

Historical Interactions of Dārā Shukūh with Hinduism

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Abstract

This Article, with a descriptive-analytical method and phenomenological approach, tries to explain the motives, solutions, and achievements of Dārā Shukūh (fl. 11th century AH) in Muslim-Hindu relations. It will also describe his ways of interaction and explain some negative reactions against his policies. Dārā Shukūh's main motives were his special family upbringing, his chivalrous and artistic mentality, his adherence to the tolerant Qādirī Order, his companionship with educated Hindus, and the similarities he found between Islamic mysticism and Hinduism.

In practice, he tried to promote rapprochement between Islamic denominations, further the tolerance of the Qādirī order, value Hindus, write books on the compatibility between Islamic and Hindu principles, have dialogues for resolving ambiguities, and to translate Hindu classic texts to promote mutual understanding.

His activities led to the opposition of Hanafī jurists and Naqshbandī Sufis, his banishment and excommunication, the decline of the tolerant Qādirīs against the intolerant Naqshbandīs, the establishment of relative and temporary balance between the Muslims and Hindus, the introduction of Hindu writings to the West through translation. Of course, presenting a practical model for Muslim-Hindu relations was the most important achievement of Dārā Shukūh, which can be used in today's world.

Keywords: Dārā Shukūh, Hinduism, Islam, Muslim-Hindu relations, religious interaction, tolerance.

1. Introduction

Dārā Shukūh, the Gūrkanī prince of India, ruled over extensive parts of that country after a millennium of Muslim presence in the subcontinent, where most of the population were not Muslims and adhered to other religions, such as Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. He offered a model of tolerance between different religious traditions which had noticeable but short-term achievements. Since deep tensions are seen among religious people in the modern world, a survey of Dārā Shukūh's model can contribute to the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

This article, which has been written with library research methodology, tries to study Dārā Shukūh's motives for establishing good relations with Hinduism. Also, his diverse approaches to creating helpful interactions are explored in order to reconstruct his practical model. It should be noted that there have been a number of scholarly works on Dārā Shukūh's approach to different religions, such as Jalālī Nā'īnī's introduction to *Sirr al-akbar* and Dārīūsh Shāyḡān's preface to *Majma' al-baḥrayn*. Moreover, Schimmel in her article "Dārā Šokōh" in *The Encyclopedia Iranica*, and the author of this article in the article "Dārā Shukūh" in *The Great Islamic Encyclopedia* have discussed some aspects of Dārā Shukūh's interactions. However, none of these works are exclusive and methodical studies of this topic.

2. Dārā Shukūh, the Gūrkanī Prince

Gūrkanī Kings as a Mughal dynasty reigned about three centuries (1526-1857 CE) in India. Shāh Jahān (r. 1037-1068 AH) was the fourth king of the dynasty and Muhammad Dārā Shukūh, his eldest son, was born on 29 Safar 1024/1615 in Ajmer (Hāshim Khān 1869, 1:594; Ḥasanī 1967, 145). Shāh Jahān divided his kingdom between his sons, and Dārā Shukūh, as the crown prince, was ordered to control the

provinces of Allahabad, Punjab, Gujarat, Multan and Kabul in the years 1055 to 1062 AH. However, his repeated failures showed that he was not qualified to be in charge of the country and army affairs (Nūshāhī 1381 Sh, 173; Ḥusaynī 1346 Sh, 44).

Shāh Jahān had great compassion towards Dārā Shukūh, so after the latter's failures Shāh Jahān brought him back to the capital and retained him as the crown prince. In 1068 AH, Shāh Jahān became ill and conceded the control of India to Dārā. Dārā Shukūh's disagreement with his brothers, who ruled over different provinces, led to a conflict between them. During his father's illness, the enemies supposed that he was going to kill Shāh Jahān (Jalālāy Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1388 AH, 52; Fadā'ī 1341 Sh, 322; Mīr Muḥammad Ma'ṣūm 1358 Sh, 41, 54, 63-4). However, each of his brothers called himself the king of India and came to conquer the capital. First, Prince Shujā' attacked from Bengal, and Dārā, against Shāh Jahān's wish, sent an army to stop him. Prince Murād attacked from Gujarat and captured some regions. Then, Princes Murād and Awrangzīb collaborated and defeated Dārā's army. He escaped and came toward Iran's borders to gain the support of the Safavīds (Qānī' Tatwī 1957, 509; Ṭabāṭabā 1295 AH, 1:301).

However, his hosts betrayed him, and he was sent to Akbarabad and imprisoned there. However, Shāh Jahān who once had rebelled against his father, was now arrested and imprisoned by his son Awrangzīb. Because of illness, he was unable to escape and could not help Dārā. Awrangzīb crushed all the sporadic and bloody riots, which were conducted by the followers of Dārā. Finally, Ḥanafī religious leaders issued a fatwā to execute Dārā on the night of Thursday, 22 Dhū l-Ḥijjah, 1069 AH (1658 AD) in prison (Kinbū 1967, 3:261, 259; Bakhtāvar Khān 1979, 1:131, 167; Ḥasanī 1967, 5:146).

His body was transferred to Delhi and was buried in the tomb of his grandfather, Humāyūn. Today, only a few unmarked graves have remained of them. Awrangzīb captured the reign of Shāh Jahān and killed, deported, and detained the family members and close friends of Dārā (Qānī ‘ Tatwī 1957, 509; Gūpāmūy 2008, 571; Ḥasanī 1967, 5:146).

3. Dārā Shukuh’s Motives for Interaction with Hindus

There are many factors in the life of Dārā that motivated him to interact with Hindus. In contrast to his predecessors, he built a constructive relations with Hindu denominations. These factors can be traced in Dārā’s education, environment, and spiritual affiliations and can be divided into the following categories.

3.1 Family Background

Little information is available of Dārā’s childhood and adolescence. Apparently, the rebellion of Shāh Jahān against his father, Jahāngīr, failed and the latter took Dārā as a hostage to restrain Shāh Jahān. He was released in 1037 AH and returned to his mother, Bānū Biygum or Mumtāz Mahal, a noble Iranian lady, whose family were from Rayy (Tehran) but then migrated to India for cloth trade. She was the beloved of her husband, Shāh Jahān, who established the famous Tāj Mahal to commemorate her (Nūshāhī 1381 Sh, 171; Nā‘īnī 1341 Sh, 119, 124; Fadā‘ī 1341 Sh, 322). Shāh Jahān was a Ḥanafī Sunnī, but Bānū Biygum was likely a Shī‘ite. The roots of the deep Shī‘ite tendencies of Dārā should be sought in his mother’s beliefs. The “religious tolerance” of Bānū Biygum toward Shāh Jahān certainly created a ground for Dārā to interact with the followers of other religions.

3.2 Artistic and Literary Characteristics

Dārā’s passion for art and literature indicates his subtle nature. Dārā learned calligraphy from Aqā ‘Abd al-Rashīd Daylamī (d. 1081 AH),

the nephew of Mīr ‘Imād (Kinbū 1967, 1:425; Hāshim Khān 1869, 1:471; ‘Abd al-Rashīd 1346 Sh, 289). Several beautiful transcriptions of the Qur’ān, *Mathnawī* of Rūmī, and *Tūfī nāmāh* has remained of him. He also gave his wife, Nādirah Biygum, a scrapbook which included illustrations of exquisite monuments of the Mughal period (Tamīmdārī 1372 Sh, 1:324; Marshal 1389 Sh, 276; Schimmel 1996, 4; Hazrat 1982, 113-14, 120).¹ Also, He visited Sarmad Kāshānī, a poet and student of Mullā Ṣadrā and Mīr Findiriskī (Tamīmdārī 1372 Sh, 312; Dārā Shukūh 1344 Sh, thirteen). Dārā himself was a poet, and his simple and austere poems are gathered in a collection entitled *Iksīr a’zam*. The influence of Hāfiz, Sa‘dī, and Dihlawī are obvious in his style (Schimmel 1373 Sh, 57; Marshal 1389 Sh, 276; Dārā 1969, 4, 7, 8, 11, 23, 29, 54, 74).

Among the various denominations of Hinduism, a variety of visual and auditory art has developed, which are not found in the Muslim world. Painting, sculpture, poetry, singing, sacred dances, calligraphy of divine words, epic music, mythical plays, architecture of temples, and so forth are among the prominent manifestations of this ancient tradition, which certainly influenced Dārā and created a sense of respect in him.

3.3 Fairness and Ethical Morality

Images painted of Dārā show him as a partly thin man. Although he lived in the court, he avoided debauch and was inclined to poverty. He used the title “poor” for himself in some of his works. In addition, He was known as a lover of charity, science, art, generosity, and chivalry (Gūpāmūy 2008, 566; Dārā 1356 Sh, 1). These qualities led him to have a better understanding of the Hindu economic situation and the path of its improvement. In particular, after the arrival of Muslims in India, they

1. For a complete list of Dārā’s remaining artworks, see Nā’īnī (1341 Sh, 135, 235).

controlled the main sources of wealth and power, and most of the natives lived at a level lower.

3.4 Mystical Behavior

Different factors allowed Dārā to be in contact with Sufis. His father, Shāh Jahān, had extensive relations with the Sufi masters of his time and went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Kh^wājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī for the birth of his grandson. Dārā was once healed by Mīr Muḥammad Mīyān Mīr (d. 1045 AH), a great Qādirī Sufi, and this event led to his devotion to Sufism and joining the Qādirīyya order. After Mīyān Mīr, Dārā became a disciple of Mullā Shāh Badakhshī and a missionary with the permission to train new disciples (Shafī‘ Lāhūrī 1967, 4:61; Dārā 1344 Sh, 234).

Dārā claimed to understand the details of mysticism and monotheism and regarded himself as an owner of divine calling. Accordingly, he sometimes explicated the verses of the Qur’ān, rejected the ideas of other mystics, and presented himself as the pole of the Qādirīyya in India after Mullā Shāh. Dārā also believed in a kind of spiritual visionary relationship with Mīyān Mīr. Some of his leading disciples, such as Shaykh Aḥmad Dihlavī, taught *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn ‘Arabī to him. Since Mīyān Mīr and Mullā Shāh were occupied with prayer and fasting and avoided singing (*samā’*), Dārā grew in “non-exciting” Sufism (*sahw*) and had little inclination toward “exciting” mysticism (*sukr*) (Nūshāhī 1381 Sh, 175-8; Dārā 1335 Sh, 2, 3 and 15).

He also benefitted from other Sufis; for example, he visited the shrines of Chishtīyah saints, such as Nizām al-Dīn ‘Ulya, and went to the sessions of Chishtī masters, such as Shaykh Muḥib Allāh Allāh Ābādī (d. 1058 AH). He had correspondence with Shāh Fath ‘Alī, who was a famous Qalandar. Sulaymān Miṣrī Qalandarī, Shāh Muḥammad

Dilrubā, and Hazrat Bārī (d. 1062 AH) were among his teachers (Shafī‘ī Lāhūrī 1967, 4:63). There is a tradition of “wandering” (*parsih*) or “traversing the earth” (*sayr āfāqī*) in Sufism, which has urged Sufis to travel to far Muslim regions. As a result, they have had more connections with the followers of other religions than the jurists, theologians, philosophers, and other Muslims. Similarly, they had expectedly a greater tolerance than the other Muslims. Also, the mystical upbringing of Dārā in the Qādiriyyah order reinforced the spirit of tolerance and kindness in his approach and made him open-minded toward different ideas and traditions. Of course, some Sufi orders were not much tolerant; for example, his brother Awrangzīb, who was linked to the Naqshbandī order, had a great hostility towards Hinduism.

3.5 Similarities between Dārā’s Thoughts and Hindu Doctrines

By comparison, Dārā had a unique understanding of the foundations of Hindu and Islamic mysticism and suggested that their differences are at a surface level (Dārā 1335 Sh, 1; Hazrat 1982, 6). The influence of Ibn ‘Arabī on Dārā should be considered as an important factor in his understanding of Hindu thought. He also adopted certain pantheistic ideas from Shaykh Muḥib Allāh Allāh Ābādī Chishtī (d. 1058 AH) (known as the second Ibn ‘Arabī) (Nā‘īnī 1344 Sh, 30-129; Dārā 1341 Sh, thirteen). With this background, Vedanta Hindu texts, which are full of pantheistic content, were familiar and understandable for him. His translation of Upānīshads, the main texts of Vedanta, was motivated by his desire to find more similarities between Islamic and Hindu ideas.

3.6 Influences of Educated Hindus

Hindus were also a good model of tolerance for Dārā. Among those who influenced him in this regard was Bābā La‘l Dās Bīyrāgī (Pāndit Rāja), a poet and Hindu sage who met with Dārā. As a Yogi, he was a

follower of Kabīr and New Bhaktī Vīshnuism. His disciples were known as Bābāla'li and worshiped Rāmāh. They stressed Hatha Yoga and denied reincarnation. They were theoretically monotheists and followed the school of Sāṅkhya (Hazrat 1982, 6239-40243). There is no doubt that the meetings reinforced the idea of rapprochement in Dārā. Of course, he learned Sanskrit for a better understanding of Hindu teachings. His quotations from Shankara, the prominent scholar of Vedanta, represent his familiarity with the deeper layers of Hinduism. Dārā believed that Hindus had a revealed prophetic tradition and their classical texts, the Vedas, were from former prophets. He introduced Upānīshads as sacred scriptures and the “hidden books” mentioned in the Qur'ān (56:77-80) (Dārā 1335 Sh, 3; Hazrat 1982, 6).

3.7 Hindu Glory

Traditionally, the Hindu city of Varanasi is a religious center that has a series of ancient temples with amazing architecture. The city, along with several other Hindu centers, was in the territory of Dārā, and thousands of pilgrims would visit those places, especially in yearly feasts and celebrations, and bring with them the multitude of their offerings. The presence of Islam inclined the upper classes of Hindu society to individual and collective rites. They had a strong commitment to social order, Cāsts, and their belief in Karma extended the spirit of non-injury (*ahimsā*) in society. Despite being the majority, they did not revolt against the Muslim minority and accepted the situation as a historical destiny. The four stages of life was observed as much as possible, and the Hindu religious order trained prominent men who had a public authority to remove disasters. Many Hindus, despite Muslim oppression, respected Muslim places and celebrated Muslim saints. Of course, all of these factors, developed a sense of respect for the great and ancient Hindu religious traditions in Dārā and changed his attitude to them.

4. Dārā's Approaches to Interaction with Hinduism

In his territories, Dārā had the presence of various religious traditions that were not mentioned in the Qur'ān and hence were not counted as "the People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*). Moreover, Muslims considered Hindu images as symbols of polytheism and regarded Hindus as idol-worshippers. Extremist Muslims, referring to some verses of the Qur'ān, considered fighting with idolaters an obligatory ruling and thus inflicted violence on Hindus. In such an environment, Dārā chose a different approach and decided to interact with Hindus. His methods were the results of two parts of his life: the first part until 1062 in which he focused on Islamic mysticism, and the second part in which he attended to religions, especially Hinduism.

4.1 Rapprochement between Islamic Denominations

In the first step, he strived for rapprochement between Islamic denominations. He was diligent in performing religious duties and followed the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence. His masters, such as Sulṭānpūrī (d. 1042 AH) and Mīrak Shaykh Hirawī (d. 1070 AH), were famous Ḥanafī leaders (*mufīī*). Dārā used the word "Ḥanafī" as a title for himself (Nūshāhī 1381 Sh, 172; 'Abd al-Rashīd 1346 Sh, 289). He counted the first three Caliphs among the *awliyā'* but also respected the Shī'ite Imāms, and Shī'ite tendencies are found in his thought.

His first book, *Safīnat al-awliyā'*, which he wrote in 1049 AH, clearly shows his rapprochement tendency. In this book, he describes the life and miracles of 411 women and men, most of whom were Sufis. His brief biography of the Prophet, the Caliphs, the Shī'ite Imāms, and Sunnī scholars forms the first part of the book and the second part is devoted to the Qādirī masters. In the subsequent sections, the masters of Naqshbandiyyah, Chishtiyyah, Kubrawiyyah, and Suhrawardiyyah

are mentioned. His concentration on the Indian branches of these orders is an important advantage of this book in comparison to other biographies (Dārā 1900, 2-5, 10, 216; Schimmel 1996, 3). It is not unlikely that his Shī'ite tendency aroused the hostility of Awrangzīb, who had a strong relationship with Sunnī scholars (Dārā 1335 Sh, 14-13, 17).

4-2. Promotion of Tolerant Sufism

Dārā composed writings to promote the tolerant Qādirī order. It seems that the starting point and also Dārā's motivation in entering the field of mystical literature were the mystical correspondence between him and Mullā Shāh Badakhshī ('Abd al-Rashīd 1446 AH, 289; Ahmad 1387 Sh, 2: 37, 121, 114). In 1052 AH, he composed *Sakīnat al-awliyā'*, whose contents represent his personal state and his relations with the Qādirīyah. He also assigned a major part of the book to pay homage to Mīyān Mīr, Müllā Shāh, and their disciples. He outlined some of his ideas, such as the unique nature of existence, the phenomenal nature of the universe, and the manifestation of God. The abundant historical illustrations of the book makes it a source of Indian history. Dārā's writing method is very similar to 'Aṭṭār in *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'* and his sources include *Qūt al-qulūb*, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, *Risālah Qushayriyyah* (Dārā 1344 Sh, 24, 37, 68, 79, 80, 132, 152, 235). In addition, he attempted to build Qādirī places; for example, he built a mansion and a great garden (called Parī Mahal) for Mullā Shāh Badakhshī in Kashmir that still exists (Kokh 1991, 117; Lahore 1971, 330).

Of course, Dārā did not limit himself to the teachings of the Qādirīyah and was inspired by the great masters of Sufism. For example, he composed a treatise in 1056 AH entitled *Risālah Haq namā*, in which he provided a summary of the mystical teachings of Aḥmad Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī, Ibn 'Arabī, and Jāmī as well as a variety of

different mystical poems. In this treatise, a special chapter is devoted to the topic of pantheism (Dārā 1335 Sh, 3-4, 9-8, 13, 17, 20). Also, he authored another work entitled *Ḥasanāt al-‘arīfīn* in 1065 AH modelled on *Shaṭaḥiyyāt* of Rūzbahān Baqlī. In this work, he quoted verses of the Qur’ān and words of the Caliphs, the Shī‘ite Imāms, and Sufis and explained them. His proper selection of the eastern and western mystics of the Muslim world shows the extent of the resources at his disposal. Dārā’s attention to *Shaṭaḥiyyāt* may be a reason for his esoteric tendencies in this part of his life (Dārā 1352 Sh, 4-3, 36, 41, 53).

4.3 Valuing Hindus

After creating a spirit of tolerance between Muslim sects, Dārā promoted tolerance between Muslims and Hindus. He chose some Hindu scholars as his secretaries, and a number of reports show that his court was a center for Hindu scholars and for discussion with them (Nūshāhī 1381 Sh, 176). Some of his letters show that he had corresponded with some of the great religious leaders of his time. He wrote a letter in Sanskrit (Dārā 1352 Sh, 15), which indicates that he insisted on learning Hindu languages. Dārā was also interested in learning about other religious traditions, such as Judaism and Christianity. Hence, he studied the Gospels and the Torah and may have had discussions in this regard with the Armenian or Jewish poet, Sarmad Kāshānī (Dārā 1335 Sh, 1; Schimmel 1373 Sh, 57).

4-4. Harmonizing Islamic and Hindu Teachings

Emphasizing common beliefs in Islam and Hinduism was one of the methods of Dārā in promoting tolerance towards Hindus in the society. By 1069 AH, he authored different works to compare Islamic and Hindu teachings. This endeavor can be seen already in the book *Ḥasanāt al-‘arīfīn*, where he quoted the words of the great Hindu

mystic Kabīr beside the words of famous Sufis. Dārā's resignation from his rule over different provinces (1062 AH), attachment to Shāh Jahān, and encouragements of Bābā La'l motivated him to survey Hindu ideas (Dārā 1352 Sh, 64; Shāyigān 1364 Sh, 199).

Of course, writing the book *Majma' al-baḥrayn* in 1065 AH was the most important step of Dārā in this regard. This book contains a comparison of Islamic and Hindu mysticism. In this work, the Hindu gods (Brahmā, Vīshnu, and Shīvā), who are responsible for the creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe, are said to be identical to Gabriel, Michael, and Isrāfīl in Islam. The creative power of Māyā is described in terms of God's love in Islam for creation and manifestation. The universal womb, Hirānīyah Grabha, is compared with the Muhammadan Truth, and the stages of the heavens, earth, and seas in Hindu and Islamic cosmologies are said to be the same. In the field of anthropology, the Hindu Atman and Primātman are said to be the equals of the spirit and the Great Spirit (Dārā 1335 Sh, 2, 9-7, 16, 19, 29).

4.5 Holding Debates

Dārā tried to resolve misunderstandings between Muslim and Hindu thinkers through organizing sessions of debate and discussion. A treatise entitled *Nādir al-nukāt*, compiled by Chandarbahān Brahman, the secretary of the court, records Dārā's discussion with Bābā La'l. Dārā's questions are about the characteristics of ascetic life, different aspects of Hindu mythology, the relationship between the divine spirit and the human soul, funerals, worshiping idols, and the nature of the heart and salvation. Unlike many traditional debates between Muslims and non-Muslims, this dialogue does not have an interrogational or domineering nature (Ahmad 1387 Sh, 2:106).¹

1. To study parts of the text, see Huarat (1926, 289).

4.6 Translation of Hindu Classic Texts

Dārā considered the source of Muslim animosity toward Hindus in their ignorance of Hindu beliefs. Hence, He ordered the translation of Hindu classic texts into Persian as soon as possible and made it available for Muslims. The translation of *Jūg bāsasht* was the first step in this direction, which was done in 1066 AH (Mujtabā'ī 1389 Sh, 83; Marshal 1389 Sh, 276; Mīr Findiriskī 1385 Sh, 14, 15).

But his best work in this regard was *Sirr akbar*, the earliest translation of Sanskrit *Upanīshāds*, which was finished in 1067 AH. This collection includes fifty *Upanīshāds* that were previously dispersed. Dārā, with the collaboration of Brahmins, translated these texts into Persian, which is a literal translation, and new Persian equivalents are used in it for some Indian terms. Dārā has inserted explanatory notes inside the text, which define technical terms, complete grammatical structures, provide examples, mention the referent of pronouns, and remove ambiguities (Dārā Shukūh 1341 Sh, 56, 57, 59, 69, 72, 103; Ḥasanī 1976, 5:146; Mujtabā'ī 1389 Sh, 63).

A comparison between this translation and the modern translations of *Upanīshāds* shows that in his translation the translators have sometimes deleted certain verses and sometimes added some materials based on their sources. The pronunciation of Sanskrit words is based on folk pronunciation and the transliteration style of Brahmins is different from the accurate pronunciation of the words. Dārā used simple and fluent Persian in this translation. He also used the classic commentaries of *Upanīshāds*, but did not provide any explanation in some cases, such as reincarnation, which are contrary to Islamic beliefs (Dārā Shukūh 1341 Sh, 101, 109, 123).

Dārā also translated parts of *Mundūkah Upanīshād*, but its date and the contributors in the translation are not known. He added explanations to the text to explicate Hindu teachings or to harmonize them with Islamic doctrines. This treatise is entitled *‘Upankhat Mandūk* and is published in an anthology of his works (Dārā 1335 Sh, 3, 16). Some treatises are also attributed to him, including a translation of the *Gīta*, which was supposedly done in 1067 AH with the assistance of Hindu Pāndīts (Hazrat 1982, 236-37; Marshal 1389 Sh, 276; Mujtabā’ī 1389 Sh, 73).

4.7 Protecting Hindu Monuments

Unlike other periods of the Muslim presence in India, which witnessed destruction of Hindu works and monuments, Dārā’s age was a safe time for Hindu works. He established palatial buildings and gardens along with a large library in Lahore to maintain classic manuscripts. He also had a personal library in Qal‘a Surkh which is still preserved in a museum (Koch 1991, 117; Lahore 1971, 330).

5. Dārā’s Achievements in Interaction with Hinduism

Dārā’s efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims had various internal and external results. He influenced both Hindu and Muslim communities, and his policies had long-term results for them, which include the following.

5.1 Muslim Reactions

Dārā was a devoted Qādirī Sufī and tried to use politics to expand Sufism. However, although some people regarded him as a righteous Sufī, others considered him an apostate because of translating *Upanishads*. In particular, His contemporary Naqshbandīes who traditionally opposed Shī‘ite views, pantheism, or tolerance, supported Awrangzīb, who was interested in the Naqshbandī order and stressed following the Islamic tradition, opposing Shī‘ism, destroying Hindu

buildings, and constructing mosques in their place. With this background, after the defeat of Dārā, Hanafī scholars condemned him for defaming Sufism, profanity, and cooperation with infidels, and eventually ordered his execution (Husaynī 1346 Sh, 46; Mīr Muḥammad Ma'šūm 1385 Sh, 100).

The historians of Awrangzīb's court depicted Dārā as a prodigal, mindless, and wrongdoer person. But evidence shows that he sought to understand Muslim and Hindu religious beliefs and traditions and encouraged the scholars and mystics of both traditions towards this aim. Chandrabahān Brahman (the author of *Chihār chaman*), Tawakkul Biyg (the author of *Shamshīrkhānī History*), Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad (the author of *Tib Dārā Shukūhī*), and Buwālī Dās (the author of *Rāja Walī*) were his famous students (Schimmel 1996, 2; Bakhtāvar Khān 1979, 1:124).

Of course, encouraging the translation of Hindu texts had begun from the period of Akbar (936-1014 AH), who tried to promote mutual understanding to facilitate his rule. However, the aim of Dārā was not merely political; he tried to demonstrate that Hinduism had a share of truth. It should be noted that Dārā's translations are technically less accurate than those of Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī, who started the compilation and translation of Hindu sacred texts several centuries before him. Dārā's knowledge of Sanskrit was much less than Bīrūnī's. Dārā's translations were focused on a single branch of Hindu philosophy, i.e., Advayta Vedānta of Shankara, and despite their historical importance, they are not scholarly reliable and do not convey important differences between Islam and Hinduism (Ḥasanī 1976, 146; Mīr Findiriskī 1385 Sh, 27).¹

1. For a critique of his comparative method, see Shāyigān (1362 Sh, 213 ff.).

5.2 Introduction of the Hindu Tradition to Other Nations

Since some of the translations of Dārā, especially *Sirr akabar*, were among the first translations of Hindu texts from Sanskrit to other languages, He paved the way for direct contact with Hindu teachings and heritage. Nevertheless, Hindu and Muslim fanatics did not welcome his translations. Later in 1801 (1216 AH), Anquetil Du Perron translated this Persian text into French, and his translation was regarded as the first translation of *Upanīshāds* to a European language. Du Perron's French translation attracted the idealist philosophers of Europe and changed their view on mysticism in India. Hence, Dārā should be considered among the pioneers of comparative Hindu-Muslim mysticism, who introduced Hindu philosophy to the Muslim world and then to the West (Sharma 1975, 114).

5.3 The Decline of the Qādiriyyah against the Naqshbandiyyah

After his murder as a Qādirī leader, this order declined in India. In contrast, the Naqshbandīs, whom were protected and supported by Awrangzīb, had ample opportunities to develop their own order. But in reality, it was the tolerant Sufism that surrendered to fanatic mysticism. Since then, many close disciples of Dārā were scattered or deported, and the Qādiriyya could not reorganize themselves for a long time.

5.4 Creating a Model for Interaction

Several decades of Dārā's efforts for interaction did not adequately improve the relationship between Muslims and Hindus, and the mistreatment of Hindus by Muslims continued after him. Hindus were expelled from court posts, and their negative attitude towards Muslims increased. When Europeans arrived in India, they translated Hindu texts, and their works were more accurate and better than Dārā's. Also, they exhibited Hindu relics in European museums and took the clever measure of replacing Farsi, which was the official language of India.

However, presenting a practical model for interaction was the most important and enduring achievement of Dārā, which is still applicable, and his success in this regard was a result of his devotion and sincere sympathy with Hindus, which was not difficult for Hindus to recognize.

5.5 Temporal Balance in Muslim-Hindu Relations

Dārā's efforts in valuing Hindus reduced his father's harsh actions against them and caused an environment of tolerance at the end of Shāh Jahān's reign. This made Dārā popular among Hindus, which was reflected in their support for him. The idea of peaceful coexistence and rapprochement was not established after Dārā, and the separation of India and Pakistan in a few centuries later is a clear indication of that (Sharma 1975, 114). His actions earned him the trust of Hindus; for example, He met the seventh Sikh Guru, Har Rai, and was invited to build Golden Temple in Amritsar (Smith 2012, 9-10).

6. Conclusion

Several motives were behind Dārā's project of promoting peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Hindus. His parents loved each other while they did not follow the same religious tradition. He was interested in art, and Islamic and Hindu artworks were very valuable and respected for him. His chivalric behavior and poorly life gave a compassionate understanding of the Hindus' regretful situation. Adherence to the Qādiriyya, a tolerant Sufī order, led him to interaction with Hindus. Dārā believed in the pantheistic ideas of Ibn 'Arabī, which he found similar to those of the Hindu Vedanta school of thought. Educated Hindus went to His court and helped him translate their scriptures. Also, the great and glorious Indian culture was impressive for him.

These factors led him to approaches that established constructive interaction between Muslims and Hindus. At the beginning of this path,

he tried to produce mutual understanding between Muslim sects, because it was a prerequisite of understanding other religions. He promoted Qādirī Sufism in order to advance the spirit of tolerance. He valued Hindus and employed them in public works and governmental posts. Then, he wrote some books to harmonize the principles of Islam and Hinduism. Also, he organized dialogue and discussion sessions to remove ambiguities and misunderstandings. Translating Hindu classics was his next step to make Muslim scholars directly familiar with Hindu thought.

Dārā's interaction with other religions had remarkable results. First, it led to the harsh reaction of the Hanafī scholars and Naqshbandī Sufis, which made a suitable pretext for Dārā's excommunication. His failure weakened the tolerant Qādirī Sufis against the irreconcilable Naqshbandīs. Of course, some liberal scholars, on the other hand, admired him. He relied on his position, and established relative, temporary balance in the relationship between the Muslims and the Hindus, which unfortunately did not last after his death. His translation of Hindu works also contributed in introducing this religious tradition to other nations. Western scholars, especially, became familiar with Hinduism through Dārā's translations. The most important achievement of Dārā was presenting a practical model for interaction between Muslims and Hindus, for which he sacrificed himself.

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