

Undermined Syncretism: Origin and Consciousness of Muslim Separatism in Colonial South Asia

by

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Abstract

The syncretic cultural tradition of India for the last five thousand years is a noble legacy and a contribution of India to the world. Some major religions of the world took their birth in India. The incoming of foreigners added new elements to India's cultural tradition, and enriched it—and subsequently, this tradition evolved into a composite culture. This paper primarily looks into the aspect of what happened during the colonial period in India, which undermined this rich syncretic tradition and subsequently fragmented the Indian subcontinent along the religious lines. The paper is based upon the hypothesis that separatism is a gradual process, which is nurtured during a period of time and which leads to the eruption of division, partition, or the breaking up of the state. The result of this process becomes a strong movement if actions to combat it are not launched. This paper also explores how Muslim separatism was fed by various reactionary elements, which included colonial and imperial forces comprised of members of different castes, creeds, and religions.

Introduction

India has been a cultural mosaic, where four major religions of the world originated, and it witnessed the emergence of a composite culture, which was neither Hindu nor Muslim but hybrid of cultures, beliefs, rituals—and in its true essence, Hindustani. Hindustani culture is more eclectic and

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is comprised of elements such as art, music, painting, architecture, dress, literature, language, and dialects. Amir Khusro's contribution to the development of Hindi and Urdu and in the invention of the sitar is well acknowledged. Few people know that Hindi and Urdu have a common origin. The blending of the Rajput style and the Arabic and Persian style in medieval architecture is another unique aspect of Hindustani tradition. The tradition of raga in classical music greatly enriched Hindustani culture.

Indian civilization survived for thousands of years despite the rise and fall of dynasties because it was based upon the strong cornerstone of tolerance and the mutual respect for each other's culture. This mixing of the culture begins from fifteenth century BC with the coming of the Aryans.¹ When Aryans came from Central Asia to India, there was a struggle between them and the indigenous people. Consequently—due to better technology, enterprising attitude, martial skills, and horses—Aryans were able to defeat the indigenous people. They established marital relations with the local people and this led to the exchange of the culture. The invasion of Persians, Greeks, Sakas, Kushans, and Central Asians and Muslims also introduced several new elements in the Indian society and culture. The Bhakti and Sufi movements created an ambience for Hindu-Muslim brotherhood and fraternity.²

The emergence of Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1947 stirred the debate about the roots of Muslim separatism. My major objectives are to find out the following:

Is Muslim separatism a modern notion, or it was also present in the medieval period?

Did the two-nation concept exist in medieval India?

How the two-nation theory, which led to the balkanization of India and birth of Pakistan, came to the fore?

Did the creation of various presidencies have any role in this phenomenon?

I will expose other actors who have had little attention by the intellectual circle and who were equally responsible for fomenting the idea of separatism.

I will describe the various parallel Islamic forces, which opposed the idea of Muslim separatism.

I will establish the fact that Muhamamd Iqbal, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Rehmat Ali were only responsible for adding a few minarets to the existing castle of separatism.

My hypothesis is that separatism is a gradual process—a process that grows during a period of time, and this leads to possibility of an eruption of division, partition, or the breaking of the nation-state if there is not a strong movement to combat such tendencies. My objective is to observe that how Muslim fundamentalism was fed by the various reactionary elements, including colonial and imperial forces, as well as reactionary elements. My research method is both inductive and deductive and is based upon the primary and the secondary sources.

According to Muslim history, an Islamic state is based on three elements: one holy book (the Qur'an), one nation (the Muslim brotherhood), and one sovereign (the caliph). The idea that all Muslims worldwide form one nation can be traced to the beginning of Islam. But never before the second half of the nineteenth century was there such an idea as that Hindus and Muslims are not only two nations—but also two warring nation, which can't exist together. T. W. Arnold describes the culture of tolerance in medieval India:

Unbelievers have enjoyed under Mohammedan rule a measure of toleration, the like of which is not to be found in Europe until quite modern times . . . very existence of so many Christian sects and communities in countries that have been for centuries under Muhammadan rule is an abiding testimony to the toleration they have enjoyed and showed that the persecutions they have from time to time been called upon to endure at the hands of bigots and fanatics, have been excited by some special local circumstances rather than inspired by a settled principle of intolerance.³

The Making and Unmaking of an Educated Indian Intelligentsia

During the revolt of 1857, greater unity between the Hindus and the Muslims became a problem for the British. As part of their divide and rule policy, the British dubbed Muslims as the main conspirator in the revolt.⁴ By the close of the nineteenth century there existed a miniscule Western-educated elite class among the Muslims.⁵ Much before the efforts made by

Syed Ahmad Khan for the introduction of modern and progressive education in the Muslim community, this class took the responsibility to create awareness about education among the masses.

Unlike Hindus, the Muslims' inability to form an educated middle class, their relative backwardness, and later their scramble for government jobs may be understood as the other reasons for the rise of Muslim separatism in India. The benefit of English education went primarily to the Hindus, due to the presence of an English-educated middle class which fulfilled the government requirements. Muslims in general remained adverse to English education because they thought that the British wanted to interfere in their religion and culture and that they have also planned to convert them into Christianity. Education department offices were termed the *shaitani daftar* (the Devil's Office).⁶ Syed Ahmad Khan noticed such Muslim consciousness and put great emphasis on the education of the Muslims. The Aligarh College produced graduates who filled the vacancies in government office reserved for the Muslims.

After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the literate and politically conscious Muslim class, which mostly belonged to the higher echelons of the society, felt insecure in the wake of a loss of sovereignty due to collapse of the Mughal empire and the emergence of a foreign power with clear imperial designs. Somehow, they also developed the feeling that the Hindus preferred the British rule to the Muslim rule. Gradually, an attempt at Hindu domination grew. The early intellectuals believed in the benevolent character of the British Raj, that the British would convert India to the model of a Western metropolis, using industrialization as its development process. This myth was broken when the economic nationalists developed the "drain of wealth theory" and the "theory of increasing poverty."⁷

The Negation of the Idea of India

The Indian culture of thousands of years witnessed a merging identity that then became a larger identity. However, to preserve their separate identity, the higher class, blue-blooded, political-conscious Muslims sought to resist merging their identity. Because this feeling still had not percolated to the masses, when these elites assumed leadership of their community, they promoted the idea of separateness.

The immediate reason for the construction of various presidencies around the five nodal centers of India might have been for administrative convenience, but an in-depth probe was needed to look into the issues concerning the construction of these presidencies in Calcutta, Madras, Bom-

bay, Agra, and Lahore. According to John Bright, who spoke about this in the House of Commons in 1858:

There would be five or six Presidencies of India built up into so many compact States; and if at any future period the sovereignty of England should be withdrawn, we should leave so many presidencies built up and firmly compacted together, each able to support its own independence and its own government; and we should be able to say we had not left the country a prey to that anarchy and discord which I believe to be inevitable if we insist on holding those vast territories with the idea of building them up into a great empire.⁸

Bright had his doubt that such great diversity in India would always stand in the way of its emergence of a compact whole. He made a prediction about the future of British rule and also about the possibility of India as a nation:

How long does England propose to govern India? . . . nobody can answer . . . does any man with the smallest glimmering of common sense believe that so great a country, with its twenty different nations and its twenty languages can ever be bound up and consolidated into one compact and enduring empire? I believe such a thing to be utterly impossible.⁹

Bright was saying nothing new; there was similar perception among the British imperialist lobby, including the administrator historians. What is surprising is that although the historians saw divergence, what led them to doubt that the British rule would be able to unite all these different nationalities? They denied such a possibility because of the ideas of the early economic nationalists who exposed the true nature of the British rule: as India was a colony of this imperial power, the British objective in India was to squeeze the Indian resources.¹⁰ Although Bright spoke about divergence, he never talked about the contradictions and dissension between Hindus and Muslims.

Another Englishman who suggested the partition of the country on religious lines was Wilfred Blunt. He suggested that the entire Muslim majority in the northern provinces should be brought under a Muslim government and the southern provinces, which were occupied by the Hindus, should be assembled under a Hindu government. However, he believed that the British rule over India must continue for some time.¹¹ Thus he was the first person to suggest the partition of India based on a Hindu-Muslim line, and he was very straightforward in his statements. Once he said, "The

British Empire is a structure that might crumble at any moment, the sooner the better.”¹² Probably, he observed immense differences among the people and believed that the British would be unable to address such decentralizing tendencies.

Idea of Majority Domination, Separatism, and the British Response

In 1867, Syed Ahmad Khan solicited Mr. Shakespeare, the commissioner of Benaras (present Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh District) for Muslim education. The commissioner’s response was: “This is the first occasion I have heard you speak about the progress of the Muslims alone. Before this you were keen about the welfare of your countrymen in general.”¹³ Syed Ahmad Khan responded, “Now I am convinced that both these nations will not join wholeheartedly in anything. At present there is no open hostility between the two communities, but on account of the so called educated people it will increase immediately in future.”¹⁴ These words were music to the ears of the British; they saw that they could use Syed Ahmad Khan as a tool for the proper experimentation of their divisive policies, and they did.

Why and how Syed Ahmad Khan started drifting from nationalism to separatism is an important issue to probe? If a person’s ideology takes a radical shift, it becomes imperative to observe and analyze the psychology of the person and the events that shape it. In the early 1860s the Hindus of Benaras were demanding that Hindi and Devnagari script should replace Urdu and Persian in all courts and government institutions in the United Province. Such disregard of the Muslim sentiments by the Hindu communalists brought a turning point in the thinking of a communal conscious person like Syed Ahmad Khan—although he had thought that harmony was possible between the two communities and that they could exist together without any problem. On one instance he said:

I have often said that India is like a bride whose two eyes are the Hindus and the Muslims. Her beauty consists in this that her two eyes be of equal lustre . . . slaughtering cow for the purpose of annoying Hindus is the height of cantankerous folly . . . but when my Hindu brothers and Bengali friends devise such a course of action as will bring us loss and heap disgrace on our nation then indeed we can no longer remain friends. Without doubt it is our duty to protect our nation from those attacks of the Hindus and Bengalis.”¹⁵

The establishment of the Mohammedan-Anglo Oriental College (MAOC) at Aligarh in 1875 was meant to provide Western education to the Muslims, but soon it became a breeding ground for separatist sentiments. The establishment of MAOC was hailed by the British masters. In the words of R. Coupland, "It marked the turning of the tide, the end of the decline and the beginning of the recovery."¹⁶ He also forbade the Muslims to join Indian National Congress. In a speech in 1883, Syed Ahmad Khan shared his concern about the consequences if British leave India:

Now suppose that the English were to leave India . . . then who would be the rulers of India? Is it possible that under the circumstances the two nation—the Muslims and the Hindus—could sit on the same throne and remain equal to power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.¹⁷

He opposed the British attempt to introduce representative institutions in India because he thought the conditions in India and England were entirely different and that Muslims would find it difficult to gain power. He said:

India . . . inhabited by vast population of different races and creeds. . . [Where] system of caste is . . . dominant . . . population . . . [having uneven] wealth and commerce, learning and influence. One section may be numerically larger than the other, and the standard of enlightenment which one section of the community has reached may be far higher than that attained by the rest of the population. One community may be fully alive to the importance of securing representation on the local boards and districts councils, whilst [others] may be wholly indifferent to such matters. In such circumstances . . . introduction of representative institutions in India will be attended with considerable difficulty and socio-political risk.¹⁸

In order to oppose the policies of Congress, he organized The All India Anti-Congress Organization of Muslim Landlords.¹⁹ The formation of the United Patriotic Association by Syed Ahmad Khan and Raja Sitab Roy of Benaras had the similar objective: to oppose the policies of the Indian National Congress and also to support the colonial rule. As a result, these reactionary elements were patronized by the British since the Congress was emerging as a threat to the interests of the Raj. It is important to understand that the speech that Syed Ahmad Khan gave on December 28, 1887 at the Lucknow annual session of the Mohammedan Education Conference is important:

Now let us imagine the Viceroy's Council made in this manner ... that all the Muslim electors vote for a Muslim member and all the Hindu voters vote for a Hindu member and now count how many votes the Muslim members will have. It is certain that the Hindu members will have four times as many because their population is four times as numerous. Therefore we can prove by mathematics that there will be four votes for the Hindu to every one vote for the Muslim. And now how can the Muslim guard his interests?²⁰

His fear of Hindu domination was so great that he wished that the British rule India in perpetuity: "It is therefore necessary that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English government should remain for much years—in fact forever."²¹

Theodore Beck, who was the principal of the Aligarh College, was instrumental in increasing the Hindu-Muslim divide. He believed that Muslims and Englishmen should unite in opposing the Indian National Congress and that the establishment of democratic political institutions should be opposed as they are not suitable for India.²² He further said that the Muslims refused to join the Congress not because they were illiterate or backward in education, but "because they had no wish to put a rope round their necks and place themselves on the mercy of those who have hold of the other end."²³ In the year 1890, a petition drafted by Beck and signed by fifty-thousand people, mainly Anglo-Indian officials and landlords, was submitted to the British Parliament. It said democratic institutions were unsuited to India because there were different communities inhabiting it.²⁴ He believed that the physical differences between the Hindus and Muslims are the same the divide between the burning plains of Mecca and the snowy heights of the Himalayas.²⁵

Theodore Morrison was also related to MAOC and was instrumental in elevating MAOC to the status of Aligarh Muslim University.²⁶ He was an advocate of the separate electorate for the Muslims and had the opinion that the Muslims have more in common with the Muslims of a foreign land than non-Muslims of India. Like Beck, he also promoted the separatist sentiment of the Muslims:

The Mohammedans are in some ways the most definite and homogeneous political unit in India; they are heirs of a common civilization and common tradition of glory, and they are conscious to an extent unsurpassed in India of their corporate existence. But the Mohammedans are as a matter of fact, scattered in isolated groups all over the peninsula, and in consequence such sentiment of nationality as they do possess link

them not with Sikhs and Bengalis, with whom they share the soil but with their co-religionist wherever they are found, be it in Arabia or Persia or within the frontiers of India.²⁷

Thus these initial “fathers” of separatism groomed the “child,” which later on matured as an extreme communal force. This was the phenomenon that was entirely based upon a narrow selfish interest by sacrificing the larger and national interest—and virtually throwing India into chaos and anarchy. It was not that no attempt and persuasion was made to bring Syed Ahmad Khan inside the Congress and to purge his communal feelings. In 1888, Badruddin Tayyebji and Allan Octavius Hume persuaded Khan to support the Congress. But the reply of Syed Ahmad Khan was embarrassing and disappointing:

I do not understand what the word *National Congress* mean[s]. Is it supposed that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation, or can become a nation. . . . I think it is quite impossible, and when it is impossible there can be no such thing as a national congress, nor can it be of equal benefit to all peoples? You regard the doings of the misnamed National Congress beneficial to India, but I am sorry I regard them injurious not only to our own community but also to India at large. I object to every Congress in any shape or form whatever, which regards India as one nation.²⁸

Syed Ahmad Khan’s popularity among the Muslim landed class, intellectuals—and among the masses in Bengal, Bombay, Hyderabad, and Madras—had its contribution in the growing communal consciousness. Most of the clerics, intellectuals, and the educators from the nineteenth century Indian Muslim community were skeptical about the freedom struggle launched by Indian National Congress and as a result, made an alliance with the imperialists. However, some of the intellectuals turned their back on such sectarianism and developed an all India outlook. R. Symonds has rightly summarized the activities of Syed Ahmad Khan with the following words:

In theology he had reconciled Islam with western learning. In education he had given the Muslim their own college where they could pursue western studies without becoming worse Muslims. In government service and commerce he had made openings for the new educated Muslim middle class. In politics he had stated that the Muslim were a nation who could not and must not be submerged in a system of government by majority vote. The Pakistanis rightly claim him as one of the fathers of their country.²⁹

Badruddin Tayyabji who was the president of the Indian National Congress in its fourth session was very disappointed upon the Muslims tendency to keep apart from the mainstream political activity and shifting towards the communal abyss. He lamented, "I am utterly at a loss to understand why Mussalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow countrymen of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all."³⁰

The rising predominance of the Marwaris in the commerce and economy of Bengal led to the raising of separatist slogans by the upper- and upper-middle- class Muslims. These sections countered the slogan of Swaraj—complete independence from British rule—and urged for "Muslim commerce, Muslim industry, Muslim schools, and Muslim business associations."³¹

The Response of Nationalistic Minority Groups

It was not that the trend of the separatist movement was similar in all parts of the country. In Bombay the landed class of Muslims kept themselves aloof from the communal movement. In the third session of the Indian National Congress, of 1,889 delegates 254 were Muslims.³² In Bombay, the Muslim manufacturers, who belonged to the Anjuman-e-Islamia, opposed the anti-Congress stand of the Aligarh Center and supported the demands of the moderate congress leaders. Even in Calcutta, a feud occurred inside the Muslim Association on the question of hostility and backing the Congress. The landlord faction was against the Congress, while the Muslim intellectuals saw no harm in keeping pace with the Congress and supported the Congress demands.

There were a number of Muslim organizations that did not like the way the Aligarh Movement was moving. In 1888, the Deobandi issued a *fatwa* against Syed Ahmad Khan due to his pro-British attitude. Shibli Numani, who was a former teacher in Aligarh College, founded a Muslim education society, named Nadwat ul-Ulama in Lucknow in 1894. During the Swadeshi Movement from 1905 to 1908, this society strongly took side with the nationalist groups headed by the Indian National Congress. It blended the traditional Muslim system of education with Western education. Not only that even some of the prominent leaders of the Aligarh Movement, like Altaf Hussein Hali and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, were so disgusted with Syed Ahmad Khan's pro-British policy, that they were also preparing to publish an article that especially covered the British military expeditions in the northwest frontier of India. But due to the death of Syed Ahmad Khan, the planned publication could not go to the Lahore Press.³³

One of the great Congress leaders who were greatly influenced by the extremist and revolutionary ideas was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He joined one of the secret societies during antipartition agitation in Bengal. Azad recalled that mistrust against Muslims was great:

When Shyam Sunder Chakravarty introduced me to other revolutionaries and my new friends found that I am willing to join them, they were greatly surprised. At first they did not fully trust me and tried to keep me outside their inner councils. In course of time they realized their mistake and I gained their confidence.³⁴

In order to build up a progressive outlook among the Muslims, and taking inspiration from the Young Turk Movement, Azad established a journal named *Al Hilal*. Although it was confined to the urban intellectual Muslim circle and hardly reached the rural people, it was very largely popular. It criticized the Aligarh group for increasing separatism between the two communities and maintained, "Aligarh movement has paralyzed the Muslims."³⁵ It invoked the Muslims to join the Struggle for India's Freedom, and it had considerable influence in forming the momentum for the Khilafat Movement.

Reactionary and Anti-nationalistic Organizations and the British Policy

The partition of Bengal and the antipartition movement reached alarming height, and it embraced almost all sections of the Indian society. The East Bengal landed-class feared increase in the land tax. In order to keep the elites out of the movement, the government announced that there was no plan to increase the land tax.³⁶ Lord Curzon toured Bengal, and while addressing the Muslim landlords in Dacca, he said that the partition of Bengal would yield great benefits for the Muslim community. *The Statesman* rightly observed, "Partition of Bengal was calculated to foster in Eastern Bengal the growth of Mohammedan power, which it is hoped will have the effect of keeping in check the rapidly growing strength of the Hindu Community."³⁷

The formation of the Muslim League in 1906 was blessed by the British authorities; its objective was "to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India."³⁸ Later on, speaking at a reception given by the Muslim delegation, the Viceroy Minto II said that in all the representative bodies Muslims should be represented as a community.

He also justified their demands that the representation should be based on the political importance, loyalty, and services and not based on numbers.³⁹ Minto also stressed that Muslim political activity should be aimed at achieving community representation in order to check the growing political and economic influence of the Hindu community.⁴⁰ By this time, already an English-educated Muslim middle class had emerged, and in order to attain clerical and government jobs, it required government support. On the request of the Muslim League, separate electorate was introduced in the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. It has been rightly observed, “it was the Morley-Minto Reforms that inaugurated modern Indian political communalism.”⁴¹ Morley-Minto Reforms had another important objective to provide a special status to the rising Anglo-Indian community.

Muhammad Ali, one of the Muslim separatist leaders, said in 1912, “a united India does not exist today. We have to create it and the first necessary conditions before it can be created are to recognize that it does not exist.”⁴² Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader, also perceived the diversity and increasing class and communal divide engineered by various groups in India. He observed, “In the case of India too, it will probably be found that innumerable nationalities, till then lying dormant, would come into life with the further course of bourgeois development.”⁴³

The annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 by the British created great suspicion in the mind of the Muslim communalists. It brought the two communities closer against the common enemy: the British and the communal forces. But the famous Lucknow Pact between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League was a mistake.⁴⁴ The Hindu-Muslim unity on the question of Khilafat and later on merging the issue with the Non-cooperation movement was all told not a healthy development.⁴⁵

Shape and Trends of Rising Majority Communalism

The twentieth century is strange in Indian history concerning the rising tide of communalism; communal loyalty and antagonism were never that intense. In medieval period, under the Muslim rule, both Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony. It was well said, “The Muslims are not a separate people. They are Indians who happen to attend a Muslim mosque instead of a Hindu temple.”⁴⁶ It is important to probe the factors that destroyed the mutual harmony of the two communities. One observer said: “The Hindu-Muslim problem is an artificial English irritant.”⁴⁷ W. C. Smith believes that the “communal antagonism of India’s middle class are [sic] due to the British imperial policy of divide and rule.”⁴⁸

Unlike Hinduism, religion is not a personal belief in Islam, “Islam has never accepted the view that religion is a private affair between man and his creator and as such has no bearing upon the social or political relations of human beings.”⁴⁹ According to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Qur’an is an all-pervading and guiding spirit. He said:

The Quran is a complete code of life. It provides for all matters, religious or social, civil or criminal, military or penal, economic or commercial. It regulates every act, speech and movement from the ceremonies or religion to those of daily life, from the salvation of the soul to the health of the body, from the rights of all to those of each individual, from punishment here to that in the life to come.⁵⁰

Thus Islam not only regulates the religious but also the nonreligious aspect of life. Although differences are there in all religions, there is no denial of the fact that every religion is based on the foundation of peace, fraternity, brotherhood, love, cooperation, and harmony. At any point of time, if religion drifts away from such ideals, it ceases to be what it was meant to be—and then blind religiosity prevails, and the religion merely becomes a tool in the hand of some maniacs and fanatics to serve their narrow interests.

The Hindu communalism alarmingly raised its head especially after 1925 with the formation of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The association of some Congress leaders with Hindu Mahasabha and RSS was not at all taken seriously by the Congress leadership. According to Bipan Chandra, “one communalism feeds on another and in the process both gets fatten.”⁵¹

One of the staunch Hindu communal leaders, Bhai Parmanand, who was also one of the founding members of the Hindu Mahasabha, was vocal on the Hindu-Muslim question. He wished to push the Muslims across the Indus river.⁵² He was pessimistic of Hindu-Muslim unity and considered it impossible and saw the solution of the communal problem in complete severance between the two people: “India could be partitioned in such a manner as to secure the supremacy of Islam in one zone and that of Hinduism in the other.”⁵³

The great Hindu-Muslim fraternity and unity which was build up in the wake of Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movement from 1920 to 1922 soon faded, and the communal hiatus increased. The Hindu communalists started the Shuddhi and Sangathan Movements to bring back the converted Muslims into Hindu fold. In reaction the Tabligh and Tanzim Movements⁵⁴ were launched by their Muslim counterparts. One instance of such a divide can be seen in the statement of one of the Bengali Muslim leader in 1923:

The Mussalamans of India owe allegiance to Islam in respect of social obligations and to the particular party of which they are members in respect of political ideals. A Mussalman in this country therefore cannot say that he is an Indian first and Muslim next. All that he can say is that he is an Indian Muslim first and the member of the wider Islamic brotherhood afterwards.⁵⁵

The suspicion between the two communities was so intense that even the constructive activity like removal of untouchability was seen as an attempt to organize the untouchables against the Muslims. The Hindu communal leaders like B. S. Moonje asserted that “swaraj means nothing less than a Hindu Raj.”⁵⁶ Mahatma Gandhi referred to *Ram Rajya*⁵⁷ so many times, although he meant a society without discrimination, it created suspicion in the Muslim mind. It was also said by Hindu communalist groups that Hindu-Muslim unity would be possible only by *shuddhi* (purification) and without converting Christians and Muslims *swaraj* (self-governance) cannot be attained. In 1928 Moonje declared:

As England belongs to Englishmen, France to the French, and Germany to the Germans, in the same way Hindustan belongs to the Hindus. Hindus want swaraj but not at the cost of their religion. If the Musalmans want to co-operate with us, without making any demands for right, the Hindus will also advance shoulder to shoulder with them; if not Hindus should be prepared to fight their way to freedom without the help of other communities, for the simple reason that Hindustan belongs to Hindus.⁵⁸

Ram Deo, one of the Hindu communal leaders was more aggressive and announced, “Hindu flag shall be hoisted on each and every mosque in India.”⁵⁹ Lala Hardayal, a noted revolutionary and founder of the Gadar Party in San Francisco, later on also joined the communal line and envisaged several necessities for the future of Hindu *rashtra* (nation) and Hindustan such as “Hindu sangathan, Hindu Raj, conversion of Muslims and Christians, and conquest of Afghanistan and frontier province and the conversion of its inhabitants.”⁶⁰ Despite the fact that he believed in a united India, even Lala Lajpat Rai⁶¹ suggested dividing the Punjab into Hindu and Muslim majority areas, but when he realized that the Muslims are not agreeing to such an idea, he found no other option but to divide. This rhetoric by the Hindu extremists did great harm to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and definitely pushed Muslim leaders toward separatism.

B. N. Dhar shared his concern for the growing communalism in his presidential address to the Indian National Congress in 1911: “The idea of

a united Indian nation may not be alluring to some people and a section of the Muhammadans may for the present fail to realize its true significance, but the instructed classes do care for that ideal and they see that it is menaced by separatism.”⁶²

Due to the increasing communalism, the idea of majority domination was present in the ruling circle as well. The Lieutenant Governor of United Province, James Meston, wrote to the Viceroy on March 25, 1915 that, “the Muslims know that, if they lost us, the Hindus would eat them up.”⁶³ Such fear among the British was obviously due to rising tide of Indian nationalism and the success and enthusiasm of the Swadeshi Movement, which compelled the British to annul the partition of Bengal in 1912. Their motive was to create an opaque wall in the form of Muslim separatism in order to check the tide of Indian nationalism, and this was grossly mistaken by the Muslims as Hindu nationalism. Barring a few leaders, the nature, character, and objectives of the Indian National Congress remained nationalistic, secularist, and anticolonialist.

Politicization, Minority Separatism and Fragmentation of the Idea of India

In 1918, Aga Khan planned a South Asian Federation with India as its nucleus and center. He was in favor of a United States of India within the British Empire.⁶⁴ His scheme of distribution included handing over two or three districts of the Western United Province (the western parts of the Agra and Oudh provinces) to Punjab, detaching Sind from the Bombay province and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Baluchistan would form Indus province with Quetta as its capital. Furthermore, this federation would have expanded toward Afghanistan and Iran.⁶⁵ This idea of an Indus Province of Muslims was further given a more tangible shape by Muhammad Iqbal and Rehmat Ali in the proposed form of Pakistan. A. B. Keith writes that he noticed among the Indian Muslims the making of a scheme for “the creation of a Muslim State based on Afghanistan and embracing all those North-West areas where faith is strong. Such a state would inevitably form a permanent source of danger in India.”⁶⁶ The similar sentiment was also voiced by historian Beni Prasad: “the idea of an Islamic state in the North-West had floated in an amorphous form in a few minds in the general ferment of 1919.”⁶⁷

The leader of Jammat-e-Islami, Maulana Maudoodi advised Indian Muslims to reject Indian nationalism. Muhammad Iqbal justified the creation of a Muslim India within India. He said:

I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British empire or without the British empire, the formulation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me the final destiny of the Muslims.⁶⁸

Although Iqbal was a champion of Muslim nationalism, he was not in favor of a world-wide Muslim state. He believed the “Muslim nation must focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics, a league of Muslim nations.”⁶⁹ He said that the Indian Muslims are a homogeneous community and a nation in the modern sense. An American scholar wrote that Iqbal was “perhaps the first important Muslim leader to suggest the idea of a separate Muslim state.”⁷⁰ Iqbal believed that Islam could only survive in this country if Muslims occupied their own community in a particular territory. He said:

I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interest of India and Islam. For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.⁷¹

Besides Muhammad Iqbal, another significant name to be mentioned is Rehmat Ali, a Cambridge graduate, who supported the opinion that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations with completely different social systems and that it was desirable to create a separate Muslim state. Much before his 1933 pronouncement, in 1915, he stated that North India should be a Muslim state and for that “Indianess” must be shed off.⁷² He coined the term *Pakistan*.⁷³ This idea came in a declaration on January 28, 1933 titled “Now or Never.”⁷⁴ Rehmat Ali considered this declaration of great significance and memorable in the annals of history because the date marked the birth of Pakistan, the disintegration of India, and the demise of the British imperialism in India. This declaration started an ideological revolution in the life of one fifth of all humans in the world who were living in India, a revolution the repercussion of which was to be felt throughout Asia and the world.⁷⁵

The Pakistan movement was launched by Rehmat Ali in a very planned and calculated manner in 1933 with certain specified aims and objectives.⁷⁶ These aims and objectives display his radical ideology, which was launched on a fanatical and extreme communal platform. He wrote pamphlets and

handbills and other literature in order to spread the lethal virus of separatism among the Muslim masses, especially among the youth, and a whole generation of the young were indoctrinated. One of the pamphlets titled “What Does the Pakistan National Movement Stand For?” discusses the political ideology and fundamentals of the movement. He also established propaganda centers in India and United Kingdom.

Speaking in the British House of Commons Mr. V. Adams showed his disapproval of the Pakistan scheme. He said, “We need the fidelity of Hindu community no less than we need the fidelity of the Moslems.”⁷⁷ About this “Pakistan scheme,” he believed, “Such an arrangement is not in accordance with our traditional ideas of Muslim loyalty.”⁷⁸ Rehmat Ali claimed himself as the founder of the Pakistan Movement. He commented in 1935 on Burma’s separation from India: “while Burma is being separated from Hindustan, it remains a mystery to us why Pakistan is to be forced in the Indian federation.”⁷⁹ Rehmat Ali also declared in 1937 that there should be Bang-e-Islamistan for the combined territories of Bengal and Assam.⁸⁰ He also talked about Osmanistan comprising Hyderabad.⁸¹ He advocated a “triple alliance of these three independent Muslim states.”⁸² He also proposed to create Siddiquistan, Faruquistan, Haideristan, Muinstan, and Moplastan. In a pamphlet published in 1945, he said, that “the non-Indian nations comprise the Muslims, Dravidians, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, and untouchables, and ever have been the victims of the myth of Indianism, so they must sovereignize themselves as nations.”⁸³ The following statement is in the first edition of *The Encyclopedia of Islam*:

The Pakistan National Movement is strongly opposed to the Indian federation and owing to the fear of being merged and submerged by the Hindus . . . the Hindu-Muslim problem in the India of today is basically international rather than inter-communal. The movement primarily aims at the reintegration of a part of the Indian Muslims as a nation in Pakistan . . . it is a movement which may if successful, exercise a profound influence not only on Pakistan or Hindustan but, possibly, throughout Asia.⁸⁴

Muhammad Ali Jinnah spoke about the two nations, most probably for the first time in 1936. During 1937, Jinnah supported Iqbal’s conception of a separate Muslim homeland. In October 1938, Jinnah accused the Indian National Congress of attempting to destroy the Muslim League. His frustration was due to the poor performance of the Muslim League in the 1937 election and a landslide victory of the Indian National Congress. Instead of leaving the League to its fate, if the Congress would had extended the hand

of friendship, it would have brought the League into the mainstream. Leaders of the League realized that in a normal political process the League would not survive due to the strength of the Congress, and such a perception further fanned the feeling of separateness.

On March 24 1940, the Lahore Resolution was passed. For the first time, it demanded a separate Muslim state, with the name *Pakistan*. In brief, the resolution called for the creation of administrative areas, which are ethnically more homogeneous, and one of these areas would be predominantly occupied by Muslims because the Muslims by themselves formed a separate nation and desired to have a national home.⁸⁵ *The Manchester Guardian* commented that by passing the resolution “Jinnah had re-established the reign of chaos in Indian politics.”⁸⁶ Putting the onus of separatism on the colonial rulers, *The New Statesman* said, “Indians did not divide on the lines of creed but on the economic lines and that communal division had been recognized and exaggerated by the white rulers for their own ends.”⁸⁷ *The Hindustan Times* wrote: “History has made Muslims and Hindus in India into one people, which even the ingenuity of the most ingenious constitution-monger, will be unable to divide. To break up the unity of India is not to satisfy this or that community but to ruin the peace and prosperity of the people of this country as a whole.”⁸⁸ The subsequent developments—the arrival of the Cripps’ Mission, the Cabinet Mission, the C. R. Formula, the Desai-Liaquat Pact, and finally the division of India—are a well-known facts.

Conclusion

The journey of the idea from physical segregation to political balkanization and the creation of a separate homeland was not confined to Iqbal, Jinnah, or Rehmat Ali. There were so many players belonging to various groups without any distinction of religion or community—groups such as British imperialists, Hindu and Muslim communalists, and a group of social elites. Initially, the idea of a creation of a separate homeland was confined to the educated upper class, but later on it started percolating among the masses and resulted, especially since the 1930s, in growing intensity of the communal riots.

Thus, the Muslim separatism, which originated due to multiple factors, divided India on communal line and left behind the legacies of untold miseries, which the people of South Asia, especially, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are facing even after more than six decades of the balkanization. The problems of governance and nation and state building in these

countries depends upon the way the respective ruling political leaders are going to address these contentious issues.

Endnotes

1. There are a number of theories about the arrival of Aryans: for example, the Arctic region theory of B. G. Tilak, the Tibetan theory of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and the Central Asian theory. But the most well-acknowledged theory is Central Asian Theory presented by Max Muller and has been accepted by most historians. This theory has been cross-examined in various ways. For example, philology recognizes the phonetical similarity between the words of the Vedas and Zindavesta (an ancient holy book of the Parsi community of Iran), absence of horses in the Indus Valley civilization; an advanced and urban Indus civilization followed by a rural Vedic period, and so forth. Today an attempt is being made by the communalists to establish that the Aryans were indigenous people in order to malign the outsiders as enemies. For detail, please see, K. N Panikkar, *The Concerned Indian's Guide to Communalism* New Delhi, India: Viking, 2000).
2. Both the Bhakti and Sufi movements influenced each other. The Sufi saints adopted several practices of the Indian saints like torturing their bodies, fasting, and chanting. In addition, the tradition of *Pir* and *Murid* was also based on a guru-disciple tradition of ancient India. Irrespective of caste, color, sex and religion, the Sufi and Bhakti saints attacked the existing evils in society and attracted large followers.
3. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London: Scribner, 1913), 420.
4. W. W. Hunter, *Indian Mussalmans: Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?* (London, Trubner, 1871); see also Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among the Indian Muslims* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
5. The two early Muslim organizations, National Muslim Association and the Mohammedan Literary Society founded by Abdul Latif, were the earlier organizations founded to educate and create awareness among the Muslims. Some of the Muslim youth belonging to the were educated in the English Medium British colleges and Fort William College.
6. John Allan, Sir T. Wolseley Haig and H. H. Dodwell, *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (Delhi, India: S Chand and Company, 1969), 729.
7. The drain of wealth was the first time observed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is also called "the morning star of social reformation" in India. However the theory of the drain of wealth from India to England was given a concrete shape based upon probe and inquiry by Dadabhai Naroji and later on R. C. Dutt further developed the theory. In his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule*

- in India*, published in the year 1901, Nairoji gave various constituents, the process and estimates of the drain of wealth.
8. *Select Speeches of Rt. Hon. John Bright on Public Questions* (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1907), 14.
 9. *Ibid.*, 13.
 10. This group comprises Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutta, M. G. Ranade, and others.
 11. W. S. Blunt, *India Under Ripon: A Private Diary* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1909), 107–108.
 12. W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries: Being A Personal Narrative of Events, 1884–1914* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1932), 285.
 13. For details, please see Syed Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan* (Karachi, Pakistan: Royal, 1995).
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. *Sir Syed Ahmad Speeches and Letters: On the Present State of Indian Politics* (Allahabad, India: The Pioneer Press, 1888), 22–24.
 16. R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), 42.
 17. Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (London: Faber, 1950) 31.
 18. Choudhary Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, Pakistan: Longman and Greens and Co., Ltd., 1961), 269–70.
 19. A. B. Rajput, *Muslim League Yesterday and Today* (Lahore, Pakistan: Ashraf, 1948) 16.
 20. Syed Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, p. 46.
 21. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Sir Syed Ahmad on the Present State* (Allahabad, India: The Pioneer Press), 40.
 22. Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, India: Hind Kitab Limited, 1947), 105.
 23. Theodore Beck, *Essays on Indian Topics* (Allahabad, India: The Pioneer Press 1888), 84.
 24. *Ibid.*, 104.
 25. *Ibid.*, 45.
 26. Theodore Morrison, *The History of the MAO College: Aligarh, from its Foundation to the Year 1903* (Allahabad, India: Vanguard Press, 1903), 29.
 27. K. K. Aziz, *A History of the Idea of Pakistan*, vol. 1 (Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard, 1987), 48.
 28. Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims: A Political Study, 1857–1947* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1959), 67.
 29. R. Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (London: Faber, 1949), 32.
 30. H. Mukherjee, *India's Struggle for Freedom* (Bombay, India 1948), 84.
 31. Lal Bahadur, *The Muslim League: Its History, Activities and Achievements* (Agra, India: Agra Book Store, 1954), 30.
 32. B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 1 (Bombay, India: Padma Publication, 1947), 44–47.

33. Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, 107.
34. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative* (New Delhi, India: Sangam Books, 1959), 5.
35. A. H. Albiruni, *Makers of Pakistan* (Lahore, Pakistan: M Ashraf Publication, 1950), 135.
36. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 163 (House of Commons: London, 1906), 1088.
37. Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, 111.
38. R. Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan*, 41.
39. Mary Minto, *India, Minto and Morley, 1905–1910* (London, Macmillan, 1934), 45–47.
40. Lal Bahadur, *The Muslim League*, 39–40.
41. W. N. Brown, *The United States and India and Pakistan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 49.
42. *Comrade*, 6 January 1912.
43. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today* (London, 1947), 385.
44. The Congress accepted and legitimized the League's separate electorate, and this was a Himalayan blunder on the part of the Congress because appeasement of the communal demands tends to foment extreme communalism.
45. As a result, religion entered into politics, and religion was later on manipulated by the communal leaders. Although the Khilafat issue created big anti-British feeling, the Muslim of India "were drawn back by the enthusiasms of these years into a religious loyalty," said Wilfred Cantwell Smith. The religious loyalty further intensified the Muslim communalism. Once the Khilafat issue was set to rest, the Muslim participation in the all India movements became marginal.
46. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, 21.
47. F. Gunther, *Revolutions in India* (New York: Island Press, 1948), 12.
48. W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1985), 208.
49. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Osmani, *Pakistan Constituent Assembly Debates* (March 1949), 9.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi, India: Penguin, 1989).
52. Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), 206.
53. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *The Pakistan Resolution* (Karachi, Pakistan: Vanguard Publishers, 1968), 5, quoted from Bhai Parmanand, *Arya Samaj Aur Hindu Sangathan* (Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard Publishers. 1923).
54. In the aftermath of the withdrawal of the Khilafat movement, the Tanzim movement was started in 1924 in Punjab by Saifuddin Kitchlew.
55. Abdul Karim, *Letters on Hindu-Muslim Pact* (Calcutta: Oriental Printer and Publisher, 1924), 13.

56. *Partap*, January 21, 1927.
57. Mahatma Gandhi used this term for a society where there would be no exploiter and everyone will be equal, but Gandhi has been criticized by Marxist scholars for using such religious terms, which had an impression on the Muslim mind.
58. K. K. Aziz, *A History of the Idea of Pakistan*, vol. 1 (Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard, 1987), 140.
59. *Guru Ganthal*, April 24, 1927.
60. *Milap*, June 23, 1928.
61. Lala Lajpat Rai was an extremist leader of Indian National Congress.
62. M. A. Karandikar, *Islam in India's Transition to Modernity* (Bombay, India 1968), 163.
63. J. M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 139.
64. Aga Khan, *India in Transition: A Study in Political Evolution* (London: Warner Publication, 1918), 41–42.
65. *Ibid.*, 45.
66. A. B. Keith, *A Constitutional History of India, 1600–1935* (London, Warner Publication, 1936), 287.
67. Beni Prasad, *India's Hindu-Muslim Questions* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1946), 77.
68. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed, *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906–1947*, vol. 2 (1924–1947), (Karachi, Pakistan : National Publishing Ltd., 1970),. 159.
69. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, Pakistan: Ashraf, 1962), 157–59.
70. Robert D. Campbell, *Pakistan: Emerging Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 13.
71. All India Muslim League, Allahabad Session, December 1930: Presidential Address by Muhammad Iqbal (Kapur Art Printing works, Lahore, Pakistan, n.d.), 1.
72. Chaudhuri Rehmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation* (Cambridge: Book Traders, 1947), 213–14.
73. G. Allana, *Pakistan Movement: Historical Documents* (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1977), 143. He interpreted the word as follows: *P* for Punjab, *A* for Afghanistan, *K* for Kashmir, *S* for Sind, and *TAN* for Baluchistan.
74. According to the declaration: “India constituted . . . not the name of one single country . . . nor one single nation. It is in fact the designation of a state created by the British for the first time in history. It includes peoples who were never previously formed part of the Indian nation at any period of its history but . . . possessed and retained distinct nationalities of their own. One of such people is our own nation . . . our religion and culture, our history and tradition, our social code and economic system, our laws of inheritance, succession and marriages are fundamentally different from those of most people

- living in [sic] rest [sic] India. The ideals, which move our people to make the highest sacrifice are essentially different from those, which inspire the Hindus to do the same . . . we do not inter dine, we do not intermarry. Our national customs and calendars, even our diet and dress are different.
75. K. K Aziz, *Complete Works of Rehmat Ali*, vol. 2 (Islamabad, Pakistan: National Commission of Historical and Cultural Research, 1978), 1.
 76. In the words of Rehmat Ali, “the movement stands for the spiritual liberation of the nations of South Asia from the secular thralldom of Indianism. *Secondly*, it meant for the cultural liberation of the nations of South Asia from the barbaric influence of Indianism. *Thirdly*, the movement aimed for the social liberation of the nations of South Asia from the caste tyranny of the Indianism. *Fourthly*, it stood for the economic liberation of the nations of South Asia from the impoverishing capitalism of Indianism. *Fifthly*, to check the domination of Indianism. *Sixthly*, it aimed for the inter-national consolidation of the nations of South Asia against the de-nationalizing dangers of Indianism and *finally*, for the creation of a new order of Asianism to take the place of Indianism in South Asian history. For detail, please refer to Kursheed Kamal Aziz, *Rahmat Ali: A Biography* (Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard Publishers, 1987), 24.
 77. *Parliamentary Debates of Pakistan*, 301 H.C. Deb. 58, 1935, p. 1034.
 78. Ibid.
 79. Syed Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, 139.
 80. Ibid., 141.
 81. Ibid.
 82. S. P Varma, *Problem of Democracy in India* (Delhi, India: S Chand and Company, 1946), p. 62.
 83. Chaudhary Rehmat Ali, *India: The Continent of Dinia or the Country of Doom* (Cambridge, UK: The Dinia Continental Movement, 1945), 49.
 84. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, first edition (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Publication, 1937).
 85. B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan* (Bombay: Thacker, 1946), 2.
 86. Syed Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, 227.
 87. Ibid.
 88. Ibid., 228.