Introduction

Since the very beginning of its long and chequered history, Islam has encountered various religious communities both in the area in which it emerged, and in the vast territories which it conquered during the period of its phenomenal expansion. The most distinctive characteristic of these encounters was the fact that Muslims faced the other religions from the position of a ruling power, and enjoyed in relation to them a position of unmistakable superiority. They were therefore able to determine the nature of their relationship with the others in conformity with their world-view and in accordance with their beliefs. Barring the earliest years of nascent Islam in Mecca, the first two or three years in Medina, the period of the Crusades in certain regions and a few other minor exceptions, this characterization holds true for the pre-modern period of Islamic history in its entirety. Islam formulated toward each community that it faced a particular attitude, which was shaped by the historical circumstances in which the encounter took place, and was influenced to a certain extent by the nature of the respective non-Muslim religious tradition.

These attitudes were intimately related to the matter of religious tolerance or intolerance and interfaith relations between Muslims and others. This was a prominent theme in the Muslim tradition since the early period of Islam. It was extensively discussed in Qur’ānic exegesis, in the various collections of hadith and in the literature of jurisprudence throughout the medieval period. A survey and analysis of a portion of these sources will form the mainstay of the present work.

The Qur’ān does not have a specific term to express the idea of tolerance, but several verses explicitly state that religious coercion (ikrāḥ) is either unfeasible or forbidden; other verses may be interpreted as expressing the same notion.1 Modern Muslim writers find the idea of tolerance mentioned in the prophetic tradition as well. A favourite proof-text adduced in support of the idea of religious tolerance is the hadith which reads: “Let (the) Jews know that in our religion there is latitude; I was sent with (the) kindly ḥanīfīyya’ (li-ta’lama yahūd anna fi dininā fustabata innī uršiṭu bi-ḥanīfīya samhā).” Another hadith says in a similar vein: “The religion most beloved to Allah is the kindly ḥanīfīyya” (aḥabbu al-dīn ilā Allāh

1 See Chapter Three, sections II–VI.
Because of the linguistic affinity of *samāḥa* with *tasāmūḥ* or *samāḥa*, the modern Arabic terms for tolerance, these *ahādīth* are sometimes understood as supportive of the idea of Islamic tolerance toward other religions. In their original context, however, the traditions in question carry a substantially different meaning. In Bukhārī’s *Saḥīḥ*, the latter tradition is included in a section entitled “The religion (of Islam) is lenient” (*al-dīnu yusrun*) and is pertinent to the Qur’ānic idea according to which Islam is a religion which is considerate to its believers and does not impose on them excessively arduous duties. Several details in Muslim ritual are perceived as examples of such leniency. Muslims are allowed to postpone the obligatory fast of Ramaḍān to the following month of Shawwāl in case of sickness or travel. They may shorten their prayers when they are in danger of attack and may use sand for ritual purification when water is not available. This was also the commentators’ understanding of *ḥanīfīyya samāḥa*: Islam is a “lenient religion which does not impose hardship or constraints on the people” (*wa al-milla al-samāḥa allatī là ḥarrāja fihi wa là tufyqa fihi ‘alā al-nās*). Thus, this *hadith* speaks of the lenient nature of Islam for its own adherents rather than about its relationship with members of other faiths.

With the beginning of modern European scholarship on Islam, the subject received a fresh impetus. Responding to criticism directed at the alleged intolerance of Islam as reflected in the idea of *jihād*, both Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers and scholars wrote a substantial number of rebuttals, marshalling arguments in support of the tolerant nature of Islam and of its civilization. Many asserted that

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5 In contradistinction to the leniency of Islam, some Muslim traditions perceive the Jewish religion as being excessively harsh. Al-Qasīsī (Iṣrāḥ al-ṣārīf, vol. 1, p. 123, ll. 11–10 from bottom) explains *al-ḥanīfīyya al-samāḥa* as “*the* ḥanīfīyya which is opposed to the religions of Banī Isrā’il and the arduous duties (*shadīd ṣaḥā*) which their religious leaders imposed upon themselves.” For an analysis of traditional Muslim views on this matter, see M. J. Kister, “On ‘concessions’ and conduct: a study in early hadith”, in G. H. A. Juynboll, ed., *Studies on the first century of Islamic society, Barondale and Edwardsville 1982*, pp. 89–107, at p. 91 (= *Society and religion from Jihālīyya to Islam* (Variorum Collected Studies reprints, Aldershot 1990, XIII, pp. 6–7)).


8 Such books are a legion. One of the first works belonging to this genre is Cherāgh Ali, *A critical exposition of the popular ‘jihād’,* showing that all the wars of Muhammad were defensive; and that aggressive war, or compulsory conversion, is not allowed in the Koran. The book was first published in Calcutta in 1883 and has seen numerous editions since. Among the non-Muslim scholars, one should mention T. W. Arnold, whose *The preaching of Islam* was first published 1896. More important in this group is I. Goldziher whose works abound in critical empathy with Islam. See J. Waardenburg, *L’Islam dans le miroir de l’Occident*, Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1963, pp. 267–270. For an example of Goldziher’s defense of Islam, see his *Introduction to Islamic theology and law*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 16–19, where he strongly rejects another scholar’s view that “Islam lacks the critical concept we call ‘conscience’”. For his exposition of
Islam was misrepresented in Western scholarship and public opinion as an intolerant religion and aggressive civilization. As a result of this argument and in view of the generally heightened interest in the significance of religious diversity in the twentieth century, the tolerance theme acquired major importance in modern Muslim apologetics and in some modern descriptions of Islam. The whole issue has frequently aroused heated controversy.

Recent decades have seen a dramatic increase in the activities of radical religious groups, and, consequently, in the amount of public and academic debate on questions of interfaith relations. Academic serials dedicated to this field, such as Islamochristiana, Islam and Christian–Muslim relations and Studies in Muslim–Jewish relations, have come into being. Conferences on various aspects of it are repeatedly organized and a substantial number of pertinent collective volumes have seen the light of day. The debates have often been conducted within the framework of interfaith dialogue – or polemics – between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Frequently they have been sparked by political events, and the protagonists tended to use their perception of the subject in order to influence public opinion in favor of their particular religious group. In this context, it is easy to find simplistic and naive comparisons between the lofty ideals of one’s own civilization and the unsavory practices of the opponents. Such comparisons are standard tools of the trade for any polemicist. At other times, the participants strive to achieve a different objective: by stressing the more appealing features of Islam and minimizing the importance of the less appealing ones, they attempt to increase the chances of improving the relationship between their own community and the Muslims. One gains the distinct impression that in such debates the Christian participants are far more receptive to the point of view of their interlocutors than are their Muslim counterparts. It should come as no surprise that in these circumstances only facts and issues supporting the objectives of the participating

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9 An excellent example of this is S. Zwemer, The law of apostasy in Islam. The author castigates Islam for punishing apostasy with death, and bemoans the consequent paucity of Muslim converts to Christianity. The book is written as if the Christian church has always been an embodiment of the principles of religious freedom and tolerance. On the other hand, Syed Barakat Ahmad (in his “Conversion from Islam”) disregards the whole corpus of hadith and fiqh literature in order to argue that the capital punishment for apostasy is not really sanctioned in Islam. For the development of Muslim attitudes to apostasy in the Qur’an, hadith and fiqh, see Chapter Four, below. There is also extensive modern Muslim literature on the question of apostasy; this deserves separate treatment.
protagonists are brought up; others are suppressed or explained away. No clarification of the real issues involved can be expected to emerge from these debates, though some of them have served as significant venues in which adherents of diverse faiths became more conscious of each other’s sensibilities and points of view.

Many travelers along this path have commendable goals at heart: they endeavor to increase the chances of achieving interreligious amity and peace. Some are able to contribute to the advancement of these goals while preserving at the same time their scholarly integrity. In other cases, this approach makes inroads into scholarship and tends to obscure certain issues while preventing the discussion of others. This seems to be caused by the unwarranted but pervasive notion that scholarly research that surveys and analyzes intolerant elements in a medieval religious tradition is derogatory toward its modern adherents and will hinder efforts at religious reconciliation. This notion should be resisted. Rather than denying the existence of certain intolerant elements in medieval Islamic thought, modern Muslims might instead admit that such elements exist, while at the same time exercising their power to reject these and embrace the more liberal and tolerant principles of their tradition. Some modern Christian institutions have already taken this way: they grapple with their historical guilt for acts such as the massacres perpetrated by the Crusaders or for the excesses of the Spanish inquisition by decrying, in Vatican II, “the hatreds, persecutions and manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone”, rather than embarking on futile attempts to deny their historicity. Muslims can take comfort in the commonly held view that the living conditions of non-Muslims under medieval Muslim rulers were significantly better than those imposed on Jews and other religious minorities by their Christian counterparts. Undisputed facts speak loudly in favor of this proposition, and it need not be substantiated by the patently false claim that medieval Islam was tolerant in the modern sense of the word. Modern interfaith dialogue and understanding should not depend on glowing – but questionable – descriptions of religious tolerance in the Middle Ages; they should emerge from autonomous decisions of contemporary believers. These believers have the freedom to choose from their tradition elements that are compatible with

11 See, for instance, the judicious article by Christian W. Troll (“Der Blick des Koran auf andere Religionen”, in Kerber, ed., Wie tolerant ist der Islam?, pp. 47–69). The article bears the subtitle “Gründe für eine gemeinsame Zukunft.”
13 For a recent statement by a prominent scholar, see B. Lewis, The multiple identities of the Middle East, New York: Schocken Books, 1998, p. 129: “… there is nothing in Islamic history to compare with the massacres and expulsions, the inquisitions and persecutions that Christians habitually inflicted on non-Christians and still more on each other. In the lands of Islam, persecution was the exception; in Christendom, sadly, it was often the norm.” See also idem, The Jews of Islam, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 62 and B. Z. Kedar, “Expulsion as an issue of world history”, Journal of World History 7 (1996), pp. 165–180. Expulsions of non-Muslims from Muslim lands were few and far between; for medieval and early modern rulers of Europe expulsions of Jews and “deviant” Christians was routine. See also below, Chapter Three, end of section II.
their values and to disregard those that contradict them. A contemporary Muslim may stress the tolerant elements in Islam, present them as reflecting his own faith and urge his coreligionists to adopt his liberal convictions. For instance, he could adopt the broadest interpretation of Qur’an 2:256 (“No compulsion is there in religion …”) or the strikingly humanistic approach attributed to Ibrāhīm al-Nakhafi according to whom a Zoroastrian – and, by extension, any other unbeliever – “is a free and inviolable human being, akin to a Muslim.” The adoption of al-Nakhafi’s approach does not make it necessary to deny the existence of other ideas which also existed in the medieval Islamic tradition, but which are less appealing to a modern person with liberal convictions. And if the historical context of these less appealing ideas is taken into account, even the Muslim law of apostasy – to the denial of whose existence some modern Muslims have devoted so much attention – will not appear so uniquely odious: civilizations comparable with the Islamic one, such as the Sassanids and the Byzantines, also punished apostasy with death. Similarly, neither Judaism nor Christianity treated apostasy and apostates with any particular kindness. The real predicament facing modern Muslims with liberal convictions is not the existence of stern laws against apostasy in medieval Muslim books of law, but rather the fact that accusations of apostasy and demands to punish it are heard time and again from radical elements in the contemporary Islamic world.

Creating a personal system of values by choosing appropriate elements from one’s religious tradition is legitimate for a believer and desirable for all, especially in view of the fact that the building blocks for a tolerant version of Islam are indeed available in the Muslim tradition if interpreted with this purpose in mind.

14 For an excellent example of such an approach among modern Muslim intellectuals, see Abdullahi Ahmad an-Na’im, Toward an Islamic reformation: civil liberties, human rights, and international law, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990, pp. 86–91, 170–181 and passim.

15 See Chapter One, the end of section VI and Chapter Three, section V.


18 See “Apostasy (Jewish and Christian), in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, s.v. (F. J. Foakes-Jackson), and “Apostasy”, in The Encyclopaedia of Religion, s.v. (H. G. Kippenberg).

19 See below, Chapter Five, note 53.

20 A remarkable recent example utilizing this approach is Sa’id’s al-Hurriyya al-dinyya fl al-islam. The author surveys much of the material which we analyze in Chapter Four, below, and endorses the view that an apostate should enjoy the same religious freedom as any non-Muslim. He must not, in any way, be coerced into reverting to Islam. For the controversy related to the publication of this book, see Muhammad al-Tahlawi, “Ra’i yadid aqrarahu Majma’ al-buhth al-islamiyya: al-murtadd ‘an al-islam la yaqtal.” October, April 15, 2001, pp. 62–63. I am indebted to Ms. Aluma Solnick of the Hebrew University for this reference.
It is a quite different matter when a scholar presents one aspect of Islam, or one passage from a Muslim text, disregards all others, arrives at sweeping conclusions and bestows upon them the aura of scholarly truth.21

The understanding of these distinctions is essential especially in view of the fact that discussions of religious tolerance or intolerance in the books of Muslim tradition and law are conducted against the background of a Muslim government being in charge of a religiously heterogeneous population. These discussions are therefore irrelevant to modern situations which involve relationships between autonomous political units belonging to different religious traditions, rather than situations in which a community not in power seeks governmental tolerance for its religious beliefs and practices. For example: religious tolerance or intolerance, as defined in Muslim books of hadith and in the shari'a, may be relevant to the treatment of the non-Muslim population in southern Sudan, of the Bahá'ís in Iran, or of the Coptic minority in Egypt, but is irrelevant to the solution of the Arab–Israeli conflict, which does not revolve around the rights and obligations of Jews living under Muslim rule.

Modern discussions of our theme have typically focused on the question of whether classical Islam allowed Jews and Christians who lived under Muslim rule to retain their ancestral religion and, additionally, whether it allowed them to practice it freely. These are two distinct questions; yet too often it is assumed that an affirmative answer to the former necessarily implies the same answer to the latter. It is not self-evident that if Jews and Christians were allowed to adhere to their respective creeds, they were also permitted unrestricted freedom of religious observance, particularly in the public sphere. The restrictions imposed by Muslim law on the construction, maintenance and repair of non-Muslim places of worship and on the public manifestations of non-Muslim ritual are cases in point. The total ban on non-Muslim presence in a substantial part of the Arabian peninsula is also a significant part of the over-all picture.22 Moreover, if the question of religious

21 Examples of this kind of work are numerous and only a few representative samples need be mentioned here. Issa J. Boullata (“Fa-stabiqü al-khayrt: A Qur√nic principle of interfaith relations”, in Yvonne Y. Haddad and Wadi Z. Haddad, eds., Christian–Muslim encounters, pp. 43–53) states, on the basis of several Qur√nic verses, that “one of the doctrinal principles enunciated in the Qur√n is that of religious pluralism” (ibid., p. 43). An uninformed reader of the article may gain from it the impression that the Qur√n never spoke about Islam as the only true religion, that it never said anything harsh about the non-Muslims, that classical Islamic tradition never imposed restrictions on non-Muslim observance in dîr al-islām and never designated the Arabian peninsula as a region where Islam was the only faith to be tolerated. The article certainly does not take account of the development of the Prophet’s views of these matters throughout his career. For another example in which Islam is described as an absolutely tolerant religion, in total disregard of any evidence to the contrary, see Farooq Hasan, The concept of state and law in Islam, Lanham (MD, USA): University Press of America, 1981, pp. 225–247. See also al-˘üfı, Sam˛at al-islm, p. 77 infra, where Muslims and dhimmıs are said to be equal in matters concerning retaliation (qißıṡ) and blood-money (diyā), in total disregard of the pertinent controversy in the books of law (see below, Chapter One, section VI). On the other hand, the issue of pluralism is treated in a profound manner, taking into account the complexities of the sources and of the changing historical situations, by Sachédına, The Islamic roots of democratic pluralism, pp. 63–97.

22 See below, Chapter Three, section II, at notes 13–30.
freedom is to be discussed in its modern sense, its scope becomes much wider than that defined by the two considerations mentioned above. It would include, in that case, not only the freedom to practice one’s religion but also to preach it; it would involve the same rights with regard to religions other than Judaism and Christianity; the freedom to change one’s religious affiliation at will, or to practice no religion at all. Thus, the ruthless attitudes of early Muslims to Arab idolatry are evidently relevant to the subject of this inquiry. The ‘Abbāsī persecutions of the Manichaeans and of other groups and individuals subsumed under the term zanīdaqa,23 as well as the more tolerant stance of Muslim jurisprudents vis-à-vis the Iranian tradition of Zoroastrianism, are also part of the overall picture of Muslim attitudes to other faiths. Nevertheless, they are only infrequently treated in modern descriptions of Islam, written for the benefit of the western reading public. With regard to idolatry, the reason is obvious: Jews and Christians had been as harsh on idolatry as Muslims, and their modern coreligionists are hardly in a position to take the Muslims to task because they would brook no compromise with ancient Arab idol worship. The Muslim stance on idolatry certainly does not evoke the emotional overtones often associated with the treatment extended by Islam to Judaism or Christianity. Like other non-monothestic, Arab idolaters do not have a contemporary “lobby” in the West and there is hardly anyone in the modern world who is willing to take up their forlorn cause; yet the suppression of idolatry in the Arabian peninsula is, in principle, comparable to the suppression of any other religion and deserves the same scholarly attention. The case of the Manicheans is similar: the Manichean community hardly exists in modern times, but its erstwhile treatment by the Muslims and their refusal to grant the Manicheans dhimmī status24 should receive appropriate attention when an evaluation of Muslim tolerance or intolerance is made.

Questions of religious change have also a place in the framework of this inquiry. It stands to reason that few people converted to Christianity, Judaism or Zoroastrianism under Islamic rule in the Middle Ages, even if abandonment of Islam was not involved. Nevertheless, Muslim traditionists and jurists deal with this rather theoretical issue. As we shall see in the forthcoming chapters, they often make a distinction between non-Muslims who had adhered to a religion


before the emergence of Islam, and those who embraced such a religion at a later time. Belonging to the Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian community while Islam was not yet in existence is considered within the natural order of things and thus acceptable. Continuing to belong to these faiths after the emergence of Islam is regrettable but tolerated. Embracing one of them during the Muslim period (even if no apostasy from Islam is involved) is controversial and according to some views such converts are not to be tolerated by Muslims and should be expelled from the land of Islam. The present writer is not aware of any expulsions carried out by Muslim governments in accordance with this ruling, but it does reflect a pervasive notion that adherents of non-Muslim religions should not increase in number after the emergence of Islam.

Wholly different is the case of religions which came into being after the revelation of the Qur’an. For them the harshest treatment is reserved, especially if they are derived from Islam. Few people tried to establish a new religion in the lands ruled by Muslims in the medieval period and no toleration was accorded to those who did. In view of the dogma asserting the finality of Muhammad’s prophethood, any prophetic claim in the Muslim period was nipped in the bud. Modern times, on the other hand, saw several significant attempts to launch new religions or religious groups. Again, none of them was tolerated. The emergence of the Bahá’ís in Iran and of the Ahmadiyya in British India are two cases in point. The two groups are similar in the sense that their first adherents had been Muslims, but they are different from each other in numerous other respects. The Bahá’ís eventually ceased to be Muslims by their own admission; the Ahmadis, on the other hand, have always insisted that they were Muslims in the fullest sense of the word. The Bábís and Bahá’ís emerged in a country ruled by Muslims, while the Ahmadis came into being in British India. The Bábís and Bahá’ís were ruthlessly persecuted by successive Muslim governments; the Ahmadis were allowed to preach and practice their beliefs freely. At that stage, the dispute concerning the Ahmadis was

25 See Chapter Four, section VII.
27 The literature on the Bábís and Bahá’ís is constantly growing. For a survey of Bábí religion, see A. Amanat, Resurrection and renewal; P. Smith, The Bábí and Bahá’í religions: from messianic Shí’ism to a world religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Juan R. I. Cole, Modernity and the Millennium: the genesis of the Bahá’í faith in the nineteenth century Middle East, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998 (especially pp. 26–29). For a Bahá’í survey of the persecution of their community after the revolution of 1979, see Die Bahá’í im Iran. Dokumentation der Verfolgung einer religiösen Minderheit, Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá’í-Verlag, 1985. It is noteworthy that Khumaynî explicitly refused to accord protection to the Bahá’ís as a religious minority, arguing that “they are a political faction; they are harmful; they will not be accepted.” See Denis MacEoin, A people apart. The Bahá’í community of Iran in the twentieth century, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989, p. 5. Denying the religious nature of the Bahá’í movement is intended to obviate the glaring contradiction between the treatment of the Iranian Bahá’ís and the principle of religious tolerance. For rulings of some Egyptian courts on the Bahá’í question, see Ahmad Rashhíd Táhirih, Hurriyyat al-‘aqida fi al-shari‘a al-islámiyya, Cairo, 1998, pp. 339–349.
between voluntary religious organizations, none of which had a state machinery or powers of coercion at its disposal. Only when the Ahmadiyya moved its headquarters to the state of Pakistan after its establishment in 1947, did it come into conflict with the power of a professedly Islamic state. The religious establishment of Pakistan immediately tried to use the state machinery for the attainment of its anti-Ahmadi goals. The Pakistani government resisted these attempts in its early years, but has succumbed to them more and more since 1974. In that year, the Ahmadiyya were declared non-Muslims in a constitutional amendment passed by the parliament of Pakistan; in 1984, a decree issued by President Ziyā al-Haq transformed practically any religious activity of the Ahmadiyya into a criminal offense. Anti-Ahmadi riots and persecutions followed the promulgation of the 1974 amendment and of the 1984 decree.28 Thus, neither the Bábís and the Bahá’ís, nor the Ahmadiyya were treated with any toleration by the Muslim mainstream or by the Muslim states in which they were active.

Furthermore, questions of religious freedom are pertinent not only to non-Muslims who live in a Muslim state, but also to Muslims who deviate from beliefs considered orthodox by the religious establishment of their time and place. With regard to the Muslims, we should ask whether they are allowed to abandon Islam, to question its basic tenets, or to refrain from religious observance or from some of its aspects. Keeping these considerations in mind, our discussion will include the laws concerning apostasy.29 The attitude to Muslims who fail to fulfill such religious obligations as participation in the Friday prayer or observance of the fast of Ramadān, are also relevant to the subject of this inquiry. One should also consider the stance taken towards Muslims who deviate from a doctrine held by the religious establishment of their times; the mīḥna during the period of the ‘Abbāsī caliph al-Ma’mūn is a case in point.30 The martyrs of Cordova who were done to death in the mid-ninth century for provocatively disparaging Islam and the Prophet31 and the execution of al-Hallāj in 922 A.D. may be mentioned as well. These and similar matters are pertinent to the question of Islamic tolerance, though they do not constitute part of the present study.

It goes without saying that the purpose of the present writer is not to measure medieval Muslim attitudes by the yardstick of an absolute ideal of religious freedom that has not been implemented even at the present time in most areas of the world. The period in which classical Islamic thought came into being was not

29 See Chapter Four, below.
30 The most recent treatment of this topic seems to be J. A. Nawas, Al-Ma’mūn: mīḥna and caliphate, Nijmegen, 1992.
one in which religious tolerance, religious freedom, or equality of religions in the modern sense were considered as positive notions or desirable goals; and Islam should not be blamed for its failure to transcend the mood of the times. Bernard Lewis has written in one of his recent works that “for Christians and Muslims alike, tolerance is a new virtue and intolerance a new crime”;\(^{32}\) and we should keep this apt observation in mind as we proceed. We should also keep in mind that classical Muslim traditionists and jurists had no hesitation about unabashedly proclaiming the exaltedness of their religion and way of life. For them it was only natural that this exaltedness be expressed in a concrete manner wherever possible. More than a few details in Muslim law and world-view in general were explained by classical jurists as being based on this premise.\(^{33}\) In this respect, Muslims were clearly not different from their non-Muslim contemporaries: the positive self-image of the Byzantines was apparently as ingrained as their own.\(^{34}\) Comparable feelings were the norm in medieval civilizations. When the Muslims reached China in the eighth century A.D., “they found a Confucian elite with a heightened sense of its own superiority. Chinese civilization was, to the officials, scholars and landlords … more advanced than any other culture.”\(^{35}\) In his classic description of Indian civilization in the eleventh century A.D., al-Bırūnī reports that the Hindūs rarely engage in religious disputes among themselves and certainly do not put their life or limb in harm’s way because of conflicting views; however, as far as foreigners are concerned, they consider them impure (mlechha) and refuse to have any association with them.\(^{36}\) They believe that

there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race but theirs, no kings other than their leaders and no religion except theirs. (They believe) that science is (only) what is in their possession. They are haughty, self-conceited and ignorant … (yataraffafiün wa yataba÷ramün wa yufijabün bi-anfusihim fa-yajhalün). They do not think that … anyone except them has any knowledge. Thus, when they are told about a science or a scholar in Khurāsān or Persia, they consider the one who told them about it as ignorant … \(^{37}\)

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33 See Chapter One, section V.

34 See Chapter One, at note 109.

