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The history of Indian Muslims is so complex that their isolation from the national mainstream and consequent socio-psychological confusion have remained a puzzle for social scientists. A study based on the factual developments related to this distinct and a unique religio-social group may help the reader to draw right conclusions.

With the collapse of Moghul Empire, the Muslim bourgeoisie, who prefer to call themselves Muslim Indians and not Indian Muslims have been struggling to keep the Indian Muslims under a mental blockade by using Islam as weapon. They treat their community members as a communal constituency to bargain with the contemporary ruling class to share political power. Assertive insistence of Islamic clerics on a separate Muslim identity in a diverse but united society worked as a catalyst to accelerate the movement for Muslim separatism launched in this country for centuries.

Since the advent of Muslim rule in India, Indian Muslims have been suffering from the malady of hate and divisive politics of the ruling class. Initially, they became the victims of Muslim Indians who had converted them for their self-seeking interest and subsequently of the political class in their politics of vote arithmetic. Ironically, they have never realised that they have been under siege under Muslim Indians, who continue to carry forward the legacy of Sarhindi to Iqbal.

Muslim invaders had massacred unaccountable number of native population and destroyed large number of temples in the name of Islam. They converted large number of Indians into Islam and kept them segregated from the Hindus. Since then, the Indian

Muslims remained under perpetual siege of their medieval masters and subsequently under their descendants. The upper class Indians who changed their faith for sharing power under the alien Muslim rulers diluted their Indian identity with the cultural identity of the former and were proud to consider themselves a part of Muslim Indians. The converted Indians belonging to lower strata of society however, never got equal social status.

Actually, the backwardness and miseries of Indian Muslims lie in their mental siege under the preachers of Islamic conservatism that has isolated them from their cultural past. The disturbed socio-political Hindu-Muslim relation in India as we see today is nothing but the historical legacy of the enslaved mindset of Indian Muslims being carried forward from generation to generation. The answer to their problem of so-called religious identity as often highlighted by the leadership in the community therefore, solely lies in their freedom from the grip of Islamic radicals. Ironically, even the contemporary Muslim 'liberals' have not made any concerted and unified efforts to free them from the perpetual mental siege.

Historically, the movement to keep the Indian Muslims under siege dates back to the last decade of sixteenth century when the great Mogul Emperor Akbar's religious 'liberalism' started decaying. Starting from Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi and followed by Muslim thinkers like Shah Wali Ullah, Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, Mohammad Allama Iqbal and others the movement for a separate Muslim identity which is basically synonymous to separate political identity with hegemony of Islamic power in this country remained a permanent feature of Muslim society in India. Their concerted efforts to keep the Indian Muslims under siege influenced even the contemporary Muslim thinkers who are the repositories of their heritage.

Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (1564- 1624):

Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, who was popularly known as Mujaddid (Renovator of Islam) had traced his descent from Caliph Umar. Rejecting the 'heterodoxies' of the great Mogul Emperor Akbar, this eminent Islamic mystic of his time and a hardcore Sunni Muslim strongly refuted the Shia point of view in his writing entitled "Risala Tahliliyya" and made a major contribution towards rehabilitation of orthodox Islam in India. He tried to influence the courtiers of Akbar and continued his tirade against the Hindus as well as Shia Muslims aggressively when Jahangir ascended the throne of Delhi. He is widely known among the Muslims for his letters written in Persian not only to his disciples but also to the influential Muslims in the court of Jahangir. His letters exercised great influence in turning the heterodoxies of Akbar to orthodoxies, which were pursued by all the subsequent Muslim rulers from Jahangir to Aurangzeb. He was so rigid in his approach towards Islam that he did not bend before the emperor as per the prevalent custom when he was summoned to the court of Jahangir. His plea that bending down before anyone except Allah was un-Islamic, annoyed Jahangir, who ordered for his imprisonment in Gwalior jail due to his discourteous behaviour. After a year however, Jahangir under the influence of his Islamic writings released him from jail and offered huge gifts to him. His tomb at Sarhind in Patiala is still an object of veneration (Islamic Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, Page297).

Shah Wali Ullah (1704-1762):

Shah Wali Ullah another Islamic mystic of the Sufi tradition of Sunnism who claimed his lineage from Quraysh tribe of Prophet Mohammad and of Umar, the second caliph was found more concerned with the political disorder after the death of Aurangzeb and the fading glory of Muslim power. With his religio-political thought that was based on the 'Persio-Islamic theory of kingship' (Shah Wali Allah and his Time by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, page 397) he wanted the Muslim society to return to the Prophet era for the political unity of the then Muslim rulers. He translated the writings of Sarhindi from Persian to Arabic to inspire the Muslim Indians and also invited Ahmad Shah Abdali, the king of Afghanistan to fight against the Marathas to save the subjugation of Muslims by the Hindus. His letter to Abdali was a part of his hate campaign against the Hindus. He did not believe in Indian nationhood or any national boundary for Muslims and therefore, invited Shah Abdali, Amir of Afghan to attack India (Third battle of Panipat 1761), in which Marathas were defeated. In his letter to the Afghan king he said, "...All control of power is with the Hindus because they are the only people who are industrious and adaptable. Riches and prosperity are theirs, while Muslims have nothing but poverty and misery. At this juncture you are the only person, who has the initiative, the foresight, the power and capability to defeat the enemy and free the Muslims from the clutches of the infidels. God forbid if their domination continues, Muslims will even forget Islam and become undistinguishable from the non-Muslims" (Dr. Sayed Riaz Ahmad in his book 'Maulana Maududi and Islamic state' - Lahore People's Publishing House, page 15 - 1976).

The political rise of non-Muslims like Maratha, Jat and Sikh powers and consequent danger to Islam of its political heritage was unbearable to Shah Wali Ullah. The slogan of 'Islam is in danger' - is profoundly embedded to his hate-non-Muslim ideology. The

successive Muslim thinkers drew inspiration from his religio-political thought and carried forward his mission, which ultimately gave birth to the Islamic politics in India.

A great Muslim thinker and promoter of one of the most emotional chapters of Islamic revivalist movements in Indian subcontinent his political thought had brought the Indian Muslims under perpetual siege of Islamic orthodoxy. The on going Hindu-Muslim communal controversy in contemporary India is deeply rooted to his political Islamic theory. The most significant contribution of Wali Ullah(Allah) for his community is that his teachings kept alive the religious life of Indian Muslims linked with their inner spirit for re-establishment of Islamic political authority in India. It was the political theory of Wali ullah that kept the Indian Muslims emotional social disorder and deprived them of a from forward-looking vision.

Being proud of his Arab origin Wali Ullah was strongly opposed to integration of Islamic culture in the cultural cauldron of the sub-continent and wanted the Muslims to ensure their distance from it. "Waliullah did not want the Muslims to become part of the general milieu of the sub-continent. He wanted them to keep alive their relation with rest of the Muslim world so that the spring of their inspiration and ideals might ever remain located in Islam and tradition of world community developed by it". (The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent by Istiaq Hussain Qureshi, 1985, Ibid. page 216). "In his opinion, the health of Muslim society demanded that doctrines and values inculcated by Islam should be maintained in their pristine purity unsullied by extraneous influences" (Ibid. page 215). The religio-political ideology of Wali Ullah made a permanent crack in Hindu--Muslim relation in this sub-continent, which undermined the self-pride and dignity of integrated Indian society.

Ahmad Barelavi (1786-1831):

Waliullh's son Abd al Aziz (1746-1823) carried forward the legacy of his father and as a result India faced violent communal disorder for decades. Aziz's disciple Saiyid Ahmad of Rai Bareli under the deep influence of the jihadi spirit of the faith propounded by Waliullah and Sunni extremism of Maulana Wahab of Saudi Arabia launched jihad against the non-Islamic power of the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh with a view to restore Dar-ul-Islam (A land, where Islam is having political power). Though, he was killed in battle of Balkot in May 1831, Indian Muslims continue to regard him as martyr for the cause of Islam. Tired with their failures in re-establishing Muslim rule the followers of the jihadi spirit of faith kept their movement in suspended animation for decades due to the firm grip the British established on this country.

Post- Sepoy Mutiny (1857) Movement for Islamic revivalism through Islamic institutions:

The movement for Islamic fundamentalism got a severe jolt with the failure of the Sepoy mutiny in 1857, when the Muslim radicals lost all hopes to restore Islamic power in India. The Islamic clerics however, kept the movement alive through

institutionalised Islamic movement and founded Islamic institutions like Darul-Ulum at Deoband , Nadawa al Ulama at Lucknow, and Darul-Ulum Manzar Islam in Bareilly. With thousands of madrasas these institutions have been carrying forward the legacy of the religio-political concept of Wahab and Waliullah. Farangi Mahall was already founded at Lucknow during the period of Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb. These institutions, which continue to draw students " mainly from the starving Muslim peasantry and working lower middle classes" (Deoband School and Demand for Pakistan by Faruqi, page 40) are the representative bodies of Muslim proletariat. Leave aside the restoration of Islamic polity, these theological seminaries are today producing thousands of unemployed or under employed Islamic clerics without caring for their material prosperity. In the absence of any scope for re-interpretation of religion for democratic, secular, scientific, industrial and modern condition of the society, common Muslims do not see beyond mosques and madrasas. These institutions have therefore, succeeded in producing only self-proclaimed holy warriors of their jehadi faith. In the name of preserving the cultural identity of the Muslims these holy warriors are in fact serving the cause of self-seeking Muslim elite.

Aligarh Movement of Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan (1817-98):

Contrary to the Islamic revival movement only through theological education, Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, a Mogul scion and loyalist to British power launched a parallel Aligarh movement with the objective to provide modern education to Indian Muslims. He was the first scion of Mogul family in modern history of India, who launched a unique Muslim separatist movement with a political and educational ideology and an objective to restore the lost pride of his community after the fall of Mogul Empire. Deeply aggrieved with the plight of Muslim Indians particularly after the failure of Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 and "acutely sensitive to the ending of Mogul dominance", he is widely known as founder of Islamic modernism in India. Though, a staunch believer in Sunni order of Islam, his outlook took a decisive change after the Sepoy Mutiny in which he had personally witnessed the sufferings of his community members at the hands of the British. But as a part of his tactical move to bring back the Muslims into the confidence of the British, he continued his loyalty to the British throne till his death.

Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan while taking inspiration from Shah Waliullah's concept of tactical moderation of Islam formulated the two-nation theory which not only formed the basis for the demand for a separate Muslim land of Pakistan but also coincided with the 'hate-Hindu campaign' of Shaikh Sarhind, Shah Wai-Ullah and Ahmad Bareilvi. Through scientific and modern education to Muslims his movement produced a sizeable section of Muslim middle class with doctors, engineers, scientists and scholars of modern subjects. This new class of Muslim however, also came under the influence of the fundamentalist forces, worked as the fighting force for Muslim elite and gradually succeeded in besieging the mindset of common Muslim masses. Strongly opposing the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 on the plea that it was a Hindu dominated organisation Ahmad Khan prevented the Muslim elite from joining it. Restoring confidence among the despairing Muslims of his age he is largely regarded "as a forerunner of Pakistan".

Instead of making any sincere effort towards the Hindu-Muslim unity Sir Sayed Ahmad rather convinced the British rulers that the two major religious communities of India were not capable for unity. (Hali's Hayat-e-Javed, translated by K.H.Kadari and David Matthews, 1979, page 199, Idarh-e-adabiyat-e-Delhi Qasimjan Street, Delhi - Quoted from Pioneer dated 20.10 2004 in a letter to editor column by Roopa Kaushal).

A noted Muslim scholar M.R.A.Baig also observed:

“ Being a descendant of high Mogul officials, he emotionally could not accept that Muslims should be ruled by their former subjects. He also feared that Hindu rule will result in the imposition of Aryo-Dravidian culture on the Muslim Perso-Arabic civilisation”(The Muslim Dilemma in India by M.R.A. Baig – page 51-52).

Religious obsession of Muslims remained a potential factor during freedom struggle and formation of All India Muslim League (AIML) in 1906. Internationally known historian R.C.Majumdar in his book 'Struggle for Freedom' (Page 127, 1969) maintained:"Aligarh movement gradually alienated the Muslims from the Hindus in the political field.....The anti-Hindu feeling was conspicuously shown in the Muslims' attitude towards Indian National Congress since its very inception". He further said: "It occurred to the Muslims that in order to counteract the political organisation of the Hindus, particularly the Congress, they must have a central organisation of their own" (Page 150, 1969). He added, "the spirit of Syed Ahmad dominated the Muslims who with rare exceptions, regarded themselves as Muslim first and Indian afterwards" (Ibid. Page 152). He quoted Sir Percival Griffiths, ICS, who "stressed the Muslim belief that their interest must be regarded as completely separate from those of the Hindus, and that no fusion of the two communities was possible"(Ibid. Page153). "Middle class Muslim nationalism sabotaged the natural process of electoral democratisation"(Ameena A.Saeed in an interview in Times of India dated November 29, 2003).

The educational ideology of Sir Sayed Khan provoked a violent reaction from Islamic orthodoxy but his followers gradually overcame this problem. Aligarh Muslim University, a citadel of Muslim Middle class played a major role in Pakistan movement under the guidance of Muslim elite. The then Muslim leadership used this new class to strengthen the siege of Islamic orthodoxy over the common Muslims with the ultimate objective to achieve its political hegemony. Even today Indian Muslims are proud of Aligarh Muslim University.

Urdu Movement:

The alien Muslim rulers created Urdu as lingua franca (Mixture of different languages for convenience) by mixing over fifty percent vocabularies from Turkish, Persian and Arabic in native dialects. While Persian was used as principal standard written language for administrative purposes, the Muslim rulers with the intention to establish their permanent political, economic, cultural

and linguistic hegemony in India pushed Urdu as a substitute for the native languages, which had Sanskrit origin and Nagari script. Urdu was gradually saturated with Perso-Arabic script, metaphors, similes, the forms of verse, prosody with about sixty percent of vocabulary, content of mannerism and poetic thought of Islamic and Persian traditions. The birth of Urdu therefore, created the first social division in Indian society.

Since the advent of British establishment in India, Muslims have been struggling for revival of the medieval pride of Urdu. Initially, the use of Urdu was confined to urbanised Muslim elite and of those Hindus, whose economic interest was linked with it. But due to its alien character it never became acceptable to native dwellers. Gradually it formed part of communal, parochial and Muslim politics in the country and was also linked with the cultural identity of Muslims. The pride of place given to Urdu in the literary courts of Muslim rulers made this new language a status symbol of the elite section of Muslims. Its Persianisation and Arabisation and imposed supremacy over regional languages always remained a source of irritant for the common Hindus as it disturbed the homogeneity of Indian society. Obsession of Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan to the linguistic supremacy of Urdu as a symbol of Muslim domination over the cultural and linguistic identity of this country gave credence to a first movement for recognition of Hindi as the second official language of North Western Provinces. Urdu-Hindi controversy therefore, originated from the Muslim renaissance movement launched after the failure of Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.

Organisations like Arya Samaj, Punjab Brahma Sabha, Sat Sabha and Sikh National Association joined the Hindi movement and voiced their opposition to Urdu before the respective units of Education Commission set up by the British to frame the education policy for India. Realising the gravity of situation the British Government introduced Hindi with Devanagari script in Bihar in the year 1880 despite the protest of Muslims. The aggressiveness of Hindi movement "affirmed that for Hindus Urdu was a pure and simple survival of Muslim tyranny" ((Muslim Politics and Leadership in the South Asian Sub-continent by Yusuf Abbasi, 1981, page 90). Introduction of Hindi in Bihar "quickened the pace of Hindi movement in North West Provinces and later in United Province"(Ibid. page190). "Urdu never indeed took root in the soil of rural India. One reason for this was its snobbish aversion to the dialects of the regions, where Urdu was supposed to have deep roots" (Anwar Azim in his essay entitled 'Urdu a victim of cultural genocide' published in a book entitled Muslims in India edited by Zafar Imam, 1975, page 259).

The followers of Aligarh movement strongly opposed the replacement of Persian script with Nagri in the court of United Province in April 1900. The Muslims took it as challenge to the supremacy of their cultural identity and launched an agitation to oppose Nagari resolution. They converted the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental Defence Association (an outfit of Aligarh Movement) into Urdu Defence Association, which was a starting point to corrode the unity of the national Freedom Movement. Ironically, Deoband Movement, which was opposed to Aligarh movement joined the Urdu Movement by identifying it as threat to Islam. Had Muslim thinkers been honest to develop Urdu in the literary tradition of this land with local script, Indian masses would have perhaps lapped it. Urdu Ghazals printed in Devanagari script are much more on sale than its print in Perso-Arabic script. In

ancient India Sanskrit was initially written in Brahmi script but due to its complexity Devanagari script was developed, which was easier to learn. But obsession of Muslim thinkers to carry forward Perso-Arabic legacy of Urdu identified this language with the identity of Muslims as a separate social entity and created major hindrance for it to become a language of common Indians. Such tendency of Muslim thinkers encouraged linguistic separatism and hence Indian masses rejected it.

Formation of Muslim League:

Aligarh movement was the force behind the ideology of political exclusivism in the name of religion, which prompted All India Mohammedan Educational Conference held in Dacca (December 27-30, 1906) to form the All India Muslim League. Since then AIML maintained a visible social and political distance from the Hindus and the Indian National Congress respectively. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a prominent leader of the Congress did not join the AIML till 1913 though, he supported the League movement for separate electorate for Muslims. Within the Congress he however always tried to bargain for one-third reservation for his community. Formation of AIML was a major landmark in the history of modern India. The first formal entry of a centrally organised political party exclusively for Muslims had the following main objectives:

"To promote among the Musssalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and remove any misconception that may arise as to the instruction of Government with regard to any of its measures.
To protect and advance the political rights and interests of Mussalmans of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government."

After the formation of Muslim League, the Muslim Indians, in stead of battling against the British remained consistently fighting a war against Indian National Congress a party that they described as of Hindus. Since they had no love for any democratic polity and did not foresee the possibility of restoration of Perso-Arabic hegemony over the Hindu majority with resurgence of Islamic rule in the country, demand for creation of Pakistan became their sole political agenda. They therefore tightened their grip over Indian Muslims who remained constantly under their siege since the establishment of Muslim rule in the country. Formation of Muslim League opened a floodgate for Indian Muslims, who never looked back to their cultural past. Since then various Muslim organisations like Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, Tbliq Jamaat, and Jamaat-e-Islami accelerated the Muslim separatist movement to keep their community members under siege.

Emergence of Iqbal as Ideological Father of Pakistan.

Allama Iqbal (1873/76-1938) widely known as a romantic and Indian nationalist poet experienced a "mental crisis" after his return from Europe in the first decade of nineteenth century. Being sensitive to the problems of Muslims, he took keen interest in Islamic mystical philosophy but used his intellectual brilliance only to strengthen the grip of All India Muslim League over Muslim masses. His spiritual and political guidance to his community for a separate Muslim state served as bedrock for demand for Pakistan. He

is therefore, called 'spiritual father of Pakistan'. "Iqbal combines many contradictory trends in himself; his verses could serve both conservatives and progressives as weapons"(Encyclopaedia of Islam, Brill, Volume III, page 1059).

A product of the movement of Islamic revivalism, which was based on the medieval concept of Muslim solidarity, Iqbal is also known as a poet of Muslim awakening in India. "He stood for going ahead with the Quran and revival of Islamic polity without realising how the simple polity of earlier Islam was incompatible with the complexities of modern civilisation". "He attempted to provide a systematic Islamic base to the socio-political ideas of Indian Muslims" (Politics of Minorities by Moin Shakir, 1980, Ajanta Publication, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi, page142). His romantic ideas meant for reviving the interest of elite Muslim Indians to hypnotise the common Indian Muslims and subordinate them to the former. "Everything was made subordinate to the interest of ruling elite; science, philosophy, democracy, constitution and fundamental rights of equality and liberty were subservient to the exploiting class" (Ibid.).

Like Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal also failed to assimilate his liberal thought with the global concept of democracy and could not free himself from the medieval moorings of Islam. He propagated the political solidarity of Muslims on the basis of religion, which fulfilled the political ambition of a section of Muslim elite who got independent power in Pakistan after partition of the country. Indian Muslims who supported the thesis of Iqbal but stayed back in India got nothing but only demoralisation for the betrayal of their leaders. Ironically, Indian Muslims are still proud of Iqbal. He is widely known for politicising the two-nation theory initially propounded by Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan. Muslim League with Iqbal as president adopted a resolution in its Allahabad Conference in 1930, which formed the basis for demand of Pakistan in 1940. Initially Mohammed Ali Jinnah was also an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity but to fulfill his political ambition he took an about turn and led the movement for Muslim separatism, which was launched to negate the tactical move of Mogul Emperor Akbar to rule this country through Islamic 'liberalism'.

After the exit of colonial power, British India was politically divided between 'Hindu India' and Muslim India with Pakistan as a new name to the latter. This division was however, converted into political division only in August 1947, which had the endorsement of over ninety- percent of the Muslims of undivided India. But ironically, of the total thirty percent of Muslim population of British India, about ten percent stayed back in 'Hindu India'.

Common Indian Muslims never understood the complexity of Pakistan movement, which they had blindly supported in the name of religion. Once they understood the reality of partition they were hapless and helpless. They however, did not learn a lesson from the betrayal of their leaders who again misguided them before leaving for Pakistan with a slogan - "Hans Kar Liya Pakistan Lad Kar Lenge Hindustan"(We got Pakistan with smile, we will take Hindustan with fight). A larger majority of the Muslim leaders, who were first Muslims than Indian went to Pakistan but handed over the besieged Indian Muslims who had actively participated in their fight for partition under perpetual siege of Islamic fundamentalists.

Some of the Muslim Indians understood the rising tide of Indian nationalism during freedom movement and took refuge under Nehruvian concept of secularism after Independence. They however, kept patronising the radical Islamists who carried forward the conceptual legacy of Islamic glory in the sub-continent. Emergence of Indian Union Muslim League, a new incarnation of All India Muslim League and multiplication of madrasas in post-colonial India reveal that Muslim Indians did not like to free the common Muslim masses from the siege of the Islamic clerics.

While Pakistan was declared an Islamic State, India accepted democracy and secularism with not only equal right to all its citizens but also certain special rights to Muslims as a minority community. India did not give any constitutional recognition to Hinduism even though its formation was based on religion. The Hindus of Pakistan did not vote for a religion based state but they were forced to migrate to 'Hindu India'. In south Asian countries India is an exception for not giving constitutional recognition to the religion on the basis of which it was reorganised after the end of British rule. The Hindus of this new India however, never raised any assertive voice for constitutional recognition to their religion as the ancient scriptures of this land suggest 'Sarva Dharm Sambhav' (Equal respect to all the religions).

The post-Independence behaviour of Indian Muslims hardly had any change. Their various grievances in the name of Muslim identity are being exploited by all the political parties that treat them as a vote bank only without taking any step to free them from their siege. These demoralised religio-social group that stayed back in India after partition, did not learn any lesson from the betrayal of their leaders. Gradually, the Indian people learnt to ignore the bitter past of partition and accepted the ground reality as such.

In post-colonial Indian polity the Muslims leadership kept their community polarised in favour of Congress for over two decades since Independence. Meanwhile, organisations like All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat were formed to bring the Indian Muslims under common platform but it too failed to resolve their socio-psychological confusion. Organisations like Student Islamic Movement of India emerged to re-infuse the concept of Islamic extremism among the Indian Muslims. Division of Pakistan with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 for which India under Congress rule fought a decisive war was not palatable either for

Muslim Indians

The 'secular' intellectuals belonging to the Muslim community consider themselves as repositories of the heritage of Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi to Allama Iqbal. Instead of identifying the fault lines in the insistence of Muslim clerics on exclusivist identity of their community and transforming their opinion, the Muslim 'liberals' are not ready to free their co-religionists from their mental siege. The Muslim 'liberals' are not ready to free their co-religionists from their perpetual mental siege. So long as these 'secular' Muslims do not recognise the civilisational underpinnings of pre-medieval India and link the Indian Muslims to their roots for which no compromise to the spiritual Islam is required - possibility of the freedom of common Muslims from the siege of Islamic fundamentalism is ruled out.

"As long as Muslims felt that they were an important and even decisive element of the ruling group they did not feel that they were a minority a term that implicitly condemns a community to the margins" (M.J.Akbar in his foreword of 'Indian Muslims : Where have they gone wrong' by Rafiq Zakaria, Bhartiya Vudya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2004). There are a number of Muslim intellectuals who write about this bitter truth but it is an irony that they hardly speak this truth assertively when they face Muslim congregations. They often quote the address of Maulam Azad to the demoralised Indian Muslims in front of Jama Masjid after partition but they hardly assert to ensure that the Indian Muslims are freed from their medieval mindset and grip of Muslim Indians. The most unfortunate part of their intellectually cowardice attitude is that they do not intend to write or speak the truth for common Muslims.

If the Muslim scholars are genuine secularists with conviction, they should launch an assertive movement and intellectual jihad to generate collective concern among the Muslim leaders to free the masses from the siege of the Ulema. As a first step they are to free common Muslims from the medieval psyche of Ibrahim Khan's 'Red Pamphlet' - "Ye Mussalman arise awake! Do not read in the same school with Hindus". This is possible only if all the theological seminaries are converted into educational institutions to impart modern and scientific education with a paper preferably optional on theological subject. Kalama, Namaz, Roja, Jakat and Haj, are perhaps the only ingredients of spiritual Islam to maintain Muslim identity. Islam may be a complete way of life during Prophet era but can't it be moderated according to global civilisational changes as has been done in many Islamic countries? Muslim elite and middle class in the community are unfortunately neither ready to unload their medieval mental burden nor feel the need to free the ignorant Muslim masses from the siege of Islamic fundamentalists. Though, this communal conflict is being carried forward by the radical Islamists as a legacy of their religious intolerance, the Muslim scholars often project it as an outcome of divide and rule policy of the British.

In post Independent India, Muslim 'secularists' have been putting blame on Hindu nationalists for the Hindu-Muslim divide. But they never raise any voice against Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, who sowed the seed of two-nation theory and Allama Iqbal who

propagated it. Both of them are highly revered among the Indian Muslims. They never condemn Fida Hussain some of whose paintings were the burning example of blasphemy. They are also fond of putting blame on Indian National Congress for sabotaging the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi for Hindu Muslim unity. They often refer to Motilal Nehru's report for ignoring the constitutional demand of the Muslims, which compelled a secular leader like Jinnah turning communal. Putting blame on others for own follies is intellectual dishonesty. Zakaria admits that "Indian Muslims became pawns in the hands of political parties" but he has ignored the historical facts that his community members always remained under the siege of the Muslim elite of this country. Is it not a historical fact that the Indians converted to Islam were forced to forget their civilisational roots from the day they changed their faith? Were they not forced to give up their cultural identity before conversion?

Hindus have no inhibition to pay reverence to Dargah of Muslim saints as they believe God in any form but Muslim leaders hardly reciprocate such gesture by joining the religious congregation of Hindus. They talk of reconciliation but are not ready to cross the barricade of Islamic injunctions. They quote Akbar Allahabadi who mocked the Mullah - " why should they travel by train when camel is available" but they never came out aggressively against the Mullah who openly expressed high regards to Osama bin Laden or loudly said that family planning is against Islam. If they do not want the Muslims to defy the Prophet's tradition how can they ask their community members to "discard the outmoded traditions and out of date conventions"?(Rafiq Zakaria in Indian Muslims - Where have they gone wrong, Page XXXIX, Bharati Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2004).

Through the ages from Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi to Shah Waliullah and from Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan to Sir Allama Iqbal the Indian Muslims have devolved themselves to maintain a separate identity. The contemporary Muslim thinkers of 'secular' and democratic India have ignored this perpetual devolution of Indian Muslims. M.J.Akbar, a reputed journalist rather found "Indian Muslims evolving through ages " and linked their evolution through the poetry of Khushru, Ghalib, Iqbal and Akbar Allahabadi. Zakaria in his book complemented M.J.Akbar and said that he had " convincingly refuted Sir Vidia Naipaul for his propagation that Indian Muslims have developed no roots in India ". Every Indian would have gladly accepted this compliment of Zakaria had the Indian Muslims been also sensitive to the cultural and religious sentiments of the majority community of this country.

If Muslim 'secularists, do not want to spell out their mind on historical facts and want the Indian Muslims to join the national mainstream without unloading their mental burden of medieval India, they are perhaps also falling in the same line of Muslim Indians who do not want to free their own community members from their siege. How does Mr Zakaria expect the Indian Muslims to respond to his saner advice "to take a realistic stand and sincerely work for collaboration with Hindus" until and unless he intellectually confronts with Muslim Indians for freedom of common Muslims from their medieval psyche? There is no dearth of Muslim intellectuals who in their informal talk criticise the Mullahs but they do not have the courage to confront them. If the Hindu intellectuals raise their voice against the siege of Indian Muslims, they are branded communal.

Without any deep understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the cultural tradition of Indian society, obsession towards any exclusive identity on the basis of religion is always detrimental to social harmony. The crux of the social tradition of Indian society was a value-oriented concept of dignified co-existence, which was however disturbed after the establishment of Muslim rule in the country. "The notions of pluralism, equality and identity cannot be translated into practice if pursued independently" (Pluralism, Equality and Identity: Comparative Studies by T.K.Oommen, Oxford University Press, 2002, Page 1).

Islam or Christianity never had any identity problem in India before the establishment of Muslim and colonial rule in this country. Identity conflict started only when the Hindus were discriminated on the basis of their religion and they had to suffer due to atrocious behaviour of the alien rulers. Conversion through force or allurements was the main reason behind conflict in religious identity.

Nationality is basically a geo-cultural identity, which the Muslims in India have always disputed. M. Mujeeb, a noted Muslim scholar and expert of the history of Indian Muslims observed that the Muslims claim adherence to Sharia in principle but disregard it in practice. In support of his view he gives example of Muslim landlords, who often create private trusts to prevent their daughters from getting share in the landed property of the family. They however, claim themselves to be the upholders of Sharia. (Islamic Law in Modern India edited by Tahir Mahmood, 1972, Page 9). Similarly, Muslim elite hardly makes any sincere effort to encourage the poor and economically backward Muslims towards modern education, which may qualify and induce them to think freely and independently. Madrasa education is producing merchants for selling reserved accommodation in heaven after death but at the cost of poverty in present life. Well off Muslims hardly send their children for study in madrasas.

The monumental wonders erected by Muslim rulers in different parts of India are symbols of Islam. These monuments gradually got the status of national heritage. No 'secular' writer is ready to pen this truth about the misuse of the public exchequer that could have been spent over the economic development of the people. Such lavish expenditure at the whims and fancies of the Muslim rulers reflect their luxurious style of living which may be contrary to the spiritual concept of Islam.

The End of British rule provided opportunities to Indian Muslims to unload their burden of medieval psyche and legacy of Islamic concept of democracy by integrating themselves in Indian society. The Muslim clergies in support of the elite section in their community however, did not free them to do so but rather tightened their grip over them in the name of religion. The political leadership of the country on the other hand allowed the communal divide for vote bank politics that has kept the Indian Muslims under perpetual siege. Had the Indian Muslims been kept out of political Islam and encouraged for adherence only to the fundamentals of spiritual Islam that is Kalama, Namaz, Roza, Jakat and Haz the gap of communal divide might have decreased. In stead of treating them as a political group had they been accepted only as a religious social group the question of their

religious identity would not have arisen. In the name of religious identity the Muslim Indians are fighting only for their political identity with a constituency of Muslim voters.

Post-Independence history of India reveals that there was hardly any communal riot on the issue of spiritual Islam. But Muslim Indians in their lust for sharing political power used their community members in the name of religion only for their vested political interest. Gradually, the use of religion became a national strategy of power politics in the country.

The post-Independence behaviour of Indian Muslims hardly had any change. Their grievances in the name of Muslim identity are being exploited by all the political parties that treat them as a vote bank only without taking any step to free them from their siege. With the rising tide of 'Hindutva' the demoralised Muslim community maintained a low profile but formulated the strategy of tactical voting against the BJP in election and succeeded in removing it from power at centre in 2004. Tactical voting of Muslims against the BJP was one of the major reasons for the defeat of the party in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra. How long this strategy will help the Muslim Indians only time will say but this dangerous trend may be counter productive if the Hindus are also polarised as it happened in the last Gujarat Assembly election. This strategy of Muslim Indians could aggravate the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, which is not in the interest of the country.

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