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**A Study on  
Muslim Economic Thinking  
in the  
11<sup>th</sup> AH / 17<sup>th</sup> CE Century**

Abdul Azim Islahi

1429 A.H. / 2008 A.D.

Scientific Publishing Centre  
King Abdulaziz University  
Jeddah

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## FOREWORD

There are numerous works on the history of Islamic economic thought. But almost all researches come to an end in 9th AH/15th CE century. We hardly find a reference to the economic ideas of Muslim scholars who lived in the 16th or 17th century, in works dealing with the history of Islamic economic thought. The period after the 9th/15th century remained largely unexplored.

Dr. Islahi has ventured to investigate the periods after the 9<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century. He has already completed a study on Muslim economic thinking and institutions in the 10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century, to be published shortly. In the mean time, he carried out the study on Muslim economic thinking during the 11<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century, which is now in your hand. As the author would like to note, it is only a sketch of the economic ideas in the period under study and a research initiative. It covers the sources available in Arabic, with a focus on the heartland of Islam. There is a need to explore Muslim economic ideas in works written in Persian, Turkish and other languages, as the importance of these languages increased in later periods.

We hope that the present work will provide an inspiration to undertake detailed research on economic ideas of individual Muslim scholars in various languages, in this period and subsequent periods.

May Almighty Allah accept our humble endeavor and grant His favor.  
*Wa bi'llah al-tawfiq*

Dr. Abdullah Qurban Turkistani  
Director  
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## PREFACE

The present study seeks to undertake an investigation into the state of Muslim economic thinking in the eleventh century *hijrah*, corresponding to the seventeenth century CE. The period of study covered in this project is one of the most neglected parts of Muslim intellectual history.

To set a proper perspective and to provide background knowledge of the situation in Muslim countries, at the outset I have presented an overview of the history of Muslim governments at that time, their economic condition and intellectual and literary situation. Those who are already conversant with it may skip this section. Due to certain limitations, the main focus of the research has been works available in the Arabic language with a few exceptions, and economic institutions that existed in the Ottoman Empire that controlled the heartland of Islam. It also takes the note of some Western economic institutions and ideas in the seventeenth century for comparison purposes.

Although only a sketch of the state of economic thinking in the 11th/17th century, I hope that this study will fill a gap, to some extent, in the literature on the history of Islamic economic thought. Our efforts will be well rewarded if it could provide a fillip to future research in this area.

It is a pleasant duty to express my gratitude to Professor Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi, Professor Ishtiaq Ahmad Zilli and Dr. Mohammed Obaidullah, who have read and commented on portions of the manuscript. My thanks are also due to our Director Dr. Abdullah Qurban Turkistani and to all our colleagues at the Islamic Economics Research Centre for being a constant source for encouragement in this endeavor. I am also grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of this project at various stages of its preparation.

I am much beholden to the Deanship of Scientific Research, King Abdulaziz University, whose grant made this study possible. The help and support extended by the Deanship of Scientific Research is gratefully acknowledged. I would also like to acknowledge the secretarial assistance that I received from Mr. Syed Anwer Mahmood throughout preparation of this project.

*Wa akhuru dawana ani'l-hamdu li-Allah Rabbi'l-`alamin.*

Abdul Azim Islahi

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## CHAPTER ONE

### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

For a proper understanding of the economic thought of a people, study of their socio-political condition, intellectual milieu and economic history is always very helpful. Especially the economic history and economic thought are intimately interrelated. Economic activities are always guided by economic thinking and economic thought is a reflection of economic conditions. However, unfortunately, there is not only a complete absence of studies on the economic thought of seventeenth century Muslims, but also a marked lack of writing on the socio-political and economic history of the Muslim states of the period. It is particularly distressing that in spite of its great importance, the history of the Ottomans has been badly neglected compared to other similar (or even smaller) states of the period<sup>1</sup>. It is in this context that the first few chapters of our study seek to provide an idea about various aspects of seventeenth century history. Since the scope of the present study is the heartland of Islam which was at that time under the Ottoman control, we shall deal here mainly with Ottoman conditions. Accounts of other states will be kept at a minimum.

#### 1. The Ottoman Empire

***Notable Ottoman Sultans.*** The seventeenth century began with the same great Muslim dynasties – Ottomans, Safawids and Mughals – who ruled in the sixteenth century. During the span of a hundred years, the Ottoman empire saw no less than ten sultans on its throne.<sup>2</sup> It may be noted that in the same period, in Iran four sultans<sup>3</sup> reigned while in India<sup>4</sup> only three. This large number is a sure sign of the weakness of the rulers and their loose control on the government. A frequent change of ruler generally results in the instability and retardation of economic development. Obviously most of these Sultans had a very short span of rule and possess little interest or individuality for us. Sultan Ibrahim (born 1024 / 1615) who reigned between (1099-1108 / 1640-1648) saw the reigns of five rulers – his father Ahmad I (1603-1617), uncle Mustafa (1617 and 1621-1622), two brothers Othman (Osman) II (1617-1621) and Murad IV (1622-1640), and his son Muhammad (Mehmed) IV (1648-1687).

We briefly note here only those sultans who showed real Ottoman vigor and strength. At the turn of the century, Muhammad I (d. 1012 / 1603) was sultan. According to al-Muhibbi (4:27-18)<sup>5</sup> Sultan Muhammad personally led his armies in the war and fought daring crusades. The kind of conquest he achieved, hardly any other Ottoman was destined. His successor Ahmad I was also a capable sultan, ruling from 1603 to 1617. He wanted to introduce various reforms in the empire, especially in military system. For this purpose he issued a new *qanun-namah* or code of regulations. However, he did not achieve much success with his efforts. Naima (1973, pp. 451-52) calls him 'the friend and support of the neglected, infirm and poor'.... 'He was a zealous and active emperor, incessantly manifested his good disposition'.

Another ruler worth mentioning here is Sultan Murad IV<sup>6</sup> (d. (d. 1049 / 1640) who became sultan at the raw age of eleven or twelve years, at a time when the Empire was in dire need of a strong man's hand. His first few years passed under the care of his mother. Gradually he attained the experience of governance. After 1632, he emerged 'as sultan in fact as well as in name' (Parry, 1976, p. 145). He suppressed various uprisings in different parts of the empire. According to Itzkowitz (1972, p. 73), Sultan Murad IV 'the most energetic since Suleiman, was a throwback to the earlier warrior sultans who had campaigned in person at the head of their armies'<sup>7</sup>. Before his death he re-conquered Baghdad and settled a peace accord with Iran (Bagley, 1969, p. 37). The demarcation of territories finalized at that time constitute the present day borders of Iraq and Iran. Sultan Murad revived the military and financial powers and put an end to the anarchy and corruption inherited from the preceding reigns. He carried out reforms in various areas of the government. He commissioned the preparation an '*adalat-namah*', a book of justice, containing measures for the protection of the peasants<sup>8</sup> (Parry, p. 148). His rule spread over the widest territory among all the Ottoman sultans. In the opinion of Lane-Poole (1903, p. 220), he was the last of the warrior sultans of Turkey. He died at the age of only 28.

The longest reigning sultan in the seventeenth century was Muhammad IV. 'The sultan, who had been upon the throne for thirty five eventful years was no sluggard, indeed, but his energies were wholly absorbed in the chase' (Lane-Poole, 1903, 237). He spent the whole period in hunting and had no interest in government affairs. Fortunately, he had capable viziers who successfully looked after the affairs of state for most of his rule. But in 1687 he was deposed due to Ottoman defeats under some incapable viziers while he continued to pursue his passion for hunting.

The sultan at the close of the century was Mustafa II (1695–1703) who demonstrated high zeal and made concerted efforts to revive Ottoman aggressive policy. He launched a counteroffensive against Austria and saw initial success in this offensive. But zeal was not enough to secure a sustainable victory. The opposing forces were too strong to be overcome. (Lane-Poole, 1903, 241; Bagley, 1969, p. 41). During 1698, in the face of united European forces Mustafa II lost some territories and won others. By the end of the century, (that is 1699) the treaty of Karlowitz was finalized, becoming the first major Ottoman diplomatic reversal, Hungary was ceded to Austria. The historians mostly agree that 'Karlowitz marks the beginning of the end for the Ottoman empire. It was the first of many dictated peace treaties which the Turks had to sign. European diplomats knew that henceforth the Turks would not be able to threaten the integrity of Europe' (Armajani, 1970, p. 191; Hourani, 1974, 73; Lane-Poole, 1903, 241).

**Grand viziers.** In the period under study, behind every successful sultan was the personality of a wise and able grand vizier.<sup>9</sup> However, these strong grand viziers, no matter how able, were very few and far between. Sultan Murad's grand vizier Qara Mustafa Pasha (1638-44) was faithful to the precepts and practice of the Sultan. 'He sought to reduce in number the janissaries and the *sipahis* of the Porte'<sup>10</sup>. At the same time he was careful to ensure that the troops were paid well and regularly. He set himself, therefore, to reform the coinage, to introduce a more effective and just assessment of taxation and by these means, to have at his command a full treasury' (Parry, 1976, p. 155). After the death of Sultan Murad, when Sultan Ibrahim ascended the throne, the grand vizier's rigorous control and promptitude to punish wrong-doing Janissaries created resentment against him. The other powerful people of the court also conspired against him to eliminate him (Brockelmann, 1959, p.332). Very soon all the weaknesses and evils that existed before 1632 dominated the scene again.

The most significant figure among the Ottomans' grand viziers of the seventeenth century was Kuprili Muhammad Pasha<sup>11</sup> (1570-1661) who was appointed by the mother of Sultan Muhammad IV (1648-1687) to save her son from the carnage that was taking place. As a Grand Vizier, he halted the general decline of Ottoman government by eliminating corruption throughout the imperial government and returned to the old Ottoman practice of closely observing local government and rooting out injustice (Davison, 1968, pp. 56; Lane-Poole, 1903, 221). He also tried to revive the Ottoman practice of conquest and protecting Muslim countries from European expansion. He was against innovations (*bid`at*) and considered them as the cause of many evils. He brought to heel with an iron hand all those who sought the way of rebellion and

uprising. After his death in 1661, his son Kuprili Fazil Ahmad Pasha (d. 1676) succeeded him as the grand vizier. The younger Kuprili was, like his father, a capable and successful grand vizier. While his father brought peace and security with chastisement and punishment, the son won hearts with his humane conduct. According to Itzkowitz (1972, p.81), 'European observers of the Ottoman scene were convinced that Mohammed Kuprili and his son Ahmad had not only restored the empire to health, but that they had also placed new power and glory within its grasp'.

Another important Grand Vizier was Qara Mustafa Pasha (d. 1095 / 1683) who was appointed to the post after the death of Kuprili Fazil Ahmad. During his tenure, the Ottomans fought the last great war against Europe. In the initial expedition he won the field. But later on, against the allied European forces, he had to retreat, and compromised on humiliating terms (al-Muhibbi, 4:397-403). Ultimately, he was executed in 1683.

No systematic rule was followed for appointment to the post of grand vizier. That such a system produced as many able and conscientious men is surprising (Lewis, 19968, P.23).

## **2. The Ottomans and the Heartlands of Islam**

The heartlands of Islam remained within the territory of Ottoman Empire, although the Ottomans did not establish their direct rule over them. The Ottoman Sultans protected the holy places of Islam, the Arabic language, local traditions, Islamic culture and the educational system. They never allowed artificial boundaries between various Muslim states. One could freely move from one country to another and engage in economic and academic activities or work for the government. The Islamic world had first seen such a unity after the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad in the mid 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century (Yaghi, 1996, 239). In fact, it was the religious character of the Ottoman Empire that guaranteed it unity, strength and vitality. The Ottoman ruler never considered Turkish nationality, or any nationality at all<sup>12</sup>. Lewis's (1968, p.13) following remark is worth quoting here:

"For the Ottoman Turk, this Empire, containing all the heartlands of early Islam, was Islam itself. In the Ottoman chronicles the territories of the Empire are referred to as 'the lands of Islam', its sovereign as 'the Padishah of Islam', its armies as 'the soldiers of Islam' its religious head as 'the shaykh of Islam'; its people thought of themselves first and foremost as Muslims. Both Ottoman and Turk are ... terms of comparatively recent usage, and the Ottoman

Turks had identified themselves with Islam – submerged their identity in Islam – to greater extent than perhaps other Islamic people”.<sup>13</sup>

This does not mean that the region had not seen any trouble or political changes. During the seventeenth century, the Ottoman control over the territories situated far away from the capital was loosened. 'Mamluk *beys* became the real power in Egypt and periodically overthrew Ottoman viceroys who tried to exercise power.' (Perry, 1983, p. 120). In many cases they did not care for the Ottoman ordinances (Abd-al-Rahim, 1988, 478). For a short period, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen saw uprisings or semi independent rulers. Sometimes they declared their autonomy (Creasy, 1961, pp. 246-47; Hourani, 1974, p.72; Brockelmann, 1959, p. 330). But this was generally due to the misrule of the local governors, the appearance of an ambitious leader or due to the Ottoman Sultan's preoccupation with his own affairs.

### 3. Two Other Great Muslim Powers of the period

**Iran.** Another great Muslim government in this period was the Safawid Sultanate of Iran. It had been a rival to the Ottoman Empire from its inception in the early sixteenth century and rivalry continued into the seventeenth century. Under Abbas I, (1587-1629) the Safawid government reached its zenith. He modernized his new slave army and acquired modern English war techniques and established his hegemony in Iraq in 1623. The Ottomans would re-capture it from Shah Safi, the successor of Shah Abbas, after fifteen years in 1638 under Murad IV, and a peace treaty was concluded the next year that determined the western boundary of Iran. The same boundary is still in place. The decadence of the Safawids<sup>14</sup> started after Abbas I. The first successor of Shah Abbas was Shah Safi (1629-42) who 'loved to execute the great, and the net effect of this policy was to heighten the lone position of the throne' (Hodgson, 1974, p. 57). Abbas II (1642-67) 'was unusually capable and personally helped sustain the prestige of the monarchy'. 'Under Sulayman (1667-94), the chief vizier, head of the bureaucracy, was effective ruler, at the expense of both the army and the privileged landed class' (ibid). Husayn (1694-1722) was the last effective Safawid shah. His rule was put to an end by Afghan revolt, which took Isfahan and massacred the Persian nobility.

Except for Shah Abbas II, the Safawid rulers after Abbas I, were incompetent. The end of his reign in 1666 marked the beginning for the end for the Safawid dynasty. Despite falling revenues and military threats, later shahs had lavish lifestyles. Suleiman I is said to have spent eight years straight in his

harem; Shah Sultan Husayn drank endlessly. The shahs imposed heavy taxes that discouraged investment and encouraged corruption among officials.<sup>15</sup>

**Mughals.** The third great Muslim empire of the period was Mughal India founded by Babur in 1526. The seventeenth century saw three great Mughal emperors, all of them having the title of 'world emperor' or 'world conqueror': Jahangir, Shahjahan and Alamgir. Prince Salim (who would later be known as Emperor Jahangir) ascended to the throne after the death of Akbar in 1605. During his reign, Kandahar (which had been won by Akbar) was lost to Persia's Shah Abbas.

According to Schimmel (1980, p. 89) Jahangir's 'main field of interest was natural science rather than statecraft.' He did not like the religious policy of Akbar. Thus a return to Islamic traditions started in his reign, though he did not encourage it much. In this revival, Ahmad b. Abd al-Ahad Sirhindi (1564-1624) played a vital role. Hence he was called '*mujaddid-i alf-i thani*' (the renovator who came at the beginning of the second millennium of Hijrah). Jahangir did not much like his revolutionary ideas, so he imprisoned him in the fort of Gwalior in 1619. However, he released him after a year and felicitated him in the royal court (ibid. p. 91).

Jahangir died in 1627 and the reign of his son Shahjahan (1627-58) began. He maintained the same traditions on the whole, both politically and culturally. He was much more successful in the political field than his father Jahangir. He extended the borders of the Mughal empire by annexing smaller sultanates like Burhanpur, Daulatabad, and Ahmadnagar. 'In Bengal he seized Hooghly from the Portuguese' (Schimmel, p. 95). He is famous for historical buildings which he constructed in major cities of his empire, the most important being the Taj Mahal of Agra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The beauty of the white marble structure is unsurpassed. Almost four hundred years later, it continues to inspire awe and admiration.<sup>16</sup>

It was in the year 1067 / 1656 that Shahjahan suffered paralysis and Awrangzeb became emperor of India, defeating his brothers. Al-Muhibbi (4:316-317), a contemporary historian, gives a good account of Awrangzeb. According to him, Awrangzeb used to eat from his own earnings, abolished a number of taxes and imposed *jizyah*, which his predecessors could not do. New conditions marked the reign of Awrangzeb. The period saw many administrative changes. The Maratha strengthened their position in the south. Interests of foreign merchants increased in territorial questions, the Dutch made settlements in Malabar, the English in Bombay, and the French in Pondicherry. He expanded the boundary of his empire much more than his predecessors.

Awrangzeb abolished many un-Islamic practices, like the *darshan*, when the emperor showed himself every morning at a window so that his subjects were blessed by his radiant view, likewise weighing against gold and silver, etc. (Schimmel, 1980, p. 102). He ordered the closure of some temples that were used for unholy purposes, while he made grants for many others. He reintroduced *Jizyah* but at the same time abolished a great number of irregular taxes (ibid. p. 102). Jaffar (1974, p. 374) presents his sketch as: 'Magnificent in his public appearance, simple and unassuming in his private life, exact in the performance of his religious observances, prompt in the dispatch of his daily business, an eminent educationist, a remarkable religious enthusiast, a patron of the poor and the learned, a great literary genius, an elegant letter writer, a fountain of justice as of honour and a master of pen as of sword –Alamgir was indeed a triumph of character'. A number of Europeans who visited his Empire praised his personality and his rule (ibid. pp. 376).<sup>17</sup>

There is marked contrast between the early seventeenth century Mughal emperor and the one at the end of it. The early seventeenth century saw the last days of Akbar the great (d.1605), while the end of the century saw Awragzeb-Alamgir (the world conqueror). Each of them ruled for about fifty years over the greater part of India. Akbar brought stability to Mughal rule in India; Awrangzeb took it to its zenith. But the similarity ends here. While Akbar tried to win the hearts of the non-Muslims by innovating a cocktail religion, *Din-i Ilahi*, Awrangzeb, by strictly following the Islamic religion, provided an opportunity for his adversaries to oppose and defame him. Akbar abolished *jizyah* while Awrangzeb re-imposed it. Akbar was illiterate, while Awrangzeb had great literary and scholarly training. Akbar organized a discussion forum of the scholars of different religions whose effect vanished, while Awrangzeb organized a committee of the Hanafi scholars to prepare selection of authentic religious decrees that resulted in the compilation of a 6-volume *Fatawa-i 'Alamgiri*.<sup>18</sup> Akbar laid a misdirected intellectual foundation while his great-grand son brought everything to the right traditional pattern.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. The Ottomans vs. Europe

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire was still the most powerful state in the world, both in terms of wealth as well as military capability. But the symptoms of decline could be easily discerned. According to Lewis (1968, p. 36) the treaty of Sitvatorok signed with Austria in November 1606 was a clear admission of defeat, as the Ottoman Sultan consented to concede the Imperial title to the Habsburg. Though it was favorable to the Ottomans, it was achieved at the cost of Ottoman dignity. The Ottomans sent

their full official delegation outside of Istanbul to Hapsburg. In fact it was 'a negotiated compromise rather than a grant of peace by the Sultan to Christian suppliants' (Davison, 1968, p. 64). In the last quarter of the century, in 1683, the second failure before the walls of Vienna was decisive and final. 'The Austrians and their allies advanced rapidly into Ottoman territory in Hungary, Greece, and the Black Sea coast, and the Austrian victories at the second battle of Mohacs in 1687 and at Zenta in 1697 sealed the defeat of the Turks. The peace treaty of Carlowitz, signed on 26 January 1699, marks the end of an epoch and the beginning of another' (Lewis, 1968, p. 36).

European advance was backed by political alignment, scientific development and technological superiority, something which was neglected by the Ottomans. The irony is that the Ottomans realized very late that Europe had left them far behind in science and technology and economic and military strength.<sup>20</sup> This was not the case in earlier centuries. To quote Lewis (1968, p. 26) again: "The great technical and logistic developments in European armies in the seventeenth century were followed tardily and ineffectively by the Ottomans – in marked contrast with the speed and inventiveness with which they had accepted and adapted the European invention of artillery in the fifteenth century".<sup>21</sup>

## **5. An overview of the Ottoman Rule**

The general administrative set up of the Empire, more or less, remained as established in the sixteenth century. The Sultan was the supreme commander and the sovereign of the Empire. Next to him were the grand vizier and *shaykh al-Islam* who aided him in temporal administration and religious matters respectively. They had divided their works in various departments or offices to ensure its proper functioning.

'The Ottoman practice had always been for son to succeed father on the throne and for brothers of the new sultan to be executed in an attempt to short circuit palace intrigue' (Itzkowitz, 1972, p. 74). In the seventeenth century a healthy change occurred. Now the eldest living male member of the ruling family would assume the throne. This saved the Empire from struggle, ensuring among the sons of the deceased sultan resulting in fratricide. Yet the reigning Sultan still distrusted filial loyalty. So the brothers of the Sultan were locked away in the harem portion of the palace. While they lived in luxury, they were still forced to live in small rooms and often in isolated conditions. No attention was paid to their education and proper training (Davison, 1968, pp. 55). As a result, most successors proved incapable sultans, completely disengaged from the working of the government. The Sultans also abandoned the practice of

training their sons to assume the sultanate by having them serve in the government and the military. In both Islamic and Western histories of the Ottomans, this shift in the sultanate style is regarded as one of the prime causes of its decline.

In the period under study the influence of the mother of the sultans increased greatly as some of the sultans sat on the throne as young, as the age of seven, eleven, fourteen, while others had grown up confined to the harem, having no experience of the outside world. Commenting on the decaying position of the Ottoman Sultans in the period under study, Lewis (1968, pp. 22-23) remarks: "If the first ten Sultans of the house of Osman astonish us with the spectacle of a series of able and intelligent men rare if not unique in the annals of dynastic succession, the remainder of the rulers of that line provides an even more astonishing series of incompetents, degenerates, and misfits. Such a series as the latter is beyond the range of coincidence, and can be explained by a system of upbringing and selection which virtually precluded the emergence of an effective ruler".

As a result of the disintegration of the institution of the Sultanate, power had to be located somewhere else. It principally went to the Janissaries, the military arm of the government. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Janissaries slowly took over the military and administrative posts in the government and passed these offices on to their sons, mainly by bribing officials. Because of this practice, the Ottoman government soon began to be ruled by a military feudal class. Under the early Ottomans, position in the government was determined solely through merit. After the sixteenth century, position in government was largely determined by hereditary. The quality of the administration and bureaucracy declined precipitously.

The levy of boys – *devshirme*<sup>22</sup> system – began to break and as the conquest halted, it completely stopped (Davison, 1968, pp. 57). 'Unlike the earlier pattern, janissaries in active services were allowed to marry and engage in business. They were no longer the disciplined crack force intensely devoted to the sultan' (Perry, 1983, p. 120).

The personal style of government characterized by the earlier Sultans became rare in the period under study. In place of Sultanic government, the bureaucracy pretty much ran the show. Power struggles among the various elements of the bureaucracy; the grand vizier, the *Diwan*, or supreme court, and especially the military, the Janissaries, led to a constant shifting of government power. Muslim historians point out that the growth of bureaucratic power and

the disinterest of the Sultans led to corrupt and predatory local government which eroded popular support. Western historians point to internal decline in the bureaucracy along with increased military efficiency of European powers, as the principle reason for the decline of the Empire.

Many scholars of the period saw very clearly the decline of the Empire but were powerless to stop it. They suggested reformative measures but to no avail. In this regard, names of Qoji Beg, Katib Chalpi, Naima and Sari Pasha are most prominent.

### **Endnotes**

1. According to Karpat (1974, P. 91), the period from 1603 is 'probably the most important and possibly the most neglected period in Ottoman history during its transition to the modern age'. The period supposedly corresponds also to swift Ottoman decline (ibid).
2. Following are the names of 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Sultans and their rules:  
 Muhammad (Mehmed) III (1595–1603)  
 Ahmed I (1603–1617)  
 Mustafa I (1617)  
 Osman II (1618–1622)  
 Mustafa I (1622–1623)  
 Murad IV (1623–1640)  
 Ibrahim I (1640–1648)  
 Muhammad (Mehmed) IV (1648–1687)  
 Suleiman II (1687–1691)  
 Ahmed II (1691–1695)  
 Mustafa II (1695–1703)
3. Safawid Shahs of Iran during the 17<sup>th</sup> century  
 Abbas I (1587–1629)  
 Safi (1629–1642)  
 Abbas II (1642–1666)  
 Suleiman I (1666–1694)  
 Sultan Hosayn I (1694–1722)
4. Mughal emperors of 17<sup>th</sup> century  
 Akbar (1556–1605)  
 Jahangir (1605–1627)  
 Shahjahan (1627–1658)  
 Awrangzeb (1658–1707)
5. Al-Muhibbi (4:216) states that Muhammad III was a pious sultan; he used to stand up with respect when the Prophet's name was pronounced. *Adli* was his pen name (*takhallus*) in poetry.

6. Murad IV. was son of Ahmad I (d. 1617). During his reign a great flood caused the demolition of the Ka`bah which was rebuilt by him in the year 1040 / 1630. Al-Muhibbi gives an account of building and use of materials (4:334-341), the existing structure of Ka`bah is his construction.
7. Sultan Murad IV proved wrong, at least for a short period, Sir Thomas Roe's (Ambassador of England at the Porte from 1621-1628) saying that 'the Ottoman empire might stand but never rise again' (Parry, 1976, p. 132).
8. The sources do not report whether that manual survived and what were its contents.
9. According to Armajani (1970. p. 158) "The process of decay took some 300 years but the signs had already appeared in the seventeenth century". ..... "Were it not for the courage and ability of some of the grand viziers, the empire would not have lasted as long as it did" (ibid. p. 159).
10. According to Davison (1968, pp. 55-56), 'In the mid-seventeenth century the grand vizier was given an office residence, to serve also as office, which became the effective center of government. It was known as the "Pasha's Gate" or later as the *Bab-i `Ali*, the 'lofty gate', and in European parlance as the Sublime Porte. "Porte" in time became a term to denominate the whole government'.
11. 'He (Kuprili Mehmed) was perhaps the most successful grand vizier after Skullo Mehmed Pasha who was in office under three different sultans between 1565-1579' (Kurat, 1976, pp. 168-69).
12. In one widespread usage the Ottomans were identified as *Rum* – that is, etymologically, as Romans' (Cook, 1976, p. 1). But 'not only was there no Ottoman Holy Roman Empire; there was no Turkish nation to have one' (ibid. p. 2).
13. "It is curious that while in Turkey the word Turk almost went out of use, in the West it came to be synonym for Muslim, and a Western convert to Islam was said to have 'turned Turk' even when the conversion took place in Fez or Isfahan" (Lewis's (1968, p.13). It may be noted that even in India, Muslim were sometimes called as Turks.
14. In the opinion of Perry (1983, p. 124), 'a rapid deterioration of Safawid strength after the death of Abbas saved the day for the Ottomans'.
15. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavids> accessed on 8. 1. 2007. For more details one may refer to Savory, Roger, (1980), *Iran under the Safavids*, Cambridge University Press.
16. 'A disciple of the great Ottoman architect Sinan is said to have taken part in building the Taj Mahal at Agra' (Hodgson, III. P. 83). This shows that Mughals were aware of the Ottomans excellent architecture.

17. For example: Keen says: 'In his reign the House of Timur attained its zenith' (Jaffar, 1974, p. 378). To Orme, Awrangzeb was the ablest monarch that ever ruled over Industan" (ibid.).
18. It is said that Awrangzeb spent one hundred thousand rupees at that time on its preparation. In the Arab world the collection is known as '*al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah*' (al-Hasani, 1983, p. 110).
19. Had Awrangzeb required from those scholars to prepare a document on issues specific to Indian conditions and challenges arising out of European advances in science, technology, discoveries and colonization, it would have been a remarkable contribution. But in a period when door of *ijtihad* was closed, this kind of thinking one would have never expected.
20. Many historians are of the view that to the Ottomans themselves it was not very obvious that their strength was gradually waning. They realized very late that 'the military and economic tide was turning inexorably toward Europe' (Itzkowitz, 1972, p. 73).
21. This deterioration is also discernible in the Ottoman archives. 'In the sixteenth century the records are careful, detailed, and up to date; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they become irregular, inaccurate, and sketchy' (Lewis, 1968, p. 23n).
22. Devshirme is the Ottoman term for the periodical levy of Christian children for training to fill the ranks of the Janissaries and to occupy posts in the Palace service and in the administration.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

#### 1. Economic Condition of the Ottoman Empire

**Agriculture.** The Ottoman Empire was predominantly an agricultural economy with extensive fertile areas. In such an economy, taxes on land and farming were the principal source of revenue. But hardly any improvement in agriculture is reported in the sources. 'The methods of agriculture were very primitive and the tools used were rudimentary' (Kurat, 1976, pp. 157-58). Productivity was low due to old methods of cultivation, shortage of skill and the lack of market opportunities. From the Ottoman memorialists, Lewis (1968, 33) lists three main causes for the decline of agriculture: 'the squeezing out of the feudal *sipahis*, the mainstay of the early Ottoman agrarian system, and their replacement by tax-farmers and others with no long term interest in taxes'. Davison (1968, p. 60) also notes similar causes of agricultural decline.

Although the *timar* system was not very relevant in the existing circumstances, its growing absence adversely affected the agrarian relations. The number of absentee landlords and tax-farmers increased causing oppression and desertion of the farmers<sup>1</sup> (Lewis, 1968, p.32-33). Commenting on the agricultural conditions of the Ottoman states, Lewis (1968, p. 31) observes: "The technological level of agriculture remained primitive, and the social conditions of the Turkish countryside after the sixteenth century precluded the appearance of anything like the English gentleman-farmers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whose experiments revolutionized English agriculture".

It is reported that Husayn Pasha al-Sari (d. 1094 / 1682), a governor of Syria, was fond of various kinds of plants and variety of fruit trees. He sent his men to far away places to bring to Damascus such plants (al-Muhibbi, 2: 124). But this was an individual interest. It was not the state policy to develop agriculture and plantation.

**Industry.** As compared to agriculture, 'industry fared little better'. However, various factors 'combined to keep industrial production primitive, static, and inert, utterly unable to resist the competition of imported European manufactures' (Lewis, 1968, p. 34). The Ottomans did not pay attention to industrialization the way Europe was doing. They retained old labor practices, in which production was concentrated among craft guilds. Increasingly, the economic relationships between the Ottomans and the Europeans shifted gears. Europeans increasingly bought only raw materials from the Ottomans, and then shipped back finished products manufactured in Europe. Since these finished products were produced with new industrial methods, they were far cheaper than similar products produced in Ottoman territories. This practice adversely affected the Ottoman craft industries.

In a comment on the general condition of the Ottoman industry, Lewis remarked: 'Primitive techniques of production, primitive means of transportation, chronic insecurity and social penalization, combined to preclude any long-term or large-scale undertakings, and to keep the Ottoman economy at the lowest level of competence, initiative, and morality' (Lewis, 1968, p. 35. He refers to Ulgener).

**Trade and Commerce.** Since ancient times the majority of Muslim states had an agrarian economy. The concentration and dependence on agriculture continued even when Europe was experiencing the industrial revolution. During the period under study, 'the Ottoman empire was self-sufficient with regard to foodstuffs but lacked certain strategic raw materials and firearms'. These items they imported from European countries (Kortepeter, 1974, p.59). 'As the empire dominated the main trading routes from the Mediterranean to the East, trade, although hampered by many obstacles, played an important part. Constantinople and Smyrna were the main centres of trade with foreign countries while Adrianople, Brussa and Thessalonica were famous internal trading centres'. Thus, in addition to tithe and poll taxes, 'the customs duties were another source of large revenue. There were many Jewish, Greek and Armenian merchants<sup>2</sup>, for the Turks as a rule considered trade derogatory to their honour and preferred military and administrative appointments.<sup>3</sup> This may be one of the reasons for the lack of development of Muslim mercantilism in the Ottoman Empire.

But the situation in the heartlands of Islam was different. There the trading remained an accepted and preferred occupation. Interestingly, many *ulama* and writers engaged in trade while continuing their scholarly interest. Al-Muhibbi reports a number of such names.<sup>4</sup> Most of these traders were active at a local level only. It is strange that they had not left any tract on their business experiences.

The seventeenth century saw a new important trade commodity, i.e., tobacco<sup>5</sup>. It was brought to the Islamic world by English merchants from the American colonies.<sup>6</sup> According to Lewis (1982, p. 195), until the last quarter of the seventeenth century, coffee was an important component of the export commodities to Europe from the Middle East. But the situation changed thereafter. Reversal was also seen in import and export of cloth, raw material and sugar.

**Public Finance.** Although the Ottoman states did not enjoy any distinguished place in the foreign trade, due to their presence on world trade routes foreign trade was a significant source of income for the Empire that stood astride the crossroads of all the continents and sub-continent: Africa, Asia, India, and Europe. However, European expansion created new trade routes that bypassed Ottoman territories. This resulted in the alienation of vast amounts of revenue from the economy that used to accrue to the Empire through the tariffs that were collected from all goods passing through its territories.

War booty, new conquered lands, and tributes from defeated governments formed other major sources of income for the Ottoman Empire. But during the seventeenth century, this situation changed. In the words of Parry, "The tide of conquest was far less rapid and the campaigns much less lucrative than before. Warfare in the Caucasus area and on middle Danube had become inordinately expensive. Now, with the paid troops of the central regime vastly swollen in number, the strain on the revenues of the states was still more insistent and severe" (Parry, 1976, p. 139). To meet these increasing expenses, the Ottoman government, instead of developing various sectors of the economy or finding a new source of income without overburdening the existing ones, 'had recourse to expedients like the manipulation of the coinage or reservation to itself of lands belonging to the fief system in the provinces, the lands being then transformed into tax farm [*muqata'at*] and leased out to tax contractors [*multazimin*]. It also raised additional revenues known as '*awarid-i diwaniyah* [levies of the Diwan or Council of State] – taxes imposed formerly to meet exceptional needs, normally of a military character, but now exacted as a regular contribution, and at a rate which increases steadily throughout these years' (ibid. p.139).

'After every forlorn battle the Porte succeeded each spring in furnishing on new army, guns and warships. But this was accomplished at the cost of much economic dislocation and the intensification of many social evils. Expenditure was met, or partly met, by higher taxes – notably on coffee, tobacco, official salaries – and by confiscating the fortunes of fallen officials' (Kurat, 1976, p. 193).

Increasing government expenditure due to the changing state of war industry was one of the problems faced by the Ottomans in the period under study. In earlier centuries, a major part of an army comprised cavalry *sipahis* who were supported by *timars*. But in the changed conditions of warfare of the seventeenth century it became difficult to continue this. 'The greatly increased use of firearms and artillery necessitated the maintenance of ever larger paid professional armies, and reduced the relative importance of the feudal cavalryman' (Lewis, 1968, 30).

## 2. Some Important Economic Institutions

**Capitulation.**<sup>7</sup> In the period under study, the Western countries greatly benefited from the trade concessions received from Muslim governments. France, having friendly relations with the Ottomans, got capitulation as early as 1569 for trading in Ottoman territories. At that time the other European countries had to sail and trade under the French flag. In early seventeenth century half of France total trade volume was in the Levant. The English and the Dutch were granted capitulation in 1580 and 1612 respectively." Except during the civil war between 1642 and 1660 the English had the lead in the Levant trade in the seventeenth century (Inalcik, 1974, p. 57). Levant trade played such an important role in the economic development of Europe that according to W. Sombart 'without recognizing the significance of the Levant trade for Western economic expansion it is difficult to comprehend the rise of Western capitalism' (ibid.). The Ottoman policy of 'low tariffs' on foreign traders and granting them '*imtiyaz* or capitulation' ultimately prevented them from modernizing their own economy (Kortepeter, 1974, p. 59).

**Money, Banking and Interest.** In earlier periods, the Ottoman sultans generally faced shortage of silver. But the situation changed in the seventeenth century. 'Silver, flowing from the Americas into Spain and hence to Genoa and Ragusa, penetrated thereafter into the Ottoman empire' (Parry, 1976, p. 126). It was a situation not known to the Ottoman rulers who were accustomed to crises of shortage of silver. This had a very disturbing effect on the Ottoman economy.<sup>8</sup> 'The new silver bought gold at a comparative advantage and the empire began to be drained of it' (Davison, 1968, p.59). This together with an increase in population and debasement of coinage, had an inflationary effect on the Ottoman economy. 'Twice in the seventeenth century the Ottoman government tried to stem the inflationary tide by the issue of a new silver currency; first the *para*, which appeared as a silver coin in the 1620's, then the *piaster*, or *kurush*, which appeared in the 1680's ...' (Lewis, 1968, 29). But the monetary crisis continued. 'A courageous attempt was made in 1696-7 to restore the currency by striking a new *piaster* and a new gold coin worth 300 *aspres*. In these years the

treasury had more difficulty in making ends meet than at any time during the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; in 1691, expenditure (about three-quarters military) had out ripped receipts by more than a quarter' (Kurat, 1976, pp. 193-94).

Lending and borrowing was not considered as a business activity. Therefore, it could not be institutionalized. 'Banking, such as it was, seems to have been very largely the preserve of the Jews but also, increasingly, of the Armenians; both as short-term lender, could strongly influence the local *pashas*. In the maze of Constantinople's Alleys, the Jewish community was the largest in Europe. It included craftsmen, besides middlemen' (Kurat, 1976, p. 182).

In the seventeenth century, Europe came out of the controversy of interest in favor of its validity and acceptance, and the establishment of the banking system received momentum (Kellenbenz, 1974, p. 235). This had never been a matter of debate in Islamic history. However, individual practices of interest are reported in the sources. Burhan al-Dimashqi known as Shaqlabaha, who used to sell silk before he traveled to Istanbul, occupied there positions of teacher and judge. Upon retirement, he returned to Damascus where he had dealings with the farmers. He was famous for charging *riba* and in this way he increased his fortune to an unlimited extent. He used to deal with his borrowers very harshly (al-Muhibbi, I: 455). Al-Muhibbi (4:394) notes another incidence of loan on mortgage and the practice of interest (ibid. 4:394). But these instances have been reported in Muslim sources as deviation from the Islamic teachings.

***Awqaf (evkaf)***. Ottoman Sultans created large numbers of *awqaf* for prayers and welfare purposes. But at the same time they discouraged misuse of this pious foundation. Kuprili Muhammad, the grand vizier, did not hesitate to spend the income from *awqaf* on other government schemes (Bagley, 1969, p. 38). '... under Turkish practice the maintenance of many military services as well as virtually all public works was the responsibility of charitable trusts (*evkaf*): Ottoman piety endowed not only mosques, hospitals, and almshouses, but roads, ships, and fortresses on the ever-victorious frontier. But the administration of *evkaf* was an object of lively competition among the influential and much of the income was diverted to other purposes, and even the property was sometimes converted into private ownership' (Kurat, 1976, p. 194).

**Timar.** *Timars* (fiefs) were granted to officers to provide them with a necessary income to spend on themselves and their supporting staff. The system deteriorated in the seventeenth century. It no longer served to support cavalymen of high quality or to manage the economy efficiently. To some of the Ottoman thinkers, like Hasan Kafi and Mustafa Kocu Bey 'the root of Ottoman weakness' lies in the 'disorganization of the *timars*'<sup>9</sup> (Karpat, 1974, p. 89).

**Guild.** In Ottoman cities, all occupations (including industries) were organized under guilds.<sup>10</sup> In the opinion of Lewis (1968, pp. 33-34) 'the corporative structure of the guilds fulfilled a useful social function in expressing and preserving the complex web of social loyalties and obligations of the old order, and also, though to a diminishing extent, in safeguarding the moral level and standard of craftsmanship of the artisans'.

**Ihtisab.** The institution of *ihtisab* (*al-hisbah* in earlier history) or market supervision was very active. The *muhtasib* (officer in charge of *ihtisab*) could fix prices of essential commodities, ensure their proper supply, control the quality, check pollution, etc. In brief, the matters which were not resolved by guilds were taken care of by the *muhtasib* (Ata-Allah, 1991, vol. 1, pp.120-24, 145,149, 203). People could complain to him against any exploitation or imperfection created by guilds. For instance, people of al-Quds complained against the bakers who closed their bakeries and caused inconvenience to the public. (Ata-Allah, 1991, Vol. 1, p.115).

### 3. Causes of Economic Decline

The prosperity that was brought about by the unprecedented conquest and just rule of the Ottoman Sultans during the sixteenth century, caused a double increase in the population of the Empire. This eventually produced widespread unemployment and frequent occurrence of famine because the economic resources of the country could not support such a large population. 'This imbalance and the resultant pressure on the means of subsistence led to the rise of surplus element, largely of peasant origin, landless and unemployed' (Parry, 1976, p. 140).

Sometimes situation took a turn for the worse due to the misdeeds of a certain official or due to a natural calamity. Protests and demonstrations by the poor in Halab against the Ottoman governor for their rights are reported by al-Muhibbi (3:357). During the governorship of Muhammad Pasha b. Mustafa originally from Bosnia (d. 1065 / 1654), a fire destroyed in two markets about 123 shops. To meet the losses, he imposed illegal taxes that led to

demonstrations and protests by the public and the army. Finally, he was called back to Istanbul and executed (*ibid.* 4:227). In the year 1009 / 1600 Makkah saw starvation and a rise in prices so steep that it became proverbial. People even ate the flesh of dogs. The poor children used to collect the blood of slaughtered goats and eat it after cooking. This situation remained this way for only three months. Later the rise in prices became frequent phenomena. The inflation that occurred in the year 1037/1627 continued for eight years (*ibid.* 4:299). It is not known what measures were taken to fight price rises and starvation.

Corruption also fueled the economic decay. Offices were regularly 'bought and sold without regards to ability' (Perry, 1980, p. 120). 'Many important posts were given to unqualified people and administrative appointments often went to the highest bidders' (Kurat, 1976, p. 159). It may be noted that corruption and sale and purchase of official posts were two common evils of the decaying Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria that facilitated their take over by the Ottomans (Ibn Iyas, 4:353, 371, 378, 477; Ibn Tulun, p. 216). In the opinion of Perry (1980, p. 120), 'the increasing diversion of trade by Dutch and English merchants to sea routes furthered Ottoman economic decline. Perhaps even more basic was the fact that conquest – with its accompanying booty and opportunities to acquire new fiefs – had reached its limit, and war now was an expensive rather than a lucrative activity'. Unfortunately, Ottoman rulers did not exert themselves to find real alternative sources of income. Rather 'a decline in sources of revenue brought excessive, arbitrary taxation and debased coinage' (*ibid.* p. 120). Commenting on 'the technological backwardness of the Ottoman Empire – to its failure not only to invent, but even to respond to the inventions of others', Lewis (1968, p. 32) remarked: "While Europe swept forward in science and technology, the Ottomans were content to remain, in their agriculture, their industry, and their transport, at the level of their medieval ancestors. Even their armed forces followed tardily and incompetently after the technological advances of their European enemies".

#### **4. European Mercantilist Activities in Muslim Regions**

The last years of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century saw the emergence of new factors and new influences within the realm of commercial, economic and social affairs.

In the sixteenth century the Portuguese were the dominant players from the Arabian Sea up to Bantam and Jakarta by way of the Straits of Malacca. The dominance of the Portuguese over the waters of the Indian Ocean ended the Ottoman endeavor to challenge them. Lewis (1968, 24) states: "In Eastern

waters they (Ottomans) encountered the stout ships of the Portuguese, whose shipbuilders and navigators, trained to meet the challenge of the Atlantic, were more than a match for the calm-water ships of the Ottomans. Stouter vessels, more guns, better seamanship were what defeated the successive attempts of the Ottomans to break out of the ring, and swept Muslim shipping from the waters of the Indian Ocean". Coming to the Seventeenth Century, Dutch, French and English became more active and they almost marginalized the Portuguese and thus their supremacy on the water passed away.

The English and the Dutch also began to penetrate into the Mediterranean Sea. English merchants succeeded in securing trade privileges in the Levant. In addition to trading in spices and garments, English merchants also supplied the Ottomans with the war materials that they needed due to the long years of conflict with Persia and later Austria (Parry, 1976, p. 124). During the seventeenth century, England benefited economically by trading in Ottoman territories. The Levant market for the English cloth, which was the main export, expanded by one-third and was one-fourth of all English manufactures exported to the Levant. According to W. Sombart, Levant trade played vital role in the rise of Western capitalism (Inalcik, 1974, p. 57).

On the eve of the seventeenth century, 'the Dutch had sent successful expeditions to the East Indies.' At the same time, the English East-India Company was founded, largely by merchants of the Levant Company to trade with the East Indies. 'The Dutch companies, on the other hand, were federated in 1602 into the "United East India Company' (Kirk, 1964, 66). Soon they snatched sea trade from the Portuguese. Within a few years, they were also expelled from the Gulf by the East India Company through joint expeditions with Shah Abbas' forces. The Portuguese's 'decline was accelerated by their loss of Muscat in 1650 and closing of their factory at Basra' (Kirk, 1964, p. 67).

The Dutch also had to retreat soon. According to Kirk (1964, p. 68), 'the strain of the wars of the later seventeenth century, first against England and then against Louis XIV of France, was too much for the vitality of the Dutch State, and her commercial activities in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf began to flag. Meanwhile France, under Louis XIV's far seeing minister Colbert, had begun to plan creation of a maritime commercial empire. He opened factories in India, sent an embassy to Persia in 1664 and obtained trading-rights at Bandar Abbas and Isfahan' (Kirk, 1964. p. 68).

One major change in the seventeenth century was the replacement of Portuguese control over the sea trade in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean by the Dutch. The latter began to seize Portuguese holdings as early as 1601.

"From the seventeenth century, the establishment of Dutch and British power in Asia and the transference of the routes of world trade to the open ocean [Cape of Good Hope] deprived Turkey of the greater part of her foreign commerce and left her, together with the countries over which she ruled, in a stagnant backwater through which the life-giving stream of world trade no longer flowed" (Lewis, 1968, p. 28).

## **5. A Brief Note on the Economic Conditions of Safawid Iran and Mughal India**

**Iranian Economy.** During the reign of Shah Abbas I, the Iranian economy was one of the strongest in the world<sup>11</sup>. The Silk Road which led through northern Iran to India was revived in the 16th century. Abbas I also supported direct trade with Europe, (particularly England and the Netherlands) which sought Persian carpet, silk and textiles. The main imports were species, textiles (woolens from Europe, cottons from Gujarat), spices, metals, coffee, and sugar.

With the help of the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company Shah Abbas was able to end the Portuguese hold on Hormuz and their trade monopoly. In 1625, Portuguese made an abortive attempt to recapture Hormuz (Savory, 1980, p. 118). But the English influence increased in the region.

To break the hold of the Portuguese on the Persian trade, the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company joined forces and allied to defeat the Portuguese. They succeeded in their objective. However, later on they became 'bitter rivals' (Savory, 1980, p. 113). In 1664, another contender, the French East India Company, which had hitherto had little contact with Iran, appeared on the scene. In this struggle, ultimately the English East India Company succeeded in establishing its commercial hold.

The economic situation, along with the political, deteriorated after Abbas. Under Shah Safi, development was ignored. 'The revenues of the whole provinces' were treated 'as due directly to the royal treasury, rather than leaving them largely with the local military administrations, only a minimum remained for provincial affairs' (Hodgson, 1974, p. 57).

The economic power was shifting to a new class of merchants, many of them ethnic Armenians, Georgians and Indians<sup>12</sup>.

**Mughal India.** Perhaps the most successful economy of the three great Muslim governments was that of Mughal India. This is clear from the stability of the government, expansion drive of the Empire and construction of historical buildings in all major cities. Spengler quotes Mukerjee saying that in the seventeenth century, India was "the agricultural mother of Asia and the industrial shop of the world". 'In a number of seventeenth century centers of economic activity, though they were situated in a vast subsistence economy resting upon essentially self sufficient villages, specialization, exchange, and capital accumulation progressed as economic activities became monetized in part because one third to a half of agricultural produce had to be sold for cash to meet demand for revenue'. Since land revenue was largely collected in money, demand for credit also increased leading to lending at interest. But this business was mostly carried out by Hindus (Spengler, 1971, 120).

The principal sources of government incomes were 'taxes on crown-lands, the land revenue, customs duties, tributes from dependencies, escheats and presents'. Generally fixed land tax was charged on agricultural lands known as *kharaj-i-muwazzaf*. Writing on the system of *kharaj-i-muwazzaf*, Moreland (1975, p. 259) says: "I have traced no account of its origin...."<sup>13</sup> "The *jizyah* or poll-tax which was abolished by Akbar in the sixteenth century was re-imposed by Awrangzeb, 'though it was not strictly collected' (Jaffar, 1974, p. 383).

After giving an account of frequent and excessive internal transit duties collected by local chiefs, Moreland (1975, p. 292) concludes that 'from such occurrences industrial or distributive enterprise must have been seriously discouraged by the risk that novel demands might be imposed in the event of any profitable development of business'. One must note that this was the period when Western mercantilists were striving for the strengthening of the state through promotion of trade by advocating a policy of no internal custom duties and encouraged establishment of manufacturing industries for export purposes. It may be one of the reasons that mercantilism could not develop in the East. According to Jaffar (1974, 406), 'In the middle of the seventeenth century India supplied Europe with diamonds, pearls, chinzes, large quantities of spices, drugs, such as horax, opium, etc., tobacco and saltpetre'.

In India, European influence spread and waxed stronger during the seventeenth century. 'The Portuguese, whose presence had disturbed the Indians since 1498, were followed by the British East India Company with settlements and factories in various parts between Thatta and Bengal ..... The French, who began to covet the treasure of India, settled in 1688 in Pondicherry; the Dutch had a few minor settlements' (Schimmel, 1980, p. 105). The Mughal emperor granted extensive trading rights to the British East India Company in

1615. They could not foresee that this would end up in the enslavement of their country within two centuries. By the end of the century, these European mercantilist organizations had developed from trading voyage to factory, from factory to fort, and from fort to territorial sovereignty.

### Endnotes

1. It may be noted that the condition of farmers in Europe was also bad but there the exploiters used their income for investment in trade and industries (Minchinton, 1974, pp. 168-170, Maddalena, 1977, pp. 290, 303).
2. "In Turkey too there were rich merchants and bankers, such as the Greek Michael Cantacuzenos and Portuguese Jew Joseph Nasi-the Fugger of the Orient, as Braudel called him. But they were never able to play anything like the financial, economic, and political role of their European counterparts" (Lewis, 1968, p.31).
3. 'In the eyes of an improving Westerner like Defoe, the Turks themselves were 'Enemies to Trade ..... distressedly poor!' To the extent that it was not managed by Europeans – increasingly by French and English – external trade was largely in the hands of Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Lebanese. In the chief ports, Jewish intermediaries were indispensable to European merchants, but much of the overland trade from Persia and the East, in Turkey as in Russia, was Armenian' (Kurat, p. 181).
4. For example: Taj al-Din b. Ahmad a noted scholar was a prosperous trader who combined both activities – commerce and education (al-Muhibbi, p. 456)...Al-Sayyid Alawi b. Muhammad al-Jufri (d. 1061 / 1650) was one of such *`ulama* who prospered in business (ibid. 3:121). Muhammad b. Husayn al-Hamawi (d. 1094 / 1682) a great scholar of rational and traditional sciences, engaged in commerce and traveled in all neighboring countries (ibid. p. 459). Muhammad b. Atiq al-Hamasi (d. 1020 / 1611) authored in various branches of knowledge, engaged in commerce, copied books himself, had very beautiful hand writing (ibid. 4:34). Similarly Muhammad b. Uthman al-Hush (d. 1030 / 1620) was one of the successful businessmen in addition to being a man of literature (ibid. 4:37). The Hanafi scholar Mahmud b. Barakat al-Baqani (d. 1074 / 1663) owned large number of books; he traded them and earned lot of profit (ibid. 4:318). Abd al-Rahman b. Abd Allah Jamal al-Layl (d. 1070 / 1659), a Hadrami scholar traveled to India to benefit from the great scholar's of the country. Later he engaged in trading and left a number of students (ibid. 2:263). It is surprising why these *`ulama*, in spite of being involved in trading, did not take notice of the rise of Western mercantilism and write on this aspect of the life as several past scholars did. However, any definite conclusion

may be risky as the vast literature of the period has not seen the light of day and still remained unexplored with this objective in mind.

5. According to al-Muhibbi, tobacco came to Arab cities around 1012/1603. Like coffee, it became a controversial commodity and a number of works appeared for and against it. Hasan b. Abu Bakr al-Saqqaf (d. 1044 / 1634) a great scholar was very much against smoking tobacco and he struggled to banish it from his area in which he succeeded and its ban was announced in markets. He also wrote a treatise on its prohibition (al-Muhibbi, 2:80). Ali bin Ibrahim al-Halabi (d. 1044 / 1634) also wrote a tract on smoking of tobacco (ibid. 3: 124). Sultan Murad IV had forbidden tobacco during his reign.
6. The historian Pecevi, writing in about 1685, has this to say on what he calls 'the coming of the fetid and nauseating smoke of tobacco'. "The English infidels," he says, brought it in the year 1009 [AD 1601] and sold it as a remedy for certain diseases of humidity." Its use however, rapidly extended beyond its so-called medicinal purposes. It was seized upon by "pleasure seekers and sensualists" and even by "many of the great *ulama* and the mighty". Pecevi gave a vivid account of the immediate popularity of this new vice and its effects' (Lewis, 1982, p. 196. He quotes Pecevi, I:365; translated in Lewis, 1963, pp. 133-35).
7. "The capitulations refer to a class of commercial treaties which Western power concluded with Asian and African states and under which Western nationals enjoyed extraterritorial privileges. European residents were thus subject to the laws of their home governments and immune from those of their home countries. Among the Near and Middle East lands the system developed most fully in the Ottoman Empire. .... In encouraging trade with the West, the early sultans thus did not have to seek equal treatment for their own subjects." (Hurewitz, J.C. (1987) *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record 1535-1956*, Oxford, Archive Editions, first Published in 1956 by Von Nostrand Co. New York, Vol. I. P.1). Such a capitulation or Treaty of Amity and Commerce granted to France continued up to 1924 (ibid.).
8. It may be noted that 'by the 1590s the annual export of Bullion from Western Europe to the Levant was as estimated at 1,500,000 ducats. Between 1593 and 1596 Venice alone exported over 1,000,000 ducats to the Levant, and over 1,500,000 ducats between 1610 and 1614, 84 per cent of it in Spanish *reales*. The French port of Marseilles probably exported more. Taken together, around 1600 Europe's trade with near East and Far East probably absorbed about 2,500,000 ducats, or almost 80,000 kilogram of silver every year' (Parker, 1974, 529).
9. Lewis criticizes Qoji Beg and Katib Chalapi for their recommendation of return to old system of *timar*. 'Understandably, they miss the point that the

obsolescence of the *sipahi* had become inevitable, and that only the long term, professional soldier could serve the military needs of the time" (Lewis, 1968, p.30).

10. 'According to Evliya [Awliya]', early in the seventeenth century there were in Istanbul 1,001 guilds divided into 75 groups for reasons of administrative expediency' (Baer, 1970, p.18).
11. The strength of the economy is clear from his modernization of the army and the construction of grand buildings in Isfahan such as the Imperial Mosque, Masjid-e Shah, completed in 1630, the Imami Mosque, Masjid-e Imami, the Lutfullah Mosque and the Royal Palace.
12. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavids> (accessed on 8. 1. 2007)
13. It was very common in early Islamic history. Imam Abu Yusuf (1392, pp. 52, 53-54) has analyzed in his book *Kitab al-Kharaj* the two main systems of taxation on land – *muqasamah* (proportional agricultural tax) and *misahah* or *kharaj-i-muwazzaf* (fixed land tax).

## CHAPTER THREE

### INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE

In the sphere of education and intellectual input, the seventeenth century was very closely related to the sixteenth century. The features that dominated in the former, like imitation, repetition, reproduction, emphasis on traditional education, etc., re-enforced themselves in the latter. The Arabic language remained the medium of religious and juridical expression and writings in the Arabic language increased enormously. But the importance of Turkish and Persian also increased due to being the languages of rulers and receiving of official patronage. The number of translations and original works in these two languages increased many-fold in the seventeenth century.

#### 1. Traditional System of Education

Memorization of the Qur'an and its correct recitation (*tajwid*) were parts of early education (al-Muhibbi, 4: 229, 231). Next came the stage of memorization of some basic courses of *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh* and its principles; Arabic literature, grammar, parts of speech, *tasawwuf*, logic, etc. (ibid. 1:170, p. 252). Formal regular classes were not the only method of teaching. Sometime an '*alim* (knowledgeable person) held open schools in mosques or public places (ibid. 1: 189). In many cases, students studied a portion of the book only (ibid. 2:166). *Tafsir*, *hadith fiqh*, *adab* and *tasawwuf* were five main branches of knowledge for the '*ulama* (ibid. 3:191). Memorization and reproduction of inferred rules was considered a great achievement (ibid. 3:69). Study of *shuruh* (notes and commentaries) and writing such commentaries, and sometimes commentary over commentary was the pattern of scholarship (ibid. 2: 122; 3:89, 123). One would hardly find a famous scholar who had not written a commentary, as if writing a commentary was a matter of recognition. Most of the scholars spent their whole lives in writing commentaries. Some of them had several commentaries to their credit.<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that sometimes the commentaries were superior to the original text. Muhammad al-Shirwani (d. 1036/1626) wrote a commentary on al-Dawani's work *al-'Aqa'id al-'Adudiyah* which was considered better than the text (ibid. 3:475). Had they developed creative thinking and engaged themselves in scientific education, they would almost surely have contributed original and marvelous works.

**Search for Excellence.** Although strictly a traditional system of education, the search for excellence was active. Thus, in spite of the division of *'ulama* into different jurisprudential schools, they chose the experts in every subject irrespective of their jurisprudential affiliation. For example, Shams al-Din Ramli (d. 1004 / 1595), himself a top Shafi'i, studied under Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali scholars (al-Muhibbi, 3:343). Another example is Muhammad Ibn Qulaqz (d. 1021 / 1612), a Hanafi who chose discipleship of top scholars from various school of jurisprudence (ibid. 355). Abd al-Rahman al-Buhuti (who was alive in 1040 / 1630) received *fiqh* education from top scholars of all four schools of *fiqh* (ibid. 2:405). *Ijazah* was the system of granting certificates (ibid 1: 183-84, 367; 2:487, 3:14). Under this system, a teacher satisfied with the knowledge and talent of the student, used to authorize him to teach, report, or give *fatwa*.

The spirit of *ijtihad* was absent in this period. Even those who were capable to do so generally avoided it. Al-Muhibbi (2: 424) reports regarding Abd al-Aziz al-Sa'di (d. 1016 / 1607) that he had sound knowledge of all the tools of *ijtihad* but he never applied them. Al-Muhibbi gives in two full pages an account of the works of Abd al-Hafiz al-Sharafi (d. 1077 / 1666) who had an encyclopedic knowledge of Shariah principles that were required for *ijtihad* (ibid. pp. 306-308). But no exercise of *ijtihad* on current issues is reported about him.

**The best jurisprudential works of the period.** Notwithstanding the trend of the period as commentary writing and repetition, it had produced a number of great scholars in all four school of jurisprudence, who had an encyclopedic knowledge of the jurisprudence they followed. The hallmark characteristic of their work was the multitude of information with little originality. Their commentaries and works are still used as source books. Here is an account of such works under the four schools of jurisprudence:

Khayr al-Din al-Ramli (d. 1081 / 1669) was the leader of the Hanafi School of *fiqh* in this period. In consonance with the trend of his age, he wrote notes and commentaries on the works of many of his predecessors, like *Kanz*, *al-Bahr al-Ra'iq*, *al-Ashbah wa'l-Naza'ir* etc. But he is famous for his *fatawa* (ibid. 2:134). 'Ala' al-Din Muhammad al-Haskafi (d. 1088 / 1676) is another great Hanafi scholar of the period who authored *Sharh Tanwir al-Absar* known as *al-Durr al-Mukhtar* and *Sharh Multaqa al-Ab'hur*, entitled *al-Durr al-Muntaqa* and many other works and *fatawa* (al-Zerekli, 6:294).

Ali al-Shubbaramallisi (d. 1087 / 1675) was the most learned scholar of his time in the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence. Although he authored a number of

books, his most famous works are *Hashiyah 'ala'l Mawahib al-Ladunniyah* in five volumes, and *Hashiyah 'ala Sharh al-Minhaj* (ibid 4:314). Abd al-Qadir al-Fayynmi (d. 1022 / 1613) wrote an enhanced commentary on *Minhaj* of al-Nawawi in which he incorporated the commentaries of his teacher al-Ramli and the commentaries of al-Khatib and Ibn Hajar. He also left works on other sciences (ibid. 4:44).

Ali al-Ujhuri (d. 1066 / 1655) is considered the greatest scholar of the Maliki school of jurisprudence in the period who authored many reference works (ibid. 5:13). For example: three commentaries on *Mukhtasar Khalil* – the biggest in 12 volumes, the middle in 5 volumes and the smallest in two volumes, in addition to many other treatises of importance. Salim al-Sinhuri (d. 1015 / 1606), the great Maliki scholar wrote a commentary on *Mukhtasar al-Shaykh Khalil* (al-Muhibbi, 2:204). Muhammad al-Khurashi (d. 1104/1690) was Shaykh al-Azhar whose commentary on *Mukhtasar Sidi Khalil* is an authentic source on Maliki jurisprudence.

Mansur al-Buhuti (d. 1051 / 1641) was the greatest leading scholar of the Hanbali school in Egypt. He presented a Commentary on *Iqna'* in three volumes as well as notes on it. He also wrote commentary on *Muntaha al-Iradat* by al-Taqi al-Futuhi and notes over it (al-Zerekli, 67: 307). Mara'i al-Karami (d. 1033 / 1623) was another great scholar of the Hanbali school. He wrote a large number of books on *tafsir, hadith, fiqh* and many other socio-political problems. His most famous works are *Kitab Ghayat al-Muntaha* that shows his original thinking, *al-Fawa'id al-Mawdu'ah fi'l-Ahadith al-Mawdu'ah, Iqaf al-'Arifin 'ala Hukm Awqaf al-Salatin*, etc. (ibid. 7: 203; al-Muhibbi, 4: 358-60).

## 2. Rational Sciences

**Science and Philosophy.** In addition to Shariah sciences, mathematics, astronomy, astrology and chemistry were also studied (al-Muhibbi, 1:373). Abd al-Qadir al-Fayynmi (d. 1022 / 1613) learnt these sciences as well as music. He left works on these sciences (al-Zerekli, 4: 44). Ahmad al-Qalyubi (d. 1064 / 1658) was well versed in Shariah sciences as well as in rational sciences. His knowledge of mathematics was excellent. He was also an expert medical practitioner. He wrote a tract on finding out the direction of *qiblah* without a compass (al-Muhibbi, I: 175). Another Ahmad al-Dimashqi (d. 1081 / 1669) had knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, astrology, etc. (ibid. I: 178). Hasan al-Nurdini (d. 1078 / 1658) wrote a commentary entitled *Sharh al-Baha'iyah* in mathematics (ibid. 2: 63). Husayn Ibn Sha'al (d. 1069 / 1658) was an expert on chemistry and spent a huge amount on experiments (ibid. 2:99). Mulla Muhammad Sharif al-Kurani (d. 1078 / 1666) who spent most of his

scholarly life in the two Holy Cities of Islam before he finally returned to Yemen wrote notes on *Sharh al-Isharat* of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, in which he made a comparison between al-Tusi and Imam al-Razi. His other work is comments on *Tahafut al-Falasifah* of Khuwaja Zadah al-Rumi, in which he made a comparison and contrast between al-Rumi and al-Ghazali (ibid. 4:281). Thus, the study and composition of works on mathematics, astronomy, geography, and medicine continued in this period, but received relatively less attention as compared to traditional sciences. Those who were skilled in these sciences they were generally not from among the *madrrasah*-trained traditional *'ulama* (Gibb and Bowen, 1965, 1:2, p. 151).

**Medicine.** According to Gibb and Bowen (1965, 1:2, p. 162) 'The medical craft was, like other crafts, largely hereditary, which gave some guarantee against the complete disappearance of this old science. On the other hand, it is also not uncommon to find a *qadi* or *'alim* as the head of the corporation of physicians, and other men of religion practicing medicine'. Al-Muhibbi gives accounts of many such physicians. Ibrahim b. Manalla al-Jamal (d. 1058 / 1647) was a famous physician who became the head of all physicians (*ra'is al-atibba'*) (al-Muhibbi, 1:21). The chief of the physicians was a very prestigious position. Sometimes it was held by a female doctor too (ibid. I: 204). Salih Ibn Sallum (d. 1081 / 1669) was the chief physician of the Ottoman Empire; due to his excellence in his profession he became a very close friend of Sultan Muhammad b. Ibrahim. He authored a highly regarded work on medicine (ibid. 2:240-41). Mulla Safi al-Din al-Kilani (d. 1010 / 1601), a settler of Makkah, also authored a number of books on medicine. Many medical miracles and cures are attributed to him (ibid. p. 244). Madin b. Abd al-Rahman (d. 1044 / 1634) was the chief physician of Egypt and authored '*Kitab Qamus al-Atibba' fil-Mufradat*' (ibid. 4:333). In the case of medicine, Sultanic physicians benefited from the European researches. Two chief medical doctors of Sultan Muhammad IV (1648-87) in their treatises referred to European medical innovations (Gibb and Bowen, 1:2 p.149).

**History and biography.** History and biography had traditionally attracted the attention of scholars. Muhammad al-Shilli al-Hadrami (d. 1093 / 1681) wrote two books on history – one of them titled *Nafa'is al-Durar'*. He traveled to India where he studied under a number of *'ulama*. He also authored many scientific works. He finally settled in Makkah and benefited people from his knowledge (al-Muhibbi, 3:336-38). Muhammad al-Ghazzi (d. 1061 / 1650) authored many books, including a history titled *A'yan al-Mi'at al-'Ashirah – al-Kawakib al-Sa'irah* (ibid. 4:197). Al-Muhibbi wrote *Khulasat al-Athar* in four volumes which is a very valuable and authentic source on scholars, poets, rulers and people of importance in the eleventh century *hijrah* (17<sup>th</sup> century Gregorian). It

has been our main source for the political and intellectual conditions of the period. Hasan al-Burayni (d. 1024 / 1626) authored a number of books, the most important being his history which was used by al-Muhibbi as one of the sources for his book *Khulasat al-Athar* (ibid. 2:51). Muhammad b. Ahmad Tashkupri Zadah (d. 1030 / 1621) about whom al-Muhibbi says he was a mountain of knowledge' (ibid. 3:356). He translated his father's work *Mawdu'at al-Ulum*, a bibliography of important works in the Ottoman empire and their contributors, into the Turkish language.

**Poetry and Literature.** The most famous work of Muhammad Wahyi Zadah (d. 1018 / 1609) is *Sharh Mughni al-Labib* in two volumes. It is full of valuable comments that show his vast knowledge (al-Zerekli, 6:8) Al-Sayyid Muhammad Kibrit (d. 1070 / 1659) was an expert in Shariah and scientific studies, and authored many valuable works, like *Rihlat- al-Shita' wa'l-Sayf* – his journey account, *Kitab al-Jawahir al-Thaminah*, *Kitab al-Matlab al-Haqir*, *Sharh Diwan al-Farid*, etc. (al-Muhibbi, 4:28-29). Mustafa Azmi Zadah (d. 1040s / 1630s) wrote *Ruba'iyat* in Turkish, as Sadid al-Din al-Anbari wrote in Arabic and Umar Khayyam in Persian. In addition he wrote a commentary on '*al-Durar wa'l-Ghurar* and notes on the principles of Ibn Malik (al-Zerekli, 7:240). Some of the outstanding Ottoman scholars of this period were receptive to new ideas and they thought and wrote on socio-political and economic problems confronting society with open minds, such as Katib Chalapi (1609-57) the famous historian, geographer and bibliographer, Awliya Chalapi (1611-78), the renowned traveler, Qoji Beg the author of *Nasihah-namah* (1620) and Sari Mehmed Pasha (d. 1133 / 1720), the author of *Nasihah al-Wuzara' wa'l-Umara'*. But their number was few.

**Translation Activities.** Translation of Arabic sources into Turkish continued during this period. (al-Muhibbi, 4:475). Many *ulama* trained in Istanbul or other Turkish speaking cities helped in the translation of Arabic –Turkish – Arabic, while those trained in the Indo-Arab and Iranian regions enriched Arabic and Persian literature through their translations. Taj al-Din b. Zakariya (d. 1050 / 1640) was an Indian *sufi* scholar who translated many Persian works into Arabic (ibid. 1: 464). He authored treatises on the art of cooking, plantation of trees and medicine (ibid. 1: 468). Later he migrated to Makkah where he died in 1050 / 1640 (ibid. 1: 470). Sayyid Sibghat Allah al-Baruji (d. 1015 / 1606) was another scholar. Born in Bharuch (Gujarat) he settled in Madinah Munawwarah where he engaged in teaching. He authored and translated into Arabic many works by Indian scholars. His commentary on *Tafsir al-Baydawi* got wide acceptance (ibid. 2:243). Most viziers and *ulama* had knowledge of all three major languages Arabic, Persian and Turkish (ibid. I: 381, 397, 422; 2: 156, 176). Some *ulama* studied European languages also. For example, Husayn

b. Mashikh al-Qatir (d. 1032 / 1633) knew Bosnian in addition to the Persian, Turkish and Arabic languages (ibid. 2:118).

**Calligraphy.** Art and Calligraphy reached its peak. Muhammad al-Rumi (d. 1081 / 1669), a settler of al-Quds, could write *Surat al-Ikhlās* on a grain of rice. He wrote Surah Yasin within the letters of *Bismillah* and the whole Qur'an in the letters of *Surah Yasin* (al-Muhibbi, 4:228).

**Printing press.** The printing press, which had been invented and in use in Europe for the previous two centuries, was generally not known in the East. The *ulama* copied the voluminous works of their predecessors. Sometimes the same work was copied many times to prepare more copies – a very tedious work indeed (al-Muhibbi, 3:160). Mulla Muhammad al-Akhlaqi of Damascus (d. 1021 / 1612) copied *Kitab Akhlaq-i 'Ala'i* forty times. The book is in three languages: Arabic, Persian and Turkish (ibid. 4:294). 'The year 1627 saw the arrival in Istanbul, from London, of a printing press for the publication of religious literature in Greek and intended distribution among the adherents of the Orthodox faith' (Perry, 1983, p. 151). It remained confined among the Christians and Jews. For the Ottomans, the use of the printing press had to wait for another century.<sup>2</sup>

**Waqf of Books.** There are a number of reports of scholars who dedicated their personal libraries for public benefit (al-Muhibbi, 3:127). Muhammad Ba Jamal al-Yamani (d. 1022 / 1613) made many *awqaf*. He had a large number of books which he made as an endowment (ibid. 4:228). Sharaf al-Din b. Zayn al-Abidin (d. 1092 / 1680), the grandson of Qadi Zakariya al-Ansari, a Shafi'i scholar, accumulated a very rich library. For instance, it had twenty eight commentaries on *Sahih al-Bukhari* and forty explanations of the Quran. However, his successors destroyed it (ibid. 2:223).

**Ottomans' Respect for Scholars.** The *'ulama* were paid a stipend to devote themselves fully to academic work without any worry (al-Muhibbi, I: 334). Muhammad al-Baghdadi (d. 1016 / 1607) was getting a stipend of 40 *uthmani* daily (ibid. 4: 31-32). Although the Ottoman government patronized scholars and students and supported them financially, many *'ulama* preferred to live on their own and engaged in commerce and other economic activities to earn their livelihood. The *ulama* had great influence in the government. The *Shaykh al-Islam*, or the grand *mufti* of the empire, had a say in many vital decisions. Sometimes he played a very important role in the making of a Sultan or dethroning him (cf. ibid. 4:364-65). The grand *mufti* of the empire had so much influence that he could decree to depose or even execute the Sultan if the interest of the Empire necessitated it. The grand *mufti* Abd al-Rahim

(d. 1062 / 1651) did so in the case of Sultan Ibrahim (ibid. 2:412). Ottoman sultans never resorted to inflicting capital punishment on scholars. If they became angry with them, exile was the punishment. An exception only occurred when the Sultan apprehended their involvement in any conspiracy against him (ibid. 2:111). *Waqf* was the major source for supporting education. A large number of such *awqaf* were inherited from the past rulers and many new *awqaf* were generated by every sultan. 'The higher education in all the Islamic lands was given in college-mosques and *madrasahs*, which differed in size, staffing, and importance, according to the extent of their endowments' (Gibb and Bowen, 1:2, p.143).

### 3. Intellectual life in other parts of the Muslim world

***Iranian Scholars of the seventeenth century.*** Shah Abbas (d. 1038 / 1628) gave high honors to *ulama* and traders who visited his country. Al-Muhibbi praises his behavior and rule (al-Muhibbi, 2:268-69). Abbas developed a highly intellectual atmosphere, along with improvement in economic conditions. Seventeenth century Iran produced many great scholars in the field of theology and philosophy. Abd-Allah al-Yazdi (d. 1015 / 1606) was the greatest scholar of Iran in his time. He wrote a number of original books and commentaries on earlier works, which received wide acceptance (al-Zereкли, 4: 80). Baha al-Din Muhammad al-'Amuli (d. 1031 / 1629) was one of the greatest scholars of the Safawid regime, and spent thirty years in travel, then settled in Isfahan. Shah Abbas used to keep him in his company on all occasions. He wrote a number of books and exegesis of the Qur'an. Al-Muhibbi gives his achievements and life account fifteen pages (ibid. 6: 101). Mir Damad (d.1631) was a philosopher in the Neoplatonic Islamic Peripatetic tradition of Avicenna and Suhrawardi, a scholar of the traditional Islamic sciences, and foremost figure of the cultural renaissance of Iran, ushered in under the Safawid dynasty. Mulla Sadra (1571 – 1640) was another great Persian philosopher, who led the Iranian cultural renaissance in the seventeenth century. He was the foremost representative of the illuminationist, or *ishraqi* school of philosopher-mystics. He is commonly regarded by Iranians as the greatest philosopher their country has ever produced.

***Mughal India.*** Mughal rule promoted education at various levels. According to the historian Jaffar (1974, p. 386) 'the curriculum embraced the art of administration, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, accounts, agriculture, economics, history, ethics, astronomy, medicine, physics, philosophy, law and ritual'. However, it is not known what the level of these courses was, and whether any attempt was made to introduce the modern trends as was going on in Europe. No doubt, seventeenth century India produced great religious scholars and

literary persons. Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) a disciple of Khwajah Muhammad al-Baqi bi-Allah (d. 1014 / 1605) composed quite a number of books and treatises, but his fame mainly rests upon his 534 letters mostly in Persian and only a few of them in Arabic. These letters show his deep insight into religious sciences, sufism, philosophy, socio-political and economic issues. As against Ibn 'Arabi's theory of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being), Sirhindi propounded his theory of *wahdat al-shuhud* (unity of manifestation). He denied the existence of "*bid'ah hasanah*" (good innovation). He used to say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told in absolute terms that any new thing in matters of religion is a stray. So nothing can be exempted from this statement. (al-Hasani, 1999, 5:46-62). Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi (d. 1629 / 1642) left many works on *hadith* and related themes. He is credited with popularizing the study of hadith in India (Ibid. 5: 219-229). Mulla Abd al-Hakim Sialkoti (d. 1067 / 1656) was the greatest scholar of his time in India. Shahjahan gave him highest respect and consulted him on all important matters. His works, during his life time, reached the Turko-Arab world and were studied with enthusiasm (ibid. 5: 229-231). *Tarikh-i Firishtah* by Muhammad Qasim Hindushah Firishtah (d. after 1623) and *Padishah-namah* by Abd al-Hamid Lahori (d. 1654) are authentic sources on the Indian history of the period. Mughal Kings had very good literary taste. Jahangir left his valuable diary called *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* and Awrangzeb left quite a number of his letters (*Ruqqa`at*) which are master pieces of literary excellence.

One of the greatest accomplishments of Awrangzeb is a compilation of *Fatawa-i Alamgiri*. Spread over six volumes, these *fatawa* were collected, selected and edited by a group of leading *ulama* under the chairmanship of Nizamuddin Burhanpuri in the year 1697 under the personal instruction of the Emperor. *Fatawa-i Alamgiri* was also acclaimed in Ottoman territories. An Ottoman author addressed Awrangzeb with the classical title of 'Commander of the Faithful' (*amir al-mu'minin*) (Hodgson, 1974, 3: 82). According to Schimmel (1980, p. 102) it is an 'important document for the legal history of Muslim India and allows many insights into Muslim institutions in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>3</sup> Awrangzeb also paid attention to the patronage of the Firangi Mahall School in Lucknow that was destined to produce many great scholars in later periods.

It may be noted that the Persian poetry which had declined and stagnated under the Safawids flowered in India under generous royal patronage and a number of great Persian poets were attached to the Mughal court, such as Urfi, Naziri, Kalim, Talib, etc. It is interesting to note that all these poets had migrated from Iran in search of better prospects.

During the Mughal period women also contributed to art and literature. Some of the Mughal princesses earned high esteem in this field. For example, Humayun's sister Gulbadan Begum (d. 1603) wrote *Humayun-namah*. Jahan-Ara, daughter of Shahjahan, was a gifted writer. Awrangzeb's daughter Zebunnisa was also a poetess who wrote Persian poetry under the pen-name of *Makhfi*, 'Hidden' or 'Zeb' (Schimmel, 1980, pp. 101-102). Translation of Indian works and patronage of Hindi poets continued. Even some translation from Islamic natural sciences into Sanskrit is reported (Hodgson, 1974, 3: 86). Awrangzeb's daughter Zebunnisa 'had a number of works translated into Persian, among them Fakhruddin Razi's *Tafsir* which appeared in Mulla Safiuddin's rendering as *Zeb-i-tafasir*' (Schimmel, 1980, pp. 101-102).

In the seventeenth century, another important center of Islamic culture, art and architecture in India was Bijapur, where Adil Shahi<sup>4</sup> rulers promoted religious sciences, Arabic and Persian translations, poetry and paintings and the construction of beautiful buildings. A number of scholars from Arabia and Iran migrated to Bijapur and enjoyed official patronage<sup>5</sup> (Schimmel, 1980, pp. 56-58).

One important contribution of seventeenth century Muslim rule in India is the development of the Urdu language<sup>6</sup> that grew to be one of the largest depositories of Islamic sciences and learning in the modern period. Although Urdu became a literary and scientific language only in the nineteenth century, early poets of Urdu were born in this period.<sup>7</sup>

#### **4. *Ulama* – the connecting link between the Muslim governments**

During the period under study the Muslim world was divided into three great empires and many smaller states. In these distant and far-away situated states it was the community of *ulama* that played the role of connecting links. These *ulama* freely traveled from one country to another, benefited from the local scholars and spread their own knowledge. Al-Muhibbi reports a number of such *ulama* who visited Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Hijaz, Yemen, Iran, Sind, India and Java.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the Indian cities emerged as cultural centres of the Islamic world, such as Ahmadabad, Haydarabad, Bijapur, Burhanpur, Delhi, Agra and Lahore. They attracted scholars from all over the Muslim world. An especially large number of *ulama* from Yemen and Hadramut traveled to various Indian cities which had earned the distinction of being seats of Islamic learning. Muslim Indian rulers patronized them and their knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Intellectual activities and inventions in Seventeenth Century Europe

It will be useful for comparison purposes to have a glance at seventeenth century Europe and the scientific and intellectual developments taking place there. The Renaissance movement started as a result of the rediscovery of Greek ideas through Arabic translations, commentaries of Muslim scholars and their additions during the fourteenth century, intensified in the subsequent centuries. It had wide-ranging consequences in literature, philosophy, art, politics, science, religion, and other aspects of intellectual enquiry. The printing press (which was still banned in Muslim countries) helped in the spread of knowledge among the masses. In the words of Sella (1974, p.382), 'Thanks to the invention of printing from movable types, reading materials ceased to be a luxury and the exclusive possession of a few churchmen and scholars'.

The seventeenth century saw a rise in the number of scientists, philosophers and theorists in Europe.<sup>10</sup> For example, Blaise Pascal (1623 - 1662), mathematician and physicist; Pierre de Fermat (1601 - 1665), lawyer and mathematician; Francis Bacon (1561-1626) philosopher, statesman and essayist; Thomas Browne (1605-1682), author in diverse fields, including medicine, religion, science etc. René Descartes (1596-1650), philosopher, mathematician and scientist; Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655), philosopher, scientist, astronomer/astrologer, and mathematician; Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), philosopher, Christian apologist, playwright, and poet; Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1694), jurist, political philosopher, economist, statesman, and historian, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), physicist, astronomer, astrologer, and philosopher; Thomas Hobbes, philosopher and mathematician (1588 - 1679), John Locke (1632-1704) philosopher and theoretician, etc.

Besides these great scientists, philosophers and scholars, it was also the century that boasted of the greatest English poets William Shakespeare, (1564 - 1616) and John Milton (1608 - 1674).

It was also the age of many inventions. For example: the first measurement of the speed of light in 1676; reintroduction of banknotes in Europe; central banking in France and modern finance by Scottish economist John Law in 1609 and the publication of the first newspaper; in 1657 Christian Huygens developed the first functional pendulum clock; the first reflecting telescope was built by James Gregory based on the suggestions of the Italian astronomer Niccolo Zucchi in 1663; Antoni van Leeuwenhoek first discovered Bacteri in 1676; binary systems were developed by Gottfried Leibnitz in 1679; and in 1684 calculus was independently developed by both Gottfried Leibnitz and Sir Issac Newton and used to formulate classical mechanics.

**Concluding remark.** From the preceding pages, it is clear that in the field of creative thinking, intellectual temperament and scientific discoveries, the graph of Europe was going up and that of the Muslim world was sliding downward and the gap was widening by the day. No doubt, academic activities and educational endeavors could be witnessed every where in the Muslim lands. There is also no doubt that the traditional system of education was not devoid of virtues. It had 'many good features'.<sup>11</sup> However, the missing point was its updating, effectiveness and making it more relevant to the needs of the time. Perry's remark on the decaying trend in intellectual and academic fields in the Muslim East during the period bears a grain of truth: 'Indeed, the Islamic world never knew a 'Dark Age'; its civilization was alive but now lacked much vitality. Mosques, schools and colleges continued to transmit old religious and legal learning by memorization. Books were in traditional patterns, with few signs of originality, although some new styles emerged in a still flowering Ottoman Poetry. None of the mosques and palaces being constructed compared with the great earlier ones. The 'conservative spirit' had just about spent itself' (Perry, 1983, pp. 122-23).

The entire Muslim world in the seventeenth century had an almost uniform educational system. 'The traditional subjects and methods of elementary education were pursued alike by Niger, Nile and Indus' (Gibb and Bowen, 1:2, pp.139, 156). However, there is a marked difference between the early centuries of Islam when the expansion of Islamic states was in progress and the declining phase of Muslim intellectual powers, when the Islamic state was firmly established over the larger part of the known world. In the early phase, Muslim scholars gained knowledge of foreign philosophy and sciences, wrote commentaries on them, assessed and analyzed them critically and added and introduced great improvements to them. The rulers at that time created conditions that facilitated and accelerated the process of translation and interaction. As a result, within a few centuries they became leaders in those sciences and the other nations started learning these sciences from them. These nations developed the spirit of inquiry, research and investigation and very soon they left their Muslim benefactors far behind. Lack of freedom of thought and expression, combined with the grip of *fatwa*, for example, the ban on the printing press, the closure of the gate of *ijtihad* (original and creative thinking), a superiority complex, and having the strongest governments in the world, rendered them incapable of realizing the intellectual achievements and scientific advancement of other nations. When during the seventeenth century, a series of humiliating defeats shook them from their slumber and the illusion of the imagined superiority of their own sciences and culture, it was too late to close the gap created in those long years and overcome the obstacles in the way of scientific thinking and modernization of attitude.<sup>12</sup>

## Endnotes

1. For example, Ali al-Halabi (d. 1044 / 1634) wrote *Sharah `ala Sharh al-Qutr*, *Sharh Sharh al-Azhariyah*, *Sharh `ala Sharh al-Basmalah*, etc. (al-Muhibbi, 3:123). He also wrote a tract on the smoking of tobacco (ibid. 3: 124). Writing a commentary on the works of fathers and forefathers was a new trend in this period (ibid. 2:199). In addition to writing a commentary on the works of predecessors, we also find the presentation of abridged edition of such a work (ibid. 2:167).
2. Ibrahim al-Mutafarriqa who traveled to Europe brought a printing press in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. He was not allowed to print religious books (Gibb and Bowen 1:2 p.153).]
3. This opinion of Schimmel is probably not based on the direct study of *Fatawa-i Alamgiri*. In fact they are simply a selection of authentic and accepted legal decrees (*fatwa*) of the past Hanafi *ulama*.
4. In Bijapur the Adil Shahi Sultanate was established by Yusuf Adil Shah in 884/1480. In the year 1067 / 1656, Sultan Mahmud became the sultan of Deccan after the death of his father. He was a praiseworthy sultan (al-Muhibbi, 4:316). Bijapur Sultanate was surrendered by Sikandar to Awrangzeb's troops in 1098/1686.
5. Here are a few names: Shaykh al-Aydarus (d. 1041 / 1631) traveling from Hadramut to Yemen, to Makkah reached India and studied under his uncle Abd al-Qadir b. Shaykh and obtained a diploma (*ijazah*) from him. Finally, he went to the court of Burhan Nizam Shah, Sultan of Deccan, where he received prestige and position. After a few years he reached Bijapur. He convinced the Sultan of Bijapur and converted him from *Shi`ah-Rafidi* to Sunni-Muslim. In his last days he settled down in Dawlatabad where he died in 1093 / 1681 (al-Muhibbi, 2:235-36). Abu Bakr b. Husayn (d. 1074 / 1664) was born in *Tarim* migrated to India, lived in Surat and finally settled and died in Bijapur (ibid. 1:82). Similarly Abd-Allah b. Zayn, another scholar of 11<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> century born in at Tarim in Hadramut reached Bijapur and engaged in teaching and finally died and was buried there (ibid. 3: 40-41). Abd-Allah b. Shaykh (d. 1073 / 1662) traveled to Surat and Bijapur and after spending many years in Bijapur returned to his native place Tarim in Hadramut (ibid. 3:51). Al-Sayyid Umar Ba-Alawi (d. 1063 / 1652) born in Zifar, was educated locally and benefited from the *ulama* of the Two Holy Mosques. Finally he migrated to Bijapur and settled there (ibid. 3: 219-20).
6. The name "Urdu" itself is a Turkish word which means 'army' as originally this language was spoken by the soldiers using words from Arabic, Persian, Turkish and local Indian languages. Ultimately it developed into a beautiful refined modern language.

7. Such as Quli Khan (d.1611) and Wali Dakkani (1635-1707).
8. For example: Sayyid Jamal al-Din b. Nur al-Din migrated from Damascus to Makkah, from Makkah to Yemen and finally to Haydarabad, where he received honor and position and died there in 1098 / 1686 (al-Muhibbi, 1: 495). One of the great Sufis al-Sayyid Abd al-Rahman (d. 1085 / 1693) who originally came from Morocco, settled down in Makkah. He was much loved in India. Offerings and gifts reached to him from India (ibid. 2: 347). Ali Ba Umar (d. 1096 / 1684) born in a city called Zifar, after being locally educated, traveled to Makkah, Madinah, India and Java in pursuit of learning and teaching and finally returned to his native land (ibid. 3:178). Muhammad Amin Lari (d. 1066 / 1655) was from a royal family in India; when his father was defeated in a battle, he migrated to Ottoman Empire and finally he settled in Damascus. He was a great scholar who benefited a large number of students through his teaching (ibid. 4:309). Musa Sindhi (d. 1012 / 1603) migrated from Sindh to Madinah. Spending many years in Madinah, he traveled to Syria and Palestine. He died in al-Quds (ibid. 4:435). Khuwajah Muhammad al-Baqi bi-Allah (d. 1014 / 1605) was born in Kabul, traveled to Lahore and finally settled in Delhi. He and Sufi Taj al-Din al-Hindi of Sanbhal were mentors and friends of each other (ibid. 4:288-89). Al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Bahrayni (d. 1081 / 1669) was a great scholar of Bahrain who traveled to India and met scholars there and finally settled in Isfahan (ibid. 3:480-82). Muhammad al-Hariri al-`Amuli (d. 1059 / 1648), born and educated in Damascus, migrated to Iran where he gained extreme respect from Shah Abbas. He authored many books and commentaries. He engaged in the production of silk along with his academic pursuits. Therefore he was called *Hariri* (silk manufacturer) (ibid. 4:49). Abd al-Qadir al-Aydarus' (d. 1038 / 1628) ancestors came from Hadramut. He was born to a Hadrami father and Indian mother at Ahmadabad, and became a great scholar of his time. He authored a number of works which received the appreciation of *ulama* from Yemen, Egypt and many other countries (ibid. 2: 440-42). One of his most famous works on the history of this period is *al-Nur al-Safir `an Akhbar al-Qarn al-`Ashir*. Shaykh Abd Allah Sindhi taught at Makkah (ibid. 3:8) Abd-Allah Bafaqih a scholar of 11<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> century traveled to India from Hadramut to exchange ideas with the Indian scholars. He also had a deep knowledge of chemistry. (ibid. 3: 39). Shaykh al-Jufri (d. 1063 / 1652), after his early education in his home village Taris in Yemen, traveled to India where he completed his education under the top scholars of the country and then returned to the Hijaz (ibid 2:236-37). Some *ulama* traveled to India to study medicine and other rational sciences (ibid. 1: 482). Works of Muhammad al-Maghribi (d. 1094 / 1682) reached India and were widely circulated (ibid. 4:206). Al-Maghribi, himself a Maliki, authored many

works related to Hanafi schools. He had knowledge of all existing sciences. He also knew music (ibid. p. 207). He presented a very comprehensive collection of *Hadith* works on the pattern of *Jami` al-Usul* by Ibn Athir (ibid. p. 206).

9. Al-Muhibbi mentioned a number of such *ulama*. A selected list is given below: Abu Talib al-Alawi (d. 1055 / 1645) born in Hadarmut, migrated to India, taught there and in the last days of his life, he returned to his native land but died on the way in Oman (ibid. 1:131). Shaykh Ahmad al-Aydarus (born in Tarim in 949 / 1542) traveled to Ahmadabad and Bharuch and settled there, died in 1024 / 1615 (ibid. I: 218). Abd al-Baqi al-Tuhayti (d. 1074 / 1664) a religious man of Tahtah near Zabid in Yemen learned the Naqshabandi order from Taj al-Din al-Hindi and became his successor (Muhibbi, 2:283). Indians had great respect and devotion to the pious Hadrami Abd al-Jami` b. Abu Bakr (d. 1082 / 1671) (ibid. 2:299). Abd al-Hamid al-Sindi (d. 1009 / 1600), after acquiring full knowledge and expertise in Shariah sciences in his native state Sindh, migrated to Makkah where he benefited others scholars. He died and was buried beside his elder brother's grave in Jannat al-Ma`la (ibid. 2: 327-28). Abd-Allah al-Yamani (d. 1037 / 1627), after acquiring an education from the *ulama* of his country Yemen, headed to India and reached Ahmadabad to benefit from scholar of that city (ibid. 3:61). Alawi Jamal al-Layl (d. 1054 / 1644) traveled twice to India from Yemen and received great respect from the Indian ruler (ibid. 3:121). Another Alawi al-Jufri (d. 1061 / 1650) had also visited India (ibid). Umar Ba Shayban (d. 1066 / 1655) originally a Hadrami born in India, traveled Arabia to benefit from scholars of the region and finally came to Belgam (a city in southern India) and engaged in teaching. He used to help students financially and with books (ibid. 3:215). Muhammad al-Saqqaf (d. 1048 / 1638) religious man who frequently traveled to different countries, also traveled to India (al-Muhibbi, 3:403). Muhammad al-Hadrami (d. 1019 / 1610) authored many books in the form of poetry. In his youth, he traveled throughout India (ibid. 3:492). Muhammad al-Aydarus (d. 1030 / 1620) from Tarim traveled to Ahmadabad for advanced Shar`iah learning and settled there (ibid. 4:26). Muhammad al-Saqqaf (d. 1071 / 1660) left for India to study under the great scholars. In later years he returned to Makkah (ibid. 4:42-43). Muhammad b. Fadl-Allah Burhanpuri (d. 1029 / 1619) a sufi of *wahdat al-wajud*, attracted the attention of the *ulama* of Arabia. Ibrahim al-Kurani of Madinah wrote a commentary on it (ibid. 4:110).
10. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/17th\\_century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/17th_century) (retrieved on 5. 2, 2007)
11. Praising the system Gibb and Bowen (1965, 1:2 p.153) remark: "While some of their intellectual activities may have been misdirected and their initiative stifled by the cramped sphere in which they moved, the historians

must recognize that it was due to them, and to the work of the religious brotherhoods, that the civilization of Islam did not founder in the cataclysms of the later medieval centuries. Seen in this light, even their narrowness and unyielding grip of tradition becomes understandable and justified, since their task was indeed to hold society together in a period of confusion and economic decline, when it could not afford to take the risk of intellectual adventure".

12. "In its earliest, primitive phase" writes Lewis, "Islam has been open to influences from the Hellenistic Orient, from Persia, even from India and China. Many works were translated into Arabic from Greek, Syriac, and Persian. But with the solitary exception of the late Latin chronicle of Orosius, not a single translation into a Muslim language is known of any Latin or Western work until the sixteenth century, when one or two historical and geographical works were translated into Turkish" (Lewis, 1968, p.34).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### WORKS OF ECONOMIC INTEREST

Our search and research into the economic ideas of Muslim scholars has shown that in the seventeenth century, writings on socio-economic problems considerably declined. We could not find any work similar to those that Muslim scholars wrote in the fifteenth century, such as Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, Maqrizi's *Ighathah*, al-Asadi's *Tahrir* or Ibn al-Azraq's *Bada'i al-Silk fi Taba'i al-Mulk*. No doubt, the fifteenth century was the peak of Muslim intellectuals' works on social, political, cultural and economic problems. Even works similar to those of the sixteenth century scholars like Ibn Nujaym (d. 970/1563), al-Balatumusi (d. 936 / 1530), Khunji (d. 927 / 1521), etc. could not be traced. As the seventeenth century marked political decline and intellectual stagnation, we find that writers of the period lost their interest in non-traditional subjects. Thus, very scarcely they wrote on socio-economic problems. And of whatever was written, a very small portion of it is accessible to researchers. There is no denial that a huge amount is still lying in manuscript form in various libraries of the world. However, there is thinking that if there were any remarkable works, they must have (by now) attracted the attention of scholars. But the possibility of oversight should not be ignored. We must admit that our study is based on literature to which we had an access. Absence of knowledge does not necessarily mean absence of existence.

#### 1. Works on commentary, jurisprudence and legal decrees

In the past, works of *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh* and *fatawa* were important sources of the economic ideas of Muslims. During the seventeenth century, a large number of books were written in Arabic on these subjects. A substantial number of them are still available. For example: In Hanafi *fiqh* we have *Sharh Tanwir al-Absar* known as *al-Durr al-Mukhtar* and *Sharh Multaqa al-Ab'hur* entitled *al-Durr al-Muntaqa* by Muhammad al-Haskafi (d. 1088 / 1676) and *al-Fatawa al-Khayriyah* by Khayr al-Din al-Ramli (d. 1081 / 1669). In Shafi'i *fiqh* we have *Hashiyah 'ala Sharh al-Minhaj* by Ali al-Shubbaramallisi (d. 1087/1675) and Abd al-Qadir al-Fayyumi's (d. 1022 / 1613) enhanced commentary on the *Minhaj* of al-Nawawi. Ali al-Ujhuri (d. 1066 / 1655), Salim al-Sinhuri (d. 1015 / 1606) and Muhammad al-Khurashi (d. 1104 / 1690) wrote commentaries on *Mukhtasar Khalil*, an authentic source on Maliki jurisprudence. The great Hanbali scholar of the period Mansur al-Buhuti (d. 1051 / 1641) presented

commentaries on *Iqna'* and *Muntaha al-Iradat* by al-Taqi al-Futuhi. All these works attracted the attention of scholars and they are still used as reference books in various schools of jurisprudence. In writing the commentary or commentary over commentary and in addition to repetition, generally they concentrated on the explanation of the literary meaning of words, their use in terminology, correct pronunciation, grammatical elucidation, citation of the opinions of past scholars, their differences, reconciliation or strong and preferred opinion, presentation of evidences and textual support. Their main characteristic has been the vastness of knowledge and not originality. These details may be useful for general readers and jurists but have little advantage for economic researchers.

From this literature, only works of *fatawa* may provide some insights into our discipline, as they came in response to various new problems, (including socio-economic), faced by the society. In the following section we introduce such works:

***Al-Fatawa al-Khayriyah.*** The *fatawa* of Khayr al-Din al-Ramli, known as *al-Fatawa al-Khayriyah*, was compiled into its final form in 1081/1670. It could prove to be a most authentic source for the intellectual history of seventeenth century Muslims, but unfortunately no significant attention has been paid to usage of this source. This collection could have been utilized as a general source relating to the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire or as a unique contemporary document containing vital information about the central features of life in seventeenth century Arab region, such as customs, and education, religious rituals and observance, as well as legal, communal and economic relations. This neglect on the part of scholars is deplorable (Seikaly, 1984, p. 397).

In the opinion of Seikaly (1984, p. 400) 'Khayr al-Din's legal injunctions were not armchair reactions to hypothetical cases but represented actual prescriptions elicited by concrete situations'. Beside their relevance as a contemporary record, the *Fatawa* provide us with an internal and complex view of agrarian relations (Seikaly, 1984, p. 401). Khayr al-Din's opinions bear pragmatic dimensions as he was not only a jurist but a farmer as well who owned land and cultivated it. He imported from Egypt a variety of seeds and introduced them into his home district Ramlah. Thus he obtained knowledge of agrarian conditions directly. In most cases, Khayr al-Din bases his decisions on the opinions of earlier Hanafi scholars or even contemporaries. However, he is not a mere follower. Sometimes he asserts his own opinion with the word '*wa ana aqul* (and I say.....)' (al-Ramli, 1311 AH, I. 96). In the next chapter we shall give his ideas concerning the agrarian relations derived from this work.

***Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah.*** It may be noted that all works of *fatawa* are not equally important for our period of study. Here we have such a collection. *Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah*, also known as *Fatawa-i Alamgiri* or *al-Fatawa al-Alamkiriyyah*, was compiled in Arabic at Awrangzeb Alamgir's order by a committee of eminent jurists under the supervision of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Burhanpuri (d.1092 / 1680). Consisting of five volumes, it is a collection of authentic, accepted and preferred rules and opinions in Hanafi jurisprudence. It is an extract of more than one hundred past works of *fiqh* and *fatawa* and arranged on the pattern of *fiqh* books. It took eight years to complete. It was started around 1050 / 1640 and completed in 1058 / 1648 (Nadwi, 2001, pp.6-7). Its main purpose was to save jurists and *qadis* from the toil of going through numerous works of *fiqh* and *fatawa* and finding preferred opinions from the disputed and conflicting opinions. Although *al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah* is a collection of rules and precepts from the past works of *fiqh* and *fatawa*, its collection reflects the conditions of the period in the sense that out of various decrees, the one pertinent to the period of compilation should have been selected.

A comparative study conducted on Awrangzeb's *Farman*<sup>1</sup> (the royal decree) on land tax and the corresponding dicta in the *Fatawa-i Alamgiri*, (chapter on tithe and land tax) showed that the 'contents of the *farman* were borrowed from *Fatawa's* discussion of land revenue administration' (Zafarul-Islam, 1990, p. 70). It is also revealed that the *fatawa* could not be implemented in full in the changing situation of Mughal India. Only a few modified rules were selected (ibid), such as the peasants' right of permanent and hereditary occupation, ownership rights on bringing un-owned waste land under cultivation, realization of the land tax in case the land is leased, mortgaged or sold by a peasant. All these provisions were borrowed from the *Fatawa-i Alamgiri* (ibid, p. 72). These provision were very helpful to bind the farmers to their lands in a situation when the empire was facing the problem of peasants' flight and abandoning the land uncultivated (ibid. p. 70); thus affecting the government revenue adversely.

## **2. Works on *al-Hisbah* and *al-Siyasah al-Shar`iyah*.**

In the Islamic tradition two types of writings – works on *al-hisbah* and works on *al-siyasah al-shar`iyah* – proved a rich source of economic thought<sup>2</sup>.

In the Ottoman period, the jurisdiction and functions of *al-muhtasib* (in-charge of the *hisbah* office) increased, (Ata-Allah, 1991, Vol. 1, pp. 115, 120-24, 145,149, 203). Surprisingly, we could not trace any exclusive writing on *hisbah* or *ihtisab* as it was generally known by this term<sup>3</sup>. In view of the

importance of *hisbah* or *ihtisab*, there is a probability of writing on this institution in the seventeenth century as well and it would not be surprising if some day it is discovered. But we admit that during our research we could not trace any such work.

Works on *al-siyasah al-shar'iyah* or *shar'iyah* governance are known in the Persian tradition as "mirrors for princes". We have a number of such works in the period under study. As noted above in Chapter Two, the failure of the second siege of Vienna, the series of defeats that followed after it, and the humiliating treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, led to soul searching and introspection among a number of Ottoman scholars. Qoji Beg, Katib Chalapi, Naima and Sari Pasha are the most prominent thinkers who wrote on the causes of Ottoman decline and suggested steps for reform and the restoration of the diminishing power and prestige of the Empire. Works of these writers come under the category of 'mirror for princes'. They suggest many economic measures to strengthen the government and improve the condition of masses. They wrote these works in Turkish because they mainly addressed the Ottoman Sultans whose mother tongue was Turkish. Only few of them could be translated into English or Arabic. We discovered information on a book in the Arabic language entitled: *al-Jawahir al-Mudi'ah fi Bayan al-A'dab al-Sultaniyah* by Abd al-Ra'uf al-Munawi (d. 1031/1621) but failed to trace it. In the next chapter we shall examine the economic contents in Turkish literature on the topic which we were able to find through various studies done in English. Below is a brief introduction to such works and their authors:

**Resale (Risalah = treatise).** Qoji Beg wrote a report on the state of the empire in 1630 who 'in unusually clear language described the degeneration of the empire and enumerated the causes in his treatise, *Resaleh*. Among other things, he mentioned that the sultan had made himself 'invisible', preoccupied, as he was, in his *harem* life. Because of the influence of the harem 'the sultan no longer governs himself and neither is the grand *vazir* allowed to do so; power is actually in the hands of negro eunuchs and purchased slave girls'(Armajani, p. 190).

Qoji Beg (also called Gorijeli Qoja Mustafa Beg) was a native of Gorije (Gorca, Korytza) in Macedonia. He entered the palace service as a *devshirme* during the reign of Sultan Ahmad I and served under successive sultans. After retirement, he returned to his native land in the early years of Murad IV's reign. He gained the confidence of Sultan Murad IV (1623-40) and Sultan Ibrahim (1640-1648), and it is for his memoranda to these sultans that he is famous. His best work is his *Resale*, presented to Murad IV in 1040/1630, where he analyses the causes of Ottoman decline and suggests remedies.

According to Qoji Beg, *Shari`ah* is 'the basis of the existence and maintenance of empire and religion; its application is the necessary condition for the good order of both' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 226). He lays stress on the proper establishment and respect of the institution of *Shaykh al-Islam, qadi al-askar* and community of *ulama*. 'The rot set in when the offices of state were sold to the highest bidder and the *ulama* fell into disrepute as the result' (ibid).

***Nasihatinamah.*** About fifteen years later, during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim, an unknown author wrote a tract called *Nasihatinameh*, "Words of Advice". (Armajani, p. 190). However, this work is also attributed<sup>4</sup> to Qoji Beg. The *Nasihatinamah* is a straight-forward description of the various state institutions and government practices, interspersed with political maxims' (Imber, 1986, E. I. 5:249). Since its purpose was to guide the new (and totally inexperienced) Sultan, Ibrahim, he kept its language very simple. Lewis (1968, p. 22n) observes: 'Kocu Bey (Qoji Beg), an Ottoman official of Macedonian or Albanian birth, was recruited by the *devshirme* and joined the palace staff, where he became the intimate adviser of Sultan Murad IV (1623-40). The memorandum which he composed for the Sultan in 1630 on the state and prospects of the Ottoman Empire has been greatly admired both in Turkey and among Western scholars, and led Hammer to call Kocu Bey 'the Turkish Montesquieu'.<sup>5</sup>

***Dustur al-'amal.*** According to Armajani (1970, p. 191), 'The greatest intellectual luminary of the seventeenth century in the Ottoman empire was the celebrated historian Haji Khalifha (Hajji Khalifah 1608-1657). One of his books, *Dustur al-'Amal*, "Manual for Action", is very much like the Persian *Mirror to Princes*. He repeated the old familiar maxim: "No state without *rijal*, 'men [of affairs]', no *rijal* without *mal* [Wealth], and no *mal* without subjects". Like Avicenna, he likened the state to a body with four pillars - *ulama*, army, merchants, and farmers, he claimed that the state was sick and diagnosed the reason for the illness as high taxation, oppression of the masses, and the sale of offices to the highest bidder'.

Mustafa b. Abd-Allah, known as Hajji Khalifah or the Katib Chalapi, was called Hajji Khalifah because he performed *hajj* and was Khalifah in his government department. The son of a 'standing' cavalryman and himself a secretary in one of the government offices, 'he deplored the neglect of the 'rational' sciences by the *ulama* of the *madrasahs*, and contrived to acquire from other sources a wide knowledge of physics, astronomy, geometry, and geography; to give lessons in them himself; and to compose a number of remarkable works' (Gibb and Bowen 1:2, p. 152). He was 'the first Ottoman learned man to acquaint himself with European scientific thought and attempt to

introduce it into the Sultan's dominions' (Adnan, 1939, pp. 103-120, quoted by Gibb and Bowen 1:2, p. 152). His work *Jahan-numa* in cosmography was the first most important work printed after the introduction of the printing press in Turkey during the eighteenth century (ibid., p. 154). He is the author of a famous bibliographical dictionary called in Arabic *Kashf al-Zunun*. Katib Chalapi, while writing a work on geography, admitted that 'Muslim sources were inadequate for information of Christian lands. This was the situation when 'European literature had a vast body of writing on travel in the Levant' (Itzkowitz, 1980, p. 105). The Ottomans were only concerned with the political developments of Europe. They paid little heed to deeper and more significant developments in the intellectual, scientific and technological spheres' (ibid., p. 106). They tried to find the solution to their problems in past events. 'There was no thought of innovation, no willingness to experiment with new institutions' (ibid., p. 107).

In 1653, he wrote *Dustur al-Amal fi Islah al-Khalal* (*The Guide to Practice for the Rectification of Defects*) in which 'he remarked that only the appearance on the scene of a "man of the sword" could save the Ottomans' (Itzkowitz, 1980, 99). Most of the measures of reform which he suggested fall under economic spheres such as 'to reverse the treasury's deficit', limit the excessive growth of the army and restore the peasantry to prosperity' (ibid).

Katib Chalapi (1608-57) in his work *Dustur al-'Amal* writes: 'The social conditions of man correspond to his individual condition, and in most matters the one is parallel to the other ..... First of all, the natural life of man is reckoned in three stages, the years of growth, the years of stasis, and the years of decline. Though the times of these three stages are ordained in individuals, nevertheless these times vary according to the strength or weakness of individual constitutions .... and the stages also vary in different societies' (Quoted by Lewis, 1968, p. 210). This is reminiscent of Ibn Khaldun's five phases through which the state runs within four generations<sup>6</sup>.

Hajji Khalifah's *Dustur* is of 'special interest by reason of its semi-philosophical superstructure, which links it with al-Dawwani and Ibn Khaldun' (Rosenthal, p. 226).

The author of *Dustur al-amal* Hajji Khalifah had experience of the working of the Ottoman government as an official in the fiscal administration. 'Speaking of signs of abnormality and disharmony in the affairs and forces of the Ottoman empires, he gives this as the reason for his treatise, written in response to an inquiry ordered by the sultan' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 228).

**Tarikh Naima.** Born in Aleppo around 1665, Naima migrated to Istanbul in 1685 and joined the halberdier corps of the imperial palace where he was trained as a secretary. In the preface to his court chronicle of seventeenth century Ottoman history, *The Garden of Husayn, Being the Choicest of News of the East and West*, he convincingly defended Husayn Kuprili's conclusion of the Treaty of Karlowitz. In this respect, he drew principally upon the ideas and schema of Ibn Khaldun and Katib Chalabi. He justified the signing of the Karlowitz treaty with the example of the peace treaty of Hudaibiah, which was entered into between Prophet Muhammad (b.p.u.h.) and the Makkan infidels in 6<sup>th</sup> AH / 627 AD (Itzkowitz, 1980, pp. 100-101).

Like Hajji Khalifah, Naima also based his prescription for the decaying phase of the Ottoman empire on Ibn Khaldun's theory, who states in his *Muqaddimah* that 'a dynasty, like an individual, grows up, enters into a period of stagnation, and then retrogress. Each period corresponds to the life time of a person, set at some forty years' (ibid). Itzkowitz observes that Naima expands Ibn Khaldun's theory and postulates 'five stages in the life of a state'<sup>7</sup>: the heroic period of its establishment, the period of consolidation under the dynasty and its slave-servants, the period of security and tranquility, the period of contentment and surfeit and finally the period of disintegration (ibid. pp. 101-102). By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman state was passing through the stage of contentment and surfeit. In fact, these stages are predicted by Ibn Khaldun himself.

**Nasihah al-Wuzara' wa'l-Umara** or *Guldeste* (*Guldastah* = flowerbed). Its author, Sari Mehmed Pasha, was one of the few Ottoman statesmen who were deeply concerned over the decline of the Empire after the end of the sixteenth century and left descriptions of contemporary conditions, together with suggestions for reform. During the first two decades of the eighteenth century, Sari Mehmed Pasha several times held the office of Chief *Defterdar*, or Treasurer of the Empire, and was for many years a member of the Divan or Council of the State; through which all important government business passed. He therefore writes with authority both on the Treasury and administration in general during a period of exceptionally rapid decline' (Wright, 1935, pp. VII-VIII). The author was himself an integral part of the Ottoman system and concerned himself primarily with matters which had come to his personal attention'. Although he died in the eighteenth century, the major part of Sari Pasha's life falls in the seventeenth century. The exact date of his work is not known but it is estimated that it was written in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Since the book falls in the same line of works mentioned above, it seems appropriate to include him among the writers of seventeenth century.

Of Sari Pasha's early life, no details are found. Between the ages of twelve and fifteen years he was employed in the Treasury office as an apprentice. This was in the year 1082/1671. This means that he was born during 1070s / 1650s. In 1114/1703 he was appointed chief *defterdar* or treasurer of the Empire. Until his execution in 1129/1717 he was appointed and sacked several times to various government positions

'As *defterdar* or treasurer Mehmed Pasha had been in close and long continued contact with the financial side of the administration and therefore had ample opportunity to observe its many defects' (ibid. p. 17) '... he makes no clear distinction between what writers of the present day would classify separately as political, economic and ethical subjects' (ibid). Mehmed Pasha 'felt deeply the weakness in moral fiber of the official class of his day and regarded this as one of the principal reasons for the decline of the Ottoman Empire from its splendor under the great sultans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' (ibid. p. 18).

Sari Pasha 'often quotes from earlier works. His most frequently used source is the *Hadith* ... In addition to this there were several quotations from the Koran and from the *Asaf-name* of *Lutfi Pasha* who was grand Vezir under Selim I. and Suleman the Magnificent' (ibid. p. 18). 'The *Kitab -Guldeste* is divided into nine chapters and a prefatory exordium. These are of very unequal length'. No doubt, 'much useful information is provided regarding the condition of the empire in the time of the writer ..... like all Ottoman writers on the subject, he had always in mind a picture of the glorious times of Sultan Suleyman as the standard with which he compared later conditions' 'Renovation rather than evolution was his aim.

Following is the content of his book.

First Chapter: Explanation regarding the behavior and habits of the Grand Vezir.

Second Chapter: Explanation regarding the official position and the harmfulness of bribes.

Third Chapter: Explanation regarding the behavior of the Secretary of the Treasury and of the holders of office.

Fourth Chapter: Explanation regarding the Bektashi Corps.

Fifth Chapter: Explanation regarding the condition of the *Rayas* and the harmfulness of tyranny and oppression of the poor.

Sixth Chapter: Explanation regarding the state of the Ever-Victorious Frontier and qualities of commanders.

Seventh Chapter: Explanation concerning avarice of liberality, greed and covetousness, pride and envy, humility and arrogance, good temper and bad temper and hypocrisy.

Eighth Chapter: Explanation regarding faithful friendship and the harmfulness of calumny and backbiting.

Ninth Chapter: Explanation regarding the state of the *Zi'amet* and *Timar*.

### 3. Works on Social and Economic Problems

In Islamic history, right from its beginning up to its flourishing days, there had been works dealing on economic issues like public finance, market rules ..., money and inflation, etc. As noted above, such writings reached their zenith in the ninth/fifteenth century in which we saw works of Ibn Khaldun, al-Maqrizi, al-Asadi and Ibn al-Azraq. Writing in the subsequent centuries did not stop. Some of the works of the sixteenth century were published. But in the first instance, they were not up to the mark of earlier works. Secondly, due to non-originality, they lost attraction. As far the eleventh/seventeenth century is concerned, in this period, too, some works on Social and Economic Problems have been reported but their whereabouts is not certain. We could not get any published work of this nature.

Al-Ramli (1311, 2:151, 184-85) reports that Taqi al-Din al-Husni, a Shafi'i scholar of Damascus wrote a full treatise on the condemnation of extra-legal and oppressive taxation. Economic discussions like validity and feasibility of cash *waqf* continued in this period. Al-Muhibbi (2: 126) mentions that the Hanafi al-Din b. Abd al-Rahman al-Umari (d. 1067 / 1656), a Hanafi *mufti* in the Hijaz region, authored, among other works, a treatise on the refutation of the validity of replacing a *waqf* with cash *waqf*. But we could not obtain information from relevant sources whether this treatise has survived. Similarly, a work on royal *awqaf* by Mara'i b. Yusuf al-Karami (d. 1033 / 1623) entitled *Iqaf al-'Arifin 'ala Hukm Awqaf al-Salatin* (al-Muhibbi 4:360) too could not be traced. In bibliographies, we find one more work entitled *al-Burhan fi Awqaf al-Sultan* by Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Hijazi (d. 1035 / 1625) Sources have also

reported a work – *Taysir al Wuquf `ala Ghawamid Ahkam al-Wuquf* - by Abd al-Ra'uf al-Munawi. It may be noted that in *al-Fatawa al-Khayriyah* the longest chapter is on *waqf* administration and related issues. It covers more than a hundred pages [from p.115 to 219]. Besides this, various agrarian and urban property issues are also somehow related to *waqf* provisions.

#### 4. Miscellaneous works

***Maktubat-i-Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thani.*** Ahmad Sirhindi known as Mujaddid Alf Thani (Renovator at the Second Millennium) left three volumes of his letters addressed to scholars, administrators, the king, *sufis*, his sons, and disciples. These letters (except a few of them which were written in the Arabic language) were written in Persian, the official language of Mughal India. A selected and summarized version, translated into Urdu, has been prepared by Nasim Ahmad Faridi Amrohi which we have used as a source.

Sirhindi's *Maktubat* contain his views on various religious, social, political and economic issues.

***Ruqqa'at-i-Alamgiri or letters of Aurangzeb.*** *Ruqqa'at-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzeb* were collected and published by Inayat-Allah Khan, one of his principal secretaries. In these letters we find Aurangzeb giving advice to his sons about the duties of a king – how to govern the state by preserving order and peace in the kingdom and by protecting the person and property of the subjects. These letters are full of many fine and instructive passages from well-known poets and thus afford proof of Aurangzeb's Persian scholarship. Occasionally he reports advice received by his father Shahjahan. Many Qur'anic verses are quoted in these letters. This shows he was well-versed in the Qur'an which he had learnt by heart. We conclude this chapter with certain excerpts from this work to have an idea regarding the economic contents of these letters.

'The tolls on merchants and travelers bring forth every year Rs. 15000 to 16000, but the district treasurer and the police officer do not send to the royal treasury more than Rs. 1000 to 2000. Truly this is not collecting the tolls but robbing the king of his property. The use of the property of the people (by the king for his private expenses) is unlawful (Bilimoria, 1972, p. 52, No. LI).

'Able and intelligent servants are the source of increase of property and of a good name to their masters' (ibid, p. 55, No. LIII).

Awrangzeb quotes his father, "The order and management of the kingdom and property simply depend upon wisdom and justice. May God forbid, if an unworthy king attains the dignity of sovereignty and appoints ministers and nobles having no sound judgment to posts (in the kingdom), absolute disorder will prevail in the management of the country. Then follows the ruin and poverty of the subjects, and the country yields a reduced revenue and (thus) is ruined (ibid, p. 55, No. LIV). (It may be noted that this evil prevailed among the Ottomans and many wise men had warned them of its consequences. The Mughal King himself was conscious of it). Aurangzeb addresses himself as 'humble creature' p.59, 'humble mortal' p. 56, 'needy person' p. 88, 'sinner' p. 130.

'Though to weigh the entire body of a person against gold, silver, copper, corn, oil and other commodities is not a practice of the country of our ancestors and of the Mohammedans of this country (i.e. India), many needy and poor persons are benefited by this practice' (Bilimoria, 1972, p. 78, No. LXXVIII). This practice was known as '*tola dana*' (weighing charity) was common among the former Hindu Kings. Here Aurangzeb accepts this practice because of its beneficial effect on the poor. It is reported that in his later period he stopped it.

For Aurangzeb, the second caliph Umar b. Khattab was an inspiring personality. In a letter to one of his governors, he asked him to follow the rules suggested by the Caliph when he dispatched his governor (ibid, p. 94, No. XCIV).

'This sinner (i.e. Aurangzeb) wishes that no crime, especially oppression, should be perpetrated; the result will be that there will be order and peace in the kingdom. Kingship is not maintained without discipline' (ibid, pp. 130-31, No. CXXXII). The royal property belongs to the public. The king is the trustee and the officers are appointed by the king. None but the needy and the weak can claim a share of the property (ibid, p. 141, No. CXLVI).

Awrangzeb preached simplicity in dress. 'Man should put on a simple and durable dress. Ornament and fashion are the peculiar characteristics of women. These things are proper for women' (Bilimoria, 1972, p. 141, No. CXLVII).

'The evil passion does not allow man to do good acts and to store up provisions for the next life. Otherwise people would know that it is bad to practice oppression, but it is worse to encourage it. To render services to the avaricious is to kill the poor. To be thoroughly conscious of responsibility of the judgment of the next life which is doubted is a difficult task' (Bilimoria, 1972, p. 146, No. CLII). These letters show that the Emperor was a great supporter of

justice and great opponent of tyranny and oppression. 'You should select God-fearing and virtuous men, look carefully into their character, and appoint them, so that both you and I will be free from responsibility on the Day of Judgment' (ibid, p. 165, No. CLXXE).

## Endnotes

1. This *farman* was sent to Muhammad Hashim (1669) the *diwan* of Gujarat. For details refer to Zafarul-Islam, 1990, pp. 69, 70, 79n.
2. On *hisbah* we had works by al-Shayzari, Ibn al-Ukhuwwah, Ibn Bassam, al-Jarsifi, Ibn Taymiyah, al-Uqbani, Ibn Abdun, Ibn Abd al-Rauf, and al-Saqati.

Works on *siyasa shar'iyah* in the past include Abu Yusuf's *Kitab al-Kharaj, Da'aim al-Islam* by Abu Hanifah al-Nu'mn al-Isma'ili, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah* each by Abu Yala al-Farra and al-Mawardi, *Siyasat Namah* by Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi, *al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Muluk* by al-Ghazali, *Siraj al-Muluk* by al-Turtushi., *Qabus Namah* by Kay Kaus, *al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah* by Ibn Taymiyah, *Tahrir al-Ahkam fi Tadbir Ahl al-Islam* by Ibn Jama'ah (all in chronological order starting from 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Century to 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Century). In addition to rules for good governance, these works have been a rich source of Islamic political economy.

3. Tash Kuprizadah, a sixteenth Century author who presented a valuable bibliography of works written in the Ottoman empire, complained about the absence of writing on *hisbah* or *ihtisab*. However, in our study on *Muslim economic thinking and institutions in the 10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century* we could trace at least two titles but they contained hardly any new ideas (Islahi, 2007, p. 87). That may be the reason for not attracting the attention of scholars.
4. Another treatise entitled *Nasihatanamah*, attributed to Qoji Beg, was apparently compiled from memoranda submitted to Sultan Ibrahim on the Sultan's orders. The same treatise is attributed to the Grand Vizier Kemankesh Kara Mustafa Pasha (Imber, 1986, E. I. 5:249).
5. Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (before January 18, 1689 in Bordeaux – February 10, 1755), was a French social commentator and political thinker who lived during the Era of the Enlightenment. He is famous for his articulation of the theory of separation of powers, taken for granted in modern discussions of government and implemented in many constitutions throughout the world. He was largely responsible for the popularization of the terms feudalism and Byzantine Empire. Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_de\\_Secondat%2C\\_baron\\_de\\_Montesquieu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_de_Secondat%2C_baron_de_Montesquieu) [Accessed on 22. 9. 2007]

6. Following is a summarized account of these stages as discussed in *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun:

Supported and strengthened by group feeling and social cohesion a new dynasty comes into being by over throwing all opposition. This is the first stage. ‘In this stage the ruler serves as a model to his people by the manner in which he acquires glory, collects taxes, defends property and provides military protection’ (I: 353). On another occasion he says: “...that at the beginning the dynasty has a desert attitude. ... It has the qualities of kindness to subjects, planned moderation in expenditures, and respect of other people’s property. It avoids onerous taxation and the display of cunning or shrewdness in the collection of money and the accounting (required) from officials. Nothing at this stage calls for extravagant expenditure. Therefore the dynasty does not need much money” (II: 122-23).

In the second stage ‘the ruler gains complete control over his people, claims royal authority all for himself excluding them and prevents them from trying to have a share in it’ (I: 353). Thus it is a stage of stabilization and consolidation of forces, strengthening further the group feeling and rewarding his supporters through benevolent expenditure.

The third stage is the stage of economic prosperity and enjoyment of the ‘fruits of royal authority’. Increasing attention is paid to collection of taxes, administration of public revenue and expenditure. Development of cities, construction of large buildings, increase in allowances of officials and general public attract the attention. The burden of luxurious expenditure and taxation increases even though tranquility and contentment prevail. ‘This stage is last during which the ruler is in complete authority. Throughout this and the previous stages, the rulers are independent in their opinion. They build up their strength and show the way for those after them’ (I: 354-55).

In the fourth stage, ‘the ruler is content with what his predecessors have built: He limits his activities, ‘follows closely in their footsteps’ (ibid.). He takes no initiative by himself. Expansion in politico-economic power stops and some sort of stagnation starts.

In the fifth stage, the ruler indulges in extravagance, lives an extra-luxurious life, wastes the resources accumulated by previous rules. Incompetent and unqualified followers are entrusted with the most important matters of the state. Idle court men are rewarded, and sincere critics are humiliated and punished. The ruler loses all kind of sympathy and group feeling. In this stage taxes increase, while revenue declines. The

economy is shattered and social system is disturbed. The government suffers from incurable disease, which leads to its downfall (ibid.) and the takeover by a new dynasty, supported by a strong group.

7. These stages have been mentioned by Ibn Khaldun himself. See the note no. 6 above

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STATE OF MUSLIM ECONOMIC THINKING

It is said that economic thought is a reflection of the economic conditions. This is most correct in the case of eleventh/seventeenth century Muslim economic thinking. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the period was highly stagnant in the intellectual sphere. Imitation and commentary writing and in many cases commentary-over-commentary was the trend in academic circles. But this does not mean that economic thinking stopped. In fact, wherever there is an economic problem, there is economic thinking. And seventeenth century Muslim economic thinking revolves around the problems faced by the society. Following are the major issues and related discussions:

#### 1. Corruption the root cause of decay

In the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire saw many ups and downs but towards the end of the century, the decadence was very obvious, and a continuous downtrend set in. Intellectuals of the period worried about this situation. They were unanimous that the root cause of this decay was corruption.

It may be noted that even at present, corruption is considered as the major factor that makes the development efforts of developing countries ineffective or neutral<sup>1</sup>. This verifies that in their diagnosis of the causes of decay, the Ottoman scholars were very precise and up to date.

One of the worst kinds of corruption was the sale of offices. Its result was that corrupt and incapable persons occupied the positions. Almost all the Ottoman thinkers of the period are unanimous on this issue. Qoji Beg's contention is that the spread of 'corruption had brought about the decline in the old institutions and bred disrespect for the Shari'ah and the old laws (*Kanun*)' (Imber, 1986, E I, 5:249). To regain past glory, the Empire has to be cleaned from corruption and respect for the Shariah and *Qanun* has to be restored. Frequent wrongful dismissal of officers and religious and judicious position holders is another course of decline (ibid.).

The anonymous author of *Nasihah-namah*<sup>2</sup> also complained about corruption and the sale of taxes to the highest bidder for collection. His advice, presumably to the Sultan, is to lower taxes and pay officials and the army, rather than let them loose among the peasants. His plea was for the imposition of fixed taxes and for the appointment of pious Muslims as tax collectors (Armajani, pp. 190-91). He denounces the auctioning of tax-lists to the highest bidder, since the poor subjects are the principal victims (Rosenthal, 1968, p.227).

While discussing the sickness of the present state, Hajji Khalifah points out that the disease is 'too heavy taxation with consequent oppression of the masses, and the sale and resale of offices in order to enrich the individual at the expense of the masses. This happens openly although such misuse and abuse is condemned by both natural and religious law; it goes against justice and reason' (Rosenthal, 1968. p. 230). He further states: 'since even infidel kings oppose such practices as unjust, it is incumbent on Muslims (who were given the divine Law) to repent and to return to justice. Offices must no longer be sold and resold and taxes must be reduced, otherwise the curse for the transgression of the law and the guilt of injustice and oppression and violence will lead to the certain ruin of the empire' (ibid. p. 230).

A common form of corruption was to dismiss an honest officer and offering his position to a higher bidder, even if the latter was incapable and dishonest. This had surely added to the problem. To cure this, Hajji Khalifah suggests: 'Keep uncorrupt men in office for a long time and forbid the buying and selling of offices; punish severely those who oppress the people. In a few years the people will regain strength, and prosperity will return to the realm' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 232).

Sari Pasha Defterdar has shown how corruption affects the state and the economy. 'If it becomes necessary to give a position because of bribes, in this way its holder has permission from the government for every sort of oppression stretching out the hand of violence and tyranny against the poor subjects .... destroys the wretched peasants and ruins the cultivated lands; ..... it causes a decline in the productivity of the subjects and in the revenue of the treasury ....' (Defterdar, 1935, p. 89). 'To give office to the unfit because of bribery is a very great sin' (ibid. p. 90). He emphasizes appointing capable, competent people for the finance office (ibid. p. 95).

From the preceding account, it is clear that in the seventeenth century, Ottoman rule was suffering from four types of corruption: a. sale of offices to highest bidders, b. allocation of tax farming to one who offered the highest

price, c. allocation of offices and tax farming to incompetent and unworthy palace nominees, and d. dismissal of honest officers who did not comply with misrule to appease their bosses. These evils were so obvious that all the good thinkers of the empire condemned them and suggested remedies. They opposed the sale of offices; suggested change in the taxation system; and demanded retaining the honest and worthy officers for a fairly longer period so that they got enough time to correct the house.

## 2. Agrarian Relations

Qoji Beg recommended that the old sound *timar* system<sup>3</sup> should be restored. All bad innovations (*bid'at*) and oppressive rules should be abolished and a just and religious atmosphere should be promoted (Imber, 1986, E I 5:249).

Qoji Beg does not realize that the *timar* and *sipahi*<sup>4</sup> systems turned obsolete and corrupt. Lewis writes: 'Both Kocu Bey (Qoji Beg) and Haci Halife (Hajji Khalifah) note and deplore the decline of the *sipahis* and the increase in the paid soldiery which, says Haci Halife, had increased from 48000 in 1567 to 100,000 in about 1620'. On this Lewis comments: "Both writers are aware of the harmful financial and agrarian effects of this change. Understandably, they miss the point that the obsolescence of the *sipahi* had become inevitable, and that only the long-term, professional soldier could serve the military needs of the time" (Lewis, 1968, p. 30).

While dealing with the army, 'he (Qoji Beg) discusses at length the states of those in possession of large and small fiefs and those who receive pay. He strongly advises the abandonment of payment and a return to reward in the form of fiefs' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 226). In his opinion, 'this will help to improve the lot of the poor subjects (*ra'aya*) who are at present oppressed by heavy taxation' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 226).

Qoji Beg, like his predecessor Lutfi Pasha<sup>5</sup> urged that peasantry be protected by moderation in taxation and by regular censure of village population, as a control on the competence of provincial government (Lewis, 1968, p. 32).

Sari Pasha tries to convince his readers with the old saying: 'For it has been said: "Without men of consequence there are no rulers and without property there are no men of consequence, and without prosperity there is no wealth and without justice and good administration there is no prosperity (Defterdar, 1935,

p. 119). This is a well known Arabic maxim of statecraft quoted by many wise men. Sari Pasha pays special attention to the institution of *ziamet*<sup>6</sup> and *timar*. 'The condition of the *ziamet* and *timar* is also one of the matters of which careful thought should be given in the interests of good order in government' (ibid, p. 142).

In the seventeenth century great Muslim Empires, both Ottomans and Mughals faced the problem of the flight of the farmers from their fields, leaving the land uncultivated. This affected the state revenue adversely. Khayr al-Din al-Ramli advocated the peasants' right to self-determination in occupational sense. He emphasized the termination of all forms of peasant oppression with the aim of bringing about an end to their desertion (Seikaly, 1984, p. 406). It appears from his *Fatawa* that oppressive taxation and forced labor was the reason behind the flight of farmers from their lands (al-Ramli, 1311, I:100). However, he is against the farmers who keep the fertile lands uncultivated. Such people cannot be excused. The due *kharaj* will be charged whether they cultivate the land or refrain from it (ibid., p. 100). Thus, he does not want to encourage the phenomenon of absconding from cultivation of lands.

In the earlier period, the *timar* system had underpinned the Empire's former military strength. It was allocated to deserving persons. Now the palace nominees and unworthy people received *timar*. This is the reason behind the resentment among the troops. According to Khayr al-Din, many of them contravened the original terms of their grants and used to dispose of them by outright sale or sub-letting (al-Ramli, 1311 AH, 2:102).

The tenants were exploited and charged with oppressive taxes. He was against bonded laborers (al-Ramli, 2:184-185). 'In fact, throughout the *Fatawa*, Khayr al-Din not only consistently reiterated the peasant's right to relinquish cultivation voluntarily; he also bitterly attacked any attempts to thwart it' (Seikaly, 1984, p. 404). Thus, he can be considered as the champion of peasants' rights at a time when their condition was most neglected.

The Mughal emperor realized that the problem of peasants' flight could be solved by implementing the Islamic provision regarding land ownership<sup>7</sup>. So he issued a *farman* in which he included such provisions taken from *al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah* (Zafarul-Islam, 1990, pp. 72, 77).

### 3. Economics of Taxation

As we noted above, increasing expenditure and decreasing income was the burning issue of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. This widened the deficit gap in the public treasury. The measures taken to meet the gap generally added to the problem. The tax farming worsened the situation. Rosenthal (1968, p.227) explains: 'The tax farmer first sees what the actual amount of the tax is. To this he adds the bribe that he had to pay to getting the tax collection allotted to himself and the profit or his own reward. Burden of this accumulated amount falls on the poor tax payer'. Excessive taxation has impoverished the subjects. Naturally this attracted the attention of Ottoman thinkers. As a remedy, Qoji Beg suggested cleansing the society from corruption. Worthy men should be appointed to administrative positions, and no interference should be made in their functioning (Imber, 1986, E I 5:249).

*Nasihatanamah* also contains ideas of lowering taxes and the reorganization of the pay of the army and officials. According to Rosenthal (1968, p. 227), 'The chapter on taxes is particularly interesting because it reveals an extra-ordinary state of affairs'. The author of *Nasihatanamah* stresses that the *ra'aya* are the treasure of the Padishahs. As long as they enjoy prosperity and are not oppressed, the treasury is full ..... They must be protected against injustice and oppression" (quoted by Rosenthal, 1968, p. 227). This is reminiscent of Ibn Khaldun who pointed out the disastrous effects of oppressive taxation and advocated the lowering of taxes to increase the revenue – an idea that came to be known in the twentieth century as Laffer's curve.<sup>8</sup>

In the third chapter of *Dustur al-'amal*, Hajji Khalifah deals with public finance. He uses the analogy of the human being in which rational soul is the sultan, the reasoning faculty is the vizier, comprehension faculty is represented by the *mufti* and so forth for all grades and degrees of the administrative hierarchy. 'Only this well-arranged hierarchy working in unison guarantees the even flow and distribution of public money. Officials must be absolutely incorruptible in order to preserve the population from oppression, injustice and poverty' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 231). The decadence sets in as the government, with all its organs, decays. It begins from the top and reaches to the bottom. Luxury and extravagance makes the expenditure out of all proportion to income. In this analysis Hajji Khalifah is in line with Ibn Khaldun's diagnosis<sup>9</sup>.

In the opinion of Rosenthal (1968, pp. 231-32) Hajji Khalifah's *Dustur al-'amal* seems to be like a counsel of despair when the latter says that at the moment of the composition of the treatise 'the solution is a strongman. However, the author suggests to restrict expenditure and appoint only

committed and capable persons to important affairs'. "This will cut excessive expenditure within a few years or at least reduce taxes and thus alleviate the financial straits of the people." In brief we can say that the three writers – Qoiji Beg, the author of *Nasihatnamah* and Hajji Khalifah - show remarkable similarity in their assessment of the situation and in their suggestions of practical measures to stop the decline and restore the power and stability of the Ottoman Empire. However, Hajji Khalifah is a category of his own. 'This distinction is due to the theoretical superstructure, frame and form in which he presents his views' (Rosenthal, 1968, pp. 232).

Naima prescribes five measures to save the Ottoman state; they are of the nature of the economic, political and moral. Economic measures are: First, the government should balance income and expenditure. Second, the government should pay its stipends and salaries on time, which would quiet outbursts against the government (Itzkowitz, 1980, p. 102). He does not suggest how it could be done when the government is facing severe deficit.

In the affairs of the Treasury, Mehmed Pasha was particularly well informed, for he had seven times held the position of Chief *Defterdar* (finance secretary). He advocates 'for the appointment of competently trained officials' whose integrity cannot be challenged. He is for the extended tenure and freedom of action as the frequent changes in office and interference in work affects the efficiency (Defterdar, 1935, p. 46). 'He advises a complete change in the system of taxation. He advocates the return to direct collection of taxes by appointed officials, to replace the existing practice of selling to the highest bidder, the right to gather the government's income'<sup>10</sup>. It is interesting to note that a European traveler remarks that taxes were less and the treatment accorded to subjects and people was more just than under the governments of Europe, and conditions, in general, far better for the peasants. (Mottraye, Vol. I, pp. 235, 319 referred to by Wright, 1935, p. 50). It seems that the main culprit was the manner in which the tax laws were administered which caused injustice. --- All taxes were farmed out to the highest bidders, usually courtiers or high officials of the capital. Sold and resold, divided and subdivided, each time with a substantial profit to the vendor, the amount which had to be collected by the last in this long line of buyers was vastly larger than was required by law (ibid. p. 50).

Sari Pasha was fully aware that without setting the matter of the Treasury, no reform and development is possible. Therefore he suggests honest and capable persons to manage the governments finance. According to him, 'the duty of such a person is to strive with care to reduce expenditure and augment the income of the Treasury and avoid waste and unproductive expenditure

(Defterdar, 1935, p. 98). He stresses upon keeping the proper account of the public Treasury (pp. 103-105). Absence of proper accounting leads to misuse and embezzlement of public funds.

Khayr al-Din al-Ramli especially talked about the land tax. He is of the opinion that a fixed land tax (*al-kharaj al-muwazzaf*) cannot be replaced with a proportional agricultural tax (*kharaj al-muqasamah*). This is opposite to the opinion of the Hanafi scholar Imam Abu Yusuf, who suggested to Harun al-Rashid this change on economic grounds (Abu Yusuf, 1392 AH, p. 54). Al-Ramli thinks that it will be a breach of trust (*naqd al-'ahd*). It seems that he is talking about land that was acquired with the condition of fixed land tax that is oppressive because it will be a tyranny which has no place in Shariah (ibid., p. 99). Another reason may be that the tax collectors abused the principle of *kharaj al-muqasamah* by compelling them to pay *fasl* (a predetermined portion of that tax before the harvest) (al-Ramli, 1311, pp. 97-99).

#### 4. Money and Prices

In *Nasihahnamah*, the sultan is advised 'to supervise the mint and improve the coinage so that it regains its purchasing power' (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 227).

Sari Pasha advocates a sound monetary policy for the government. "It is also necessary to give thought to the condition of the coinage, and occasionally to control the degree of purity and the weight of coined aspers which are struck in the mint" (ibid. p. 77). It may be noted that when precious metals are used as money, any debasement increases the quantity of money and consequently prices rise. Sari Pasha suggests that if there is need to administratively fix the price, the government "set the proper market price. Every thing must be sold at the price it is worth" (ibid. p. 77). "The fruiterers and merchants put a double price on provisions and supplies and reap profit. They rob the people. It is apparent that neglect in this matter redounds to the harm of believers in time of trouble and to the benefit of fruiterers and merchants. Therefore it is necessary that the grand vezir and the rulers who are in the township and province, the *valis* and the military commanders take pains to see the execution of this business in person". (p. 78). What he suggests is actually the function of *muhtasib*.

## 5. Economics of Sufism

In the Islamic tradition, a group of Sufis presented a somewhat different school of thought in economics. Their thrust has been the minimization of wants, purification of soul, and preference of others to their own needs. According to Siddiqi (1992, p. 15): “The main contribution of *tasawwuf* (or *zuhd*) to economic thought in Islam is a constant pull against giving too high a value to material wealth and a persistent push towards altruism and unselfish service of Allah’s creatures. They emphasized the ultimate concern of the human soul and its reaching out towards its source in the Divine. They personally exemplified this concern by minimizing the material values and extolling the virtues and attributes that contributed towards felicity in the hereafter while also enabling the life here on the earth” (Siddiqi, 1992, p. 15).

The Seventeenth century is characterized by the spread of various Sufi orders. They exhorted the same economic behavior which may be called ‘Sufi economics’. An example of such economic thinking can be seen in *Maktubat-i-Mujaddid Alf Thani* authored by Ahmad Sirhindi.

According to Ahmad Sirhindi, the economic rationality (*aql-i-ma’ash*) is short sighted (Sirhindi, 1978, 1: 177). Mankind has not been created for enjoyment and pleasure-seeking (ibid, p. 166). A person should love the poor (p. 131), minimize his involvement in mundane activities (p. 97, 143), prefer the success in the Hereafter (p. 132), avoid non-necessary, permissible objects and confine himself to the fulfillment of necessary permissible objects only (p. 91, 98). Man is by nature a social being; he is always in need of help and cooperation of his society. Being a needy is the natural quality of human being (p. 46 vol. 2).

An effort to get rid of needs and become independent of others may lead him to disobedience<sup>11</sup> (ibid, 2: 46, p. 165).

Sirhindi says (1992, p. 97): ‘One should not pay attention to the beauties of the worldly things, as it is disliked by Allah and has no value with Him. Take a lesson from those who possessed all worldly means and then left empty hands. From the permissible objects, confine yourself to the necessary minimum only and have the intention that it will strengthen you to worship the Almighty (ibid, p. 91).

Sirhindi always emphasizes the payment of obligatory Zakah as it is the fulfillment of an obligation, as well as a help to the poor. One has to pay attention to voluntary *sadaqat*, after payment of compulsory zakah (ibid, 1: 46, 87, 88, 94; 2: 46, 55, 70, 152).

‘Pay zakah on productive assets and grazing cattle so that you emancipate yourself from their passion. Delicious meals and fine cloth should not stop you from worship. In fact they should be a means to it’ (Sirhindi, 1: 87).

‘A proper way for payment of Zakah is to set apart the portion of Zakah from your assets. Then spend it on its heads throughout the year (p. 94). One may infer from it that in his opinion, it is not necessary to spend it without delay. If it is allowed to delay/gradually spend, in the interim period it may be loaned and invested.

In the opinion of Sirhindi, *riba* is so strictly prohibited in Shariah that, its practice makes the whole amount - including the capital – *haram*. For example, if someone pays 12 for 10, then not only additional 2 but the principal 10 also becomes *haram* (ibid, 1: 114). This is perhaps an opinion unique to him. He rejects a ruling of *Qinyah* which says that borrowing on interest (*riba*) is permitted for the needy (*muhtaj*) because this will finish the prohibition of *riba* as generally all borrowers borrow because they *need* money. So the 'need' must not be taken in ordinary sense. It may be in the sense of unavoidable necessity (*idtirar*) as only in this extreme case a prohibited thing is allowed. He supports his stand by the Qur'anic verse; “He has forbidden to you, unless you are constrained to it” (the Quran, 6:119), i.e. compulsion of necessity (ibid, p. 114-16).

In a period when the ruling elite and many commoners are engaged in maximizing the worldly means, and in enhancing their resources, they do not mind the valid and invalid, such teachings as ‘*sufi* economics’ remind us of the ideal course of action and strike a balance between two extremes.

## Endnotes

1. In a recent survey of 150 leading policy makers in 60 developing countries about the main obstacles to economic development, corruption has topped the list (Gray and Kaufman, 1998).
2. It is said that the work belongs to Qoji Beg
3. *Timar* a grant of land for military service or more exactly a kind of Turkish fief, the possession of which entailed upon the feudatory the obligation to

go mounted to war and to supply soldiers or sailors in numbers proportionate to the revenue of the *appanage*' (Deny, 1934, vol.4, p.767).

Wikipedia describes: '*Timar* was a form of land tenure in Ottoman Empire, consisting in grant of lands or revenues by the Ottoman Sultan to an individual in compensation for his services, especially military services. The *timar* system was introduced by Osman I who granted land tenure to his troops. Later this system was expanded from Murad I for his *Sipahi*. ..... The *timar*-holder acted as an agent of the central Ottoman government in supervising the possession, transfer, and rental of lands within his territory and collecting tax revenue, in return for military service. A *timar* was not necessarily made up of contiguous property, but could consist of property scattered among different villages'.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C4%B1mar> Retrieved on 29.9.2007

4. *Sipahi* was the feudal cavalryman of the Ottoman Empire whose status resembled that of the medieval European knight. The *sipahi* (from Persian for "cavalryman") was the holder of a fief (*timar*) granted directly by the Ottoman sultan and was entitled to all of the income from it in return for military service. The peasants on the land were subsequently attached to the land and became serfs.  
 "spahi." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 29 Sept. 2007 <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9067970>>.
5. Lutfi Pasha's treatise *Asafname*, written after his dismissal from the office of the grand vezir in 1541, sets forth rules on what a good Grand vezir should do, and more urgently, on what he should avoid (Lewis, 1968, p. 32n).
6. *Ziamah* or *ze'ame* (in Arabic, *za'amah*) was a kind of Turkish fief with a minimum annual revenue of 20,000 aspers (akce) (Deny, 1934, 4:767).
7. Provisions such as: 'Peasant's land in case of his incapacity to cultivate, or of absconding, should be given to someone else in lease or for cultivation in return for a fixed proportion of the produce, but all surplus (after deducting the land tax from the rent or the share of the *malik* i.e. peasant) should be kept for the latter. His land was to be returned to him whenever he recovered his capacity or came back..... One who brings un-owned waste land under cultivation is to be considered its owner irrespective of his being Muslim or non-Muslim' (Zafarul-Islam, 1990, p.72).
8. For a detailed analysis of Ibn Khaldun idea refer to Islahi, 2006, pp. 13-17.
9. Ibn Khaldun (II: 123) writes in *Muqaddimah*: 'Later comes domination and expansion. Royal authority flourishes. This calls for luxury. (Luxury) causes increased spending'. ..... 'Extravagant expenditures mount.... The ruler, then, must impose duties on articles sold in the markets in order to

improve his revenues. Habits of luxury, then further increase. The customs duties no longer pay for them. The dynasty, by this time, is flourishing in its power and its forceful hold over the subjects under its control. Its hands reaches out to seize some of the property of the subjects, either through customs duties, or through commercial transactions, or in some cases, merely by hostile acts directed against (property holdings), on some pretext or even with none'. ... 'At this stage, the tax collectors in the dynasty have acquired much wealth, because vast revenues are in their hands and their position has widened in importance for this reason. Suspicions of having appropriated tax money, therefore, attach to them'.

10. At this, in 1935 Wright (the translator of his book) observed: 'It is interesting to note here that this reform, suggested about 1715 by our author, was not carried out until the old monarchy was replaced by a republic less than a decade ago' (Wright, 1935, 47n).
11. He is referring to the Qur'anic verses: "No, indeed, man waxes insolent, for he thinks himself self-sufficient" (al-Qur'an, 96: 5-6).

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION: APPRAISAL, COMPARISON AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The seventeenth century inherited three great Muslim dynasties – the Ottomans, who controlled the heartland of Islam, the Safawids, who ruled Iran and the Mughals, who governed India. Almost the same political, intellectual and economic institutions also continued. In a time span of hundred years, the Ottoman Empire saw ten sultans at its throne. In the same period in Iran four sultans ruled, while in India only three. Frequent changes of ruler generally results in instability and retardation of economic development. The period saw high and low tides in Ottoman wars with Europe but the treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 is said to be the beginning of the end of Ottoman supremacy in Europe and the start of European imperialism in the Middle East. The power and prestige of the Ottomans started dwindling.

*Appraisal.* During the period under study in the Muslim world, the organization of agricultural activities remained traditional and simple. Introduction of any new crop made no difference in cultivation technique. To meet the demand for food, reliance continued upon local food supplies. Low crop yields and heavy agricultural taxes placed the population in constant jeopardy. The flight of peasants was a phenomenon that spread from Ottoman to Mughal rules. The situation was similar in the industrial and manufacturing sector. Various factors combined to keep industrial production primitive, static, and inert, utterly unable to resist the competition of imported European manufactures. International trading activation also declined considerably. Economic conditions are, in most cases, a reflection of the political and intellectual situation of a country. A strong economy can hardly exist with an unstable government and poor brains. In most cases, they re-enforce each other.

While Europe swept forward in trade, science and technology, Muslim governments did not pay attention to developing and modernizing their agriculture, industry, and trade. As a result, their economies set on declining path. But they were still powerful enough to fight many great wars which would not have been possible without economic strength.

In the sphere of education and intellectual input, the seventeenth century was very closely related to the sixteenth century. The features that dominated in that century, like imitation, repetition, reproduction, writing commentary, commentary-over-commentary, emphasis on traditional education, etc., re-enforced themselves in this century as well. In the seventeenth century, writings on socio-economic problems by Muslim scholars considerably declined. We could not find any work similar to those of their predecessors from the earlier centuries. This situation may be compared with the three great collections of seventeenth century English publications that are available at the British Museum, the Goldsmith's Library of Economic Literature at the University of London, and the Kress Library of Business (Appleby, 1978, P. IX). More than 1500 treatises, tracts, pamphlets, handbills and broadsides related to economic issues were written only by Englishmen during the course of seventeenth century (ibid. p. 4).

As in any society, the seventeenth century Muslim economic thinking revolves around the problem faced by the people. They wrote on those topics which were the problems of the day. The history of economic thought in this period is the best example of a selective and interpretive in nature. In this period, Muslim governments generally faced problems like deficit in public revenue, flights of farmers, declining productivity and various forms of corruptions, such as: sale of offices to highest bidders, allocation of tax farming to the one who offered the highest price, assignment of offices and tax farming to incompetent and unworthy palace nominees, and dismissal of honest officers who did not comply with misrule to appease their bosses. The intellectuals and reformers of the period generally addressed these issues and suggested remedies. However, no exclusive writing could be traced on economic problems such as money and prices, theory of value, economics of taxation and public expenditure, and similar subjects on which earlier Muslim scholars wrote extensively (Islahi, 2005, pp. 25-72).

***Comparison with the Economic thinking in Europe.*** For comparison purposes, it will be worthwhile to have a look at the situation of economic thinking in Europe during our study period. According to Lekachman (1976, p. 32), the transition to capitalist modes of thought is properly located in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The West searched foreign trade as the source to enrich the country. The idea is known in the history of economic thought as 'mercantilism'. The globalization of economic enterprises, multinational and voices of world economic order that we hear of today, their foundation was laid down in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Europe, Asia and the Western Hemisphere were linked in new trading patterns. The minimum role that the Muslim states had in this new enterprise kept

dwindling throughout these centuries. In the European part of the world, specialization, new farming techniques, and more efficient ways of using labor made higher levels of productivity possible, enabling them to perform better in international trading. We could not trace any such overhauling in the Eastern part of the world.

Mercantilism that developed in the last one and half a century<sup>1</sup> was the predominant economic thought of the period in the West. It spread simultaneously over the major European, countries, England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, etc. The famous writers or practitioners who advocated or promoted mercantilism are: Thomas Mun (1571-1641), Gerald de Malynes (1586-1641), Edward Messelden (1608-1654), Dudley North (1641-1691), Josiah Child (1630-1699), William Petty (1623-1687) and John Locke (1632-1704) in England and Ireland; Antoine de Montchretien (1576-1621) and Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) in France; Antonio Serra (1580-1650) in Italy; and Ludwig Von Seckendorf (1626-1692) and Johann Joachim Becher (1625-1685) in Germany.

Mercantilism remained confined to the European nations, and not a single country from the Muslim East could adopt the system or contend with them. The Ottomans being the strongest of all the sixteenth century–governments and being not only neighbor of the Western countries but also occupying a very large part of their territories, it was expected that they would have proved a successful rival in mercantilism or would have developed it among their own subjects. But that also did not happen. Thus, it would be interesting to end this study with a comparison between Christian West and Muslim East on the subject of mercantilism and try to find out answer to the question on what factors helped in the development of the merchant system among the former and why it could not flourish among the latter.

Historians of economic thought have explored the factors that helped the development of mercantilism. It started with religious zeal, missionary spirit and crusading objectives<sup>2</sup> (Kirk, 1964, pp. 63-64; Heaton, 1948, p. 241; Lewis, 1976, p. 203; 1982, pp. 33-34), though later it transformed into an economic movement. It was the religious objective and missionary zeal that provided support for the growth of mercantile activities in Europe. Otherwise, 'Medieval philosophy conventionally identified the merchant with the sin of covetousness; even the pure act of trading, *negotium*, was considered essentially vicious' (Letwin, 1963, p. 87). As far Muslims are concerned, it may be argued that from the religious point of view, engagement in foreign trade of European level was a socially obligatory duty (*fard kifayah*) on the part of Muslim government, but they did not realize it.

The rise and growth of nation-states necessitated strengthening the central government through the stock of gold and silver used as money (Roll, 1974, pp. 54; Oser and Blanchfield, 1975, p. 8). The Muslim states of Ottoman, Safawid and Mughal already had well-established nation-states with their traditional supporting revenue resource. They missed the point that in the changing world, the governments having foreign trading companies would dominate the scene.

The Renaissance in Europe<sup>3</sup> provided the motive force to mercantilism. As we have seen above in Chapter Three, a number of artists, philosophers, scientists and social thinkers played significant roles in transmitting the new learning about the economic world in which the invention of the printing press helped considerably. In London, 'Pamphlets and books streamed from the city's presses, in runs between 500 and 2000. A dozen titles appeared in the 1620s; by the 1670s hundreds were published each decade'; ...'there grew up a new kind of forum where the absence of the immediate presence of speaker or listener made possible a freer, more impersonal kind of exchange' (Appleby, 1978, pp. 4-5). The printing press would be adopted by the Muslim world in the eighteenth century only, three hundred years after its invention (Gibb and Bowen 1:2 p.153).

The scientific discoveries in Europe, like the compass, printing press, etc., helped the development of mercantilism in many ways. A rapid increase in production and availability of surplus products for trading purposes was the most important benefit of scientific discoveries, use of machines, and changes in production techniques. 'A surplus of exports from a country was necessary if payments were to be received in hard money' (Oser and Blanchfield, 1975, p. 9). Appleby reports: 'By the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, a significant number of landlords and husbandmen had begun changing their ways of farming, greatly enhancing England's agricultural productivity (Appleby, 1978, p. 54). 'The well-established European market in foodstuffs had created an incentive for the adoption of new techniques. The encoding, ditching, draining, irrigating, rotating, and planting of new crops, which contemporaries lumped together as 'improvements' (ibid. p. 55). No such improvement was seen in the Ottoman economy. They lacked and discouraged surplus produce. Here is an example: in Aleppo, during the late seventeenth century, increased production of atlas cloth led to a fall in imports from Europe. Instead of being pleased (as any European mercantilist would have been) the Ottoman officials were alarmed. This is because the fall in the imports meant a reduction in import duties. To make up for the loss of revenue, these officials imposed an internal tariff of 3% on Muslim weavers and 5% on non-Muslims from all such cloth produced in the city. In short, the local industries were punished for increasing their production and causing a fall in the imports

(Masters, 1988: 198, cited by Çizakça, 2000, p. 17). According to Çizakça, 'these differing attitudes towards craft production, constitutes one of the sharpest contrasts between European mercantilism and the Ottoman doctrine. As it is well known, European governments directly encouraged and protected their infant industries by imposing high tariffs on imports. In this way, the Ottoman and Indian clothes were subjected to high customs duties and thus their competitiveness was hindered in the English and Dutch markets, while the nascent industries of London and Leiden were given a boost. By contrast, the Ottoman state did not hesitate to punish its own producers, with fiscalist considerations, because they were (successfully) reducing the imports' (Çizakça, 2000, pp. 17-18).

We have seen above in Chapter Three how stagnant and imitative educational systems stopped creative and scientific thinking and producing scholars that could match the worldly philosophers and scientists of the West.

The discovery of gold and silver mines in America and other colonies that resulted in an influx of precious metals into Europe led to the large expansion in the currency and credit structure and facilitated foreign trade. Muslim Governments not only did not have any such advantage, their own stocks of precious metals were drained by European foreign trade.

Another important factor in the growth of mercantilism in Europe was maritime explorations. Adventurous navigators opened up new trade routes that decreased the cost of transportation (Roll, 1974, pp. 54; Oser and Blanchfield, 1975, p. 8). Discovery of a new world provided them with new market, and a new all water route of European trade through the Cape of the Good Hope which proved a blow to Mediterranean trade, dominated by Muslim traders<sup>4</sup>.

An important economic factor that paved the way for the rise of mercantilism was the decline of feudalism in Europe. The rise of nation states provided a strong impetus to a greater concern for wealth and a quickening of economic activity. Ottoman thinkers advocated an adherence to the old system, and argued for the revival of *timar* and called for the return to the old system. In that context Defterdar (1935, p. 143) says: 'The ancient law must be respected'.

The ship building industry of the Muslim government could not match their Western rivals. Whatever navy force the Ottomans had, they used it for war purposes. They could not spare it for navigations and explorations. They established strong governments but their rule was confirmed on the land only. The water was left for mercantile companies, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch,

French and English. As Lewis puts it, 'The Ottoman naval expeditions to the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century failed against the superior ships and armament of the Portuguese' (Lewis, 1982, p. 38). According to Lewis (1968, 24), "In Eastern waters they (Ottomans) encountered the stout ships of the Portuguese, whose shipbuilders and navigators, trained to meet the challenge of the Atlantic, were more than a match for the calm-water ships of the Ottomans. Stouter vessels, more guns, better seamanship were what defeated the successive attempts of the Ottomans to break out of the ring, and swept Muslim shipping from the waters of the Indian Ocean". Ottoman intellectuals admit the European supremacy of naval forces. Lutfi Pasha, writing after 1541, foresaw the danger to Turkey of the growing naval power of Europe. He quotes with approval a remark by Kemal-pashazade (d. 1533-4) to Selim I: 'My Lord, you dwell in a city whose benefactor is the sea. If the sea is not safe, no ships will come, and if no ship comes Istanbul perishes'. He himself said to Sultan Suleyman: 'Under the previous Sultans there were many who ruled the land, but few ruled the sea. In the conduct of naval warfare the infidels are ahead of us. We must overcome them' (Lutfi Pasha, *Asafname*, ed. and tr. R. Tschudi (1910), text 32-33, trans. 26-27, quoted by Lewis, 1968, p.25n).

'By 1625 another Ottoman observer, a certain Omer Talib, could see the danger in a more pressing form:

"Now the Europeans have learned to know the whole world; they send their ships everywhere and seize important ports. Formerly, the goods of India, Sind and China used to come to Suez, and were distributed by Muslims to all the world. But now these goods are carried on Portuguese, Dutch, and English ships to Frangistan, and are spread over the world from there. What they do not need themselves they bring to Istanbul and other Islamic lands, and sell it for five times the price, thus earning much money. For this reason gold and silver are becoming scarce in the lands of Islam. The Ottoman Empire must seize the shores of Yemen and the trade passing that way; otherwise before very long, the European will rule over the lands of Islam"<sup>5</sup>. Not only on water, the Western governments obtained capitulation and thus enjoyed special economic and social rights in Muslim states. We could not find any example that Muslim states had secured such a capitulation within European countries where Muslim traders could enjoy similar rights. No Muslim state realized that these capitulations might be misused for political manipulations or even colonization of their lands and enslaving the natives<sup>6</sup>.

Western governments encouraged foreign trade, provided it protection, granted monopolies to the native trading companies and supported them with a number of legislations. Protection provided by the government to industry and

foreign trade and capitulation obtained in Muslim governments proved a strong support to mercantilism. On the contrary, some of the Muslim rulers engaged in trading or monopolized it for their personal gain which had a discouraging effect on common traders. That is the reason that Muslim scholars always opposed trading by the ruler.

While the main concern of major European countries was ‘how to acquire the largest share of what was commonly seen as a more or less fixed volume of international trade and how to obtain a favorable balance of trade and a net import of bullions and precious metals’, the Ottomans were content with the war booty, tributes, government domain and taxes.

Muslim East and Christian West had always been rival (in spite of the evidences of certain give and take) in intellectual and political spheres. Muslim political power surpassed its Western rivals but scientific and intellectual decay that started in previous centuries could not be recovered in the seventeenth century and for that matter until the present age.

In fact, the heyday of Ottoman political power was the last chance to turn the course of history through paying attention to scientific research, intellectual uplift and modernization of the economy, as Europeans were doing. But they lost this opportunity and lagged behind. Not only the Ottomans, the conditions of other great Muslim states – the Iranian Safawids and the Indian Mughals, were not very different. Their absence from this front left the mercantilism patronizing governments free to impoverish a larger part of the world by establishing colonies and exploiting them to their own benefit. Muslim governments accepted, tacitly or explicitly, European rule on water and remained satisfied with their sovereignty on land. Rather, they awarded the European traders capitulations in their own territories but never exacted such rights in European countries for their own subjects.

The political, economic and intellectual retreat that started in the seventeenth century could not be restrained in the subsequent period, although efforts to reverse this trend always existed. Due to awakening in the Muslim world in the twentieth century, these efforts have increased many-fold. The advantage of historical studies is to avoid the mistakes of the past, follow the correct course of action and learn the lesson from others.

**Recommendations.** The present study, which is only a first drawn sketch of the seventeenth century Muslim economic thinking, could present only a partial picture. However, it has initiated a new discussion and shown the need to carry

out further research in this direction so that a more clear and comprehensive picture of the Muslim economic thinking comes out.

Most of the intellectual heritage of the period remained in manuscript forms in various libraries of the world. This major obstacle in the way of study of Muslim economic thought has to be removed by publishing this rich source of information.

The Ottoman archives are a very important authentic source of information about socio-economic thought and practices. It is not possible for researchers living in far away places to go through them. They should be made available for them using the latest means of information technology.

In the seventeenth century, Turkish and Persian were the languages of the rulers. Most of the practical knowledge and theoretical works of the period were accomplished in those languages. There is a need to translate and edit those works for the benefit of others. Researchers on the history of Islamic economic thought - those who have knowledge of the Turkish and Persian languages – should pay attention to the study of Muslim economic thinking in writings in those languages. Hitherto, research in Muslim economic thinking has been mostly confined to a specific language and region. Studies on Muslim economic thinking in various languages spoken by them and regions inhabited by them are expected to give a clear and complete picture of Muslim economic thinking as a whole.

## **Endnotes**

1. Mercantilist ideas, in crude form, began to appear around the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century and continued in spite of variations and modifications until the second half of the eighteenth century (Gray, 1951, 14). Mercantilist writers emphasized the strengthening of the nation-state and increasing stock of bullion. They suggested foreign trade as the source to acquire precious metals. They stressed the creation of colonies as the source of supply of raw materials and the market for their finished products.

The famous mercantilist writer Dudley North (1641-1691) in 1660, at the age of nineteen reached Turkey where he lived for about twenty years. In Turkey North joined a partnership in a Constantinople trading house, of which, due to the incapacity and laziness of its senior members, he soon became active manager' (Letwin, 1963, p. 185). Within a few years he opened his own firm and soon became the most substantial of the English

merchants in Constantinople, the centre of the Turkey trade (ibid.) North also started business of lending money to Turkish officials at a rate of interest sometimes ranging from 20 to 30 percent (Letwin, 1963, p. 186). Later he became treasurer of the Levant Company at Constantinople. He spoke Turkish fluently. Even in England, 'he broke into Turkish whenever provoked' (Letwin, 1963, p. 187). It is not known how far he influenced his Turkish partners in Istanbul; whether he could train some of them to continue in the business. 'Sir Dudley North's *Discourses Upon Trade*, published in 1691, have been lauded as the first great exposition of free trade doctrine. It is not known whether any such discussion was found among the Turkish intellectuals.

2. In an earlier study we have proved it with documentary evidences. See Islahi, *et al*, 2007, pp. 49-50.
3. Elsewhere we wrote that behind the Renaissance was the contact result with Muslim intellectual heritage (Islahi, 2005, pp. 7, 104, 114).
4. The Ottomans could have thought of befitting reply by digging the Suez Canal. In a book written in 1580, an Ottoman geographer suggested the Sultan: 'let a channel be cut from the Mediterranean to Suez, and let a great fleet be prepared in the port of Suez; then with the capture of the ports of India and Sind, it will be easy to chase away the infidels and bring the precious wares of these places to our capital' (Lewis, 1982, p. 34). Had the sultan followed his proposal, this would have been a befitting reply to the Cape of Good Hope and the Western mercantilism may not have prospered in the East.
5. Observations of Omer Talib are written on the margins of a manuscript of the *Tarikh al-Hind al-Gharbi* (Maarif Library 10024) referred by Lewis, 1968, p.28).
6. In about 1580, an Ottoman geographer, in an account of the New World, written for Murad III, gave warning of the dangers to the Islamic lands and the disturbance to Islamic trade resulting from the establishment of Europeans on the coast of America, India and the Persian Gulf; he advised the Sultan to open a canal through the isthmus of Suez and send a fleet 'to capture the ports of Hind and Sind and drive away the infidels' (Lewis, p. 27. He refers to *Tarikh al-Hind al-Gharbi* (Constantinople, 1142/1729, fol. 6b ff.).

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