Ibn Hazm on Christianity: An Analysis to His Religious Approaches

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Abstract: Ibn Hazm al-Zahiri stood out as a critical analyst of Christian scriptures, however without giving any justification (ta’lif). Thus, his analysis methodology is known as the al-Zahir’s Methodology. This paper seeks to introduce his methodology, analyze the approaches, his objections and critiques adopted by him in his study of Christianity. The interaction between Muslims and Christians in al-Andalus (Spain) stimulated Ibn Hazm to master Christianity and its scriptures. His book al-Fasā is an outcome of the continuous friction between Islam and Christianity in al-Andalus. Kitāb al-fasā fi al-nilāl wa al-atwa wa al-nihāl continues to be considered a work of monumental significance in comparative religion, the first of its kind to systematically study of the religious doctrines of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Key words: Ibn Hazm • Al-Zahir’s Methodology • Inter-religious relation • Islam • Judaism • Christianity

INTRODUCTION

Abu Muhammad Ali Ibn Ahmad ibn Said Ibn Hazm also sometimes known as al-Andalusi al-Zahiri (994-1064) [1, 2] was a Spanish-born Arab theologian, philosopher and jurist whose most important work was a book on comparative religious history. Ibn Hazm was born in Cordova in 994 to a respected and affluent family, descendants of Persian émigrés who had converted from Christianity and resettled in Andalusia, Spain. His father, Ahmad, an erudite scholar and devout Muslim, served as a high functionary to al-Mansur and to his son and successor, al-Muzaffar, regents to caliph Hisham II of al-Andalus. His father, who was chief minister at the Umayyad court, died when Ibn Hazm was 18 years old, during the violent political upheavals of the time. After a careful education in the usual legal and literary style of the time, Ibn Hazm entered active politics himself, being at various times vizier to reigning members of the Umayyad house, a fugitive in neighboring Andalusia state and a political prisoner [3].

At the age of 32 Ibn Hazm finally renounced political life and devoted himself wholeheartedly to scholarship, but his outspokenness in legal writings which attacked the jurists of the dominant Maliki rite led to efforts to silence him. The latter half of his life seems to have been spent on his family estates, writing and teaching informally those who sought him out. In fact the