

## **Islamic Policy of Aurangzeb Alamgir (1658-1707)**

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### **Abstract:**

*The last Muslim dynasty who ruled over Indo-Pak subcontinent was the Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857). The Muslim Rule in the Indo-Pak subcontinent started with Mohammad bin Qasim's rule in Sindh and Multan in 712 AD. Various Amirs, Sultans and Kings ruled over the subcontinent. For the first three centuries, the Muslim Rule was confined to almost the present areas of Pakistan, but Sultan Shahabuddin Ghori, Sultan of Ghazni under whose control was the present Afghanistan and Pakistan, extended the Muslim Rule to the whole of Northern India and present Bangladesh in 1192 after his victory in the second Battle of Tarain. His slave general Qutbuddin Aibak claimed himself as the first Sultan of Delhi after the death of Ghori in 1206. Before the Mughals, the Sultans of Delhi followed Islamic policies in different phases. The Mughals followed them with some new trends introduced by Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) which were opposed by Hazrat Mujadid Alaf Sani of Sirhand. However, the debate over Akbar's policies in terms of Islam continued, until the time of King Aurangzeb. In the War of Succession between the four sons of King Shah Jahan was actually considered a major battle between Aurangzeb representing the Mujadid school of thought and Dara Shikoh representing the Akbar's liberal school of thought. In this battle the success of Aurangzeb was considered the victory of the Mujadid school of thought because majority of the Mansabdars and Mughal aristocracy was favorable to Aurangzeb. After becoming King, Aurangzeb tried to restore*

*Mughal religious policy according to Islamic shariat, but he faced some resistance. Still Aurangzeb, as a wise ruler, started his reformatory efforts at the Mughal court in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of his rule so that he could wisely face the opposition which he did successfully done in the later 39 years of his rule. But still there were certain Hindu, Jat, Sikh, Marhatha elements who had gained strength in the Empire by the encouraging aspects of Akbar and his follower kings – Jahangir and Shah Jahan – still he succeeded in giving true pattern to the Islamic policy and codified them in his Fatawa-i-Alamgiri prepared with the help of more than 200 leading Ulema of his times. That is why this work is one of the best reference works for Islamic shariat or jurisprudence in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In this article all the efforts of Aurangzeb in this connection and the challenges he faced have been given in the light of original authentic sources.*

Aurangzeb Alamgir was born on 21 October 1618. He was the third son of Shah Jahan. His brothers were Dara Shikoh, Shuja and Murad. After ruling for 49 years he died on 3 March 1707. His full name is Mohiuddin Muhammad Aurangzeb Alamgir. Mohiuddin means helper of Din-i-Islam. Aurangzeb means ornament of the Crown. Alamgir means the conqueror of the world. He was the sixth great Mughal ruler who helped furthering the Mughal Empire and strengthening it in terms of its territories and policies. There were only two Mughal kings whose rule is spread over about fifty years. First is Jalaluddin Akbar and the second is Aurangzeb Alamgir. Both these Mughal rulers left a lasting effect in terms of their policies in the Empire which continued even up to the modern times. A lot of controversies are also shrouded around the personalities and policies of these two rulers attracting the world scholars and historians to express divergent viewpoints especially with reference to their religious policies.

Aurangzeb Alamgir became king as a result of War of Succession amongst the four sons of King Shah Jahan. In September 1657, Shah Jahan became seriously ill. Dara Shikoh, the eldest son, who was with Shah Jahan in the capital,

considered himself as the heir apparent of his father and took over the reins of the Mughal Government. When Shah Jahan fell, Dara Shikoh came to dominate the Mughal government. He was not a farsighted man. He always feared from his brothers who were equally fit to become next king. He considered that the news of his father's illness should not be known to any of his brothers. Therefore, he stopped the messengers and travelers coming from different provinces to send any reports of the court to any corner of the Empire.<sup>i</sup> In this way false news spread in the Empire that Shah Jahan had died and the throne has wrongly been occupied by Dara Shikoh. This was unacceptable to other three sons of Shah Jahan and a long war of Succession started amongst them. Ultimately the matter of final moment came and in May-June 1658, there was a great battle between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh at Samugarh, a place near Agra, in which Aurangzeb emerged victorious.<sup>ii</sup> Dara Shikoh fled towards Delhi and Punjab. On hearing the news of success of Aurangzeb, Shah Jahan wrote a secret letter to flying Dara Shikoh to wait for some time outside Agra so that he could plan how to get rid of Aurangzeb. Shah Jahan invited Aurangzeb to his court in Agra fort because Shah Jahan was in Agra. The plan was that when Aurangzeb will come to the fort, he will be slain in the fort by unfair means. Aurangzeb was a careful person. His soldiers caught the secret letter of Shah Jahan to Dara, from the flying two horsemen and came to know of the conspiracy. He took steps to control the city as well as the fort. He besieged the city of Agra as well as the Agra fort. He removed all the guards of the fort and appointed his own guards who were loyal to him. Then he went to Shah Jahan and presented his complements and asked him to rest. In this way, Aurangzeb became king on 5 June 1658 after confining his father in the fort palace of Agra. Later Dara was caught and killed. Similarly, other two brothers Shuja and Dara were also dealt with. Thus the real war between Dara and Aurangzeb came to an end after a long struggle. Aurangzeb would have not put his father in confinement, had the father not been acting favorable to Dara Shikoh to which Aurangzeb collected a number of evidences.<sup>iii</sup> Shah Jahan lived for a number of years and died on 22 January 1666.

Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb belonged to different ideologies. Dara belonged to the liberal school of thought to which Akbar belonged. Akbar's liberal approach towards the Rajputs and other non-Muslims started showing its political effects in the period of Jahangir, son of Akbar. As Jahangir became under the influence of Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, he started changing his policy. The same policy was continued under Shah Jahan. This effect increased in the times of Shah Jahan and showed deep effects. The Muslim nobles, Ulema, Qazis, and Mansabdars also became divided into two groups. A small group was following the policies of Akbar, whereas the majority came under the influence of Mujadid Alaf Sani and started efforts to look for a favorable prince, Aurangzeb was found suitable because he had turned against the policies of Akbar and became follower of Mujadid Alaf Sani. Thus he became strong believer of orthodox Islam.<sup>iv</sup> His success at Samugarh placed him at a position to govern the vast Mughal Empire which he successfully accomplished with justice and fairness and did his best to reform the socio-religious life of the Muslims in terms of Islam.<sup>v</sup> His behavior towards the non-Muslims was also based on fairness and justice. They were allowed to continue in the service of the Mughal Empire. Only those non-Muslims who revolted or conspired against the king were first warned. If they amended, they were allowed to continue in service. Otherwise, they were strongly crushed.

The reform effort started by Jahangir came to a climax with the accession of Aurangzeb to the throne in 1658 and the Muslim nobility, Ulema, Qazis and Mansabdars were able to again come to a dominating position. This did not mean that the non-Muslim nobility was ousted. Instead, the non-Muslim nobility continued to function as the important pillar of the Mughal state, but they were reduced to second position. On this basis some historians think that with the coming of Aurangzeb into power the Muslim theologians triumphed.<sup>vi</sup> In this way some other misconceptions have been pointed out with regard to enforcement of jizya, dismantling Hindu temples, suppression of non-Muslim nobility, imposition of certain taxes, certain actions against the Shias, etc.<sup>vii</sup> A balanced view in this connection has been presented in this article.

The reform of the state policy did not mean that there were some basic changes in the system of administration. The system of administration as maintained under Akbar and Jahangir was very efficient and effective. In the period of Shah Jahan, the aristocracy and Mansabdars were more inclined to luxury which resulted into slackness of their duties. This further affected the lower ranks of administration. During the later half of the rule of Shah Jahan, the aristocracy has become very weak. If Aurangzeb had not succeeded in the War of Succession, the bureaucracy which was pillar of the empire had become very weak. It was Aurangzeb who for the first half of his rule took a number of measures to restore the efficiency of the bureaucracy to the normal level. The latter half of his rule is devoted to suppression of rebellions in Deccan states and his wars against the Marhathas. There were certain forts in Deccan that were besieged for a number of years because of the strong opposition. When Aurangzeb's forces succeeded, he appointed his own mansabdars but they could not maintain his success for long. There was again rebellion and Aurangzeb had to come again to suppress it. This was because of weak bureaucracy whom Aurangzeb was trying to purify. Against all these odds, it was the strong personality and iron will of Aurangzeb who stood like a pillar and maintained the great pomp and show of the Mughal Empire for another fifty years. The downfall of the Mughal Empire which was about to start towards the later part of the reign of Shah Jahan, was delayed for another fifty year. Aurangzeb's efforts to make bureaucracy more efficient did not mean that religion became dominant over the state matters. Despite being a staunch Muslim who strictly observed five times prayer daily and performed other Islamic rites, Aurangzeb did not allow religion to interfere with the official matters. The ulema and qazis were not allowed to influence the state policy.<sup>viii</sup> The king also did not try to persuade any non-Muslim to enter into the fold of Islam because he thought such an act was against the basic principles of Islam.<sup>ix</sup>

During the first ten years Aurangzeb did not bring any change. He continued the old policy. Certain examples are given here. Each year the coronation ceremony of the king was held as

usual as performed before by the previous kings. For instance, in the third year the coronation event came in the same month in terms of lunar and solar system of the calendar which was celebrated with the usual pomp and show. The Emperor Aurangzeb sat on the throne in the balance and gave new honor to the jewels and the gold and distributed alms amongst the poor and the deserving people. The royal ladies, princes, Mansabdars, nobles presented gifts including by Badshah Begum (Jahan Ara), Roshan Ara Begum, Mohammad Muqim. The Emperor also showered titles and honors on his nobles, princes, and Mansabdars.<sup>x</sup>

The Emperor was also very kind to the people. Whenever he heard or saw any shortage of food in any part of the Empire, he gave orders to his governors, Mansabdars, and officials to take extraordinary steps to help the people at large. No cruelty on the people was tolerated. In the third year of his reign, such an event occurred that there was a great shortage of grain and food items in the Empire. The people at large thronged on the capital. The result was destitute and the beggars filled the streets and roads of Delhi. The life of the people became very hard. On knowing this Aurangzeb ordered his administration to take extraordinary steps in this connection to provide food and grain to the people on emergent basis. Different centers were established in the city at various places to provide cooked and uncooked food items to the people as desired by the people. At every place different feeding houses were built including at the tombs and mazars of different sufi saints of Delhi. Supplies of food items from various parts of the Empire were ensured. Similar steps were taken in other cities wherever the necessity arose. Soon the people became very happy with the king.<sup>xi</sup>

The king was also alive to the celebration of the marriage ceremony according to the imperial custom as was done before him. For instance, in this year the marriage ceremony of his son Prince Muazzam with daughter of Raja Rup Sing took place with great pomp and show. Several thousand chandeliers were illuminated and kindled in the Royal fort as well as the road of the Chowk Bazar. A great ceremony was arranged in this connection at the royal palace. The emperor showered pearls,

diamonds and enameled utensils of the value of two lakhs of rupees, along with a cash of one lakh rupees, an elephant, a number of horses and other gifts were offered at the time of *sihra bandi*. The marriage procession passed through the streets of the city, fire-works were displayed with flowers. When the Emperor saw the face of bride he gave her ornaments worth a lakh of rupees. The musicians were given nine thousand rupees in cash.<sup>xii</sup> This shows that the king was not rigid.

In the sixth year of his rule, Aurangzeb proceeds to Kashmir. After visiting the gardens and different lines of tulips in Srinagar, the king ordered that the illumination should be arranged on the banks of Dal Lake and the boats. Music was also arranged which added to the beauty of the lake.<sup>xiii</sup>

In the eleventh year of his rule, Aurangzeb started his reform policy. First the music at the court was prohibited. To compensate the musicians and qawwals, "their ranks were raised" and were rewarded so that they may not become jobless. Still the musicians were not happy. One day they assembled in large numbers and took a funeral procession, weeping and wailing and passed through the *jharoka darshan*. When the Emperor enquired about this procession, they said: "We are carrying the dead body of the music so that we may bury it". As the king was witty also, he replied: "Bury it deep in the ground so that no sound or voice may come out of it again".<sup>xiv</sup>

*Jhorak Darshan* was a pattern started by Akbar. It continued by the later kings Jahangir and Shah Jahan. A balcony type *jhoraka* was built in the upper portion of the wall at the palaces at Agra and Delhi towards the side of Jumna River. The Emperor used to sit on this balcony and give audience to the people who used to gather in thousands and lakhs at the foot of the *jhoraka*. Nobility was also kept in attendance. The people used to offer prayers for the safety and good health of the Emperor. In this ceremony Hindus, Muslims and people belonging to other faiths used to participate. Aurangzeb considered this practice against Islam. Therefore, he abandoned it in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of his rule.<sup>xv</sup>

In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, he took another important step. He banned *Tabut* procession in all the provinces. *Tabut* procession was carried out by the Shia Muslims all over the country wherever the community lived. An incident happened at Burhanpur where two groups of Shia community who used to carry their procession separately as rivals of each other. It was reported that every year there was a great fight amongst them in terms of their route and pattern of procession and *tabut* and banners. In this battle dozens of people were killed and many wounded. When the Emperor came to know of it he banned the procession in the whole of his Empire.<sup>xvi</sup>

In the 12<sup>th</sup> year Aurangzeb took another step and that was with reference to the poets and astrologers. During the days of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan it was practice to call the prominent poets and astrologers of the country, to hear their poetry and presentations and it was decided to confer the title of poet-laureate and distinction over other poets in different parts of the country. Similarly, the astrologers were considered as part of royal entourage and part of the Secretariat of the Diwan for the purpose of calculation of solar months. They were also rewarded and given high salaries. This practice was also stopped by Aurangzeb.<sup>xvii</sup>

The Qazis of the Empire were given great importance and they were favored with huge salaries and grants.<sup>xviii</sup> Under the previous Mughal Rulers, the Qazis were given secondary position, but Aurangzeb wanted to give them high place in the Empire because of their being the custodians of the shariat. In the 19<sup>th</sup> year of Aurangzeb's reign, there was an incident when the Qazi of Lahore behaved with the Governor on terms of equality. This was also because of the reasons that the Qazi also belonged to a respectable family as the governor was. There was disagreement between them on a number of points. The governor ordered the kotwal of Lahore to bring the Qazi to the court of governor. When, the kotwal asked, the Qazi refused. The governor ordered the kotwal to arrest the Qazi. When the state forces reached the house of Qazi he closed the door and refused to respond to the orders of the governor. There was quarrel between the men of Qazi and those of the forces of



kotwal in which the Qazi was killed. The matter was reported to the king in Delhi. The king sent Prince Muazzam as Governor of Lahore placing Qawamuddin (Lutfullah Khan), the governor was made the deputy governor. Prince Muazzam ordered an inquiry in which the kotal was found guilty. On this kotal was also awarded death sentence and Lutfullah Khan was sent to the Court of the king in Delhi under arrest. In this way justice was done.<sup>xix</sup> When he was brought to the king, he referred the case to Chief Justice. The Chief Justice known as Qaziul Quzzat heard the case according the shariat law by which both the parties were given chance to plead their case. As the heirs of the deceased Qazi were producing weak evidences and not proving their case according to the laws of shariat, the Qazi was hesitant to pass any judgment. Thus the case lingered for a number of years until Qawamuddin fell ill and died natural death under the custody. This proves that Aurangzeb despite being a great ruler was not doing anything against the laws of Islam.<sup>xx</sup>

The pattern of saying Salam by one Muslims to the other Muslim was also changed and brought according to the Islamic shariat. The old practice continuing from the days of Akbar was that whenever a Muslim used to meet another Muslim he/she used to offer salam by raising hand to the forehead as the Hindus do. Aurangzeb discontinued this practice and a notification in this direction was issued to all the Governors and officials of the state in different parts of the Empire.<sup>xxi</sup> Now the salam was offered in a simple way.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his rule, Aurangzeb enforced jaziya on the Hindus. Jaziya is a tax according to Islam which is collected from the non-Muslims. It is collected from the young people who are not performing any state duties. The old people, children, weak, poor, and ladies are exempted from paying this tax. The wealthy non-Muslims are required to pay this tax to the state. The Hindus, Sikhs and other non-Muslims who were in the service of the state were not required to pay this tax. The philosophy behind this tax is that under Islamic principles the state was bound to provide for the security of the non-Muslims. There are many instances in early Islamic history when the

Caliphs failed to provide protection and security to the non-Muslim subject, they returned the collected jaziya tax and informed them that they are unable to protect them against the coming aggressive forces, they have no right to collect jaziya from the non-Muslims. Such examples were noticed in the time of Calph Hazrat Umar, second Pious Caliph in the history of Islam. Therefore, it was bound to collect tax as payment for the services provided in this connection. Aurangzeb strictly enforced this jazya according to Islam on those wealthy non-Muslims who were not in the service of the state. Some resistance was shown in some areas but it was crushed.<sup>xxii</sup> In 25<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, Aurangzeb went to Deccan to fight against the rebellious Marhathas. As this war prolonged because of the weaknesses of the state officers, Aurangzeb had to face a number of rebellions one after the other. This took the latter half of his rule in these engagements. Despite being in the old age, Aurangzeb was a strong willed person, he personally never slackened. He was very particular in restoring the writ of the Mughal government. The Marhathas were shaken. Despite his heavy engagements, he was particular in enforcement of Islamic laws in Deccan. The kotwals of various areas were ordered for enforcement of jizya as per requirement of the shariat.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Sir Jadunath Sarkar has pointed that Aurangzeb destroyed certain Hindu temples and instead constructed the mosques for the Muslims especially in Deccan.<sup>xxiv</sup> This is not true. As a matter of fact when Aurangzeb reduced the forts of Satara and Parli, he discovered that the Marthas had destroyed a number of mosques built by the sultans of Bijapur inside the forts. On his conquest, Aurangzeb ordered the destruction of such temples and built mosques as before.<sup>xxv</sup> Actually the policy of the Mughals since the times of Zahiruddin Babur and Jalaluddin Akbar was not to destroy the old temples, rather they were required to be maintained and repaired. If there was any necessity to build new temples, it was only with the permission of the Emperor. In a number of cases such permission was granted by Jahangair and Shah Jahan and the Hindus were allowed to build new temples. The Hindu mandars built without permission were ordered to be demolished. A number of new

temples were constructed even in Benaras during the times of Shah Jahan. When this matter was reported to the king, he ordered their destruction.<sup>xxvi</sup> This policy continued even under Aurangzeb. Immediately after becoming king in 1658, Aurangzeb had issued notification that old temples should not be destroyed.

Sarkar has also written that Aurangzeb had dismissed certain non-Muslims from the service without any reason. This is also baseless. There were a number of Hindu and Sikh mansabdars who continued towards the end of his rule.

Like the earlier Mughal rulers, Aurangzeb also showed high respects to the sufis and saints of Islam. He had gone to the mazars of various saints in Delhi including those of Hazrat Sh. Nizamuddin Chastity to pay his tributes and offered fatiha. He offered presents many times at the mazar of Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. This practice was continued in Deccan also. On reaching Gulbargah, a place in Deccan, Aurangzeb went to the grave of Hazrat Sayid Muhammad Gesu Daraz and offered fatiha. He distributed Rupees twenty thousand among the attendants of the mazar. He stayed there for a week and then went to Zafarabad. After staying for twenty days there he marched towards Hyderabad. In this way he went to the tombs of other sufis and saints of the area and offered fatiha.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Aurangzeb was very kind on the courageous and daring officers of the state even if they rebelled against him. He treated them with justice and fairness. He respected their bravery and strong will even if they went against him. Actually, Sh. Abul Hasan, the ruler of Golconda had revolted against the king and had become independent. The Emperor and his imperial forces besieged the fort of Golconda which continued for a number of months. Finally, in September 1687 (31<sup>st</sup> year of the reign of Aurangzeb) the Imperial forces were able to capture it. A number of nobles of Abul Hasan joined the imperial camp, but one commander Abdul Razzaq remained loyal to Abul Hasan. When the imperial forces headed by Prince Muazzam entered the gate of the Golconda fort, Abdul Razzaq along with his loyal soldiers heroically fought the imperial forces till the last

remnant of his life. He received about hundred wounds on his body and still he was fighting. Ruhullah Khan, the commander of the imperial forces, and the Emperor Aurangzeb himself witnessed this bravery of Abdul Razzaq. The king instructed his commander to carefully deal with Razzaq and catch him in the wounded position. The hakims and surgeons were invited to treat him after he was caught unconsciously and brought under the imperial protection. After seeing this good gesture on the part of the kind king and coming to the senses after the treatment, Abdul Razzaq expressed his loyalty to Aurangzeb. The king asked him that as he has been miserably wounded and was unable to continue in service, to send for his sons to come and meet the king so that they could be given high positions in the imperial force. Later, this order of the king was accomplished. It was in this way that that the brave people even if they were opposed to him, were praised and they were treated with honour and justice. On seeing that some of his nobles had already gone to the side of the imperial forces and some who faced them were defeated in the battleground, Abul Hasan, the ruler of Golconda, readily submitted to the imperial forces. He was presented to Aurangzeb in the court in which he bowed before him, repented for his rebellion and on this he was forgiven and restored in his position. However, some of his commanders were changed and the loyal commanders were posted in the state of Golconda.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Aurangzeb highly respected the the Sayed family. During Aurangzeb's stay in Deccan, Muhammad Baqir, a news writer of the port of Surat, was transferred because of some of his faults. He went to Sayed Saadullah, who was one of the learned men who had worn a khirqah and lived in retirement. He was popular religious person of the area, well known amongst the people. He wrote letter to Aurangzeb recommending that Muhammad Baqir may be excused for his fault and his transfer orders may be cancelled. Because of his respect for the Syed, Aurangzeb withdrew his orders, but in his communication to the Syed conveyed that in future the Syed should not recommend such cases because he is not expected to interfere with the administrative matters as it was not his field. He was

also advised that the Syed should be committed to the promotion of pious people, not the worldly persons.<sup>xxix</sup>

There were twelve provinces in the period of Jalaluddin Akbar. But in the times of Aurangzeb the number of provinces increased to twenty-one. Some large provinces were divided according the administrative requirements, and some new provinces were also created. A list of Sufi saints of the time living in all these provinces was prepared. They were highly respected by Aurangzeb. The king, however, was careful in watching the conduct of Sufis and activities at the mazars and shrines of the old Sufis so that music and other un Islamic activities are not done in the compounds of the mazars of the famous Sufis. The king required that the Sufis saints should also strictly observe the shariat pattern of Islam. He granted inams, lands, and other favours to the mazars and Sufi saints wherever they deserved.<sup>xxx</sup>

### **Comments by Prominent Historians**

A prominent historian Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his book titled *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III<sup>xxxi</sup> has unjustifiably criticized Aurangzeb's Islamic policies and has tried to prove that Aurangzeb was trying to implement Islam in an unnecessary way. He even termed some of his policies against the basic principles of Islam. Zahiruddin Faruki, in his book titled *Aurangzeb: His Life and Times*,<sup>xxxii</sup> tried to prove that Sarkar's criticism is not based on justice and fairplay. The historian's job is to present history in the true historical perspective. He is not to concoct stories or present his views in supposition. The truth should be the projection of the historian. Faruki writes: "He [Sarkar] has arranged some incidents of Muslim history in a way that bring into prominence only the worst features of the Muslims".<sup>xxxiii</sup> Faruki has pointed out a number of other matters of Sarkar which were against the fact, such as "cold blooded murder of non-Muslims", Aurangzeb's prejudicial attitude towards the non-Muslim, etc.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Akber had appointed Abul Fazl as the official historian who wrote two compendiums –*Akbar Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari*.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Though these books are full of flattery of Akber, they provide detailed account of the reign of Akbar as well as the administration of the Akber's Empire. Like this Jahangir and Shah Jahan also appointed court historians who produced the books of history of these period. Continuing the old practice, Aurangzeb appointed Muhammad Kazim to write official history of the king. In the 11<sup>th</sup> year, Kazim presented detailed accounts of the first ten years of Aurangzeb known as *Alamgirnamah*.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Like the previous work, it contained a lot of flattery of the king which Aurangzeb did not like and stopped the writing of official history.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In this way we were deprived of the detailed account of the reign of Aurangzeb. Thus for the last forty years of Aurangzeb's period we have no official records. We have no detailed accounts than that of Muhammad Mustaid Khan Saqi known as Khafi Khan as the detailed account of the reign of Aurangzeb. The title of Khafi Khan's book is *Munthilhab al Lubab*, which covers the whole period of Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb. It is spread over two volumes. The first one covers the Mughal history upto the reign of Shah Jahan. The second volume covers the whole period of Aurangzeb. Therefore, it is the most reliable history book on Aurangzeb. This book has been translated by S.Moinul Haq under the tile *Khafir Khan's History of Alamgir*.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Another book is that of Musta'd Khan' Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri, Calcutta, 1871. Aurangzeb's orders and farmans are also published by others.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Abdul Nabi was the Faujdar of Mathura. This was the Jat land. The Jats rebelled against Aurangzeb in 1669. Abdul Nabi fought a battle against the Jats and was killed during the fight. On hearing this Aurangzeb himself marged against the Jats. There was a bloody fight between the forces of Mughals headed by Hasan Ali Khan, the new Faujdar of Mathura in December in which the Jats were defeated. Gokla Jat, leader of the Jats, was taken prisoner and executed. After the defeat the Temple of Keshav Rai served as a refugee of the Jats. The Mughal forces reached there and fighting took place in which the temple was demolished. Another reason for demolition of this temple was that during the rebellion the Jats destroyed the mosque in Mathura. Third reason for demolition of this temple

that it was constructed by Bir Sinfh Deo Bundela out of Rs. 32 lakh received as remuneration for killing Abul Fazl during the last leg of the Akber's reign. Thus Aurangzeb had sufficient grounds for demolition of the temple.<sup>x1</sup>

Aurangzeb is charged by some historians to have destroyed three temples in Benares. In their places, it is also charged, three mosques were built.<sup>x1i</sup> This is not true. According to Faruki, the Aurangzeb mosque allegedly to have been built on the ruins of Kirtibasewara temple was shown as have been built in 1669. But the contemporary records show that this mosque was built two years earlier. Therefore, he argues this charge is false.<sup>x1ii</sup> The other mosque allegedly built upon the debris of Beni Madjho temple is also not. *Ganji Arshadi*<sup>x1iii</sup> is a contemporary malfuzat (account of sacred advices) of a Sayyid saint Yasin Shah who lived in the vicinity of Benares. These aspects have not been mentioned anywhere in these accounts.<sup>x1iv</sup> The actual story is that Muslims were constructing this mosque. While these mosque was being built, its portions were destroyed in the night. This affair went for many many weeks. The incident took place on a number of accounts. This caused a big fight between the Muslim and the Hindus resulting into killing of persons on both sides and hundreds of people were wounded. At last when these incidents were happening again and again, Shah Yasin sent a letter to king Aurangzeb to help. On this basis Aurangzeb instructed the local faujdar to give due protection to the Muslims. In this way this mosque was completed.<sup>x1v</sup> Faruki also cites the example of another contemporary historical work *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* in support of this fact. Similarly the charge of destroyed third temple has also been refuted by Faruki on the basis of a number of contemporary evidences.<sup>x1vi</sup>

Aurangzeb is also charged with destruction of a number of temples after when he conquered the forts of Gokunda and Bijapur in Deccan. This charge is also not true. The fact is that after the capture of Golconda Aurangzeb found that due to weakness of Abul Hasan, ruler of Golconda, the Hindus destroyed a number of mosques in the state and instead new

temples were built. Aurangzeb appointed Abdul Rahim Khan to look after the security and morals of the city with order to restore law and order and to see that Muslim sacred places are not harmed by the Hindu population who had been encouraged because of presence of a number of Hindu mansabdars in the Mughal army. It was found that even in the city of Hyderabad a number of temple were constructed by the Hindus by destroying the existing mosques. Abdul Rahim Khan ordered demolition of such temples and in their places the old mosques were restored. The same was done in the whole of Golconda and Bijapur. The old temples were not destroyed and they continued to exist up to the British times. In order to prove his narrative, Faruki has given references to the Maratha History.<sup>xlvii</sup> Similarly other sources are quoted by Faruki.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Actually, Shivaji, the Maratha leader, had destroyed a number of mosques when he came power because of weakness of the Muslim rulers in the Deccan states during later half of Shah Jahan period. Day by day, Shivaji was gaining strength and reviving the Maratha power. To check the rise of Shivaji, Shah Jahan sent Aurangzeb to Deccan. Aurangzeb crushed the power of Maratha and brought Shivaji in confinement to Delhi. It was on repentance that he was forgiven and sent back to Deccan. When Aurangzeb himself became king, he had to again face the challenge of Shivaji. Aurangzeb defeated Shivaji in the battle, and sent Shivaji to Delhi in confinement. It was through conspiracy of the Mughal jail officials that Shiva escaped and came back to Deccan. In the areas on which Shivaji came to power, he destroyed hundreds of mosques and built temples in their places. When Aurangzeb learnt of this both when he was Prince as well as the king, he ordered restoration of mosques by destroying the newly constructed temples. It was accomplished accordingly and things in the Deccan improved and Maratha rising power was checked for the time being and as long as Aurangzeb remained king. It was, however, after death of Aurangzeb in 1707 that the Marathas again became threat to the Mughal power, but the Marathas were deeply shaken by the measures taken against them by Aurangzeb.<sup>xlix</sup>



Similar stories are spread against Aurangzeb that the king was very cruel to them and did a lot of actions against them. This is also not true. As a matter of fact, Aurangzeb considered the Sikh community harmless and did much favor to help resolve their disputes. Guru Har Rai of Dera Dun died in 1661. He left two sons, one Harkinshan by his actual wife and the other Ram Rai by his hand-maiden. There was a dispute of succession after the death of their father, but the succeeding Council decided in favour of Harkinshan. The matter was sent to Aurangzeb for settlement. Aurangzeb honored the decision of the Sikh Council and thus Harkinshan's succession was confirmed. Actually, when Aurangzeb became king in 1658, he sent for various Sikh leaders of the Punjab to come and submit themselves in the court so that their loyalty was confirmed. As a matter of fact, when Dara had succeeded his father for a short period the Sikh leaders had submitted to Dara and promised with him to help him in his rulership. Aurangzeb knew this. That is why he ordered the Sikh leaders to show their loyalty to the Mughal court. Guru Har Rai was loyal to Dara. When he received Farman from Aurangzeb, he was hesitant to go to the Mughal court in Delhi. He executed himself in 1661 and instead sent his eldest son Guru Hari Rai for submission to the Mughal court. After submission of Guru Hari Rai, Aurangzeb ordered that enough material in the shape of marble and other material should be sent to Dera Dun for construction of maenad. In this way the monad was constructed. The place is known as Dehra Guru Ram Rai which is also mentioned in the District Gazetteer of Dehra Dun.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these measures favorable to the Sikhs, there were certain Sikh leaders who revolted against Aurangzeb because they wanted to attain independence from the Mughal Rule. The opportunity came when during later half of Aurangzeb's period, the king was engaged in the Deccan wars and he was away from Delhi and Agra. Knowing that Aurangzeb is away from capital and he would not be able to do anything against them, some Sikh leaders thought of rebellion. One such example is Guru Gobind Singh who rebelled against Aurangzeb in 1704. Despite far away from the capital, Aurangzeb was very

vigilant. His control in the Empire was very strict. Through new writers spread over the all the corners of his empire, he kept himself well informed. He sent Wazir Khan as head of strong Mughal force to take steps against the guru. When he learnt the coming of the Mughal forces, Guru Gobind Singh was not ready to face them. He left Ananpur, his base of power. The Mughal forces at last caught him near Chamkaur. In this way battle of Chamkaur was fought between the forces of Aurangzeb and that of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh forces kept the Mughal forces engaged and allowed the guru to escape secretly. On learning this, the Mughal forces searched for him and found him in the jungles far away from the scene of battle. After a negotiation between Wazir Khan and the Guru, the Sikh leader accepted kingship of Aurangzeb again and he was restored to his original position, though his two sons had been lost in the battle.<sup>li</sup> On this submission he was allowed to retain his areas.<sup>lii</sup> This proves that Aurangzeb protected Sikh religion like other non-Muslims of the state.

Similarly, Parsis and the Christians enjoyed full religious freedom in the Mughal Empire. However, the Portuguese, French and British missionaries were warned not to go for forced conversions. The willing conversion was allowed as allowed under the Islamic law. Aurangzeb was very particular in observing the Islamic law in the whole of his empire. Nothing un-Islamic was allowed to continue. In this way Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and persons belonging to other religions were allowed full freedom. On the authority of Alexander Hamilton who visited India during the later part of Aurangzeb's rule, it is reported that Christians were allowed to build churches and propagate their religion. Quoting the example of the different kinds of people belonging to all the religions in Surat were allowed full freedom. However, the morals were checked and no immoral activity was allowed by followers of any religion. Alexander Hamilton also writes that no immoral activity was allowed.<sup>liii</sup>

## References

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