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Md. Ziaul Haque Sheikh

AKBAR'S INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, POST-SECULARISM AND GLOBAL INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Abstract

Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori depict a conceptual map of a range of possible approaches and ways in which Global Intellectual History (GIH) can be formulated as an academic discipline. Various scholars from different fields propose to widen its scope and boundaries - from trans-local and western-centric to intra-regional, trans-continental, trans-national and even beyond the geographical designation. In this writing, an attempt has been made to bring the idea of *"Suhl-i-kul",* a state sponsored 'interreligious-dialogue' initiated by Akbar (1556-1605), a mediaeval Mughal emperor of India, as a content of GIH. This study assumes that the concept of *"Suhl-i-kul"* can be matched with the idea of 'post-secularism' which demands that such concept can create a trans-religious global formation and contribute to establish a peaceful society in a religiously pluralist world, especially from the perspective of multi-religious South Asia.

1.   Introduction

In their writing, Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori along with other scholars cover almost all fields of social intellectual inquiry for Global Intellectual History (GIH)[1], but one of the important fields, they are somewhat reluctant [un]consciously to bring into the contents of GIH, is the 'religious phenomenon'.[2] Cemil Aydin in his writing, *Globalizing the Intellectual History of the Idea of the "Muslim World"* has sought to bring the idea of the Ottomans' *'Khilafat'* and 'Pan-Islamism' as an alternative internationalism and counter-universalism to challenge the itineraries of universal conceptual movements that originate in the Western world.[3] But, it seldom wraps up the religious phenomenon in the proposed discipline of GIH. Therefore, it remains an area for scholarly exercise about 'how can we bring the religious phenomenon

Md. Ziaul Haque Sheikh is Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Currently, he is a PhD Research Fellow at the Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi, India. His e-mail address is: ziaduds@gmail.com

[1] I am indebted to Dr. Siddharth Mallavarapu, Chairperson, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi, India, who has introduced me with the idea of GIH and encouraged me to think and write about it. However, the earlier version of this paper has been presented in the "International Conference on Terrorism in the Wave of Islamic State", held on 7-8 January, 2017, organised by the Department of Criminology, University of Dhaka.

[2] Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, "Approaches to Global Intellectual History", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *Global Intellectual History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, pp. 3-28.

[3] Cemil Aydin, "Globalizing the Intellectual History of the Idea of the 'Muslim World", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 159-186.

into the content of GIH?' Would the inclusion of any religious concept in GIH trigger the search about any particular religion as the absolute truth and universality? When GIH is tempting to avoid any type of centrism, would such intellectual inclusion transform this discipline into a particular religious-centric? In this writing, we will settle these questions and seek to bring the idea of Akbar's *"Suhl-i-kul"* [4], a state sponsored 'interreligious-dialogue' with an assumption that this concept can have the potentiality to be treated as the 'pioneer' of today's post-secularism that necessitates religious concepts can also create trans-religious global formation. Hence, it can also contribute in establishing a peaceful society in a religiously pluralist world.

2.   GIH and Reviewing Its Content

According to Moyn and Sartori, "Global Intellectual History is intended to showcase the available choices at a threshold moment in the possible formation of an intellectual history extending across geographical parameters far larger than usual."[5] The view of Duncan Bell is that "global intellectual history is an antidote to deliberating form of scholarly parochialism, insisting that ideas are not constrained or constituted by political borders, but are instead produced and consumed within cross-cutting, geographically dispersed field of discourse".[6] However, Fredrick Cooper in his article, "*How Global Do We Want Our Intellectual History to Be*?" more critically frames the word "global" in GIH and divides it into soft and hard versions. To him, soft version of 'global' directs cross-national, cross-continental and cross-cultural interconnected history and hard version of 'global' leads to a centralisation of ideas, encircling the world and formulating the proposition about the world as a whole by using modern technology.[7] While Fredric Cooper regards GIH as interconnected history, Sudipta Kaviraj, in his writing, "*Global Intellectual History: Meanings and Methods*" disagrees with Cooper's remark and defines GIH as a highly rewarding field of comparative history.[8] He makes an effort to distinguish between interconnected and comparative history by arguing that interconnected history is supplied by the modern analysts and it does not exist inside the intentional field of history that is being explored. He argues that interconnected history is extrinsic and contains the element of presentism to focus on the connection between two phenomenons. On the other hand, comparative history is intrinsic and free from any presentism, which is the main demand of GIH.[9] However, GIH is the web of knowledge, which studies

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[4] *Suhl-i-kul* is a Persian term which means peace with all. This is the religious policy of Akbar by which he extended his liberal policy and toleration to all religions and creeds and would not recognise any difference among religions owing to unite all citizen in a common bond of peace. The great outcome of this policy was to engage religious leaders of different religions into the state sponsored interreligious dialogue.

[5] Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[6] Duncan Bell, "Making and Taking Worlds", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 255.

[7] Fredrick Cooper, "How Global Do we want Our Intellectual History to be?", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 284.

[8] Sudipta Kaviraj, "Global Intellectual History: Meanings and Methods", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 295-320.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 298.

the concepts and thinkers around the world and across the ages and keeps it beyond any centrism. It also searches about the originality of existing universal knowledge, exploring those nonglobalised ideas and philosophers that have had the potentiality to be global but need agencies for its fulfilment.

The project of GIH opens a wide range of scope to cover various concepts and thinkers across the pace and time. Both Moyn and Sartori intend to offer a model for global intellectual history beyond its showcase, specially, Sartori wants to keep it in so provocative manner that anyone interested in the future expansion of the enterprise should be able to engage it directly. He has brought in a key concept of how culture travels in a determinist frame of global capitalism by focusing on Bengal's contribution in the formation of global political economy.[10] The challenge of GIH is that an attempt to search the potentiality of any previous idea that had the capacity to be globalised but has the possibility to be misplaced due to its truncation or situational appropriation as fulfilled by a particular agency. Moyn brings the event of Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) as the pioneer of human rights movements, however, he argues that it is submerged by latter human rights movements.[11] Duncan Bell also discusses about the scope of GIH and views that GIH as a species of world making project does not assume or prescribe any particular special scale; rather it concentrates on exploring the universality.[12] To him, this project cognitively encompasses the world to frame the global not based on geographical design or non-western approach, but instead, includes the imaginative world. He includes world making contents and resources as the subject of GIH. He has also brought in the idea of scientific innovation as the content of GIH. Janaki Bakhle brings the idea of anti-colonial nationalist role of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar as the content of GIH by situating this into three strands of interlinked historical discourses, *viz.,* modern Indian history, early modern South Asian literary history, and Marathi literary and political history.[13] While Sartori argues that key concepts and ideas travel around the world, however, Bakhle adds a new dimension to this argument. She contends that while tracking and analysing the planned route or itinerary of the movement or travel of any key concept and idea around the world, it is generally seen that when any idea or concept travels, local milieu adds colour to that universal idea or concept.[14] Cemil Aydin attempts to bring the idea of the Ottomans' *"Khilafat"* and "Pan-Islamism" as an alternative internationalism and counter-universalism in order to challenge the privilege of the universal conceptual movements that originate in the Western world.[15] Vanissa Smith examines the process of cultural exchange by cultural intermediaries,

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[10] Andrew Sartori, *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 63, cited in Samuel Moyn, "On the Nonglobalization of Ideas", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.,* p. 199.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 199.

[12] Duncan Bell*, op. cit.,* p. 226.

[13] Janaki Bakhle, "Putting Global Intellectual History in Its Place", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.,* pp. 228-229.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Cemil Aydin, *op. cit.,* p. 161.

according to which European knowledge has been depending on earliest contacts. He urges to rethink about this process of cultural exchange due to the fact that although cultural intermediaries are able to negotiate language and know about the epistemologies, practices, genres and methodologies, they become subject to rhetorical and discursive imperatives and occlude their agency, subtly transforming them from subject into object of knowledge.[16] Sheldon Pollock incorporates the idea of cosmopolitanism, vernacularism and pre-modernity in the GIH and discusses about how local and trans-local cultures formulate the intellectual circuit in particular areas. He makes an example by saying that Sanskrit cosmopolitanism does not take entire world or even same space as a whole but it can take an intellectual circuit of South Asia—crossing boundaries of a political unit and vernacular languages.[17] Siep Stuurman compares the relationship between nomads and settlers by referring three writers Herodotus, Sima Qian and Ibn Khaldun. By studying their writings, he has found that although there were cultural and political differences, they all significantly perceived a common humanity. There was political affinity and they confronted the common problem. This commonality is transcended to the particular intellectual and political framework.[18] In these ways, scholars have begun to formulate the GIH with a broader scope in order to incorporate a range of new concepts and ideas in it. In this writing, therefore, an attempt has been made to add Akbar's interreligious dialogue to be considered as a new contour of the GIH.

3. Reasoning the Religion in GIH Premises

Religion is a much contested concept. The attempt to define it has led to debates among theologians, social scientists and philosophers. J. E. Barnhart has sought to identify the various problems in the definition.[19] Wilfred Cantwell Smith believes that the term is extremely difficult to define and in recent decades there has been a bewildering variety of definitions.[20] According to him, the concept of religion comes to mean not only in the Enlightenment sense the various system of what people believed, and not only in the Catholic sense what they ritually practised, and not only a sense of inwardly feeling, but increasingly the historical development of all these over the long sweep of centuries.[21] However, we will not engage here about the discourse on an in-depth definition of religion, rather reflect on religion as a belief and a set of practices in the context of International Relations. Smith defines religion as "an overt system, whether of beliefs, practices, values or whatever. Such a system has an extension of

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[16] Vanissa Smith, "Joseph Banks's Intermediaries: Rethinking Global Cultural Exchange", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 82.

[17] Sheldon Pollock, "Cosmopolitanism, Vernacularism, and Premodernity", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 59-80.

[18] Siep Stuurman, "Common Humanity and Cultural Difference on the Sedentary–nomadic Frontier: Herodotus, Sima Qian, and Ibn Khaldun", in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 33-58.

[19] Joe E Barnhart, *The Study of Religion and Its Meaning: New Explorations in Light of Karl Popper and Emile Durkheim,* The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1977.

[20] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1963, p. 20.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

time, some relation to an area, and is related to a particular community".[22] Talal Asad designates religion as "first and foremost an act" that identifies an essence (belief in God) and certain actions, signs and symbols.[23] According to him, "Religion has been part of the restructuration of particular times and spaces, a re-articulation of practical knowledge and power, of subjective behaviours, sensibilities, needs and expectation of modernity."[24] Clifford Geertz sees religion as "(1) a system of symbols which acts (2) to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."[25] He has contended that instead of looking at the social function of religion, we should explore what religion means to people and how it helps them to make sense of the world and human existence. He added that there are three basic elements to every religion: a set of beliefs, sacred objects and practices.[26]

However, religion had been playing a significant role in state mechanism until the 17th and 18th centuries. The technological advancement and scientific innovation of science and knowledge in Europe surpassed the necessity of using religion in the public and state sphere. However, it was not only due to the advancement of science and technology but also due to overwhelming misuse of religion in public sphere and Churches as well as use of religion as a mode of exploitation of general people, the significance of religion in public sphere was undermined. According to Ramesh Thakur, while most religions preach universal brotherhood, religion has been a source of friction throughout human history.[27] Besides, in the mediaeval and early modern era, European countries were facing a range of intra-religious conflicts within the Christianity. Thus, religion-based mediaeval state system discouraged middle-class bourgeoisies from adopting religion-centric state mechanism and encouraged them to the formation of a state separated from religion.

To come out from friction and misuse of religions European states began to adopt secularism as one of the state's basic principles and gradually secularism emerged as a global phenomenon. Secularism is always understood as a complex idea in terms of its defining principles and applications. Talal Asad examines "secularism not merely a political ideology that structures the modern liberal state but a unity of historical complex that includes behaviour, knowledge and sensibility in the flow of everyday life".[28] Jean Bauberot defines secularism as complete absence or equal-distance from all religions; it means that the process by which religious institutions

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[23] Talal Asad, "Reading a Modern Classic: WC Smith's The Meaning and End of Religion", *History of Religions*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2001, p. 220.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 221.
[25] Geertz Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures,* New York: Basic, 1973, pp. 412-453.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Ramesh Thakur, "Ayodhya and the Politics of India's Secularism: A Double-Standards Discourse", *Asian Survey,* Vol. 33, No. 7, 1993, p. 646.
[28] Talal Asad, *op. cit.,* p. 206.

and actions will be separated from any sort of state's patronage.[29] France is such type of country. Scholars like Martha Nussbaum holds that American secularism relies on six principles–equality, equal respect, freedom of conscience, accommodation, non-establishments and separation of Church and State.[30] Another two Western scholars Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor said that secularism is constituted by four principles – equality of respect, freedom of conscience, state neutrality towards religion and separation of Church and State.[31] They are regarded as liberal pluralist scholars. However, Graeme Smith has sought the religiosity within secularism and termed secularism as "Western Secularism" and rebutted others' argument in a way that Western Secularism is the extension of Christianity.[32] Even, they oppose the interfaith interaction. Therefore, scholars like John R. Mott has opposed this trend and enhanced the preaching of Christianity through missionary work.[33]

However, another group has been trying to settle the religious issues through interreligious dialogue since the last decade of 19th century. They have given importance over the interreligious connection or religious interaction. They arranged the "Parliament of the World's Religions" in 1893 in Chicago, United States, where different representatives from various religions met together and discussed about religious issues. The Parliament of the World's Religions has no legitimate authority in framing any global principle since it has no formal recognition either from any state or any recognised international organisations. Therefore, it has no access to the international system. However, at this point, it is important to deliberate on the meaning of what interreligious dialogue really is.

4.   Interreligious Dialogue: Meaning and Method

The term 'interreligious' covers various religions and 'dialogue' is composed of Greek words 'dia' and 'logos'. 'Dia' means across, thoroughly, altogether *etc.*, and 'logos' means thinking. Therefore, dialogue means thinking together and interreligious dialogue means *thinking together about all religions*. Anne Hege Grung defines interreligious dialogue as organised encounters between people who belonging to different religious traditions where social, political and religious interests are played out and negotiated.[34] She argues that it creates strong connections between religions without overlapping them. Other contextual

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[29] Jean Bauberot, "The Two Thresholds of Laicization", in R. Bhargava, *Secularism and Its Critics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 95.

[30] M. Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality,* New York: Basic Books, 2008, p.11.

[31] Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011, p. 22.

[32] Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism,* London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2008, p. 3.

[33] *The Evangelization of the World in this Generation.* New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1991, pp. 1-10.

[34] Anne Hege Grung, "Interreligious Dialogue: Moving between Compartmentalization and Complexity", *Approaching Religion*, 2011, p. 25.

discourses and fields are also connected to the field of interreligious dialogue such as gender, management of plurality, secularism and secularity. Stanley Jedidiah Samartha views that interreligious dialogue is much more than just a talking activity; it involves a larger relationship of living together and working together with friendliness, commitment, trust and openness by which we can be engaged and informed about the understanding, critical appreciation and balanced judgment.[35] Talal Asad opines that interreligious dialogue is a comparative study of religions.[36] However, Leonard Swidler examines the dialogue as the reflection of relationality among different religions.[37] In a nutshell, interreligious dialogue is a parliament like discussion where people from different religions set together to search the common religious norms, values and human concerns irrespective of their religious affiliations, and then, they translate those into social virtues in order to make an influential change in the behaviour in public sphere. Through this interaction and motivation, inner thinking of the people is generally changed from absolutism of any religion in order to creating a fellow-feeling to other religions in a way that my religion is not the only and superior religion in the world.

Anne Hege Grung has suggested two models of interreligious dialogue. First, where religious differences are apprehended as constitutive and multicultural views, and second, where religious differences are seen as a challenge due to its complexity.[38] She says that the aim of the first model is to increase the apprehension and understanding and to decrease the tensions of religious differences at local, national and global levels. This apprehension can extend from religious periphery to other social and political fields and incorporate and engage in interreligious dialogue. The second model covers philosophical, theological and ethical reasonings of interreligious dialogue. Leonard Swidler has proposed the "*Cosmic Dance of Dialogue"* model in interreligious dialogue that is composed with *Deep Dialogue*, *Critical Thinking* and *Competitive–Cooperation* synchronically.[39] When representatives from various religions seriously engage in dialogue that is called *deep dialogue*. After engaging in dialogue, when they begin critical thinking about the particular discussion that is called *critical thinking*. In interreligious dialogue, it does not mean to criticise someone or something, rather it means to think logically to make a judgment or decision. We can take a decision logically or thoughtfully when we can first analyse it and then follow three questions what? Whence? and Whether? What means we need to develop our conscience as far as possible on what we are discussing about. This consciousness leads discussants to the logical argument and then, whence question would arrive and accordingly,

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[35] Stanley Jedidiah Samartha, "The Progress and Promise of Inter-religious Dialogues", 1972, available at https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/3211, accessed on 13 November 2014.
[36] Talal Asad, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
[37] Leonard Swidler, "Nobody Knows Everything about Anything: The Cosmic Dance of Dialogue", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* Vol. 45, No. 2, 2010, pp. 175-177.
[38] Anne Hege Grung, *op. cit.,* p. 25.
[39] Leonard Swidler, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-177.

ask where is the factual evidence for what we are talking about? Is it valid or trustworthy source? The whole process leads the discussants into *competitive – cooperative* mode. This mode is consisted of the complete circle of perception, thought, decision and action.[40] Therefore, if we engage into the world religious affairs in a deeply dialogical manner and critically analyse and synthesise our perceptions and thought and take decisions accordingly, then our actions follow the competitive-cooperative mode, rather than competitive–conflict mode.

However, S. J. Samartha tries to give a guideline for interreligious dialogue. These are: i. representatives from different religions should have commitments and integrity while approaching to a particular religion; ii. dialogue should not be limited to mere academic discussion on religious matters, rather it includes a large number of people, especially, in multi-religious societies to discard their distrust and fear between each other and to build up mutual trust and confidence; iii. representatives should ignore their own religious symbolism during discussion periods; iv. dialogue should focus on other social and political matters like poverty, conflict and translate religious norms and values into social and global values for mitigating various socio-political disputes.[41]

However, some of the important issues have been missed in the existing method of interreligious dialogue. Firstly, there is no clarification, if interreligious dialogue would discuss to compare or interconnect or interact between different religions. However, in all cases, interreligious dialogue can be conducted in a comparative study method. Through this method, we can compare good norms of all religions, extract them and then take the best norm to translate into socio-political values in order to peaceful co-existence. This method can be applicable at local, national and global levels. However, in terms of essence of religion (believe in God and basic principles etc.), there is no scope to interconnect this essence but the norms and actions which do not mismatch with the essence of any religion can be interconnected. In this way, interaction can be avoided among the essence of religions, but can be augmented among the people of different faiths.

Secondly, an important issue that requires resolution in the project of interreligious dialogue is, whether it should be patronised by the government or confined to the private initiatives. However, if the state patronises the interreligious dialogue, then the state should consider whether it makes any conflict with its secular character or not.

5.   Akbar's Interreligious Dialogue and GIH

Above, we have discussed about the GIH and its contents and interreligious dialogue. In this section, an attempt has been made to match the above

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[41] Stanley Jedidiah Samartha, *op. cit.,* p. 113.

deliberation with the content of GIH. Scholars usually give the credit to Parliament of the World's religions, 1893, in arranging the first interreligious dialogue, but the concept of interreligious dialogue can be traced back to Akbar's (1556-1605) concept of *Suhl-i-kul,* a doctrine of *reconciliation* or *peace with all*.

Jalal Uddin Muhammad Akbar came to power in Mughal India in 1556. That time India was dominated and ruled by minor Muslim conquerors. Against the circumstances, Akbar felt that to keep multi-religious India peaceful and stable, the state must have such a secular policy in which people from different religions could not only participate in state's affairs but also could perform and express their own religious affairs. His secular policy was reflected in his Indianisation of military and administrative policies and the abolition of *Jizya* in 1563. The concept of *Suhl-i-kul* is one of the innovative ideas of him. Following this concept, he undertook plural liberalist religious policy and arranged regular interreligious dialogue at Fatehpur Sikri. Accordingly, in 1575, he established *Ibadat Khana* for gathering various spiritual religious leaders who discussed about different religious matters. Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury in his famous book, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar* views that in terms of all practical religious purposes, Fatehpur remained as the seat of the first great parliament of religions of the world for about four years.[42]

However, the concept of interreligious dialogue of Akbar does have the potentiality of becoming universal. The state under him recognised all religions and invited the representatives from the Muslims – Shayekh, Sayed, Ulama, Umara, Shia, Sunni and Sufis, Hindus - Hindu *Sanyasis*, Brahman scholars, *Purushuttom* and Devi, *Yogis*, Jain Monks, Parsi Mobads, Roman Catholic Missionaries from Goa, Zoroastrian priests and Buddhists. The gathering in Fatehpur was the constellation of all religions and there were arguments, counter arguments and even in some occasions quarrels. Akbar attempted to seek consolation in different religions mixing Hindu *Sanyasis* with Christian missionaries and Zoroastrian priests.[43] In some occasions, the main agenda of discussion was to seek the truth but the ultimate aim was to create an idea among the representatives that no faith is absolute; different faiths can co-exist in a state.

During the reign of Akbar, there was no such academic suggestion about the method of interreligious dialogue, however, after critically analysing his policy, it is found that there was a comparative discussion in *Ibadat khana* among the delegates of various religions. Akbar did not impose or even motivated any religious representatives to speak against his own religion. There was only one drawback of his initiative that he formed a new religion in 1579, called *Din-i-Ilahi* by fusing the

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[42] Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi: Or, The Religion of Akbar,* Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941, p. 138.
[43] Ehsan Ghodratollahi, "Akbar, the Doctrine of Solh-i-Koll and Hindu-Muslim Relations", *Journal of Religious Thought,* Vol. 21, 2007, p. 10.

essence of different religions. However, it was his personal decision. That decision did not come from interreligious discussion held at *Ibadat khana*. Besides, after forming his new religion, Akbar did not ask any religious delegate to convert him into his newly created religion. His ultimate intention of arranging interreligious dialogue was not to form a new religion, rather to make an avenue for interaction among the different religious representatives, so that, no religious delegate could claim that the world was composed of only one religion- 'that is ours'.

Akbar's interreligious dialogue can be incorporated into the content of GIH following the directions and ideas of two GIH protagonists. One is Bakhle's idea, who has added a new dimension to Sartori's concept that key concepts and ideas travel around the world but tracking and analysing their planned route or itinerary is the important mode of writing global intellectual history owing to the fact that local milieu adds colour to a universal premise of any concept.[44] After analysing Savarkar's role in framing nationalist movement in India, he views that although there was a connection between Giuseppe Mazzini's idea of nationalism and Savarkar's idea of nationalism but there was a distinction between these two. Mazzini had not felt any necessity to use religion in the movement of unification of Italy, however, Savarkar, personally a secular character, started to use religion to unite Indians. Other is Samuel Moyn's idea of nonglobalisation. By this concept, he has attempted to search the potentiality of any previous ideas that had the capacity to be globalised but it had been misplaced due to its truncation or situational appropriation fulfilled by a particular agency. Accordingly, he brings the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) as the pioneer of human rights movement. He views that the idea of human rights movement of Haitian Revolution has been submerged by latter human rights movements.[45] Such submerged and potentially nonglobalised idea can be brought into the project of GIH.

From Bakhle's point of view, we may think that the outlook of historians about Akbar's religious policy is generally confined within their own milieu. Historians usually discuss Akbar's religious policy from their own perspective and they are divided themselves on the intentions of Akbar about religion. Religious historians see his initiative having the intention to deride others' religious faiths. They severely criticise the fusion of religion initiated by Akbar. Abdul Qader Badauni as protagonist of Sunni school of thought has criticised Akbar's religious policy and focused on his ultimate intention to form a new religion – *Din-i-Ilahi*.[46] Political historians comprehend his intentionality as to appease the different religious sections owing to prolong the Mughal rule in India. Some historians have evaluated the intentions of Akbar's religious policy on both grounds – to set up new religion by fusing different faiths and rituals of different religions, and to satisfy all the sections

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[44] Janaki Bakhle, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
[45] Samuel Moyn, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[46] See Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*, 3 Vols., Ahmad Ali, Kabir al-Din Ahmad and W. Nassau Lees, (eds.), Calcutta: Calcutta College, 1865.

of religious people for extending the tenure of Mughal rule in India. Hence, their criticisms have been confined to their beliefs and they did not find the notion of universalism in Akbar's innovative idea of interreligious dialogue. Such confinement can be regarded as defective of historical trajectories and also as a reflection of their straitjacket approach to their own cognitive circuit. However, there is one distinction of applying Janaki's model in assessing the universalism or globalism of Akbar's interreligious dialogue that is, the travelling of ideas and her focus on the impact of the local milieu - how a universal idea can get a regional and local colour, and here, our focus is on the impact of the global milieu - how the regional and local concepts and ideas can assume a universal colour in the present world.

In the contexts of nonglobalising idea and truncation and 'fulfilment theory' of Moyn, Akbar's interreligious idea was truncated in the shape of the Council for Parliament of the World's Religions, which was formed in 1888 in Chicago and formally began its journey in 1893 by arranging a formal global interreligious dialogue *i.e.*, Parliament of the World's Religions. From India, Swami Vivekananda attended the congregation and delivered a remarkable speech on the importance of interreligious dialogue. He argued that the ultimate aim of interreligious dialogue was not to fuse different faiths, rather to get all religions interconnected where each religion must assimilate its similarities of others as well as interact with different faiths in order to keep one's own beliefs intact while no religion will be made to disappear or be replaced by a new single religion.[47] Some scholars regard the Parliament of the World's Religion as the first such kind of initiatives. It is also recognised by Medias and fulfilled by different agencies. Like Haiti's human rights revolution, Akbar's contribution in interreligious dialogue remains non-globalised, although it has the potentiality to transcend into the global level.

5.1   *Akbar's Interreligious Dialogue and its Relevance to the Post-Secular World*

The world in the 20th century had witnessed overwhelming decline in religious influence in public life and the confinement of religion in the personal matters, which is usually termed by the intellectuals as the secular modern era. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehard, two scholars of Harvard University and University of Michigan, in their writing "*Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics World Wide*" analyse the approach of contemporary intellectuals and view that the death of religion was the conventional wisdom in social science during most of the 20th century. Indeed, it has been regarded as the master model of sociological inquiry, where secularisation was ranked with bureaucratisation and rationalisation and the urbanisation became the key historical revolution that transformed mediaeval agrarian societies into modern industrial nations.[48] After analysing World Values

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[47] John H Barrows (ed.), *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, Held in Chicago in Connection with the Columbian Exposition of 1893.* Vol. 2. Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893, p. 170.

[48] Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehard, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics World Wide,* Cambridge:

Survey data, they however, remark that the world is, in general, more religious than previous year of the study and during the last decade, and the secularisation theory and modernism thesis about the slow and steady death of religion is currently experiencing the most sustained challenge in the global premises. It is due to the facts of continuity of popularity in churchgoing in the United States, the emergence of spirituality in Europe, the evangelical revival that swept through Latin America, the growth of fundamentalist movements and religious parties in the Muslim world, and the upsurge of ethno-religious conflicts in international affairs. Conservative political scientist Samuel Huntington foresaw this political ecology as the 'clash of civilization' between Christian dominated Western world and Muslim dominated Eastern world.[49] In this respect, Western scholars like Warren S. Goldstein, Robert Billah, Peter Burger and Charles Taylor have criticised the secularisation theory and some of them termed secularisation as a failed project.[50]

5.2   *Post Secularism*

The latest development in the ongoing debate on religion and secularisation is the Post-secularism. A German sociologist and scholar Jurgen Habermas first used this term in his book, *"Europe: The Faltering Project'*. Incorporating the analysis of Robert N. Billah and Robert D. Putnam regarding the religious ecology of the current world, he says that "Post-secularism" can be applied to the public consciousness in Europe so far. However, as for the time being it has to adjust itself to the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly secularised environment.[51] He argues that on the one hand, anthropocentric understanding, differentiation of social subsystems and the development from agrarian to industrial and post-industrial society lead the world to secular trend. While on the other hand, growing incidents of religiously motivated conflicts and wide dissemination of such news by mass-media, increasing influence of religion in public opinion and private morality and the growing number of immigrants with various religious values lead to the consciousness engendering post-secular society.

However, Habermas introduces the post-secular concept based on two ideas – i. secularisation, to elaborate, does not essentially lead to the waning of religious influences and, ii. the increase of religious importance does not cause to endanger the secularisation process.[52] He agreed that there is no deficiency in a secular democratic state that is fulfilled by religion as secularism also does not

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Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 3.

[49] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997, p. 2.

[50] Warren S. Goldstein, "Secularization Pattern in the Old Paradigm", *Sociology of Religion,* Vol. 70, No. 2, 2009, pp. 157-178. See also, Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essay on Religion in a Post-traditionalist World,* California: University of California Press, 1991.

[51] Jurgen Habermas, *Europe: The Faltering Project,* translated by Ciran Cronin, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, p. 61.

[52] *Ibid.,* p. 64.

cause to an end to religion. In this context, he argues that religious norms can be translated into general accessible social norms. Thus, secular citizens must have the cognitive openness to learn from religions and the religious persons also must have to learn from secularism. It is complementary learning process by which religiously neutral social and state's norms will emerge. Thus, this development of religio-political ecology is a paradigm shift from the age of predominance of the scientific and non-metaphysical rationality to a new metaphysical and post-metaphysical rationality, where neither metaphysics nor the non-metaphysical rationality reigns alone.[53] Recently, another writer Pasquale Ferrara in his writing *Globalization and Post-Secularism: Religious and Universal Common Identity* tries to incorporate religion into four dimensions- i. religion and interstate relations; ii. religion and internationalism; iii. religion and transnationalism and iv. religion and globalisation.[54] In these four dynamics, he also focuses to translate the religious norms to social value in a secular manner through dialogue. However, Akbar's idea of *'Suhl-i-kul'* can be termed as the pioneer of post-secular design of the state. On the one hand, he showed his secular approach in maintaining state affairs, at the same time he did not misrecognise the religious presence in that contemporary India. He arranged the religious dialogue where the representatives of different religions gathered to showcase the cognitive openness to learn from different religions. It may be said that his project of *'Suhl-i-kul'* was unsuccessful as it was not sustained and made seldom impact on state affairs. However, *'Suhl-i-kul'* as a concept of interreligious dialogue may definitely have the potentiality to be treated as the pioneer of the idea of post-secularism.

6.   Conclusion

Finally, it can be said that interreligious dialogue is an important phenomenon in the current religious ecology of the world. Without interreligious dialogue among the world's religions, no peace in the world will exist and without peace, no world order will sustain.[55] The private venture of the Parliament of the World's Religions may be regarded as the reflection of Akbar's idea of *'Suhl-i-kul'.* However, this mediaeval idea can be incorporated in today's post-secular world and the international system in order to establish a religiously pluralist world where people from different religions live together in harmony. Akbar represented the model of Indian secularism where secularism means religious tolerance and all religions are equal before state's patronage. This idea can pave the way of translating different religious values and norms into the religiously neutral social values that may inspire all religious persons to co-exist peacefully. Therefore,

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[53] M. G. Mazumder, *Interrogating Post-Secularism: Jurgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, and Talal Asad,* University of Pittsburg, 2011, p. 4.

[54] Pasquale Ferrara, "Globalization and Post-Secularism: Religions and a Universal Common Identity", *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 62-67.

[55] Hans Kung, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethics,* New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991, p. 98.

today's western post-secular idea can be matched with the mediaeval religious tolerance and interreligious policy of Akbar. Thus, this mediaeval South Asian idea has the potentiality to become universal and may lead the GIH into a new height.