

# The Historical Backdrop of Religious Dissent in India

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The objective of this treatise is to analyse the historical backdrop of which gave rise to the religious conflict in India. Historians have a great accountability in this regard – such as, it is not justified to think that the mention of the golden period of ancient India means the glorification of the Hindus. The historians create this in quietude in vein by comparing it to Muslim India. It could be stated for instance that the qualms have been appeared centring the vanquishment of India by the Aryans, is completely the vicious move of the historians. This kind of mentality hinders the culture of history. It is true that, religious conflict has been witnessed in ancient India and there was friction between the Buddhists and the Hindus. At the same time it is also true that the harmonious force of Indian culture gave birth to an Indian heritage, destroying demolishing the religious conflict. The communalism which has been taken place in British India cannot be trifled. Vicious move can be taken by the foreigners; can do by the communal but why the historians should commit the same mistake! The religious conflict took place in colonial India should be graded in different category. The history which had been created in order to clear the charge against the British rule, why the Indian historians are engaging themselves in the same? On the other hand, it is also not possible to bring the equilibrium of intolerance between the Hindus and the Muslims by delineating the incidents of Hindu fundamentalism and the battles among the different religions in ancient India. If one tries to load any one side with glory, the secularism can never be maintained, moreover bitterness increases between the two communities. In the middle age, the Muslim rule of course had some good aspects but bad things were also not scarce. In Turk-Afghan era, in madness of war, the number of Hindu slaughtering was not less. They destroyed temples which were the symbol of our ancient architecture. The Hindus only got exemption after offering *Jijiah* to the Muslim rulers as *Jimmi*. In the Mughal era, although the practice was softened but was not been abolished. But some so called secular historians try these oppressions to pass for the emergence of time or the device for extracting tax. Aurangzeb, although a strict ruler, was not a saint. However, communalism cannot be stopped like this, means by bribing the Muslims and angering the Hindus. On the contrary, its gravity increases. The problem can be solved only by revelation of the truth.

After the battle of Buxar and Palashi, when the British rule got started, the Muslim societies were verse to include them with that foreign rule. As the British rulers gained the state by defeating the Muslim power, they also were ill-disposed to the Muslims and were not ready to give them any concession. The British rulers looked upon the Muslim community to be revolutionary. At that very juncture, the Hindus extended their hand of assistance towards the British. By adopting British language, culture and education, Hindus endeavoured to become the part of British rule in India.

Actually, it was the bent of the middleclass Hindus that they became attracted towards the generous end of the British culture. The way, the students of Hindu College became influenced by the western education and culture that they became infamous as ‘Brown *Saheb*’. On the other side, at this very moment, the Hindu kings, who disowned their kingship by the British rule, were contemplating to revolt against them. The Muslims were backward to the Hindus in respect of modernism and education. They remained confined in their world of

Arabian, Parsian and Urdu. In the middle age, after living so many years side by side, a Hindu-Muslim assimilated culture was born and this became popular with the interventions of the saints like Kabir, Meera, Dadu, Nanak and the Sufi Satyapirs. This heritage saw a crack during the advent of British rule. That was the beginning of communalism in India.

The Muslim community, as the defeated clan was far away from the British power and British culture and had been backward till the period of Great Rebellion of 1857. They were unable to gain faith of the British government. On the other hand, the Hindus considered the British rule and their culture to be superior to the Muslims and gained their favour in no time. They gained dexterity in English language. According to Meckle's desire, they became genuine *sahib* saving their body colour. At the beginning, they got lower rank government jobs. Ranking jobs were also offered to them occasionally. In the field of business, the pioneers like Dwarakanath started companies making the Britishers, their shareholders. In the field of culture, many became prosperous by upbringing the Western intellectuality. Some even started dreaming in English! But such tremendous effort also did not permit them to be equal to the ruling class. The breach in assistance first showed its face centring *Kala Kanoon* and in 1837, 1851 and finally in Ilbert Bill controversy. By no means, Hindus could acquire equality with the British rulers legally. In other side, the government created obstacle in the examination of Civil Service in the path of the Hindu student by some illegal means. At last the Hindus took the path of rebellion after being deprived in education, in business, in zamindari and in service. The first nationalistic movement got started following this path. The National Congress was founded in 1885. The Muslims took this opportunity and changed their mind at this very moment. They now started assisting the British instead of opposing them. Sir Sayed Ahmmad took leading role into it. But the field was made fertile by the Maulavis like Keramat Ali and Chirgi Ali etc. At one time, who considered the Muslim rule as *Dar-Ul-Islam* and the non-Muslims as *Dar-Ul-Harb*, and who were not at all ready to unite with the latter, now started to talk about agreement. Even this kind of statement also started to be circulated that the Muslims are religious wise not against of Christianity and very near to them. Sir Sayed Ahammad diminishing the fault of the Muslims in the Great Rebellion and prophesied their union with the British in his article. Anglo Oriental Mahmadan College was founded to educate Muslim youths in Western culture and education. The British rule also desired the same. When Hindus were becoming rebellious, they were happy to get Muslims as a substitute and completely utilised the opportunity. In 1882, they emphasized on Muslim education and reservation of service in Hunter Commission. This Commission was the beginning of dividing rule in India. Sir Sayed Ahammad already demanded for reservation of Parliament in 1883. In 1886-87, he opposed Badaruddin Tawebji, the Congress president's proposal and declared that the Muslims will not join the Congress of the Hindus. They are completely different race in respect of culture and religion from the Hindus. Sir Sayed Ahammad was the first to announce the term Two Nation Theory. In other side, Sayed Amir Ali founded National Mahmadan Association and urged to the Muslim population to join it. He also advised them to keep away from Congress. Forgetting the background of Muslim backwardness, he emphasized the issue of ignoring them by the Hindus and the British rulers. These aristocrat Muslim leaders stressed upon the issue of their reservation and started movement to claim their rights. They did not even try to solve their main problem. In regard of culture, every community would maintain their own custom, this is quite natural. For instance, the Hindus created *Hindu Mela* and the Muslims created Mahamadan Literary Society. These were the self-analysis in the era of Renaissance. These did not create dissention. Both Hindus and Muslims gave speech in one another meeting too. Surendranath Bandyopadhyay hailed Sir Sayed Ahammad for his

endeavour. But gradually the Muslim leaders leaving their path of culture became agile to remove their backwardness in respect of the Hindus in the politics. They became eloquent about their reservation in exchange of British obedience. In effect, we experienced that in Marley Minto Reformation in 1909, the separate seat reservation has been made for them. Before this, the moderate politics of Congress has been turned towards extremism and the demand of *Purna Swaraj* has come from *Lal-Bal-Pal*. Swadeshi era has been started in Bengal. Curzon's Corruption Policy has turned the Swadeshi into revolutionary. After that Division of Bengal and *Agni Yug* (Age of Fire) were started in Bengal in 1905. All these activities were considered to be the revolutionary activities of the Hindus by the British government. They were skilful to instigate the Muslims against the Hindus in these movements. In 1906, Muslim League was founded under the leadership of the Nawab of Dhaka, Salimullah. They boycotted the Swadeshi and the revolutionary movements showing the reasons that no interest of the Muslims would be fulfilled by these. Nawab Salimullah was the founder of Two Race Theory, so he also forbade the Muslims to take part in any activities of Congress and the revolutionaries due to the racial reason. In Montague- Chelmsford Reformation (1918) too, seat reservation of the Muslims took place. The Muslims were given the benefits in all the fields like education, service and administration. National Congress was symbolised to be the Hindu Association and its Muslim members decreased up to the point of extinction. In spite of that, National Congress tried hard to turn the minds of the Muslims in Gandhiji's leadership. Khilafat was the movement of outside India, but the Indian Muslims' were emotionally engaged with it. So Gandhiji supported this movement on behalf of Congress, which was declared during Lucknow Agreement. He wanted to utilize the Anti-British mentality through it. This was the golden era of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood. Gandhiji was criticised by the other leaders of Congress for this action. Some progressive historians still calumny him for this. The people, who consider Gandhiji as the pioneer of Hinduism, forget his stand during Khilaphat movement. But when Kamal Pasha himself removed the Khalipha and established National Turkistan, then this movement loses its significance and the Muslim's affinity of Congress also vanished. Ali Brother and the Kichlus gradually swayed away from Congress. The individual feeling of the Muslims got awakened again. Congress also got back to their own stand. It is said that Gandhiji's *Ram Dhun* is the prelude of establishing *Ram Rajya*. But one who perceived Gandhiji's philosophy proper knows that he did not disguise himself as a saint to entertain the Hindus. *Ram Dhun* consists both God and Allah. *Ram Rajya* is not a Hindu state but a state of good commandment. Gandhiji told it himself that his religion is the religion of ethics, religion of truth. He is not communal by any means. He wanted to proceed with his movement not only taking Ali Brothers but also Jinnah and in later period Moulana Abul Kalam Azad along with. But batty Jinnah, in spite of not being the pure Muslim, claimed to be the representative of the Muslims. He claimed the reservation of Muslim interest, which was the other name of Two Nation Theory. At this time the chief of the Muslim cultural activities was Mahammad Iqbal. He was the lover of undivided India. In 1930, in the conference of Muslim League at Lucknow, Iqbal started supporting Two Nation Theory. He specially argued to make Muslim reservation in the states in the North India because these states had Muslim majority.

Here the stand points of the Hindus also worth mentioning. The culture of Hinduism, which was practised during 19<sup>th</sup> century and even at the advent of 20<sup>th</sup> century, had no communal smell. That was the world of their culture and appellation. They made that their stand point to get rid of the aggression of the British government and to carry out fight their intellectuality. Nationalism of *Hindu Mela*, Raj Narayan Basu's endeavour to establish the

grandeur of Hinduism and Bengali language were the part of it. As Abdul Latif's Mahamadan Literary Society served for the Muslim community. Some blames Bankim Chandra to be communal his love of Hindu religion. Some argues against of making his *Bande Mataram* the National anthem and doubts his intention for diminishing some Muslim character in his novel. These activities express nothing but frivolity of their characters. Because, it was Bankim Chandra himself who accommodated the Muslim population within his model of *Tetrish Koti Janata* (Thirty-three thousand people) and never discriminated Hasim Sheikh or Rama Kaibarta. If one is bent upon catching fault in some one, then it could also be said that why Sayad Mosharaf Hossain was incline to the *Bishad Sindhu* leaving *Jamidar Darpan* and why why Sayed Amir Ali glorified Spanish Muslim in his writing. In Swadeshi era and during Division of Bengal, the Muslim were cut from the main stream but it must be kept in mind that Nationalism was not a movement against the British government. It was tied with the existential revival. Rabindranath Tagore criticised the revolutionaries for forcing the common mass to buy the expensive cloth of the Muslim and to boycott the Western cloth, in his novel '*Ghare Baire*'. But my question is, "Was the indigenous cloths so expensive that it became necessary to buy foreign cloth? Gandhi himself wrote in his autobiography that Bengalis had no weapon other than boycotting the foreign cloth. It is natural to bear some inconvenience while doing Nationalistic movement. But after crossing long way, we see that the great director Satyajit Ray also echoing the same point. But when in British patronage and also in the constitution, Hindus got elevated as a separate race, there political consciousness became aroused and like this way Hinduism got political privilege and started practising it. It got started with Tilak's *Shivaji Utsav* and *Ganapati Utsav*, and it's stepping ahead with Madan Mohan Malavya's founding Benaras Hindu University. Gandhiji did not give much priority to these leaders, so they created *Hindu Mahasabha* under the leadership of Savarkar and proceeded towards religion oriented politics. The main personalities who presided this activity were Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Din Dayal Upadhyay, Valraj Madhoke, Golwalkar and many others. B. J. P. is the follower of their path at the present time.

Let's come back to the discussion about the Muslims. The bias Mahammad Iqbal showed in 1930, its culture was already started in Cambridge University beforehand. Chaudhuri Rahamat Ali, Kalikujjaman and others made a rough sketch of Pakistan Proposal. They handed it over to Jinnah after getting back to India. Jinnah not yet got his desired position as the representative of the minorities. He remained the leader of the Muslims but was unable to maintain it to the country level. Gandhiji although tried very hard to compromise but became unsuccessful due to the opposition of Patel and the other leaders. In the year 1940, Pakistan Proposal was passed in the ADHIBESHAN of Muslim League. The communal riot which got started as a scattered incident in 1920 gradually extended in such an extent that it became the frequent in every corner. *Gohatya Nibarani Samity* (Association for Preventing Cow - Slaughtering) fuelled it. Just before the Independence, the country was flooded with blood, starting from Noyakhali to the places where the Muslim population exceeded the Hindus. Its culmination was in 'Great Calcutta Killing'. Muslim League continued to show antagonistic attitude and finally Jinnah urged to the British government to divide the country before leaving it. Gandhiji started fasting movement to stop the division of the country. It is heard that he also offered Jinnah to be the Prime Minister of India. But he had to give his life in the hand of a fanatic, Nathuram Godsey. The birth of Pakistan could not be hindered. Although Pakistan was constructed taking the states where the Muslims population was in majority but a big population of the Muslims remained in India. Only the aristocrat and the ambitious Muslims went to Pakistan following the historical avenue. The country was divided on the basis of the

religion but the division of the people did not take place. Above was the backdrop of religious dissention in the Pre-Independence era, but religious conflict still exists in India, but its character is completely of different kind and claims different analysis. In the Indian Constitution, the issue of secularism was strictly included. But its definition has become completely negative. Its meaning has been changed to be tolerance of all religions. English secularism signifies a materialistic reflections, upon which the progress of a secular society completely depends. But this positivity and practice of the term is absent in independent India. In spite of foundation of the Civil Code, the Muslim society has been kept completely out of it. This is the reason, why the Muslim conservatism wins at last in the Shah Banu suit. The litigation sways from Supreme Court to the Shariat Judgement. A certain historian has lamented that progressive laws passed for the Hindus but it does not become possible to pass them for the Muslims. Some probably call it communal but the Muslim society has not become adequately educated and progressive yet to counter it. Their conservative guardian takes this opportunity and hinders to pass any law which would lead their society towards progress. The so-called progressives also give consent to it and keep the situation unchanged. Polygamy, child-marriage go on with ease. The fundamentalists impose their evil punishment of mutilation, *Kora*, throwing stone towards the victim and many more. The females carry on wearing *Borkha* and the light of education does not reach their *Jenana*. Government becomes speechless in front of their conviction and the two neighbouring Muslim countries fuel the state. Out of meaningless compassion towards the minority, Nehru family politics bribes the Muslim community and so-called progressives keep on giving the same propagation. Raj Narayan Bose to Golwalkar continue to be treated as communal and the wave creates after the incident of Babri Masjid finds no comparison to the ignorable response at the destruction of Dhakeshwari temple of Dhaka or the Hindu temples of Kashmir. Government goes on buttering not only for the Dalits but also the Muslims. Once upon a time, the Education Ministry had been transformed to Muslim Camp. If buttering the Muslims and attacking the Hindus follows like it, secularism becomes meaningless, and progress of the country also gets hampered. It specially affects the Muslim community and hinders their progress. On the other hand, fanatic Hinduism grows, which first talks of the cultural heritage and then directly switches to fundamentalism. But it must be understood that the practice of culture is not associated with communalism. It is true that the Hindu majority has an opportunity to have some privilege. If that privilege is tried to be diminished, the communal political parties like B. J. P are bound to get priority. The Indian voters are not the fools. They do not bear religious exaggeration. B. J. P. does not win when Babri Mosque gets demolished. B. J. P. yet does not have absolute majority in any of the Indian states. The Indian population is bent upon, not to give power to any political party who are extremists, communal and non-democratic. So it is quite definite that there is no reason to be terrified about the communal terror of Hinduism. This causeless fear is becoming the main fuel of communalism – both Muslim and Hindu terrorism is trying to come to the surface. Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang, Dal Shibsena are showing their head over-shadowing B. J. P. On the other hand, the Islam Foundations are venturing in India to propagate Islamism by being fat with the petro-dollars of the Arabian countries. Intruders from Bangladesh are crowding in India destroying our wild life and increasing poverty and unemployment. The politicians continue their schemes for acquiring votes and the progressives indulge communalism for gaining some extra. After 50 years of independence, religious dissention cracks the country. The poor country gives more priority to religious factor instead of removing poverty.

In reality, a bridge of tolerance and friendship has been made between the Muslims and the Hindus because they have lived side by side for long 25 years sharing their sorrow and their happiness. A congregated culture is created out of that automatically. If we just look towards the non-political aspect, we can easily perceive that the whole Indian population become bewitched with the *Khayal – Thumri* delivered by the great Muslim artists starting from Tansen to Bare Golam Ali. The same reverence is given to Bhat Khande and Bhim Sen Joshi. Vilayat Khan and Ravi Shankar get the same adoration. Bharatnattyam and Katthak attract the minds of the Indian spectators equally. If entered the literary world, the Urdu poets starting from Mirza Galib to Javed Akhtar offer honey in the ears of the Hindus. The Hindus do not retreat to offer flowers and candles in the place of Nijamuddin Aulia at Ajmer and at the tomb of Salim Chisti at Fatepur Sicri, Agra. When return to Bengal, we remember the peers and the Fakirs. Hindus are gathered in great numbers in the *Majar* of Furfura Saheb or Ghutiyari Sharif. In Bengali literature, Musharaf Hossain to Mujtaba Ali is equally adored by the Muslims and the Hindus. Among the modern poets, Samsur Rahman and among the progressive writers Taslima Nasrin have been crowned by the progressive power. Mention can be made of Saiyad Mistafa Siraj and Abul Bashar too. Intellectuals like Shahidullah, Wajed Ali, Rejaul Karim and Abdul Odud are considered to be the holder and bearer of Bengali culture. Therefore, the cultural world must be extended to hinder communalism. The intellectual must not be incurred in the narrow political circles. The historians have a great credibility in this part. So I would to curtain fall my article by alarming the historians.

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