sometimes on their land" (Esposito, 68). Here it seems that the author is assuming an inherent connection between the two concepts and that an adult male that is considered a dhimmi is subject to taxation (*jizya*). As briefly mentioned in the previous section, there has been a difference of opinion on who is liable to pay the non Muslim tax, or *jizya*. Waardenburg writes in his previously mentioned book, "However, polytheists (*mushrikun*) cannot be *dhimmis*: no *mushrikun* are allowed within the *dar al-islam*<sup>6</sup>; only monotheists and in particular *ahl al-kitab* can be *dhimmis*" (Waardenburg, 20). He describes that in order to be considered a dhimmi, one must be a monotheist, and it is commonly thought that it was exclusive to People of the Book. He writes, "The *dhimmis* were subject to a special taxation (*jizya*), and they kept an internal autonomy within Muslim territory as socioreligious communities possessing their own laws and jurisdiction" (Waardenburg,

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<sup>6</sup> "The abode of Islam" specifically used for to describe Muslim majority places.

20). Here Waardenburg shows that being classified as a dhimmi meant that specific taxes needed to be paid, the *jizya*, in order to maintain their religious freedoms and contribute to the government.

When it specifically concerns Hindus, the majority view of modern scholarship is that they have been classified as dhimmis. Waardenburg writes, “The Hanafi and Maliki

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schools of law, for instance, were willing to include Hindus within the category of *ahl aldhimma* and give them protection accordingly” (Waardenburg, 34). Here he points out that two of the Sunni schools of Islamic Law were willing to classify Hindus as dhimmis. He writes “Even when Hindus went on worshipping their gods they could enjoy the protection (*dhimma*) of the Muslim rulers on condition that they paid *jizya*”

(Waardenburg, 34). As pointed out in the previous sections, in order for a group to enjoy the status of being dhimmi, a group needed to pay the *jizya*. It should be noted that Islamic law in South Asia has been dominated by the Hanafi school of law. Since Hanafis classified Hindus as dhimmis, this would be the dominant opinion in South Asia.

Waardenburg goes on to write, “In other words, Hindus were not considered as polytheists (*mushrikun*) in a strict sense. Consequently, they were not treated according to the *Sharia*’s prescriptions for the treatment of *mushrikun* in Muslim territory: conversion, departure, or death” (Waardenburg, 34-35). Continuing his statement that dhimmis cannot be polytheists, Waardenburg asserts that Hindus enjoyed an elevated status in Islamic law. However, this is where Waardenburg’s conclusions end along with many other modern scholars. He does not contemplate whether or not Hindus could be considered People of the Book, which is strange considering his previous assertion that



dhimmi are ‘particularly People of the Book’. It seems like the application of dhimmi status is a political assertion done by the state. It is entirely possible that it was assumed that when dhimmi status was applied, so was the theological concept of People of the Book. Perhaps modern scholars have shied away from using the category People of the Book in favor of dhimmi status in an attempt to formulate a theologically safer conclusion. Or perhaps the purity movements of scholars like Mawdudi have been more influential than many think.

Even though Islamic relations with Buddhists is not the primary focus of this project, a brief discussion would bring clarity to this analysis. Reza Shah Kazemi writes in his book *Common Ground Between Islam and Buddhism*, “Throughout Islamic history, Buddhists—together with Hindus and Zoroastrians, not to mention other religious groups—were regarded by Muslims not as pagans, polytheists, or atheists, but as followers of an authentic religion, and thus to be granted official dhimmī status” (Kazemi, 7). Here Kazemi points out that the above mentioned groups were seen as followers of valid religions, and in accordance with Waardenburg’s statements, monotheists. In the introduction Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan writes, “It seems to us then that the Umayyads and the Abbasids were entirely correct in regarding Buddhists as if they were ‘Ahl Al-Kitab’ (‘Fellow People of a Revealed Scripture’)” (Kazemi, xiv). He points out that the Umayyads and Abbasids extended tolerance towards Buddhists, specifically as if they were People of the Book. This point is particularly interesting for this project's purposes due to the relationship that Buddhism shares with Hinduism. As previously mentioned, Hindus were in fact considered dhimmis and not polytheists, therefore it would logically make sense that Hindus would be treated

as People of the Book as well. He continues, “This is in fact how millions of ordinary Muslim believers have unspokenly regarded their pious Buddhists neighbours for hundreds of years, despite what their scholars will tell them about doctrinal difference between the two faiths” (Kazemi, xiv-xv). He points out that it was common for the common people to view Buddhists in a tolerant light regardless if scholars tried to assert differences.

It should be assumed that Muslims had similar relationships with Hindus. Khilaf Ahmad Nizam writes in his book *Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*, “The mystic (Muslim) attitude towards the Hindus and Hinduism was one of sympathetic understanding and adjustment. They (Muslim mystics) looked upon all religions as different roads leading to the same destination” (Nizam, 334-335). Nizam describes that Muslim mystics were tolerant of Hindus and legitimized their beliefs. He continues, “It was their (Muslim mystics) firm conviction that spiritual greatness could be attained by Hindus in the same way as it could be achieved by the Muslims” (Nizam, 335). Here Nizam claims that Muslim mystics believed that Hindus could even gain the same spiritual states as Muslims. According to these discussions of Buddhism and Hinduism, it would be strange to leave Hindus out of the category of People of the Book but include Buddhists.

### **Early Interactions With Hinduism**

One of the earliest examples of Muslim power in India is the conquest and governorship of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim. Before he writes about Muhammad bin Qasim, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami describes, in his previously mentioned book *Religion and*

*Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*, the classifications that jurists would use when classifying unknown faiths, “When Muslim political influence spread to areas inhabited by people professing different faiths, the problem of determining the position of the non-believers in the Muslim political set-up assumed great significance” (Nizami, 326). In this quote, Nizami describes how Muslim political powers were concerned with classifying different faiths. The reason, he describes, “An Islamic State stood for the realization of certain ideals. The Muslims could be forced to live according to the laws of the *Shari’at* and help in realizing those ideals, but no such pressure could be exercised on those who did not believe in Islam” (Nizami, 326). Muslim rulers recognized that non-Muslims could not be judged under Islamic law because it could only be applied to Muslims. He goes on to write, “The Muslim jurists classified the non-believers under the following three categories: a. Those who possessed some revealed book (ahl-i-Kitab), b. those who resembled the possessors of revealed books (mushaba ahl-i-Kitab), and c. all others are kafirs and mushriks” (Nizami, 326). Due to encounters with unfamiliar religions, jurists needed to try to classify them to help rulers interact with them according to Islamic law. Different classifications being offered different rights and protections. After the conquest of Sindh, Muhammad bin Qasim had to decide what the best classification would be for Hindus according to Islamic Law. Nizami writes in his previously mentioned book, “When Muhammad b. Qasim decided to realize the jiziyah from the Hindus, he placed them under the category of mushaba-ahl-i-kitab. This position of the Hindus was accepted by all the Sultans of Delhi” (Nizami, 331). Nizami states that Muhammad bin Qasim decided to classify Hindus as a group that resembles People of the Book. When studying Muhammad bin Qasim, a reader must keep in mind that his contact

with Hindus was very early, and it could be assumed that Muslims did not know much about the variety of religious beliefs in India. By placing Hindus in this category, he refrains from extending categories of disbelief and infidelity. Perhaps he did this to try to foster tolerance between Muslims and Hindus. Nizami goes on to write, “Once or twice during this period, some religious fanatics demanded a change in the legal status of the Hindus, but their approach was neither approved by the rulers nor did it receive the support of the Muslim public” (Nizami, 331). According to Nizami, there were minority groups that wished to revoke tolerance for Hindus, however they never gained support. Jamal Malik writes in his book *Islam in South Asia*, “This pragmatic Islamicating approach<sup>7</sup> found its initial climax in Muhammad b. al-Qasim accepting the native Hindus as people of the covenant: at Alor he is said to have stated that ‘to us the (Hindu) temples shall be like the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire temples of the Magians’” (Malik, 46). Here Malik shows that Muhammad bin Qasim did see Hindus in a tolerant view, comparing them to Jews, Christians, and Magians (Zoroastrians). He goes on to describe that many modern Muslims see Muhammad bin Qasim as a model for tolerance (Malik, 48).

One of the most thorough and earliest analyses of Hinduism by a Muslim was written by the scholar al-Biruni, commonly seen as one of the greatest scholars in history. In his book *India*, he tries to study the religious traditions<sup>8</sup> of India as impartially as possible. In the introductory chapter of *India*, he tries to help his readers understand that

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<sup>7</sup> Professor Malik tries to rationalize how conversion to Islam came about in India, coming to the conclusion that many people converted to Islam for practical economic reasons. (Malik,45)

<sup>8</sup> While discussing al-Biruni I try to refrain from using the term ‘Hinduism’ due to its modern implications. When al-Biruni uses the term ‘Hindu’ it is more of a geographical term than a religious term.

the religion and culture of the people of India are very different than Islam (Sachau, 100). Perhaps he does this to try to encourage his readers not to project Islamic constructs on them. In the second chapter of the book, al-Biruni describes the religion of the people of India, “The Hindus believe with regard to God that he is one, eternal, without beginning

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and end, acting by free-will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who in his sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that he does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble him” (Sachau, 117-118). In this quote, al-Biruni finds a monotheism in his studies. For a Muslim scholar, this most likely would be seen as something favorable and positive. He then goes into a brief discussion of the *Yoga Sutra of Patanjali* in order to justify this claim of monotheism (Sachau, 118). After this discussion, he writes, “This is what educated people believe about God” (Sachau, 124). Before he starts this discussion, he prefaces that he is describing the beliefs of educated Hindus. He goes on to write, “They call him *isvara*, i.e. self-sufficing, beneficent, who gives without receiving. They consider the unity of God as absolute, but that everything beside God which may appear as a unity is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider as a real existence, because everything that exists exists through him” (Sachau, 124). Here he describes that educated Hindus believe that everything in fact exists through God and that God is the ‘real existence. He writes, “It is not impossible to think that the existing beings are not and that he is, but it is impossible to think that he is not and that they are” (Sachau, 124). Here al-Biruni alludes to an idea in Indic philosophy that all is an illusion and the only real existence is God. In this

discussion it is very interesting to see how al-Biruni is working diligently to describe the beliefs of God by educated Hindus.

Al-Biruni then moves on to discuss the religious beliefs of the common people of India. He writes, "If we now pass from the ideas of the educated people among the Hindus to those of the common people, we must first state that they present a great variety" (Sachau, 124). Here he claims that unlike the educated Hindus, the common people have more diverse beliefs. In the previous paragraph, al-Biruni assumes that his conclusions represent the majority of educated people in India. He goes on to write, "Some of them are simply abominable, but similar errors also occur in other religions. Nay, even in Islam we must decidedly disapprove, e.g. of the anthropomorphic doctrines, the teachings of the Jabriyya sect, the prohibition of the discussion of religious topics, and such like" (Sachau, 124-125). Here al-Biruni seems to assume that the religion of the common people is a corruption of the religion of the educated people. However, he points out that this discrepancy is common in other religions and even gives two examples in Islam. He goes on to give an example, "Every religious sentence destined for the people at large must be carefully worded" (Sachau, 125). Al-Biruni points out that scholars need to be careful when sharing theology with common people. "Some Hindu scholar calls God a point, meaning to say thereby that the qualities of bodies do not apply to him. Now some uneducated man reads this and imagines, God is as small as a point, and he does not find out what the word point in this sentence was really intended to express" (Sachau, 125). Al-Biruni gives an example to point out that uneducated people would come to the wrong conclusions if they were presented with a scholarly thought. This point should not

be seen as being specific to Hindus. In fact, classical Islamic thinkers tried to restrain common people from engaging with scholarship without the proper training.

Al-Biruni then goes on to evaluate other practices, beliefs, and texts of Hindus. This brief section on the analysis of al-Biruni was included to show that some of the earliest Islamic scholars to evaluate the religious traditions of India studied with the intention to understand and not condemn. Al-Biruni was most likely not interested in trying to classify these traditions, only trying to help his readers to understand these systems. He went above and beyond in his endeavours to try to give these traditions the respect he felt they deserved from a scholar. While he may have not seen some elements of Hindu religion as favorable, he did recognize that there are Hindus that do recognize a form of monotheism that may be similar to his own understanding.

### **Dara Shukoh: A Model of Tolerance**

Since this project is concerning Muslim-Hindu relations and interactions, it is only natural to look to scholars and figures that have existed in South Asian history. The scholar that will primarily be focused on is Prince Dara Shukoh, son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. In her book *The Emperor Who Never Was*, Supriya Gandhi writes, “Toward the end of his life, Dara initiated a large project of engaging with what we might today call Hindu thought. The prince himself made a comparative study of Hindu and Islamic religious concepts and had the Upanishads, a collection of Hindu sacred texts, translated into Persian” (Gandhi, 1-2). As Gandhi shows, Dara Shukoh showed a great interest in engaging with Hindu thought and trying to understand Hindu texts the best he could. She writes, “Through the works he authored or sponsored, Dara Shukoh gradually went

beyond many of these previous projects to advocate a notion of religious universalism. He came to believe that a common core of truth underlay traditions as different as Islam and Hinduism” (Gandhi, 8). Dara Shukoh engaged in these scholarly endeavors due to his own beliefs that there is validity in both his own religion, Islam, and the majority religion of South Asia, Hinduism. Throughout this discussion, it is important to remember that Dara Shukoh’s views were shaped by Sufism, which dominated understandings of Islam in South Asia during this period.

Interestingly enough for a prince, Dara Shukoh was not sitting in an ivory tower drawing conclusions on his own. Jacques Waardenburg writes in his previously mentioned book, “Dara Shukoh, a spiritual man himself, was in close touch with Muslim Sufis and Hindu *sanyasis* (renunciates) and studied both Muslim and Hindu mysticism” (Waardenburg, 70). He notes that Dara Shukoh himself was in close contact with Hindu and Muslim mystics. He goes on to write, “Looking for a rapprochement between Hinduism and Islam, Dara Shukoh held that all holy books, including the Vedas, stem from one source and that they constitute a commentary on each other” (Waardenburg, 70-71). Waardenburg points out that Dara Shukoh held that the Vedas were divine revelation and affirmed other revelations. He goes on to write, “He also contended that the advent of Islam did not necessarily abrogate the religious truths contained in the Vedas or supersede the religious achievements of the Hindus” (Waardenburg, 70-71). Interestingly enough, Dara Shukoh did not believe that Islam negated Hindu texts and beliefs. An interesting detail to keep in mind when discussing Dara Shukoh is pointed out by Gandhi.



She explains, “Like other Muslims of the time who were intrigued by Hindu thought, Dara never renounced Islam. His universalist position allowed him to embrace ideas from other traditions while remaining a Muslim” (Gandhi, 8). Throughout his scholarly and spiritual endeavors, Dara Shukoh never renounced his Islamic faith nor did he see them as lessening his status as a Muslim.

One of Dara Shukoh’s most famous pieces of scholarship is the *Majma ulBahrain*, which will be analyzed in detail in this project. Supriya Gandhi writes in her previously mentioned book in relation to the *Majma ul-Bahrain*, “This was his most ambitious work yet, not in length—it was merely a short treatise—but in scope. The work was a direct result of his immersion in Indic learning, but also built on the steps that he had already taken with his *Risala-i Haqqnuma* and *Hasanat-ul- arifin* (Gandhi, 186). She describes this work to be almost a natural response to his studies. Due to his engagement with Hindu thought, he wished to provide a formalized argument on why he believes that Islam and Hinduism have a harmonious relationship. She goes on to write, “Dara Shukoh titled his new book *Majma-ul-bahrain*, meaning the ‘meeting place of the two seas.’ Many modern readers assume that these seas stand for the two faiths of Islam and Hinduism, though what this phrase connoted in Dara’s own context was infinitely more subtle and complex (Gandhi, 186). Gandhi notes that reading this title in a modern context brings us to the immediate assumption that the two seas are Islam and Hinduism, but indicates in Dara Shukoh’s mind, there is a more complex reason for his choice of title. She goes on to write, “‘Majma’ is an Arabic noun of place meaning confluence, and its root, *j-m-*’, is associated with collecting, bringing together, and ordering. This quite aptly reflects the work that the book does to compile and arrange terms and ideas from

Sanskrit, refracted through Hindavi and Persian” (Gandhi, 186). She describes that the title could be an indication of Dara Shukoh’s goal, which is to collect and order concepts in terms from the traditions he is writing about.

The title *Majma ul- Bahrain* also has a more plain indication that would be obvious to a Muslim audience. Gandhi points out that the title of his treatise would be familiar to his audience by pointing out, “It calls to mind the Quranic verse (18:60) in which the phrase *majma-ul-bahrain* occurs: ‘And when Moses said unto his servant: I will not rest until I reach the place where the two seas meet (*majma-ul-bahrain*), even if I journey for ages’” (Gandhi, 186). Perhaps Dara Shukoh chose this specific phrase to be an indication of it being his duty to bring these two systems together. However, this could only be a speculation. Gandhi goes on to write, “The prince refers to two religious traditions, but these are not the crystallized, rigidly-bounded Islam and Hinduism that we know in modern times” (Gandhi, 187). An important note for readers of *Majma ul- Bahrain* that Gandhi points out is that Dara Shukoh’s understanding of these traditions is not how modern adherents would think of their own tradition. Discussions on the definition of religion, purity movements, and Orientalism would be lengthy and complex. However, it is necessary to point out that there have been major transformations in the understandings of Islam, Hinduism, and religion. This is not to say that Dara Shukoh’s scholarship would be irrelevant today. In actuality, it may prove useful in trying to improve the relationship between two seemingly at odds communities.

Before diving into the text, it must be made abundantly clear what Dara Shukoh’s goal is as an author. Gandhi writes, “His project does not seek to synthesize two separate streams of Islam and Hindu religion. Instead, he aims to uncover and document a

common font of truth shared by Muslim and non-Muslim, Indian ‘monotheists’<sup>8</sup>” (Gandhi, 187). She argues that Dara Shukoh does not wish to try to combine these two faiths, only to try to come to common ground. Perhaps he looked to the example of Akbar and his synthesis of *Din-i Ilahi*, an attempt to combine Islam with the major religions in South Asia, which failed to gain popularity within the Mughal Empire. He most likely wished to create a lasting sense of unity amongst Muslims and Hindus in the empire. A very interesting question that Gandhi ponders is ‘Who is the target audience?’. She writes

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that Dara Shukoh himself claimed to be writing for only a select group of people, but is skeptical of this claim due to him translating his work into Sanskrit (Gandhi, 188-189). She speculates that the *Majma* was written specifically for an elite crowd and perhaps had a political agenda behind it claiming, “The *Majma*’s composition revealed not only the prince’s spiritual journey, but also the type of rulership he was performing” (Gandhi, 189). Since Dara Shukoh was the preferred heir to his father Shah Jahan, it seems like he wanted to set the tone of what the empire will be like under his rule. If the *Majma* was meant for a scholarly elite, perhaps Dara Shukoh wished to provide a text that could possibly foster tolerance and unity within scholarly communities, and then in turn influence the people who followed the scholarly elites.

In order to try to make sense of the *Majma* to her modern audience, Gandhi provides an explanation to its organization and content. She writes, “We can see that the

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<sup>8</sup> Important to note that within *Majma ul-Bahrain*, Dara Shukoh refers to what we know today as Hindus as ‘Indian monotheists’. The specificity of the phrase is perhaps a recognition of different groups within the Indian subcontinent.

*Majma* draws greatly on themes from his conversations with Baba Lal<sup>9</sup>, even though the textual versions of these dialogues appear far removed from the actual discussions. But the prince did not receive information passively; rather, he absorbed, reshaped, and rearranged what he learned” (Gandhi, 190). Gandhi points out that Dara Shukoh is reflecting the knowledge that he learned with Baba Lal in ways he most likely understood. This is significant for understanding the *Majma* because he is most likely ordering concepts and themes in a way that will fit what he is trying to accomplish. She goes on to write, “The *Majma* is also often based on book knowledge, though the information that Dara presents cannot be traced to just one or two sources” (Gandhi, 190). Here Gandhi points out that the *Majma* has to come from multiple sources due to

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the fact that its sources cannot be traced to one or two sources. She writes, “The work’s categories, taken as a whole, do not reflect any of the prevailing genres of Sanskrit knowledge traditions. And though some of the categories find resonance in certain aspects of Sufi literature, the selection appears to be the end result of a sophisticated individual process of inquiry and reasoning” (Gandhi, 190). Gandhi points out that the categories that Dara Shukoh includes in the *Majma* seem to be more influenced by Sufi themes than that of Sanskrit traditions. This may be due to Dara Shukoh trying to give more importance to his identity as a Muslim and trying to give legitimacy to an outside belief system. Gandhi writes, “The *Majma-ul-bahrain*’s enterprise is a comparative one. It compares and draws relationships between the Indic and Islamic concepts discussed within its pages” (Gandhi, 191). She points out that Dara Shukoh is trying to draw

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<sup>9</sup> Professor Gandhi explains that Baba Lal is a Hindu ascetic that Dara Shukoh learned a great deal of Indic thought from (164)

parallels between these two systems, perhaps in order to show that these systems are not as different as some think. She writes, “Yet the work does not assume a neutral vantage point from which it weighs equally these two systems of thought. Rather, the project takes as its primary object of study the domain of Indic knowledge, which it seeks both to describe using its own vocabulary, as well as translate into Islamic, largely Sufi, categories” (Gandhi, 191). When reading and making sense of the *Majma*, it should be seen as trying to construct a relationship between Islam and Hinduism from a Muslim perspective.

The very first line, which is cited from another author, of the *Majma* sets the tone for Dara Shukoh’s book. Dara Shukoh writes, “Unbelief and Islam race down his path, Crying, ‘He is one, he has no partner’” (Gandhi, 187). By including this verse, Dara Shukoh seems to be signifying that there could be truths to other religions. Gandhi writes in her previously discussed book, “Dara Shukoh borrows this verse from the twelfth-century mystical poet Sanai’s *Hadiqat-ul-haqaiq* (Garden of Verities). In most versions, the verse contrasts unbelief (*kufir*) with religion (*din*) and not *islam*, the form that Dara uses, though this variant was widely known in the Mughal context” (Gandhi, 187). Perhaps the significance of the usage of the word Islam instead of religion adds to the point that there are knowledge systems outside of Islam that held truth and validity. If he compared religion to unbelief, there could be an implication of belief in God and atheism.

She goes on to write, “Here unbelief also signifies the Indic knowledge that the *Majmaul-bahrain* presents and is contrasted with Islam in religious terms. By this the prince implies that religious traditions outside Islam also offer a path to the divine” (Gandhi, 187). It is understandable that Dara Shukoh would want to keep his work in Islamic

religious terms because he is trying to compare and order the knowledge he is studying in an Islamic model. The primary reason for this methodology is to show that even perceived disbelief can bring one to God.

The first two sections of the *Majma al-Bahrain* draw on discussions of the Islamic and Hindu views of the elements and the senses. These sections are technical in their details and would require additional discussions and research in order to efficiently explain them. In section three, Dara Shukoh offers a comparison of Islamic and Hindu devotional exercises. He writes, “Although, according to the Indian monotheists, there are several kinds of devotional exercises, yet they regard *ajpa* as the best of all. This exercise originates from every living being, both in sleep and wakefulness, without any will or control, at every moment -and always” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43). To begin the section, he first describes the concept of *ajpa*. He understands *ajpa* as everything in the world being in a constant state of devotion. He goes on to write, “Consequently, the Holy verse: ‘And there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification’ (Quran 17:44) refers to this very fact” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43). Here, Dara Shukoh draws on a verse from the Quran which fits into his explanation of *ajpa*. The Quranic verse indicates that everything is in constant praise of God even if one does not understand how. He goes on to write, “The incoming and outgoing breath have been interpreted in two words- the breath that comes out is called *Ū* and the breath that goes in is named Man and (their combination) ‘*Ū manam*’ means ‘He is I’”(MahfuzUl-Haq, 43). Here Dara Shukoh tries to explain the previously cited Quranic verse claiming that everything is devoted to God whether or not one can understand. He writes

“The Sufis consider their occupation in these two words as HŪ Allah (i.e. He is God)- HŪ appearing while the breath comes in and Allah when it goes out”(Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43). In this quote, Dara Shukoh articulates that both Muslims and Hindus believe that the very breaths living beings take are in fact praises to God. He goes on to write, “And these words are being uttered by every living being, without his being conscious of the fact” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43). Here he asserts that this praise is performed by not only humans, but every living being in the universe. The significance of this section is that Dara Shukoh is trying relate Muslim and Hindu practices to try to show that they might not be so different.

The fourth section of the *Majma* discusses the attributes of God. Dara Shukoh writes, “According to the Sufis, there are two divine attributes of Beauty (Jamal) and Majesty (Jalal), which encircle the whole creation, while, according to Indian devotees, there are three attributes of God, collectively called *tirgun*, or *sat*, *raj*, and *tam*, which mean Creation, Duration, and Destruction” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43-44). Here Dara Shukoh shows that both Muslims and Hindus have their own concepts of beauty that have a relationship with time and reality. He writes, “the Sufis (on the other hand), viewing, and accepting the quality of Duration as the attribute of Beauty” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 43-44). As he stated, Muslims do accept Duration under the quality of Beauty, but it is unclear if the other qualities are comparable to each other. He goes on to write, “But, as these attributes are included in one another, the Indian devotees name them *tirmurat*, or *Brahma*, *Bishun* (Vishnu), and *Mahish* (Shiva), who are identical with *Jibrail*, *Mikail*, and *Israfil* of Sufi phraseology” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 44). Here Dara Shukoh claims that these attributes are synonymous with the deities of Hinduism and the major angels of Islam. He writes,

“*Brahma*, or *Jibrail*, is the (superintending) angel of Creation; *Bishun*, or *Mikail*, is the angel of Duration (or Existence); *Mahish*, or *Israfil* is the angel of Destruction”

(MahfuzUl-Haq, 44). Here Dara Shukoh claims that these deities are equivalent to these angels and as previously stated by him, they are ‘included in one another’. He assumes that these three qualities, for both Muslims and Hindus, are contained in one supreme being.

Section five of the *Majma* deals with conceptions of the soul. Dara Shukoh writes, “The soul is of two kinds: (i) a (common) soul and (ii) the Soul of souls, which are called *atma* and *paramatma*, respectively, in the phraseology of the Indian divines” (MahfuzUl-Haq, 44-45). Here Dara Shukoh claims that there are two concepts of the soul for both Muslims and Hindus. It should be noted that Dara Shukoh ascribed to the Islamic concept of the Unity of Existence. Without diving too deeply into the metaphysical argument of this concept, the Unity of Existence claims that ultimately everything is God and existence is contained within God. So when Dara Shukoh speaks of the Soul of souls, he is referring to the result of gaining the highest level of spiritual enlightenment: removing barriers to be one with the divine. He goes on to write, “When the ‘Pure Self’ becomes determinate and fettered, either in respect of purity or impurity, He is known as *ruh* (soul), or *atma*, in His elegant aspect and *jasd* (body), or *sarir*, in His elegant aspect” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 45). Here Dara Shukoh is assuming that both Muslims and Hindus ascribe to the same belief when it comes to the soul. Perhaps when describing the Pure self becoming ‘determinate and fettered’ he is referring to when a soul is restrained by a human body and that all souls are part of the ‘Soul of souls’. He writes, “And the self that was determined in Eternity Past is known as *Ruh-i-A’zam* (or, the Supreme Soul) and is



said to possess uniform identity with the Omniscient Being” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 45). Here he describes that Supreme Soul, which all souls are connected to is actually the ‘Omniscient Being’ or God. He goes on to write, “Now, the Soul in which all the souls are included is known as *paramatma* or *Abul-Awah* (i.e. the Soul of Souls). The interrelation between water and its waves is the same as that between body and soul or as that between *sarir* (body) and *atma*. The combination of waves, in their complete aspect, may (very aptly) be likened to *Abul- Arwah* or *paramatma*...” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 45). In this section Dara Shukoh includes this discussion of metaphysics to explain how Muslims and

Hindus view existence. He claims that each individual soul makes up the one ‘Soul of Souls’. As done in the previous sections, Dara Shukoh assumes that these concepts are identical in Islam and in the Hindu traditions.

The most important discussion that is included in the *Majma* is the discourse on the Vision of God. Dara Shukoh writes, “The Indian monotheists call the vision of God, *Sachatkar*, that is, to see God with the (ordinary) eyes of the forehead” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 50). Here Dara Shukoh shows that in both the Hindu traditions and in Islam there are mystical experiences that can occur both outside and or within a person. He writes, “Know that the Vision of God, either by the Prophets, or by the perfect divines, whether in this or the next world and whether with the outer or the inner eyes, cannot be doubted or disputed” (Mahfuz-Ul-Haq, 50). Here he affirms a major tenant of Islam: the revelation and connection that Prophets receive from God. He also believes that ‘perfect divines’ can attain a connection with God, which is a reference to saintship. He goes on to write, “...and the ‘men of the Book’ (*ahl-i-kitab*), the perfect divines and the seers of

all religions- whether they are believers in the Kur'an, the Vedas, the Book of David or the Old and the New Testaments- have a (common) faith in this respect” (Mahfuz-UlHaq, 50). Dara Shukoh makes it blatantly clear in this section that he is including Hindus under the concept of People of the Book, and they have the same capacity to attain mystical experiences. In this statement, not only does he put Hindu traditions and their texts on the same level as other Peoples of the Book, he also puts them on the same level as Islam and the Quran as being valid believers who possess revealed books from God.

Now this project is not trying to claim that Dara Shukoh's views represent the view of a majority of Islamic scholars on Hindus and their religious traditions. Nor is it being argued that his conclusions about Hindu religious traditions are correct or that they represent Hindu beliefs as viewed by Hindus. The purpose of including an analysis of Dara Shukoh and the *Majma al-Bahrain* is to show that a theological tolerance for Hindus from a Muslim perspective is not out of the question. Unlike his predecessor Akbar, who actually created a whole new religion in an attempt of tolerance, Dara Shukoh fully maintains his identity and beliefs as a Muslim. One does not need to accept every conclusion that he makes, but drawing on his life and legacy in order to encourage tolerance could be crucial in reviving interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Hindus. Before the closing of this section, it should be noted that Dara Shukoh never became emperor of the Mughal Empire. In fact, his brother Aurangzeb began a war against him, and their other siblings<sup>10</sup>, in order to gain power over the empire. The legacy of Aurangzeb

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<sup>10</sup> This war was actually between four brothers and was not started by either Aurangzeb or Dara Shukoh.

has been a popular discussion point amongst academics in the twenty-first century to try to push back against the popular narrative that he is an intolerant tyrant.

However, some individuals still see Aurangzeb's victory over his brother's as a victory for 'Islamic orthodoxy'. This is an oversimplification of a very complex situation.

Without diving too deeply into the war of succession, it is critically important to not attribute any theological qualities. The war of succession was merely a war amongst power hungry brothers.

### **The Antithesis: Mawdudi**

In any situation, recognizing the opposing point of view is necessary in an attempt to remain honest. It would be a great disservice not to acknowledge the purity movements that have taken place in Islamic history, specifically in South Asia. One of the most influential voices being the 20th century Islamic revivalist, Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi. In fact, outlining Mawdudi and his ideology reinforces why a retelling of history and dialogue in favor of tolerance is necessary. In his book *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr writes, "Mawdudi's life and thought also suggest that Islamic revivalism is more than just some reactionary effort born out of a

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cultural rejection of the West" (SVR Nasr, 4). When it comes to Islamic purity movements, a major focal point has been a rejection of Western values and their influence on Muslim societies. Here, Nasr wants to show it is not that simple with Mawdudi. He writes, "In Mawdudi's case, at least, it is closely tied to questions of communal politics and its impact on identity formation, to questions of power in pluralistic societies, and to nationalism. Mawdudi's arguments were anti-Western, but

they were motivated by Muslim and Hindu competition for power in British India” (SVR Nasr, 4). Without delving too deeply into the life of Mawdudi, it is important to try to understand what was influencing his opinions and situations he was reacting to. Nasr notes that he did have anti-Western motivations, but his perceived competition with Hindus for power is what caused his passion. The bulk of this discussion about Mawdudi will be focused on his perception of Muslim-Hindu relations.

A scholar and their ideology should not be studied outside of their context, and it should be noted that Mawdudi lived in a particularly turbulent time in South Asian history. Nasr discusses Mawdudi’s involvement in the Khilafat movement that sought to preserve the caliphate in Turkey (SVR Nasr, 4-5). He writes, “Meanwhile, the violent reaction of Muslims to the collapse of the Khilafat movement had led to communal strife across India. Hindus organized their own groups, an act that escalated the conflict” (SVR Nasr, 21). When the Khilafat movement fell apart, tension rose quickly between Muslims and Hindus. He goes on to write, “The communalist Hindu Mahasabha, and, more specifically, the Hindu revivalist party, Arya Samaj, organized the Shuddhi movement, which tried to convince both nominal Muslims who abided by Hindu norms and lowcaste converts to Islam to return to Hinduism. The movement, with its stress on conversion, greatly antagonized Muslims” (SVR Nasr, 21). Part of the tension that arose was Hindu groups that began trying to convince Muslims that had converted to Islam from Hinduism to return to Hinduism. As Nasr points out, this was seen as antagonistic towards Muslim communities. Perhaps Hindu revival groups felt that the collapse of the Khilafat left Muslim communities vulnerable in India and went on a mission to proselytize. He goes on to write, “Mawdudi viewed the Shuddhi campaign as proof of the inherent animosity

of Hindus toward Islam and the beginning of the end of Islam in India, concluding that, to prevent the extinction of Islam in India, Muslims would also have to proselytize”(SVR Nasr, 21-22). Mawdudi himself interpreted these events as being proof that Hindus are intrinsically at odds with Islam and that they were moving to push Islam out of India. For Mawdudi, the political tensions that were arising during his life were not contextual. It seems like he sincerely believed that these were theological issues that needed to be dealt with by trying to spread Islam in India.

Since Mawdudi believed that Islam and Hinduism were intrinsically at odds with each other, it is safe to assume that he did not have many positive things to say about Hinduism. Nasr writes, “Hinduism also had no intellectual allure; Mawdudi regarded it as a sociopolitical force rather than a culture. He saw no intellectual challenge in Hinduism as he understood it, nor did he believe that Hinduism as a religion had anything to do with the appeal of Indian nationalism” (SVR Nasr, 54). As shown here, Mawdudi did not believe that Hinduism was even close to comparable to Islam. He did not see Hinduism as a set of traditions as being a threat to Islam and believed it was separate from Indian nationalism. Since he believed there was no redeemable value in Hinduism, it is safe to assume that he did not see worth in engaging in dialogue with Hindus.

The focal point of Mawdudi’s theological writings focuses on the purity of Islam in belief and practice. Nasr writes, “Mawdudi believed that once Muslims followed the true teachings of Islam they would become immune to the lure of Western thought as it was reflected in Indian nationalism” (SVR Nasr, 54). In this quote, Nasr articulates

Mawdudi's emphasis on purity in Islam, and that through purification comes true Islam. Through the purification and study of true Islam, Muslims will be able to resist Western influence and Indian nationalism, which he believed were reflected through Hinduism. Nasr writes, "The inevitable rise of Islam would check and subdue Hindu power and eventually also win Hindus over to Islam. If the threat of Hindu supremacy necessitated a revival of Islam, the key to that revival rested in freeing Muslims from the clutches of traditional<sup>11</sup> Islamic thought and the influence of the West" (SVR Nasr, 54). A revival of Islam would help balance power between Muslims and Hindus and would eventually bring more conversions to Islam. In order for this to happen, Islam would need to be purified from outside influences and traditionalism.

Mawdudi's goal was to try to bring about a revival movement that was going to root out any beliefs and practices that were not considered 'Islamic' to him. Nasr writes, "The lines of demarcation that defined Islam were perforce steadfast: there was either Islam, as it was understood and defined by Mawdudi, or there was un-Islam" (SVR Nasr, 64). Mawdudi himself was ready to declare beliefs and practices as un-Islamic and was ready to articulate what he believed was true Islam. An interesting point to be made here

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is that Mawdudi is claiming to know what is right and wrong when it comes to Islam.

This is a strange position to have for Muslim scholars considering that there was a general understanding that ultimately only God knows what is true and what is false.

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Professor Nasr's usage of the term 'traditionalism' refers to the adherence to the institutions, methodologies, and tools that have been constructed during the early classical period. Example: the founding jurists of the Islamic schools of law (madhab) have put in place standards and tools to help formulate legal opinions on issues that arise within society. Another example of what is traditional is the structure of the Sufi orders and how they function.

Daniel Brown writes in *A New Introduction to Islam* in regards to the debates on the permissibility of coffee, “No Muslim jurist would doubt that God had an opinion about coffee, but most of them shared a healthy sense of their own fallibility in understanding his opinions. They could only do their best, and their best might not be enough” (Brown, 531). Brown shows that Muslim scholars traditionally did not claim to have the truth or even access to the truth. Scholars worked under the assumption that they were doing their best in order to help navigate Muslims through changing times, and there was even a recognition that a scholar could be incorrect in their opinions. He writes, “This process of seeking to understand God's law the legal scholars called *fiqh* – understanding.... *Fiqh* and the rulings that resulted from it were, at best, an approximation of the true law of God, and the pro-coffee lobby was free to argue that the assembled Meccan ‘ulamā’ had gotten it quite wrong” (Brown, 531). He shows that results from the process of *fiqh* were seen as approximations at best, and that if individuals felt that scholars were wrong, they were able to voice their opinions. For Mawdudi to claim that he knows what is true Islam and what is not is a break with traditional Islamic thought. It will be shown in the next paragraph how far Mawdudi was willing to take these assertions.

What exactly was Mawdudi trying to accomplish by trying to upend traditional Islamic thought and ‘purify’ Islam? Nasr writes, “To Mawdudi's audience, the psychological implications of such a dichotomy<sup>12</sup> were many. Conscious of this fact, and

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<sup>12</sup> The dichotomy that is referred to here is mentioned in the previous paragraph as ‘Islam and unIslam’.

eager both to inoculate Muslims against Hindu and Western viruses and to mobilize them in a religiopolitical movement...” (SVR Nasr, 64). In this quote, Nasr articulates that Mawdudi is trying to create a rivalry between Muslims and Hindus and is doing this by playing on a core tenant among all religions. He continues, “...Mawdudi brought to bear the full force of the choice between true Islam and un-Islam, salvation and perdition, on individual Muslims: ‘A Muslim is not a Muslim by appellation or birth, but by virtue of abiding by holy law’” (SVR Nasr, 64). Salvation is an important tenant for a believer of any religion and part of Mawdudi’s claim is that he has the key to the afterlife. This claim itself is enough to make a lay Muslim anxious. On the other hand, a scholar claiming he has the truth and wants to purify Muslim communities to help them attain salvation might be alluring to some. In actuality, Mawdudi was helping to fuel animosity between Muslims and Hindus.

Interestingly enough, Mawdudi did not believe that there were many Muslims who knew Islam, and logically following, were ineligible for salvation. Nasr writes, “The distinction between true faith and nominal allegiance to it legitimized Mawdudi’s ideology and vested his program of action with a sense of mission” (SVR Nasr, 64). Here Nasr shows Mawdudi wished to target people who he felt were only Muslim by name only. He continues, “In effect, revival of Islam began with the statement that of those who claimed to be Muslim, ‘not more than 0.001%’ knew what Islam actually was, implying that what was widely accepted as Islamic was, in fact, un-Islamic. Mawdudi’s invitation to Islam was a daring challenge to traditional Islam” (SVR Nasr, 64). In this quote, Nasr points out that Mawdudi was ready to accuse the vast majority of Muslims of not knowing what true Islam is and in fact, they fell under his category of un-Islamic.



This is a complete break with traditionalism. In the classical period of scholarship in Islam, scholars were concerned with what constituted a Muslim and what could invalidate someones faith.

A short discussion on the view of faith and works in Islam is necessary to emphasis the above point. In his section on faith and works in relation to Muslim identity, Brown writes in his previously mentioned book, “At the other extreme, the Murji’a<sup>13</sup>, along with Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers, held that faith was unaffected by works. An early Ḥanafī creed asserts that no one can be declared an infidel, nor can a person's faith be denied, on the basis of sin” (Brown, 603). Here Brown shows that there were early groups that argued that faith was unaffected by works. He goes on to write, “A somewhat later creed states the case more starkly: ‘Works are distinct from faith, and faith is distinct from works, as is proved by the fact that often the Faithful is exempted from works, whereas it is not possible to say that he is exempted from faith’” (Brown, 604). He points out that there was an eventual divorce between faith and works by Muslim scholars. Faith alone made one a Muslim. He goes on to write, “Deeds are excluded from the formal definition of faith, which consists of ‘confessing with the tongue, believing with the mind, and knowing with the heart’ (Wensinck 1932: 125)<sup>14</sup>. This definition allows even a grave sinner to possess faith, and it would thus be wrong to declare such a person an infidel” (Brown, 604). Brown summarizes the general principle that Muslim theologians

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<sup>13</sup> The Murji’a are an early division of Muslims that were concerned with the question of what invalidates faith. The other ‘extreme’ that Professor Brown refers to are a group called the Kharijites who believed that sin nullifies one's faith.

<sup>14</sup> This is Professor Brown’s citation

have been following for centuries: to call one's self a Muslim is sufficient to be a Muslim and sin and works do not affect this. As shown in the previous paragraph, calling oneself

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a Muslim was not sufficient for Mawdudi. He asserted that if one did not follow the law, as he viewed it, this nullified one's faith.

Nasr then offers an explanation to why Mawdudi needed to challenge traditional Islamic thinking to formulate his revivalism. He writes, "In traditional Islam, religion is 'essentially a way of knowledge. . . . Islam leads to essential knowledge which integrates [a Muslim's] whole being.' Islamic spirituality is therefore predicated on knowledge of God, a realization that stands above and beyond the restrictions of esoteric religion" (SVR Nasr, 66). Here Nasr presents Islamic traditionalism as a series of methodologies that leads to knowledge, not a series of established conclusions. Because it is a series of methodologies, "It presents the possibility of a transcendental religious dialogue with Hinduism" (SVR Nasr, 66). Naturally, dialogue with Hinduism was possible, and most likely inevitable. This is why Mawdudi needed to reject traditional Islamic thinking. Nasr writes, "It is for this reason that the revivalist discourse in the Indian subcontinent, insofar as it reflected communal consciousness, sought to close the door to such an eventuality. For Mawdudi, there existed no possibility of spirituality outside the *din* and no knowledge distinct from or transcendental to the obligatory duties" (SVR Nasr, 66). Mawdudi needed to reject traditionalism and reject anything that was not strictly Islamic, in his opinion. He wanted to root out anything that was not strict Islamic practice, and by doing this he made salvation possible for the people who were willing to accept his message.

Mawdudi was revolutionary and extremely influential in what he was trying to achieve. This influence was very damaging in terms of traditional knowledge in Islamic history. He wanted to ‘purify’ Islam from any outside influence that he perceived. As Nasr pointed out, dialogue between Muslims and Hindus was inevitable due to how Muslims perceived Islam for centuries. In recent history, Mawdudi has been cited by countless scholars that have been trying to further this agenda of ‘purity’ and has helped cause a deeper rift between Muslims and Hindus. To be clear, this project does not aim to solely blame Muslims for the tensions between the two communities. The goal of this project is to show that there is a beautiful history of dialogue between these two communities and in fact, Muslim scholars have encouraged theological tolerance for Hindus in the past. This section on Mawdudi was included to show the current state of Muslim perceptions of Hindus in South Asia

### **A Modern Example of Tolerance: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**

While Mawdudi has had a lasting effect on Muslim perceptions of Hindus, there have been Muslim voices in modern South Asia that have advocated pluralism and tolerance, most notably Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. While he spent the majority of his political career trying to fight for the independence of India, he was a known advocate for Muslim-Hindu unity both politically and theologically. Asghar Ali Engineer writes in his article “Theological Creativity of Abul Kalam Azad,” “Azad wrote his commentary on the Quran popularly known as *Tarjumanul Quran* during the period 1930-36. This was a very critical period in India’s history of freedom struggle. The Tabligh (an Islamic purity movement) and Shuddhi (a Hindu purity movement) movements had driven sharp wedge

between Hindus and Muslims” (Engineer, 21). Here Engineer points out that Azad is writing his commentary of the Quran during a very delicate time period. He points out that during Azad’s writing, both Muslims and Hindus are experiencing purity movements that are causing animosity between them. He goes on to write, “The first volume of *Tarjumanul Quran* was published by 1930, which means he was writing through the twenties which is precisely the period when, after the Khilafat movement and Chauri Chaura incident<sup>15</sup>, the Hindu-Muslim relations began to sour and both the Shuddhi movement and the Tabligh movement intensified themselves” (Engineer 21-22). As mentioned throughout this project, understanding the contexts in which these figures lived is crucial. For Azad, he is living and writing during the height of tension between Muslims and Hindus, and his goal is to advocate for their unity.

Azad’s commentary on the Quran deals primarily with the first chapter and much of the content of this volume discusses *wahadat-e-adyan*, the unity of religion. Engineer writes, “In keeping with his philosophy of *wahadat-e-adyan*, the Maulana stresses the importance of the concept of *rabb al-alamin*<sup>16</sup> (nourisher of the whole universe)” (Engineer, 25). After this statement, Engineer cites Azad directly, “To visualize God as *Rabb-al Alamin* or the *Rabb* of all creation is to conceive of Him as not only the creator of everything in the universe but its nourisher and sustainer as well” (Engineer, 25). In this quote, Azad explains that according to the above mentioned Quranic phrase, all of creation has a direct link to God and that God is playing an active role in the sustaining of every situation. Interestingly enough, he does not specify that God only sustains and

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<sup>15</sup> This incident was a clash between Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement and the police in British India.

<sup>16</sup> Verse 2 of Surah Fatiha of the Quran

nourishes Muslims or ‘believers’. He continues, “The provision that He has made for the sustenance and growth of everything is made under a plan, so marvelous that every being is furnished with all that its particular nature demands for its existence, and at the same

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time, it is furnished in a manner that takes cognizance of *every changing situation and need*” (Engineer, 25). Here Azad articulates that he believes God has a plan for everything and designs this plan according to the conditions to which something or someone is created.

Interestingly enough, Azad gives brief descriptions of the philosophies and religious traditions of India. For Hinduism, he shows that there is a multiplicity of belief that varies among the different classes (Latif, 109-115). He also shows that Hinduism has gone through major developments theologically. At one point, according to Azad, Hindus placed a greater emphasis on the distinct nature and the multiplicity of the gods, but then lowered their status when ideas of monotheism were introduced through the Upanishads (Latif, 113). It seems like the purpose of describing this history is to show that while there have been varying beliefs regarding the divine in Hinduism, the eventual supremacy of monotheism did take place in one form or another. He goes on to write, “Prior to the advent of the Qur'an, distinction was made between the common people and the elite in the imparting of religious knowledge” (Latif, 138). Here Azad echoes the point that was articulated by al-Biruni claiming that there is a distinction between the beliefs of the common people and the elites of India. He writes, “In India, three grades were fixed. For the common people image worship was prescribed, and for the elite the method of communion with God, while for the elite the privilege of pantheistic experience” (Latif,

138-139). Here he articulates that there is a vast difference between the beliefs of the common people and the elite, the elite believing that unity with God is possible

Azad then goes on to outline exactly what he means by the unity of religion (*wahadat-e-adyan*). He writes, “The Unity of Religion and the Qur’an: This great truth forms the primary basis of the Qur’anic call. Everything else that the Qur’an presents rests on it. If this fundamental is discarded, the entire framework of the Qur’anic message will get out of order” (Latif, 152-153). Azad claims that the very structure of the Quran is based on this principle and if this concept is overlooked, then one misses the purpose of it. He then moves on to an explanation of Prophethood and Revelation in Islam and argues that the Quran tells its readers that God has sent messangers to every corner of the world to bring a universal message (Latif, 153-154). He goes on to write, “Similarly, the Qur’an cites the recognition of one scripture by another scripture as further proof in favour of its contention that all revealed religions present but one and the same basic message” (Latif, 157). Here Azad claims that the Quran confirms the validity of other scriptures and it does this by recognizing that revealed religions have the same message. As previously discussed on the section of Donner’s book, there is no reason to believe that the Prophet Muhammad and his followers thought of themselves as constituting a separate religious group due to the Quranic recognition of confirming past scriptures.

Azad then affirms that other scriptures affirm each other, not just the Quran. He goes on to write, “So when these (scriptures) endorse each other, it follows that there is something in these several teachings which is common to them all and which serves as a point round which everything else revolves” (Latif, 157). Here he shows that different scriptures confirm each other through a core that is common to each of them. He goes on

to write, “For, when one and the same idea is stated and emphasized, at different times, in different places, among different peoples, under diverse names, in various manners and in different languages, the natural conclusion that forces itself for attention is that there is something real and abiding about it” (Latif, 157). Here Azad lays down the very foundation of his idea of the unity of religion. God has sent messengers and revelations to every corner of the universe and everyone who believes in these revelations are considered valid believers.

In his tafsir, Azad defines exactly what religion means in his understanding of the Quran. He writes, “Din or the real religion was thus devotion to God and righteous living” (Latif, 163). Here Azad gives two defining qualities of the religion of the Quran, which also falls in line with Donner’s model. Devotion to God and doing good deeds is what defines the real religion of God. He goes on to write, “It was not a name for any group formation. Whatever the race or community or country one belonged to, if only he believed in God and did righteous deeds, he was a follower of the Din of God, and salvation was his reward” (Latif, 163). Here Azad shows that these qualities are not exclusive to anyone group. Keeping in mind that Azad is writing during a tense period of time between Muslims and Hindus, a safe assumption is that he is trying to encourage his Muslim readers to be tolerant towards Hindus. He writes, “The Qur'an calls upon everyone who cares to follow the way laid down by God to accept without discrimination all the prophets and all the scriptures revealed to them and the basic truth Which they all contain, and to accept it wherever found and in whatever language it is expressed (Latif,

171-172).” Here Azad writes that he believes the Quran encourages all people to be tolerant of each other and to appreciate the revelations that have been sent to all people regardless of who it is.

Azad then explains how differences could arise in religions if they all come from a single source. He asks, “...why is it that one and the same code of law, conduct and ceremonials and ritual is not prescribed by one and all, and why again the form of worship observed in one religion is different from that in another, why one turns in one direction in prayer and why another in another, and why the laws in one differ in style from those in another” (Latif, 157)? Here he wishes to address a possible concern of someone who may be reading his work. While the core principles to every religion may be universal, one cannot deny that there are vast differences between Islam and Hinduism. These differences range from different methods of prayer, rituals, and legal codes. First he admits that distortion is absolutely possible (Latif, 158). Then he writes that in fact ritual difference is not a difference in religion itself, but a difference of outward manifestation (Latif, 158), which will be explained in the next paragraph.

For Azad, difference in what he calls ‘outward manifestation’ seems to be a natural result and does not have an effect on the core principles of religion. He writes, “The Qur'an points out that the teaching of a religion is two-fold. One constitutes its spirit; the other its outward manifestation. The former is primary in importance, the latter secondary” (Latif, 158). Here he points out that religion is made up of two major qualities, faith and the outward manifestation of faith. He continues, “The first is called *Din* : the second *Shar'a* or *Minhaj* and *Nusk*. *Shar'a* and *Minhaj* mean the path ; and *Nusk* the manner or ceremonial of devotion. In practice however, *Shar'a* has come to mean the



law prescribed by religion and *Nusk* merely the form of devotion or worship” (Latif, 158).

This quote is vital in trying to understand his argument. For Azad, there is a clear

distinction between *din*, *sharia* and *nusk*. While Azad does not define *din*<sup>17</sup> here he does in previous sections. He shows that the meaning of *din* signifies ‘recompense’ or

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‘requital’ (Latif, 89). The translation of the word *din* is very complicated and technical and its own project unto itself. For this project’s purposes, *din* generally refers to articles of faith and basic beliefs. However, it is important to note that the categories of *din*, *sharia*, and *nusk* are separate and distinct. He goes on to write, “The Qur'an states that the differences which exist between one religion and another are not differences in *Din*, the basic provision, but in the manner of giving effect to it, or in the *Shar'a* and *Minhaj*, not in the spirit of religion, but in its outward form. This difference was but natural” (Latif 158). He points out that differences amongst religions are differences of *sharia* and *nusk*, not *din*. The reason being, “The essential purpose of religion is the progress and wellbeing of humanity. But the condition and circumstance of man has not been the same in every clime and at all times” (Latif, 158). These differences arise due to different religions being born in different contexts and this explains how religions have different rituals but the same foundational principles. The context in which the Prophet Muhammad lived is very different than that which Hindu traditions were born therefore a difference of outward manifestation is natural.

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<sup>17</sup> A common error amongst translators is to translate *din* to the word religion. Modern conceptions of religion do not neatly fit these categories: logically if *din* translates to religions, then *sharia* would fall out of the category of religion. Therefore *din* has to signify another definition.

The purpose of including Azad's commentary on the Quran is to show that there have been modern scholarly attempts to use the Quran to further tolerance towards other religions, more specifically: Hindus. He outlines a paradigm using his views of the Quran that allows for the inclusion of Hindus as being valid believers. Even though he does not specifically call Hindus People of the Book, he cites multiple Quranic verses that encourage tolerance for People of the Book in order to support his argument (Latif, 165, 173, 174). This is a stark contrast with Mawdudi's model of extreme purity. Azad most likely believed that scholars like Mawdudi were gaining ground in the hearts of Muslims and wished to push back against their ideas in order to promote a unified vision of India

## **Conclusion**

As shown, the relationship between Muslims and Hindus has changed dramatically throughout history. However, through this analysis, there is sufficient evidence to support the idea that Hindus have been included under models of tolerance, particularly through discussions of the concept People of the Book. While the ideologies of scholars of Mawdudi seem to have become dominant in South Asia, that does not mean that a tolerant history never occurred nor is tolerance impossible today.

The aim of this project was to use a historical method to uncover overshadowed histories and show that all of the necessary components for the discussion are already in place. Fred Donner's model shows that tolerance in Islam is not an alien idea according to the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran. As articulated in the section on Ibn Qayyim, a methodology and a precedent is in place to have discussions of the category of People of the Book. The discussions of Darah Shukoh and Maulana Azad shows that

there have been attempts to create theological paradigms to include Hindus as People of the Book. The only obstacle to these discussions are voices like Mawdudi and the ideologies they propagate.

When studying topics like this, it is important to understand how religious traditions have operated and approached them. While Ibn Qayyim did not address the question of Hindus as People of the Book, he provides a useful framework for the question. He analyzes his opposing points of view, he draws a comparison to the Zoroastrians, and then he draws his conclusions. While he believed that his opposing point of view was in error, he does not attempt to excommunicate them. Mawdudi, on the other hand, is ready to question everyone's status as a Muslim who disagrees with him. This is in fact a position that has been discouraged in Islamic heritage. Due to Mawdudi it has become a common idea. Now the ideas of Dara Shukoh may not be embraced by a majority of Muslim theologians, but they are nonetheless very useful in trying to encourage unity in a time where tolerance is needed more than ever.

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