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MONETARY THOUGHT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY MUSLIM SCHOLARS

Abdul Azim Islahi

Abstract

Muslim scholars of the sixteenth century continued the tradition of writing on economic issues. Their work, however is characterized by the period's overall feature of imitation and repetition and thus reflects hardly any advancement of monetary thought since the works of earlier Muslim scholars. This is clearly reflected in the two representative treatises on money: those of al-Suyuti (d. 1506) written at the beginning of the century, and al-Tumurtashi (d. 1598), written at its the end.

History of Islamic economic thought is a well-researched area of Islamic Economics. To the best of our knowledge, however, all such research stopped at the end of the fifteenth century – the age of Ibn Khaldun and al-Maqrizi. The present paper seeks to advance this research and intends to investigate monetary thought of Muslim scholars during the sixteenth century (corresponding to tenth century *Hijrah*, exactly from 906 AH to 1009 AH). Beginning with an overview of earlier monetary thought in Islam to provide background information, then it goes on to note that particular century's monetary problems in order to provide a perspective for the discussion of monetary thought among Muslim scholars. For the purpose of comparison, European monetary thought of the same period is also analyzed.

'Money is one of the most fundamentals of all man's inventions. Every branch of knowledge has its fundamental discovery. In economics, in the whole commercial side of man' social existence, money is the essential invention on which all the rest is based.'

Geoffrey Crowther in *An Outline of Money*

History of Islamic economic thought is a well-researched area of the discipline of Islamic Economics. But all researches, to the best of our knowledge, come to an end at the 15th century AD – the age of Ibn Khaldun and al-Maqrizi. The present paper aims at advancing this research and intends to investigate monetary thought of Muslim scholars in the sixteenth century AD. (corresponding to tenth century *Hijrah*, exactly from 906 AH to 1009 AH). The paper begins with an overview of monetary thought in Islam in the earlier period to provide background knowledge. Monetary problems of the sixteenth century have also been noted to provide a perspective for the discussion of monetary thought of Muslim scholars. For comparison purpose, the Western monetary thoughts of the period have also been illustrated. To study Muslim scholar's thought on money it concentrates on treatises written on the subject and the piecemeal opinions scattered in the voluminous Islamic literature due to space and time limits. Thus, it takes al-Suyuti from the

beginning of the century and al-Tumurtashi from the end of it as we could find only two such exclusive works. The present paper being a moderate initiative, the present writer feels that there is need to have extensive research on the subject in the sixteenth century.

1. Monetary Thought of Early Muslim Scholars.

Muslim leaders and scholars had the perception of token money as early as the 1st/7th Century, Umar (d. 23/644), the second caliph once intended to issue money of camel skin but he refrained because some of his close people expressed apprehension that this might adversely affect the growth of camel stocks (al-Baladhuri, 1983, p. 456). Perhaps based on this report, Imam Malik (d. 179/795) says that 'if people accept skins as money, he would not like their exchange for gold and silver with deferred delivery' as it may lead to usurious practices (Malik, 1978, pp. 90-91). Another great scholar Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241/855) is reported to have said that if people decide something as money (other than gold and silver), it is all quite and acceptable (Ibn Qudamah, 1972, 4:176). To Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150/767), gold and silver are money by nature, while *fulus* (coins of other substance) are money by people's adoption and agreement, that is, a form of token money (al-Tumurtashi, 2001, p. 50). In the later period Muslim scholars discussed and analyzed various aspects of money. For example, al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) (n.d. Vol. 4, pp. 114-15) dealt with the problems of barter exchange as well as the nature and functions of money. Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728/1328) noted the two main functions of money, measure of value and medium of exchange and advised the ruler not to disturb these functions by debasement of money and counterfeiting that may result outflow of good money of the country and inflow of bad money from abroad – an idea that came to be known in the 19th century as Gresham's law. Ibn Khaldun's (d. 906/1408) statement on the money is limited to his distinction of money by nature – the two precious metals - and token money, the use of other metals. In his opinion, gold and silver are created to be used as money and perform the function of the medium of exchange, measure and store of value. 'All other things are subject to market fluctuations from which gold and silver are exempt. They are the basis of profit, property and treasure' (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, p. 313). His student Al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442) elaborated his teacher's ideas in his work *Ighathat al-Ummah bi Kashf al-Gummah* and discussed inflation resulting from the use of debased money and its adverse effects on various sections of the society (al-Maqrizi 1994, pp. 71-72, 77-79).

Muslim philosophers like Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), Ibn Rushd, Latinized Averroes (d. 595/1198), al-Dawani (d. 907/1501), etc. learned the Greek ideas on money and made substantial improvements over it.¹ These scholars generally took the stock of changing monetary condition and expressed their juridical opinion over them. In many cases juristic stands were supported by economic reasoning and evidences. Such enlightenment is scarcely found among the *ulama* of our study period.

2. Western Monetary Thought of the Period

In the economic history, as a whole, the sixteenth century is distinguished by overemphasis on gold and silver as money and race for increasing stock of precious metals, specially in European West reflected in mercantilist writers. Usury and interest controversy entered the decisive stage in this period (Spiegel, 1971, pp. 82-83). John Hales (d. 1571) 'deplores the evils of debasement. In this connection, paper money is mentioned, albeit as an absurdity. Gresham's law, by then a common place, is stated. The prince or his subjects must accumulate treasure to have on hand in time of war or of death' (ibid, p. 85).

The Western historians of economic thought are of the view that the quantity theory of money was also discovered in the sixteenth century. Credit for its discovery is usually given to Jean Bodin (1530-96) (Spiegel 1971, p. 89; Schumpeter 1954, pp. 311-312; Heckscher, 1955, 2:225).

However, as early as 1522, the great astronomer Copernicus observed that "money usually depreciates when it becomes too abundant" (Spiegel, 1971, p. 88). 'After Copernicus's rudimentary statement of the quantity theory in 1520s, it was not until the 1550s that related brief references appear again in the literature'. In 1550, Navarrus, a Dominican Priest, published 'a manual on moral theology with an appendix devoted to a discussion of usury'. In this work he states reasons for disparities of the value of money in two different countries in term of their relative scarcity. 'Navarrus thus developed the quantity theory of money in conjunction with a discussion of international prices (ibid, p. 89)

According to Spiegel (1971, p. 86), 'The emergence of the quantity theory of money in the second half of the sixteenth century constitutes an event of momentous importance in the history of economics'. This important discovery of the sixteenth century Europe was refined in various ways and criticized as well

in the course of time. Nevertheless its importance in doctrinal history cannot be denied. 'By implicitly involving the demand and supply apparatus it prepared the ground for the eventual emergence of demand and supply analysis as a general explanatory principle, a development that stretched over three centuries and culminated in the work of Alfred Marshall at the close of the nineteenth century' (ibid. pp. 86-87).

3. Quantity Theory of Money and Muslim Scholars.

Muslim scholars of earlier period had idea of embryonic quantity theory of money in term of debasement as the reason for undue expansion of money and eventually a rise in prices (Islahi, 1988, p.141). Al-Maqrizi argued that the return to gold and silver – the natural substance of money – would solve the problem (al-Maqrizi, 1994, pp. 80-81). No doubt they were right in their time. But in the sixteenth century, with the discovery of the New World, a never ending stream of treasure arrived in Spain and was diffused over the whole of Europe. Prices rose, and as the traditional explanation of changes in the price level, which had made much of the debasement of money as the principal cause, did not seem to fit the changing circumstances as well as it had before, thoughtful people in many lands searched for a better reasons' (Spiegel, 1971, p. 87). As noted above Muslim scholars discussed the problem in the same traditional framework of debasement of currency and deferred payment. They did not think afresh. Not did they analyze the new trends in monetary sphere, although the effects of changing situations were felt in Ottoman Empire as well.

Muslim scholars of the sixteenth century also wrote on monetary issues. To know the nature of their thought we shall present two representative personalities, one from the early sixteenth century and the other from the end of it – Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911/1506) and Muhammad bin Abd-Allah al-Tumurtashi (d. 1004/1599). The selection is not based on any choice as we could not find any other author who has discussed the monetary problem.

But let us first review the monetary system of their time as this will help us properly understand and evaluate their thought on the subject.

4. Monetary Problems of Sixteenth Century

Mamluk² history is full of instances of monetary malpractices. As early as in eighth/fourteenth century Mamluk rulers used debasement and unrestricted money expansion to satisfy their lust of riches. The great scholar of the period Ibn Taymiyah (663-728/1261-1328) who witnessed the turmoil resulted due to debasement practiced by Mamluk rulers of his time suggested that, 'the authority should mint the coins (other than gold and silver) according to the just value of people's transactions without any injustice to them (Ibn Taymiyyah 1963, Vol. 29, p. 469). He advised the ruler, not to start business in money by purchasing copper and minting coins and thus doing business with them He should mint coins of real value without aiming at any profit by so doing (ibid.). Generally three kinds of monetary units – *dinar* (gold), *dirham* (silver) and *fals* (copper coin, plural=*fulus*) circulated. While the *dinar* was very scarce, the *fals* was the predominant coin. Circulation of *dirhams* always fluctuated. At the beginning of the Mamluk era the dirham contained two-third of silver and one third of copper. But in the course of time the proportions were reversed (Qalqshandi, 1913, vol. 3, p.443).

Al-Maqrizi gave rather detailed account of debasement of currency and inflation in the later Mamluk period. While stating the unrestricted supply of token money in place of gold and silver coins in his time, he reiterates: "During the reign of al-Zahir Barquq (784-801/1382-99), the Ustadar Muhammad b. Ali was entrusted with the supervision of the royal treasury. He was greedy for profits and for accumulating wealth. Among his evil deeds was a large increase in the quantities of *fulus*; he dispatched his men to Europe to import copper and secured the mint for himself in exchange for a sum of money. Under his administration *fulus* were minted at the Cairo mint. He also opened a mint in Alexandria for the purpose of striking *fulus*. Extremely large quantity of *fulus* came into the hands of people and they circulated so widely that they became the dominant currency in the country. This caused a catastrophe that rendered money useless and foodstuffs scarce..." (al-Maqrizi, 1994, pp. 71-72, 77-79). Al-Maqrizi (1956, p. 71) notes two factors for that sad situation - the silver coins have disappeared either due to not minting them at all or melting them to make out of it ornaments. Lopez, Robert et al (1978, pp. 123-24) note: 'Egypt's economic crisis was accompanied by a breakdown of its monetary system. Gold and silver currency became increasingly scarce, and copper coins predominated in internal circulation and on all levels of transaction. For Maqrizi, the deterioration of its monetary system was the simple most important cause of Egypt economic difficulties. As a panacea, he prescribed a return to the gold and silver standard and a relegation of copper coinage to the role that God and

custom had ordained for it, viz. restricting it to petty transaction.’

Al-Suyuti the great scholar of later Mamluk period notes that during the year 821/1414, the *fulus* became expensive after being abundant and cheap. It became very difficult for those who were indebted to repay their loans in term of *fulus*. Earlier *fulus* to dirham the exchange rate was 8:1 or 9:1 and *fulus* to *dinar* was 260:1 *aflori*³, 280:1 *harjah*, 210:1 *nasiri*, and 600:1 was Egyptian *qintar*. After *fulus* being expensive the exchange rate of *fulus* to dirham turned to be 7:1. In case of *dinar* all decreased by 50. The situation was reversed at the end of the century when it was announced that 30 *dirham* would be exchanged for one *ratl fulus*, while earlier 36 *dirhams* were exchanged for a *ratl fulus*. (al-Suyuti, 2000, p. 96). This led al-Suyuti to pen down his treatise “*Qat`al-mujadalah`ind tagh`ir al-mu`amalah*” (Deciding the controversy in the wake of changes in money matters). We shall return soon and examine its contents below.

During the rule of Qansawh al-Ghawri (d.1516), the last Mamluk Sultan, monetary system further deteriorated. There were frequent changes of monetary units and exchange rates. The contemporary historian Ibn Iyas (1960, vol. 4, p. 251) reports that in 917/1511 a new exchange rate was announced: *Fulus*, new or old, one *ratl* equal 18 *nuqrah*. New *fulus* caused the trader thirty-three per cent loss. Just after a year, the *muhtasib* (the market inspector) announced new coins by weight: 2 *nisfs* = 1 *ratl* coins (ibid., p. 295). Again the next year announcement was made that new coins will be exchanged by weight; earlier they were exchanged by number. This caused a great loss to people (ibid., p. 328). They complained the matter of new coins as for them they meant double price. At their complaint the Sultan announced that *fulus* would be exchanged at the rate of 2 *nisfs* = one *ratl*, the old exchange rate, after it was 3 *nisfs* a *ratl*. At this, people felt relief (ibid., p. 338). Ibn Iyas (4:339) also mentions that in the year 919/1513, new and old *fulus* were to be exchanged by weight—one *ratl fulus* equal two *nisfs*.

As far the monetary situation of the Ottoman government is concerned, the Egyptian *Qanunnamah* laid the rule that from every hundred dirhams of silver 250 *pare* (pieces) are to be struck. These pieces were locally called, not *akce* (as used in the *Qaunnamah*), but *mu`ayyidi*, colloquially pronounced *midi* and by the Europeans *medin*; and it appears that the Ottomans currently called them by the name of *para* (money) (Gibb and Bowen, 1965, vol. 2:39n). ‘All sources are in agreement in presenting the rates of exchange in the middle of the sixteenth century as being roughly 40 *akces* to the *kara kurus* (foreign silver), 50 to Austrian *ducat* (gold), and 60 to the Venetian *ducat* and Ottoman *serifi*’ (ibid, 2:51). “During periods when there was an abundance of gold in circulation, Ottoman gold and silver did not suffer a notable decline in value. Around 1565, the weight of the *akce* was adjusted downwards to a weight of 0.683 grams. Similarly the weight of the gold coin was reduced to 3.544 grams in 1552 and to 3.517 grams in 1565. (a *ducat* weighed 3.426 grams in 1526)” (Sahillioglu, 1999, P. 40).

From the reign of Ottoman Sultan Salim the First (1512-20) down to the beginning of the reign of Murad III (1574-95), the weight of *akce* remained stable at 10 grains or roughly 1/5 of a *dirham*. During the reign of Murad III (1574-95) financial crisis, caused by the influx of American silver, spread to the Ottoman territories. The silver contents of the *akce* and of the European *para* were in 1584 reduced by about half. Its value fell proportionally in term of *serifi*. (Gibb and Bowen, 2:51). According to Gibb and Bowen the *akce* never recovered from this slide. ‘The Ottoman Treasury lacked the means by which the parallel difficulties were palliated in the Western countries, and the most that later competent *Vezirs* ever succeeded in achieving was its restoration to this level from still lower depths. To add to their troubles, a second scourge, spreading from the West in the reign of Mehmed III (1595-1603) and his successors, alternatively distracted and tempted the treasury. This was the plague of false and adulterated money which reduced the *akce* to a rate of 220 to the *serifi*’ (ibid. p. 52). Writing about the economic events of 986/1578, Sahillioglu notes (1999, p. 12), “The weight and standard of silver coins like the *akce*, *pare*, and *shahi* could not be preserved. Even the state mints engaged in issuing defective, lighter coins of lower metal content. A devaluation was carried out in 1584 by minting 800 *akces* from 100 *dirhems* of silver as opposed to the previous 450. This caused the price of gold coins to rise from 60 to 120 *akces*. Just as an attempt at stabilization was being made in 1586, the first and most spectacular janissary revolt in Ottoman history took place; in it the governor of Rumelia, the treasurer and the superintendent of the mints were murdered because the *ulufe* (salary) had been paid with *akces* of a lower standard”. Perhaps these were the circumstances that led al-Tumurtashi to write down his treatise “*Badhl al-majhud fi as`ilat taghayyur al-nuqud*” (efforts to solve the questions of changing currencies).⁴

Sahillioglu has rightly observed that: “The Ottoman Empire covered huge tract of territory. Within it were what might be called monetary areas, the *akce* area (Anatolia), the *pare* area (Egypt), the *sahi* area

(Persia-Iraq) and the *penz* area (Balkan). In each area different factors and choices operated on the gold and silver market. For example, the same foreign coin was valued differently in each region. The conditions of the silver market were also radically altered after the introduction of American silver into the market. Generalization made about the Ottoman monetary system, for this reason, may often be misleading” (ibid. P. 38). For example, ‘according to the day-book (*ruznamce*) of the treasury in 27 August 1569, 790 *sultaniyyes* (Ottoman gold coins) priced at 60 *akces* and another 100 priced at 59 *akces* with 282 *Efrensiyyes* (European gold coins) and 108 *gurus* (silver large coins)⁵ priced at 40 *akces* entered the treasury. A week later, a quantity of *gurus* valued at 40, 20 and 10 *akces* had also entered’ (Sahillioglu, 1999, p.41n) Until the end of the 16th century, the Ottomans did not distinguish between large silver coins of varying size and weight, be they of Western European or American origin. They identified all simply as *gurus*. For example, in the budget of 1582-1583, entries of *gurus* valued at 55, 48, 44, 40, and 39 *akces* appears without giving each kind a different name (Sahillioglu, p. 41).

5. Al-Suyuti and his treatise on money

Jalal al-Din Abd al-Rahman b. Kamal Abu Bakr al-Asyuti, (849-911/14 45-1506) a prolific writer who mastered in Qura’nic studies, tradition of the Prophet (pbuh), *fiqh*, grammar, literature, history, etc. Born in Egypt widely traveled Syria, Hijaz, Yemen, India, Morocco, and Takrur. He memorized the Qur’an at the age of eight and learned and memorized many texts of various Shariah sciences and literature. However, he had allergy from mathematics and logic. He claims to have acquired all the instrumental sciences necessary for *ijtihad* (original thinking and pronouncement of decree on new issues). It is said that number of his works crossed five hundred. However, his writings are generally marked by compilation rather than original ideas. In his work *Husn al-Muhadarah* he gave his biography; till that year his works reached three hundred in number.

The reason for writing his treatise, as al-Suyuti himself mentioned in its beginning, was that he was distressed by the increasing controversy over the amount and mode of payment in the wake of decreasing the value of copper coins (*fulus*) by about 17 percent during his time (al-Suyuti, 2000, p. 95). Thus, he mainly addressed this question, although he gave many useful information on the subject. As he notes at the commencement, similar question was asked from his teacher Alam al-Din al-Bulqini about half a century ago but at that time the problem was faced due to revaluation and scarcity of copper *fulus*. Agreeing basically with his teacher's judgment that when *fulus* become rare or disappear altogether, one has to pay equivalent quantity of *fulus* or their value in term of gold and silver, al-Suyuti says that the reason behind this judgment is that *fulus* are *mithli* object (something that vanishes with use and replaceable with similar entity). And such object, if becomes rare or disappear, its equivalent value has to be accepted. According to him even pure and standardized gold and silver coins are *mithli*. The debased and mixed with alloy will be considered *qimiy* or *mutaqawwam* (treated according to value or something subject to valuation) (ibid. p. 96). As for the question whether repayment will be made according to the value of copper *fulus* on the due date (*yawm al-mutalabah*) or the date of transaction, al-Suyuti says that in valid transactions value of the due date will be considered while in case of invalid transactions, the date of possession (*yawm al-qabd*) will be taken into account (ibid. p. 97).

Thus, if someone has lent one *ratl fulus*, the borrower has to return one *ratl fulus* whether being cheaper or costlier and irrespective of their use by weight or counting. This is in case of controversy and when matter is legally to be enforced. Otherwise the two parties are permitted to agree on any term willingly. Al-Suyuti shows the wide application of this provision in cases of forward sale (*al-salam*), debt arising out of credit sale (ibid, pp. 97-98), due wages, dowry money (*al-sadaq*), compensation for usurpation, possession in invalid contract of sale, destruction caused to other’s property, allocated portion or amount in an endowment (*waqf*), will (*wasiyah*), sustenance provided by a judge in a case of divorce, etc. (ibid. pp. 98-100). Although written in a legal and juridical tone, the treatise provides some interesting insights in economic areas as well.

Based on a famous tradition al-Suyuti considers it undesirable on the part of a ruler to cancel a legal currency except that there are enough reasons to do so. He is also against debasement and counterfeit. This is so because it is a kind of deception which is prohibited by the Prophet (pbuh). It corrupts the monetary system and inflicts harm to those who rightfully own them. It also causes inflation as the counterfeiting provides a way to unrestricted coinage. It also results into decline of imports as the importers will be discouraged when they will know that they will get counterfeit money in return of their goods. Minting of money should be prerogative of the ruler. The other should not be allowed to mint coins as it is a symbol of sovereignty. Moreover, it will lead to corruption and deception (ibid. pp. 100-101). According to al-Suyuti

when pure metals were used for minting coins, it was considered sinful to hold counterfeit money. He notes various opinions of scholars when debasement becomes the norm. Most of the scholars allowed acceptance of token money, when it became the dominating currency (ibid).⁶

An important aspect of al-Suyuti's treatise is that it provides original source material for the history of money in Islam. On the authority of al-Khattabi (d. 386/998), he reports and gives an account of the monetary system during the Prophet's time when different types of silver coins and Roman gold coins were used by Muslims, till Abd al-Malik b. Marwan (d. 86/705) issued silver and gold coins applying the average weight of those coins which coincided the weight of Makkan dihram standard in Islam (ibid). In this connection he gives further details from al-Mawardi (d. 450/1058). He gives another account of the development of money in early Islam from *al-Tamhid* of Ibn Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1070). A slightly different story of the monetary system of the Prophet's time has been provided on the authority of *qadi* 'Iyad (d. 544/1149) and al-Rafi'i (d. 623/1226). The same is supported by al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277) who provides more details on the subject with reference to Ibn Hazm (d. 445/1063) quoted by Abu Muhammad Abd al-Haqq in his work *Kitab al-Ahkam*. Information has been provided from two other historian – Ibn Sa'ad (d. 230/845) and Ibn 'Asakir (d. 571/1176) (ibid. pp. 102-103).

Brief accounts of monetary system in later centuries are also found in the treatise under review. Al-Suyuti notes that al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348) has been quoted for monetary changes in the year 632/1334, Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373) for 756/1355 and Ibn Hajar (d. 825/1449) for the year 776/1374 (ibid. pp. 103-104). Through literary sources, al-Suyuti proves that Arabs had been acquainted with the use of *fulus* since ancient days as the words *fals*, *fulus*, *Iflas* existed in the original Arabic language. *Fulus* were in use even in the first century *hijrah* among Muslims as a number of reports exist on the question of exchange of *fulus* for *fulus* (ibid. p. 104). But what was *fals*' position as a monetary unit at the early period of Islam, al-Suyuti is silent on this question, though his words betray that *fulus* were inferior and discarded type of commodity money at that time and they had not acquired that importance which they did later in Mamluk period.

6. Al-Tumurtashi on changes in currency.

Muhammad b. Abd-Allah al-Tumurtashi (939-1004/1532-1598), the Hanfite scholar of late sixteenth century was born in Ghazzah (Palestine) and lived there, though he traveled in neighbouring countries for learning many times such as Aleppo, Hamah, Damascus and Cairo in his academic pursuits. In Cairo he studied under famous Hanafite scholar Ibn Nujaym (d. 970/1562). He authored around forty books, some of them remained incomplete. His famous works are *Tanwir al-Absar wa Jami' al-Bihar* in Hanafi jurisprudence, *al-Wusul ila Qawa'id al-Usul*, *Mu'in al-Mufti ala-Jawab al-Mustafti* and *Risalah fi'l-Nuqud* or more correctly *Badhl al-Majhud fi Tahrir As'ilat Taghayyur al-Nuqud*. This last one is focus of our attention in this section.

The monetary system by the end of sixteenth century was very much disturbed due to political and economic changes and influx of American silver in Europe and from there to Ottoman Empire. Generally four types of problems were faced: Either a monetary unit totally lost common acceptance or it was cancelled, or it was partially accepted, i.e. in some regions and not others or exchanged rate was changed making a particular monetary unit more expensive or cheaper. These changes, especially affected deferred payments or transactions in the process. These circumstances provided context for al-Tumurtashi to write his treatise on money as he himself stated it (al-Tumurtashi, 2001, p. 46). It may be noted that the problem arose in case of copper *fulus* or *dinar* and *dirham* with mixed alloy. Pure gold and silver were considered as natural money and they possessed full value even after cancellation and replacing them by new coins of same purity. The issues of cancellation or disappearance and fluctuation in value and acceptance of copper *fulus* and coins of mixed metals were also addressed in the second century *hijrah* by top Hanafi leaders – Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150/767) and his two students *qadi* Abu Yusuf (d. 182/798) and Imam Muhammad (d. 189/805). Their opinions differed on the issue. While Imam Abu Hanifah holds that a sale contract will stand null and void in case the currency in which the transaction took place disappears or is cancelled. The buyer has to return the sold object if it is intact in hand, or he has to return identical good, if has been used up. If the object were *qimi* (treated according to the value), he would be required to return its equivalent value (ibid. p.48). His two students hold that the sale transaction will be valid, but the buyer has to pay the value of the object (in term of new currency). Again they have differed on the question of the value date. Abu Yusuf says that it would be value of the object on the sale date, while Muhammad says the value on the day of demonetization or cancellation (ibid. p. 49).

Al-Tumurtashi based his opinion on the leaders of Hanafi School. He agrees with the decree of *qadi* Abu Yusuf in case the coins used in transaction disappear completely or lose acceptance (ibid. pp. 53, 56). But in case the coins are partially accepted, then the buyers will have option: either he should accept it or take the equivalent value. This is so, because the money has become defective because it is not accepted in certain regions, though it is still in circulation (ibid. p. 51). Lastly, in case the value of coins increases or decreases, Imam Abu Hanifah says that the payment will be made in equivalent amount of the same coins, not different ones (*Laisa alayhi ghayruha*). In the beginning Abu Yusuf also adopted this view but later he differed and said that the payment would be according to the value of coins on the day of sale and possession (*qimatuha min al-darahim yawm al-bay' wa'l-qabd*) (ibid. p. 53). Al-Tumurtashi also adopts this view and enforces it with traditional rules in Hanafi jurisprudence (ibid. pp. 54-56). He never advocates adoption of an opinion in the light of reason and temporal requirements. Rather he warns against any original thinking and deviation from imitation (*taqlid*) (ibid. pp. 58-60).

7. A Journey of Hundred Years

We have seen above two samples of works that tried to answer questions arising out of changes in monetary units and variation in the value of money. Both aimed to present juristic solution to those problems. Al-Suyuti gives his opinion in the light of Shafi'i stand on such an issue, while al-Tumurtashi offers solution based on rulings in Hanafi School. Al-Suyuti supports his view with analogical reasoning, but al-Tumurtashi does not plead in such a logical way. The former's treatise may prove to be a useful source of monetary history in earlier period of Islam but the latter's treatise is devoid of such information. This simply shows how creative thinking and application of reasoning declined with the time in the sixteenth century, specially regarding an important economic element, money. We could not find them to have discussed the causes of fluctuation in the value of money and resulting consequences on various section of society, in term of inflation and deflations or working of Gresham's law and similar ideas which were found in earlier Muslim scholars and those were attracting attention of Western scholars as we have pointed out in the preceding pages. Thus, the overall characteristic of the period – imitation and repetition – is reflected in the works of these two scholars and hardly any advancement of monetary thought of earlier Muslim scholars is noticeable in their treatises.

Finally we would like to make it clear again that we studied the two works of sixteenth century on money and exchange by al-Suyuti and al-Tumurtashi, not out of choice but out of necessity, because we could come across only these two works – both of juridical nature. Possibility cannot be ignored of the existence of work on this issue by socio-political thinkers of the time, lying in manuscript form. Thus, they may not be taken as final words and scope of search and research is still demanding.

Endnotes:

1. For a discussion of their monetary thought refer to Islahi, 2005, pp. 48-49.
2. In the early part of the 10th/16th century the heartland of Islam was ruled by Mamluk Sultans of Egypt (1250-1517) with Cairo as their capital. In the year 923/1517 the Ottoman Turks put an end to the Mamluk rule and the whole region fell under their custody.
3. 'Aflori' or 'florin' Gold pieces, bearing a flower on the reverse [whence – from florino – the name] were minted in Florence in 1252.
4. The treatise was edited and annotated by Husam al-Din b. Musa Alaffanah and published from al-Quds (Palestine), 2001. Ibn Abidin (d. 1258/1842), mentions its title as "*Badhl al-majhud fi mas'alat al-nuqud*" in his own treatise entitled "*Tanbih ar ruqud ala ahkam al-nuqud*" in which he incorporated the major portion of al-Tumurtashi's work.
5. 'The Ottomans gave the name of *gurus* (derived from the German *groschem*) to the large silver coins, weighing 9.5 *dirhams* (29.184 grams), which the Western European merchants imported in increasing numbers to the Empire. This unit, so far as we know, first appears in treasury accounts from Hungary. The treasury accounts from Budin reveal that a *gurus* was worth 100 *penz* or 50 Ottoman *akces* in 1554' (Sahillioglu, p.40).
6. For example, al-Ghazali, who is very against debasement of currency, admits it 'if the issuer is state' (n. d. Vol. 2, pp. 73-74). It means he allows for the permissibility of 'representative' or 'token' money in modern terms.

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