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IBN HAZM ANDALUSI’S BOOK “AL-FISOL” IS THE FIRST SOURCE IN THE COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS STUDY OF THE EAST

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Annotation: This article focuses on the place of “al-Fisal fil-milal val-ahwa van-nihal”, written by Ibn Hazm Andalusí, among the books written on religions. In particular, the article provides informations about the history of the book, its structure, classification of religions and movements, and the author’s approach to the classification of religions and the coverage of religious teachings. At the same time, a brief account of the activities of the Muslim scholar Ibn Hazm in this field is given.

Key words: Comparative religious study of the East, religious scholars, Ibn Hazm Andalusí, the book “al-Fisol”, religions, movements, trends.

Most Eastern and Western religious scholars admit that Muslim scholars developed the first methodological rules for the study of religions and nations. The interest of Muslim scholars in the study of the holy books of the heavenly religions and various religious beliefs began long time ago. For example, Ibn Nadim, the author of “al-Fihrist”, says that the famous translator Ahmad ibn Abdullah ibn Sallam translated the Torah and the Bible into Arabic by order of Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Mahmud Ali, who studied Ibn Hazm’s research methods on religions, also states that the science of comparative religion in the East is based on the Qur’an and the Hadith¹.

¹ Mahmud Ali Himaya. Ibn Xazm va manhajuhu fiy dirasatil adyan. – Cairo: “Dorul-ma’orif”, 1983. –P. 4.



Indeed, many works in this field have been created in the Muslim East, which later served as a fundamental source for the development of the science of “Religious study”. Including,

- Abu Rayhan Beruni (973-1048) “al-Asar al-bakiya an al-qurun al-khaliya” (“Monuments of Ancient Peoples”);
- “al-Milal van-nihal” (“Religions and Currents”) by Muhammad ibn Abdulkarim Shahrastani (1086-1154);
- Abu Mansur Abdul Qahir Baghdadi’s work “al-Farq bayn al-firak” (“Difference between sects”);
- The works of Ibn Hazm Andalusí (994-1064) such as “Al-fisol fil-milal val ahwa van-nihal” (“Separation of religions, movements and sects”) can be a proof of the above ideas.

Thus the science of “Comparative Religios Study” was created. Later, Western scientists, who made a great contribution to the formation of this field as a science, also acted according to the rules they developed.

Ibn Hazm is also accounted one of the founders of the comparative religion of the East. His full name is Abu Muhammad ibn Sa’d ibn Hazm ibn Ghalib ibn Khalaf ibn Mad’an ibn Sufyan ibn Yazid al-Farsi, al-Qurtubi, al-Yazidi. Ibn Hazm was born in 994(384 h.y.), in the city of Cardova in Eastern Andalusia². He was andalusian scientist, faqih, historic, writer, theologian.

Ibn Hazm was originally a Persian and his great grandfather Yazid was a servant of Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan (brother of Muwiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and the governor of Syria during the reign of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab). His father, Abu Amr Ahmad ibn Said ibn Hazm, was one of the ministers of Mansur ibn Muhammad ibn Amir³. He grew up in Cordoba during the decline of the Umayyad caliphate and the ethnic and tribal struggles of the small kingdoms. His childhood was surrounded by events such as the removal of his father from the ministry after the overthrow of Caliph Hisham II and the destruction

² Ислам. Энциклопедический словарь. М.: Наука, Главная редакция восточной литературы, 1991. –С. 87.

³ Ibn Hazm. Encyclopædia Britannica. 2006. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Retrieved 23 Oct. 2006.



of his father's house in Balat Mughit in bloody battles between Arabs and barbarians. He was appointed minister twice during the reign of Abdurrahman III al-Murtaza and Abdurrahman V al-Mustazhir (d. 1023) and three times during the reign of the last caliph, Hisham al-Mu'tadd (d. 1027)⁴.

Ibn Hazm is treated with the Zahiri ratio. The reason for this was that he was considered a representative of the apparent school. According to Ibn Nadim, this sect was founded by Dawud ibn Ali. In Madhhab creed and jurisprudence, based only on the “external” (apparent), the literal understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, to see the hidden meaning (inner) in the texts of religious sources and to use them allegorically (a specific artistic image) or through ideas (concepts) through communication) or by means of reason⁵. At first, Ibn Hazm followed the Hanbali and Shafi'i sects, and later he converted to the apparent sect and developed this sect.

Ibn Hazm, as mentioned above, grew up in a wealthy family and literary environment and learned from famous scholars of his time. These include scholars such as Abu Muhammad al-Ravhani, Abu Umar Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mazhaji (known as Ibn Canaani), and Ali Abdullah Azdi (known as Ibn Farzi).

Ibn Hazm has authored more than 10 tips in the field of science. He wrote more than 400 works. Ibn Kasir said that about Ibn Hazm: “He was Qur'an memorizer, studied the shariah sciences and was a prominent scientist on them. A prominent scholar of his time. He had classified many books. He is said to have classified four hundred volumes and eight thousand pages of books.”⁶ His works can be divided into several groups. Such as history, lineage va politic, usul al-fiqh, Quran sciences, Hadith sciences, sufism, persuasion, philosophy va logic, literature, arabic language and literature, medicine and etc.

His works:

⁴ Ibn Hazm. “Al-Usul val-furu'.” Researchers: Muhammad Atef al-Iroqiy, Suhayr Abu Vafiya va Ibrohim Hilol, Cairo.:”Durun-nahdo al-arabiya”, 1978. –P. 14.

⁵ Ислам. Энциклопедический словарь. М.: “Наука”, Главная редакция восточной литературы, 1991. –С. 87.

⁶ Там же, –С. 76-77.



- Al-Akhlaq wa'l-Siyar (Morals and Behaviour)
- Al-fasl fil al-Milal wal-Nihal (on Sects)
- Al Kitab al-Muhalla bil Athar (The Book Ornamented with traditions) The only book of his Legal rulings existent to date.
- Ihkam Al Ahkam fi Usul al Ahkam. His work on jurisprudential principles or Usul Al Fiqh.
- Tawq al-hamamah (The Dove's Necklace) or (Ring of the Dove)
- Mukhtasar al-Muhalla li Ibn Hazm, an abridgment of Ibn Hazm's fiqh manual⁷.

Al-Dhahabi lists the following catalog of Ibn Hazm's works:

- Al-Isal ila Fahm Kitab al-Khisal in 15,000 folios.
- Al-Khisal al-Hafiz li Jumal Shara'i al-Islam in two volumes.
- Al-Mujalla in two volumes.
- Al-Muhalla in eight volumes.
- Hujja al-Wada' in one volume.
- Qisma al-Khumus fi al-Radd ala Ismail al-Qadi in one volume.
- Al-Athar al-Lati Zahiruha al-Ta'arud wa Nafyi al-Tanaqud Anha in 10,000 folios, unfinished.
- Al-Jami Fi Sahih al-Hadith, without chains of transmission.
- Al-Talkhis wa al-Takhlis fi al-Masa'il al-Nazariyya
- Ma Infarada Bihi Malik aw Abu Hanifa aw al-Shafi'i
- Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha' al-Khamsa Malik wa Abi Hanifa wa al-Shafi'i wa Ahmad wa Dawud (al-Zahiri)
- Al-Tasaffuh fi al-Fiqh in one volume.
- Al-Tabyin fi Hal Alima al-Mustafa A'yan al-Munafiqin in 3 tomes.
- Al-Imla' fi Sharh al-Muwatta in 1,000 folios.
- Al-Imla' fi Qawaid al-Fiqh in 1,000 folios.
- Durr al-Qawaid fi Fiqh al-Zahiriyya in 1,000 folios.
- Al-Ijma in one small volume.

⁷ G.F. Haddad. www.sunnah.org. Retrieved March 18, 2007.



- Al-Faraid in one volume.
- Al-Risala al-Balqa fi al-Radd ala Abd al-Haqq ibn Muhammad al-Saqali in one small volume⁸.

The works written by Ibn Hazm have not lost their significance to current day.

By the age of 26, he had studied all Islamic sciences, and then he began to study religions other than Islam: Judaism, Christianity as well as Zoroastrianism, Monism, Mazdakism, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions and trends⁹. After studying all the religions, he set out to write a book about them. As a result, after 20 years of research, he completed “al-Fisol fil-milal val-ahwa van-nihal”.

“الفصل في الملل والأهواء والنحل” (al-Fisol fil-milal val-ahwa van-nihal) – “Articles about nations, sects and religions” is based on theology, trends and currents in religions and their comparison. The author gives detailed information about the worshippers of the sun and the moon, the Hindu religious and philosophical teachings, the worship of idols as well as the trends and sects in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, their beliefs and teachings. Ibn Hazm describes the process of writing: “I went to the Khawarij, the Mu’tazilites, the Murjis. I also met Muhammad ibn Tayyib Baqilani, one of them. I studied all categories of Rafizis and Shiites.”¹⁰ Ibn Hazm's work is significant for its author's objectivity, critical approach and detailed elaboration of religious teachings.

In the introduction to this book, Ibn Hazm states the purpose of composing the work: “Many people have written many articles, pamphlets and books about the division of religions into sects. Some have written several volumes and a lot of books, talked a lot about religions, written details. But they lacked objective thinking and made a lot of mistakes. Many of them are written out of comprehension and insanity. Some have given brief and concise information on the subject. In this work, I provide information about sects and trends in Islam as well as the teachings of Judaism and Christianity, scriptures, sects and trends in them as well as Greek philosophy, ancient religions, fire

⁸ A. R. Nykl. Ibn Hazm's Treatise on Ethics, Retrieved March 18, 2007. The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 40 (1) (Oct., 1923): 30-36.

⁹ <http://www.ibn-hazm.net/trajem/details/15>

¹⁰ Ibn Hazm. Al-Fisol fil-milal val-ahwa van-nihal. Bayrut: “Dorul-jiyl”, 1996. –P. 5.



worship, sun and star worship including Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism.¹¹”

Al-Fisol consists of 5 books. They are:

The first book, after a brief introduction, the author provided information about the leaders of opposition parties. Then the Greek philosophers cited their philosophical views, argued among themselves scientifically and made scientific rebuttals to their misguided locations. The author went on discussing the books, the Jews and Christians, the number of their sects, differences between beliefs and details about the Torah and the Bible.

The second book which deals with the Four Gospels, the hadiths about sects in Islam, monotheism, fate and the statement of divine attributes. When Ibn Hazm thought about the Bible or the Torah, the intellectual law was based on rules and clear principles. He quoted a text from the Bible or the Torah and gave a detailed explanation.

The third book which deals with the Qur'an and its miracles, fate, ability, guidance, tawfiq, Allah's creation of the actions of slaves, faith and disbelief, obedience and disobedience, promise and persecution referred to.

The fourth book which contains information about the prophets and messengers, angels, intercession, criteria, the Day of Judgment as well as sects such as the Shia, the Mu'tazilites, the Murji'ah and the Khawarij.

In the fifth book, the author discusses magic, miracles, metaphysics, the issue of women's prophecy, the issues of eternity and death, astronomy, motion and silence, body and soul.

In conclusion, Ibn Hazm is an important figure not only in the history of Andalusian philosophical thought, but also in the history of all Islamic philosophical thought. He worked simultaneously in the fields of religion, politics, science and economics. There are many scholars who have studied him, some of whom have studied the personality and artistic creation of the scholar, while others have studied his jurisprudence and sect or his ideological, historical and philosophical views.

¹¹ Ibn Hazm. Al-Fisol fil-milal val-ahva van-nihal. Bayrut: “Dorul-jiyl”, 1996. –P. 35-36.



Additionally, Ibn Hazm's book, “al-Fisal”, is important because of author's objectivity, critical approach and detailed elaboration of religious teachings. This can also be seen from the data mentioned above. Western religious scientists admit Ibn Hazm and Beruni are recognized as the fathers of the science of comparative religion. Ibn Hazm lived and worked at the same time like Abu Rayhan Beruni. Although they have not met, the research and studies are conducted by two scholars on the study of religions are mutually exclusive. The works left by two scholars have not lost their significance over the centuries.

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