

**A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE  
THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAM AND MUSLIM IDENTITY IN INDIA:  
BRITISH COLONIALISM AND INDIAN CONGRESS LEADERSHIP IN  
THE ‘VIVISECTION’ AND PARTITIONING OF INDIA.**

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**NOTE: This article is paper one of a two part series of articles. Paper two will look at the partition of India under British colonialism, the follies of Indian Congress leadership and the formation of independent Pakistan.**

**Abstract**

This paper attempts to deal with the complex and intricate issue of the emergence of Islam and Muslim identity in undivided India. In so doing, the paper focuses on an historical perspective, for purposes of recalling the great divide in India before partition. The two papers also encapsulate the issues that permeate Indian independence from British colonialism and, they attempt to discuss, the formation of two independent countries in the form of independent India and independent Pakistan, as two distinct nation states. More importantly, these aspects will be discussed in paper two of the two part series of articles. This partition or vivisection of the Indian subcontinent was a great tragedy of history and of our times, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will also very briefly discuss the formation of Bangladesh as a relic of British colonialism in the great design to split the Indian subcontinent into three nation states. This will be undertaken in paper two. It therefore discusses the designs of British colonialism and brings to the fore issues that need to be grasped in terms of both Indian and British leadership in dividing the Indian sub – continent. The role of Indian leaders and of Viceroy Lord Mountbatten are discussed as a great tragedy to justice and the infliction of great pain to so many people that, were unnecessarily massacred and separated from their land of birth by partition. This aspect will be discussed in paper two of this series of articles. The paper draws upon the work of Jaswant Singh, Peter Hardy, William Dalrymple, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a great son of India, Richard Hough and, a host of other distinguished writers and scholars, in respect of the emergence of Islam and Muslim identity in the Indian sub – continent. On the other hand the paper draws from the experiences and observations of the writer himself, who was a student in India for seven years (1971 – 1979). Travelled the length and breadth of India during this period, and lived in New Delhi, Bombay, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Udaipur in Rajasthan for protracted periods of time. Interviewed and spoke to many people and travelled to Muslim and Hindu regions of the subcontinent and travelled to Indian Kashmir and to Ladhak, and its capital Leh (part of India but in Western Tibet). For a period of seven months in 1974, at the young and tender age of 22, the writer travelled from Jammu (Kashmir) by road to Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan and, had the opportunity of seeing for himself some of the issues raised in this paper. Had the opportunity of mingling with the locals of different religions and cultures of these countries and battled the harsh terrains and, saw the magnificent sceneries’, the diverse and rich cultures of magnificent, proud and intellectual people, in spite of a sea of

poverty and wealth. Saw the outstanding and colourful societies and the rich tapestry of Islam and Muslim identity. This was undertaken in peaceful times with great peace and serenity amidst welcoming citizens of Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, Christians and other religious groupings. It is hoped that this experience will assist in garnering at least, some of the thought processes and analysis in this paper.

It is not possible to capture all of the subtle nuances and debates of a very vexing and complex issue as captured in the title of the paper. It attempts to relive misguided ideologies of independence leading to two nation states and, discusses the emergence of Islam and Muslim identity within the realm of the Indian sub – continent. It also touches on the vexing issue of Hindu nationalism within the context of the Sangh Pariwar (the coming together of Hindu organizations in the form of nationalism). The paper is also not an effort to impinge upon the work of other celebrated writers and more experienced and learned scholars. The mistakes are solely those of the writer and, to this end, it is an attempt to relive a great past era that, caused so much of pain and bloodshed in the subcontinent of India. This was undertaken because of the vanity of so many who defied the moral system, that man has to live by and, thus caused so much of destruction, anxiety, and hardship in a sub – continent that sits at the very heart of civilization itself. Such a situation must never be allowed to occur again in any part of the world. On the other hand the British must be held accountable, for a dastardly crime perpetuated upon the people of India with great impunity.

**Key Words: Islam, Muslim, Hindu, Partition, Colonialism, Freedom, Independence, Sub – Continent. Identity, Culture, Arabs, Persians, History, Nationalism**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The paper attempts to deal briefly with Indo – Islamic history together with Arab and Persian influence, in terms of the consolidation of Muslim identity. It journeys briefly also into Islamic traditions of India, how patrons became petitioners, Muslim reform movements, Islam the image and reality, the language divide and the politics of identity, amidst a host of other important issues. On the other hand, the paper does not traverse the domain of the great Mughal Empire and of Islam's and Muslims profound contribution to Indian culture, education, architecture, and traditions in any great detail. In fact, its influence on all aspects of life in the sub – continent of India, in many ways is unprecedented in terms of development and to all walks of life, not only to the Indian subcontinent, but the entire world. The paper only touches on some of these issues very briefly in the course of the discussions in this paper. The Mughal Empire is was a vast, complex, colourful, and important era that must be best left to the pen and analysis of outstanding historians and intellectual giants, who are better positioned and qualified to do so and, of which volumes have been written. The great tragedy of Indian partition, the wanton bloodshed, the tearing and trampling upon Indian sensibilities and upon their morale and, the splitting up of the country and; the unnecessary division of the land mass of India, through the process of 'vivisection' and, the great political 'mischief' by the British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten on behalf of the British Government, is not only a monumental tragedy of great and unprecedented proportions; but must be laid bear, firstly, at the feet of a despicable and diabolical plot engineered by the British government, which was aided and abetted by Indian Congress leaders to a larger or lesser extent; in order to fulfill their own political aspirations. More importantly have contributed to the great divide between Muslims and Hindus, which still resonates today and; has given rise to Hindu and Muslim nationalisms, in both Pakistan and India, to the perils of their respective populations. This rise of Hindu nationalism in India has worked against the Muslims of India, because they constituted and constitute a large proportion of the population of India pre and post independence. This does not mean that Muslim nationalism is condoned in Pakistan. The partition of India has given rise to these frightful nationalisms that, stifle economic advancement and constantly manifests with the threat of war between these two

nations that, are nuclear powers, and coupled with other salient antagonisms that almost sporadically flare – up every now and then, with devastating consequences. This situation has led to very serious suspicions between these two nations and have led to political suspensions of cooperation, even on the most mundane of affairs, let alone the necessary cooperation in broader geopolitical, educational, cultural, travel, scientific, sports and other issues, much to the peril of both nations. There has been a breakdown of trust and cooperation between modern day, India and Pakistan and, the reality is the all embracing fact that, these neighbours have gone to war in a short space of time, since independence. On the one hand, India purports to be a secular political entity, which is highly questionable, given its poor treatment of its Muslim population that, number more than 200 million people, making up a little more than 20 percent of India's population. In reality, India has more Muslims than independent Pakistan, and this is but one of the great anomalies of the misguided partitioning of India. Pakistan, on the other hand has not pretended to be a secular state, but has declared itself as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and its successive governments and, the majority of its people have remained hostile to India and its majority Hindu population. Minorities in the form of Hindu and Christian Pakistanis have on a number of occasions bore the wrath of Muslims, in Pakistan. These, are some of the realities that an unnecessary partition syndrome has and had created and consolidated in the psyche of both Indians and Pakistanis. An issue that is most difficult to deal with because, these divides were crafted so ingeniously by the British and consolidated through Hindu nationalism, and given credence by both Indian political and religious leaders. This state of affairs, there can be no doubt was a tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the peril of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, no sane person can or could deny that, it was not a tragedy of unprecedented proportions, for the whole of mankind. These are some of the issues that this paper attempts to explore and examine.

#### **INDO – ISLAMIC HISTORY**

Arab invasions to other parts of the world began, a few years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in AD 632. (Singh, 2009). The armies of Islam rapidly spread through Persia, Iraq, Maghreb, the Levant and other Byzantine lands. By the eighth century AD, catholic Spain had submitted to Islam and Islam was knocking on today's France. "The Arabs by now held the largest and most powerful empire in the world, from the Bay of Biscay to the shores of the Indus and from the Aral Sea to the upper Nile' and by AD 662, its influence spread to the frontiers of Hindustan" (India) (Singh, 2009). Neither the \*Umayyads nor the \*Abbasids succeeded in moving further inland. It took them nearly 400 years and at great cost to and, not until the eleventh century that, the kingdoms of Kabul, Zabul and Sindh finally succumbed to the Arabs.

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\*The Umayyad Dynasty was the first dynasty of caliphs of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who were closely related to him. The Abbasids were the dynasty of caliphs who ruled the Islamic Empire from AD 750, until the Mongol conquest of the Middle East in 1258. The Abbasids defeated the Umayyads and shifted the empire from Damascus to Baghdad, thus shifting the empire's center from Syria to Iraq.

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The first of the sea invasions of India was in AD 636, when the Arab naval expeditions, to Thana, Gujarat and Sindh were repulsed and failed. The Arabs were routed in many instances as were the efforts of several Khalifas and there was much loss of Muslim life. Debal was conquered in AD 712. The kingdom was retrieved after the Khalifa recalled Qasim (the Khalifat representative) to Iraq. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries the powers of Abbasid Khalifas declined and, therefore, lost the ability to support envoys in distant lands. There were only two Arab principalities of Multan and Mansurah, in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Al Istakhri writing in AD 951 about Multan records the presence of idols and people from distant lands who

undertook pilgrimages to these idols (Abul Qasim Ubaidullah in Jaswant Singh, 2009). If it were not for the idols, it is reported that the Hindus would have destroyed Multan. Wolsely Haig (2009 in Singh) states that the “Arab conquest of Sindh was merely an episode in the history of India which affected only a fringe of the vast country.” In reality the tide of Islam overflowed during this period. Sindh and the lower Punjab ebbed leaving some jetsam on the sand.

Ram Gopal Mishra (In Singh, 2009) the author of the “Indian Resistance to Early Muslim Invaders up to 1206 observes that “the kingdoms of Kabul and Zabul too had valiantly defied the Arabs for over two centuries. For another 175 years, the ruling dynasties of these kingdoms, the Shahis, held out and Kabul then comprised the Kabul river valley and extended up to the Hindukush. It included the present areas of Lamghan, Jalalabad, Peshawar and Charsadda in the South, bordering Kashmir in the north and Persia in the West” (Voice of India, in Singh, 2009). The kingdom of Zabul lay to the south of Kabul and north of Baluchistan (Gedrosia)\* comprising the upper valley of the Helmand river with Seistan forming part of the kingdom.

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\*Gedrosia is a dry mountainous country along the northwestern shores of the Indian Ocean. It became famous in Europe when the Macedonian King Alexander the Great tried to cross the Gedrosian desert and lost many men.

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After conquering Persia in AD 643, the Arabs attacked the valley of Kabul in AD 650; Abdullah ibn Amir, the governor of Basra wanted to subdue Seistan. Though this expedition failed, Seistan was finally conquered by the Arabs in AD 653, to be lost again soon after. In spite of resistance to the Arabs the kings of Kabul and Zabul, came under Arab rule as part of the holy wars on the frontiers of Hind. There was destruction and bloodshed. Eventually invaders became Indians. Accompanying these invasions was a new experience for India, conversion of the unbelievers to Islam and this continued until a time when finally, Islam itself got transformed by India. All of this according to Singh (2009: 4) “took in reality, almost a millennium and a half to evolve.” India’s involvement with these diverse strands of Islam covered the entire range of human experience, encapsulating within the geographical spread of the subcontinent, a journey that travelled from arriving as a conquering faith, adopting the country as home and then because of no fault of Islam or Muslims but, because of the greed and power of British colonialism, It is blamed for finally dividing this very homeland. The blame needs to be put at the feet firstly of the British colonial power, then at the feet of Indian leaders such as Nehru, Gandhi, Kriplani, Sardar Patel, Krishna Menon, and including many others. Blame has to also be placed at the feet of the Muslim League and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. There can be no question about this, they are all culpable.

Islam had come to India principally with the invading Islamic forces because of the bountiful lands of Hind. In consequence, Islam became the faith of a conquering invader, acquiring the identity of a foreign, Islamic outsider. This would be the unnecessary argument because India is not a homogenous society (even today) and this could be seen by the antagonisms exhibited by the Aryan\* North and the Dravidian\* South, (Majority Hindus in the North and South).

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\*Aryan and Dravidian: The most basic division of the Indian society is of Aryans and Dravidians. According to this division nearly 72 percent of Indians are Aryans and 28 percent are Dravidians. The north Indians are the descendents of Aryans and the South Indians are Dravidians. The general script of their languages is different. Generally, it is accepted widely, yet disputed that the Aryans arrived in India from Iran and southern Russia at around 1500 BC. This proves the point that this paper has made that the Hindus and the Muslims in the

North were themselves invaders and settled in India. The Dravidians are the original indigenous people of undivided India. Before this there were also other communities in north India, such as Sino – Mongoloids and Austroloids and also other immigrants that arrived from time to time. Hinduism and the caste system are believed to have been established as a result of the meetings between the intruding Aryans and the original Indians of India, the Dravidians. The Aryans introduced the Brahman caste system which discriminated against the darker skinned Dravidians as opposed to the fair Aryans, who considered the dark skinned Dravidians as devils and demons. This caste system allowed the Aryans to be priests (Brahman), aristocracy (Kshatria) and the businessmen (Vaisia) of the society. This is a complicated issue with much denial by Hindus and their historians. This is disputed on the basis of the Sanskrit word Arya, which means good or pure and the claim that it was changed to Aryan. What of the Muslim Kings in the South, for example Tipu Sultan, and his forebears, were they Dravidians or influenced by the Muslim Mughal Empire?

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Both the Aryans and Dravidians are of diverse cultures and beliefs. Most of them (up to today) would be people that, constitute India's population in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, Islam and Muslims, in spite of the majority population being Hindu, has been around since AD 632 and, therefore; there is a compelling argument that both Islam and Muslims in India are an inextricable part of the mosaic and tapestry of India; irrespective of what some writers and Hindu nationalists such as Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, and possibly Indian Prime Minister in 2014, passionately espouse continually. Modi is an avowed Indian Hindu nationalist, who played the principal role in the massacre of some plus / minus 2000 Muslims in the state of Gujarat, in 2002, and he would want the Indian nation and the world to believe that, Muslims are a threat to India and its independence. Many of the illiterate masses buy into the propaganda of individuals like Modi, and the slogans of his BJP political party. Pre, and Post 632 AD, India was not a united country and was, made up of many warring factions and different nation states, ruled by clans, by tribes, landlords, Princes and Maharajahs and by invaders; which is different to the modern nation state of India today. It must also be acknowledged that the Prophet of Islam (Muhammad – PBUH) also ran an Islamic state that dealt with finance, the military, social welfare, international relations, education, health, and so on. The religion of Islam began to spread from Arabia, with great fervor and intensity, after the prophet's death. This was undertaken among different and diverse cultures and, different religious groupings, as He (The Prophet of Islam) consolidated Islam as a religion and a state. In reality, the then India did not have a united nation state, was made up of different types of individual governments (ruled by Hindu Maharajas and Muslim Princes in the main). This is the reality that must be acknowledged and purposefully agreed to. Irrespective of the arguments put forward, Islam and Muslims are as much a part of India as Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Jains or other religious sects and identities are.

The question arises, how did Islam with ease first become Indian, then struggled to become a geographical supernumerary to it? This great spread of what was their own home? "From being the faith of kings, emperors and the rulers of India, for a protracted period of time, that it can be accused as being the separator of those that divided the land of India, expelling itself notionally from India and moving voluntarily to the eastern and western peripheries of it; relegating such of the faith that remained in India to a life of perpetual self – questioning and doubt about their true identity. For those who remained were then questioned, humiliatingly: Where do you belong?" (Singh, 2009: 5). These bewildered abandoned faithful rightly therefore, now lament – Are we also not of the ummah? (Arabic word which means community or nation). Singh (2009: 5) points out and states "What then of the Muslim League's boast of being the sole and the exclusive representative of all the faithful? The League had claimed that it was the true upholder of Islam's ideological authenticity; also of

representing a substantive Muslim consensus; therefore, it demanded, rather presupposed, just a single Muslim medium, and asserting its identity as a different conceptual nation, claimed a separate land for itself which is why this agonizing question continues to grate against Indian sensibilities. Separate from what? And, what of those that do not separate and, so separate geographically? How do you divide a geographic, also political unity? Is this simply achieved by drawing lines on maps? Hough (1980) reports that “through a surgical operation, because, Mountbatten had said, and tragically Nehru and Patel and the Congress Party had assented; Jinnah, in any event having demanded adapting to just such recourse.” This aspect is not wholly true as expounded by Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, the great Indian intellectual and mighty Congress leader (1988) (Will be expanded upon in paper two). This aspect and many other issues concerning partition are nuanced through the eyes of Moulana Azad in his book that was “kept under lock and key for thirty years after independence and partition - *India Wins Freedom\** (will be discussed fully in paper two of this series of articles) (Humayan Kabir. 1988).

Singh (2009: 5) further points out that the “Muslim League triumphed under Jinnah’s leadership, for he achieved what he had set out to. The League was his political instrument and his acumen enabled him to exploit the accumulated weaknesses of the Congress Party’s mistakes, principally from the 1930’s onwards; upon which he heaped the British Empires critical enfeeblement, post the Second World War, carving out for himself a Pakistan; even if moth – eaten and from birth. This in some ways may be true but, at the same time the Congress leaders in Nehru and Patel including Gandhi much later, had wavered and had allowed the partition against the grain of Indian agreements. This aspect has been laid bare by Moulana Azad and would be expatiated upon in part two of the series of articles, outlining the misconceptions about Indian partition.

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\*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (*India Wins Freedom*) was a Muslim cleric (priest or Maulana). He was at the very core of Indian leadership within the Indian Congress. His book “*India Wins Freedom*,” has at last won its own freedom. His book is now the complete text since 1958. The full text of his autobiographical narrative was confined under seal in the National Library, Calcutta and, in the National Archives, New Delhi, for thirty years, and released in 1988 by a court directive. The text now reveals the controversy that has simmered in respect to partition and the divisive role played by leaders of the Indian Congress, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah. His book is narrated by Humayun Kabir and published by Orient Longman Limited, Madras, India.

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The blame in respect of the formation of Pakistan and partition cannot be Jinnah’s alone, but rather the combined Congress leadership of the times. The issue, was it collective human folly that created Pakistan? Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph (2006: 272; Hassan, 1993) state and have posed the question with eloquent lucidity as follows, “Jinnah continued to be perceived as a liberal eclectic and secular to the core; committed to India’s unity”, he was thought of by Viceroy Lord Linlithgow as more Congress than the Congress.” Therefore, there are two sides to the story as concerns Jinnah’s role. He played a central role in India’s political leadership for almost 47 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and therefore, he could not relegate himself to the fringe of Indian politics. Was it really an antipodal extreme for a person who espoused Hindu – Muslim unity.

So what happened as Singh asks? (2009) and goes on to state that, “how could so cataclysmic an event as Partition occur when it had not even been imagined as late as the 1940’s? And no intelligible definition of it existed until as late as 1946. Why and how did this ambassador of Hindu – Muslim Unity, the liberal constitutionalist, an Indian nationalist, Mohammed Ali Jinnah” “become, in Viceroy Lord Wavell’s phrase, a Frankenstein monster” (Lloyd, et al;

2006), “working to dismember that very world which had so generously created him” (Singh, 2009: 6).

There are some other issues that are equally important of this great tragedy of India’s partition that deserve discussion and reflection. Did this very vivisection of India’s land and its people question the very identity of India itself? “If Jinnah had asserted in his later years that India is not one nation; then if it was not a single nation, then what is India, even as a residue? Was it a conglomerate of communities asks Jaswant Singh?” (2009:7). History affirms that, a nation should give equal rights to all citizens and a common citizenship that goes into making a nation state. Why then in India do we find even today identified separate identities, religious, caste and community identities, fragmenting the very unity of India? For example, affirmative action is for the needy, in order to overcome historical, social inequalities but these aspects are politically misconceived social engineering. This was precisely Jinnah’s point as Singh (2009) states that “this was Jinnah’s consistent demand, as the sole spokesperson for Muslims; for like the Hindu Congress leaders wanted the insurance of a specified ratio of representation for Muslims in elective bodies and government jobs and, to this end Gandhi and others later climbed the ladder of slippery and divisive reservations. This thought outstrips the chronology of the narrative of Jinnah’s journey.” It is ironic that amongst the great constitutionalists of those times, Jinnah and Nehru became the principal promoters of special status for Muslims and to this end both Gandhi and Sardar Patel later joined this chorus for the special status for Muslims; Jinnah directly and Nehru, indirectly. They became advocates of establishing different categories amongst Indian citizens and thus assisted Lord Mountbatten and the British to eventually divide a united India. The irony sadly is the all embracing fact and reality that both of them, these two great Indians were actually competing to become the spoke persons of Muslims in India. To this end Singh (2009) points out that “this approach arose because they were both in effect, deeply imbued by European thought, percepts and social prescriptions that they, tragically, became far removed from the core of Indian consciousness. Then who spoke about a united India, sadly to a great extent but later in many ways consumed, it was only Gandhi.” The sad truth is the all embracing reality that the partitioning of India achieved the opposite. It left a legacy of enhanced Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other identities. It was the nutrient of self – interest, perpetuated even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and nearly seventy years after Indian independence, differences in separateness starkly exist. This has compartmentalized Indian society and thus fragments Indian national identity, even today, all because of the divisive role played by the British.

This is what special reservation for Muslims in India sadly achieved, and it was not the fault of poor Muslims in the main, that made up the majority Muslim population of India. What then of the historical period of the time? The easy answer is that, this period lies broadly between 1857 and 1947. The trauma of the first period of 1857 was marked by a violent usurpation of the symbols of sovereignty of India by freebooting and rough traders from a foreign land. The essence and authority of Mughal India (North India broadly) had admittedly begun to decline in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but 1857 was a violent seizure. It is against this background that four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century must be defined. In other words, this characterizes the Simla Declaration of 1906 to the independence of the India Act of 1946. It is these four decades (1906 – 1947) that transformed the very identity of the entire Indian subcontinent and significantly influenced global issues and events. Democratic representation was bias which ultimately led to vivisection of the land itself. This effectively defines the conceptual, the territorial and the historical limits of this tragic and unnecessary journey and episode. What brought about this great cataclysm of 1947? It was an event of such transforming consequences that permeate sharply divergent views. According to a host of writers on the subject, the view widely held in India amongst intellectuals, academics and the population, is that partition was a tragedy, a vivisection and therefore discussions tend to

focus on finding reasons and apportioning blame for the failure to maintaining the unity of the subcontinent, as well as mitigating the terrible consequences of division. The blame is often laid at the feet of the Congress leaders. On the other side of the continuum in Pakistan, it cannot be accepted that partition should have been avoided and there is a tendency of Muslim nationalism which is argued as a kind of inevitability of the establishment of a Muslim nation state.

The above is the genesis in essence for a search in these two papers. It brings to light the abysmal pitfalls and fallacies of those epochal periods and decades. This narrative therefore, can be considered by many as a mere recapitulation of those happenings; a linear narrative of events simply relived and therefore recounted. "Is it to be what the great Arab historian Ibn Khaldun reflected history to be or rather ought to be, in his epic treatise *The Muqaddimah*" (Book of Advice, 1337). "The writing of history requires numerous sources and varied knowledge and requires a speculative mind, thoroughness and very wide reading and consultation for purposes of searching for the truth. It requires an understanding of an array of fields that must be approached in a scholarly manner and to understand the fundamental facts and arguments of politics, the very essence of human civilization and the conditions that govern human social organization. It requires comparisons with contemporary situations. It is and, must be rooted in not deviating from the truth. It is a question of bringing together probity, comparisons, historical insight, speculation, philosophy, in order to avoid baseless assumptions and errors" (Rosenthal, 1988). Sadly the postulates put forward by Rosenthal (1988) are flouted by "so – called educated, so – called intelligent men who purport to be reasonable in debate, discussion and analysis but, do the opposite when their inflated egos are challenged by others and that to rightfully so. They then use all the destroying and cunning tactics covered in a mask or veneer of deception, which is at their disposal and, by sheer use of force and power attempt to destroy their critics, for their own nefarious designs even today. Because, they cannot comprehend the world except, in narrow and parochial own terms and, to them, the opposite and shrewd outcomes and consequences do not matter. Even if it means putting the majority of people through pain and frustration, through violence and bloodshed. To them the pursuit is victory and glory for themselves, on their own terms and, all those who stand in opposition must be destroyed, humiliated, and annihilated irrespective. This was the case in those days too, in many societies, negating the very essence of truth and justice" (Karodia, 2008). This was the mask of British colonialism with its imperial plot and design and included an array of Indian Congress leaders that led to tragic consequences of a divided India.

It must be acknowledged that most or in fact all accounts are in the main subjective because, they are based on interpretation of a period, for example a period which forced the vivisection and indeed partition of the subcontinent of India and, divided the ancient cultural unity that permeated and made up India" (Singh, 2009). The writer posits that, thought processes cannot be justified by any means of objectivity in analysis, interpretation or based on any objectivity. The question is why? Could the answer be found through any occidental philosophical determinations? The answer is no. It is a question of capturing the passions of those times, in order to dispel the jaundiced prisms of different, and many viewpoints, will be a very sad parody of an epic tragedy. This does not mean that opinions and facts must not be articulated forcefully and robustly; armed with cogent facts, in order to drive home a point and, to criticize policies that go against the grain and tide of the values that have been accepted by a nation state, its institutions, or its people, for itself and by themselves. By means of a consensus achieved through an understanding, and subsequent acceptance by the majority of the population. In the absence of coercion and violence and, in a truly democratic and acceptable manner. There has to be an acceptance of the concept of free thinking and, we need to constantly ask the question – Under whose standards and values, must society and its

people live? Should, it have been the values of the colonial masters through force, intimidation, their plundering designs, their greed, their lies and fallacies of divide and rule, granting of favours for purposes of capitulation of certain sectors of India's political leadership and parts of its diverse population, and their manifestations of the meaning of democracy; splitting the nation, its institutions, running roughshod over others and, creating a great divide between Hindus and Muslims, which ran so deep and still raises its ugly head even today in independent India and Pakistan. The answer is a categoric no and no free thinker will posit otherwise.

### **INDIA – ISLAM AND NATIONHOOD**

We begin by asking the much evaded but relevant and important questions by many Indian intellectuals, hoards of poor people and, indeed by some British politicians, in respect of the highly questionable thesis that Muslims were and, are a separate nation and, this is the reason that in the main, led to the creation of Pakistan. A purposeful observation and reading of the situation demands an array of questions to be continually asked in the wake of seeking answers. Why then, did an integral part of that very Muslim nation, reject the notion in its entirety and, on another separate note but, most importantly, why was there so much violence, indescribable human suffering, death and mayhem? Why was present day Bangladesh completely left out of the equation, when one considers that it was and is predominantly Muslim in character and in numbers? Why did it opt out of this sad equation if partition was the only option in dividing so – called different peoples? Why was the division of India, in terms of partition a geographical disaster; if the subcontinent was to be divided into Muslim and Hindu nation states; then why did large tracks or regions in India, which were predominantly, in terms of culture and religion Muslim, not given to Pakistan but, allowed to remain in India after partition? Areas such as Lucknow, Aligarh, Kashmir and many other territories, in this regard? How could intelligent men negotiating a two nation settlement have ignored these issues to the peril of the people of India, as a whole? The settlement in political terms was flawed and is flawed up to today. It has and caused and, still causes tremendous tensions among people of both countries that were forced to buy into a created separate identity crisis. This exemplifies the illogical nature of intellectual discussion of those times and, the nefarious plans of partition pushed through rapidly by the British, in a very short space of time, in collusion with the Indian Congress leadership. This disregarded the inevitable and resultant consequences that would occur and did occur.

These issues need some in depth discussion, understanding and reflection. These are fascinating issues in terms of this experience of Islam in India, when one considers and places in perspective the issues of invasion; leading to accommodation and resulting in integrated assimilation; by seeking a separate Islamic nation through the unacceptable designs of British colonialism; master minded by Viceroy Lord Mountbatten and, accepted by Indian political leadership, by means of a “surgical operation”, to hurriedly accept and settle for the creation of Pakistan. Leading from these issues and resultant questions, why is it that an undivided India, home to more Muslims than for example, the entire Middle East, did not become the global standard bearer of the noble faith, choosing instead a process of vivisection and to be separated and cut up? Was it because Islam was always considered a foreign intrusion in India, and living as if not entirely at home? Can it be then said that some day, it had to depart with partition or, is it that in over a millennia and a half, Islam, Islamic traditions, and Muslims became entirely indigenous to their land of birth. If all of this is correct and, if Muslims and Islam are not part of the cultural sediment of the Indian subcontinent, then how did Mohammed Ali Jinnah and more significantly why did Nehru, Patel, and, in fact, the entire generation of Congress leadership, accept the fallacious notion and argument that

Muslims and, then too, why in India alone, a separate nation and thus allow British designs and their own aspirations (Indian Congress leadership) in allowing partition to take place? On the other hand, was it the fear of Britain and the West in general, that an undivided India, including India, Pakistan and ultimately Bangladesh, in sheer numbers, their combined wealth and intellectual capacity would have been self – sufficient and too powerful for the West and the world to contend with? Perhaps, for who knows what the answer to this question is or would have been. However, it is food for thought.

It is self – evident that Islam is not, just as Christianity or for that matter Zoroastrianism, not indigenous to India because, Islam came to India by means of the evangelizing sword of the invader and therefore, arrived as an outsider and initially remained just that, an alien faith. But one has to be reminded that India is a cultural sea and ocean and many faiths empty into these waters. It is in this vein that Islam is a part of the cultural layers of India, and therefore, an inalienable part of the Indian subcontinent. India's foundation is Vedic and although this is disputed by many, it was much later that the layers of the Indo – Islamic or the Indo – Anglican came into reckoning. According to Singh (2009), quoting Girilal Jain, who reasoned convincingly that 'Islam is a totality' and that "the modern mind just cannot comprehend Islam precisely because, it is a totality and is rooted in the religion of Islam. It is not the other way about and that, the point has to be heavily underscored that Islamic society is theocentric not theocratic." The advent of Islam and Muslims into India took place in three broad ways and spread over almost eight centuries. This was as follows:

- The first were the Arabs, in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD by coming into Sindh, fought a few skirmishes and subsequently left. Just about forty kilometers south of Karachi lays the abandoned settlement of Banbhore and, it is believed that the first mosque in India was built here. On the other hand the Malabar Coast claims the distinction of the first mosque (this is not important).
- The second wave was the forays of the Afghans and the Persians between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD followed by the Turkic – Mongol invasions between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- From the very first invasion, hardly any Arab stayed back in Hind and this was the same for later Persian invaders like Nadir Shah. In respect of the Afghans and the Mughals (the Turkic – Mongols), a similar conclusion cannot be drawn. A number of Afghans continued living in India and made it their home, as did the Mughals who over time got assimilated and became 'Hindustani' in every sense" (this is also not important).

The advent of Persianised Turks into India is routinely characterized by historians as Muslim conquest. This is an oddity, because to term the entire period from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the Muslim era is wrong and, is also very simplistic because, there is a significant conceptual and terminological error, which over the centuries got embedded. Are we to term an invasion or for that matter any invasion by the faith or the religious beliefs of the invader – Islamic or pagan or whatever; or establish identity by ethnicity and the place of origin of the invader. This must be related with historical encounters elsewhere. It would prove that this oddity stands out even more sharply when contrasted. Why does the world and particularly religious nationalists or for that matter Europeans, do not speak of a 'Christian conquest of America's Christian era? Or for that matter why is it that the Columbus, post – AD 1492 period is not called America's Christian era? Though Spain defined its conquests of Central and South America in unambiguously Christian terms, their Spanish destruction of an entire way of life of fully matured civilizations in that continent is termed simply as Spanish conquests. The question is why? How is it then, that British conquest, granted in stages to India, is just British and not Christian? It is this kind of historiographic practice that has given birth to the fixations with such misleading phraseology and therefore, this nagging question

remains with us even today. Why make an exception in the case of Islam alone? Why then has this notion of an Islamic conquest of India found such a secure hold among Indian and other historians, and this notion persists even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This has many damaging consequences and, one of them eventually became Jinnah's assertion of being the champion of a separate nation within India. This thus secured the British design of carving India in 1947.

It is 'nonsensical' to postulate that Indian history begins only from when Muslims began to rule around Delhi/ Agra/ Malwa. "This attitude can be traced to the beginnings of Turkish rule, an ironic oddity being that even as the Delhi Sultanates were consolidating their hold" (Muslim Rule, 1206 in Singh (2009) and, in Dalrymple, 2008). The land of the birth of Islam was itself then being subjected to devastating Mongol invasions. Mongol energy and the ferocity of their invasions, uprooted many Persianised Turks from their homelands, in Iran and Central Asia, driving several of them towards Hindustan, where they sought refuge, found sanctuary, often service in those still new Sultanates of Delhi. By AD 1258 the Abbasid capital of Baghdad had been razed and the office of the Khalifa of Islam taken over by the Turks. According to Singh (2009) "this effectively questioned not just the principal symbol of Islamic authority but also its institutions, ecclesiastical and temporal." There was inhuman ferocity of the Turkic – Mongol destructions and, therefore Hindustan provided a sanctuary to people. "Muslim presence in Hind and the sovereignty of Islam was secured and this saw the emergence of latent Indian nationalism or Bharatya or Hindu began to assert itself," (Eaton, 2001: 3); similar to the Hindu nationalism being experienced today (in 2014) in India, under Narendra Modi of the Bharatya Janta Party.

As India enters the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and having battled Hindu nationalism from the time Muslims entered the equation into the landscape and tapestry of India, just after AD 632 and since its independence in 1947, it is still confronted with the dangerous rise of Hindu nationalism. This Hindu nationalism is set to take centre stage over the world's biggest democracy, as it is very likely that the BJP could be the next government in India, and Narendra Modi, its prime minister, post the May, 2014 general elections. Narendra Modi has been allegedly involved and accused of orchestrating the death of hundreds of Muslim lives in the Gujarat state in 2002, where he is Chief Minister for the last twelve years. He is accused for the bloody, brutal and tightly organized pogroms of horror. Those scenes in Gujarat were reminiscent of the massacres of Hindus and Muslims during partition and the mass killings of Sikhs in Delhi following the assassination of the late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. "Hostility to Muslims is in the bloodstream of the Sangh Parivar; the family of Hindu nationalist organizations to which Modi and the BJP belong. Inspired by European fascism and Nazism, the movements founding ideologist, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar; prescribed radically different treatment for Hindus – children of the subcontinent's aboriginal religion, according to theory, and those who subscribed to other religions. According to Golwalkar, India's minorities was suspect. They are born in this land, but are they grateful to this land, he wrote. Do the Muslims have a devotion to this land, he further added?" (Popham, 2014: 11).

Modi bears a responsibility for some of the worst religious violence ever seen in independent India. Aditya Chakraborty (2014: 10) states that "any condoning of Modi's nationalism is therefore pathetic because the Gujarat massacres have not been consigned to the past. Whatever the claims of his supporters there have been no "clean chit" for Modi with regards the Gujarat massacres." Courts in India are still hearing allegations made against him. In this regard the Congress government must be held accountable, for the justice system not prosecuting Modi since 2002. This is exemplified by a group of eminent retired judges that were commissioned independently by the Congress government of India, which provided and produced irrefutable evidence against Modi being directly involved in the massacres, and yet nothing was done to prosecute him. The much talked – about Gujarati economic model may

have brought a great amount of money to the state but it has ended up in relatively few hands, without yielding improvements in health, infant mortality or even workers wages.” Chakraborty (2014) further states that “On February 27 of 2002, a train coach carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire in Godhra station in Gujarat. Fifty eight people died. Within hours and without a shred of evidence, Modi declared that the Pakistani secret services had been to blame; he then had the charred bodies paraded in the main city of Ahmedabad and let his own party support a state – wide strike for three days. What followed was mass bloodshed: 1000 dead according to official estimates, more than 2000 according to independent tallies. The vast majority who died were Muslims. Mobs of men dragged Muslim women and young girls and raped them.”

Chakraborty (2014: 10) further reports that in 2007, the investigative magazine Tehelka recorded boasts from some of the ringleaders of how they split open the wombs of pregnant Muslim women, and that Modi did nothing but encouraged them to do so. No serious observer has contested these happenings. It was his Minister for Women who, is now serving 28 years in prison for murder and conspiracy to murder Muslims in a refugee camp that housed 200 000 Muslims who had lost their homes because they were accused for being “baby – making factories” by Hindu nationalists under Modi’s watch. This is the brand of Hindu nationalism perpetrated by Modi and his BJP party against Muslims. He is nothing but a fascist and a Nazi in sheep’s clothing. The world and India must be weary of this tyrant.

The dominant theme of Hindu nationalism has been the suspicion of and hostility towards minorities, Muslims in particular. The idea that Hindus enjoy an exclusive, mystical connection to “Mother India” is central. Popham (2014) states and points out that “as Europe discovered in the 1930’s, the politics of hate is terribly potent in countries gripped by poverty or mass unemployment, and therefore, (stark poverty and unemployment in India even today) government and, such movements play the blame game and this becomes a seductive alternative to sway the masses against minorities. This is engrained within the politics of India. Modi’s roots in the Sangh Pariwar go deep. He has done nothing else in his life but work for and within Hindu nationalism.” Modi’s success in escaping from his past reminds the world of the similar achievement of Italy’s former deputy prime minister, Gianfranco Fini. The leader of the Movimento Sociale Italiano, the direct heir of Mussolini’s fascists, and in his youth quite as committed a political extremist, as Modi. Both these shrewd men have done precisely what was necessary to emerge from a political no – mans land and take charge, while retaining their party’s support. Modi has never apologized nor accounted for the Gujarat pogroms. He does what works but maintains Hindu nationalism. This is dangerous for India, and it waits with bated breath that, Modi and his BJP do not again waken gross Hindu nationalism of the type propagated by the Sangh Pariwar, if the BJP comes to power.

We continue the discussion in this paper because “this was also the time that Al Beruni came to India, as student, refugee, complaining that the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self – conceited, and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. Little wonder that thereafter, this separation of the invader from the invaded, Muslim from Hindu began to permeate the social consciousness and fabric of India” (Singh, 2009: 16). The Hindustani approach was therefore, one of either acceptance, rejection or a kind of tolerant indifference to so – called refugees – in other words ‘Paki,’ ‘nigger,’ ‘Hun,’ ‘chink,’ or whatever. From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, reference to these aliens was not so much by their religion, as by their linguistic or national identity.

However, for the Muslims whether invader, refugee or resident, a non – believer, that is a Hindu, was a ‘kafir,’ (non – believer) for he was not of the faith. The Hindus accommodated all of them not on the basis of their religion but another alien group that arrived in India, some to invade others to shelter. In the early days throughout the world and moreso in India, a Muslim visitor from anywhere in the world was called a Turk. That is why this question becomes central, if the Hindus did not always categorize the occurrence of such invasions as purely Islamic conquests, or a Muslim as only that, then how and why did all these categories, all identified by faith alone, as Muslim, become the defining term of use for historians in the colonial and the post – colonial era? There is no definitive answer to this aspect. The other issue that arises, is not Indian historiography in part responsible for creating a mindset of separateness and that too, only for Islam or fixedly as Hindus and Muslims? Why then did it not, ever, term the European Imperialists (British, French, and Portuguese) as Christian invaders? British India remains British, not Christian, in contrast, says to the term Muslim India. Why? “The orientalist scholars, colonial administrators, religious reformers, even nationalist historians, have labored to first establish, and then perpetuate, such dichotomies by distinguishing between foreign and indigenous only in terms of faith and that, too, almost entirely in respect of Muslims and Hindus alone, never for example, Christian, and always projecting the current identity backwards in time” (Singh, 2009: 17). Lloyd Rudolph (2006) has observed that “assuming the existence of a contemporary concept or institution such as a ‘nation’ and reading it back in the historical time say finding an “Indian, or Hindu or Muslim nation prior to late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century would not be appropriate and cites Benedict Anderson’s phrase of ‘imagined communities’, reasoning that personalities like Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan and Jinnah, in reality also first ‘imagined’ a Muslim community and then Muslims and then a nation in India. So did Indian nationalists, like Nehru or the Hindu nationalists like Madan Mohan Malaviya. It is Benedict Anderson who ‘opened up the idea that nationalism is constructed, contested and changing. He did much to bury the notion that there is an essential or natural, or primordial community, identity or nation, in which sense ‘from music to food to dress, what is “national” or “ethnic” or Muslim \_ \_ \_ is always constructed.”

In the case of Islam, for instance, scholars focused on 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia to describe Islam’s essential qualities, value systems and nature. This is understandable but only up to a point. When, however Max Weber (1920) “goes to the extent of characterizing Islam as “the National Arabic warrior religion” It is a strange manner of universalizing that characteristic besides being so misleading. Such descriptions of Muslims over time, established a norm; it stereotyped Muslims by asserting their faith in Islam first, then geographically linking that with the Arab world, as if all Arabs were always endowed with over – abundant attributes of ‘warriors.’ This has been undertaken so astutely by both Hindu and Western scholars that, these misguided notions persist among many, even the educated today with remarkable tenacity. On the other hand, evidence revealing the large indifference of Hindustan and Hindwis towards Muslims as Muslims, until separateness began to be asserted by the Muslims themselves, suggests that this political question of whether Muslims are a separate nation was fundamentally misplaced, which is why it became and still remains so divisive. It could be understood as to why Jinnah’s persistence with the notion of a separate Pakistan nation state, but it is most difficult to understand, comprehend and appreciate the Congress Party’s acceptance of separation and the formation of an independent and separate Pakistan. There were other and more significant grounds for alienation and many historical abrasions, the reality is the all embracing fact that, all of these still exist today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A great injustice to India was therefore achieved which has and had affected its character, poise and emergence of a united and undivided India, which would have been a mighty and great nation of the world within the realm of its necessary and rich diversity.

## **ISLAMIC TRADITIONS OF INDIA**

India, otherwise also known as Hind, Hindustan, Bharat and so on. It is necessary to explore and understand how and why Islam became, despite the pillage, a part of India's cultural landscape. This requires an understanding of the nature of the land and its people. It becomes important and absolutely necessary to grasp the enormous body of India's Islamic traditions which reflect a variety of sects, linguistic communities and social classes. All of these were called Muslims. Even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Muslims in India are not a homogenous, monolithic community, just as they are not so even in Pakistan. This aspect is a tragic aberration and, is used to stall Muslim unity on the basis of electoral and political imperatives for the exploiters themselves, by sheer exploitation and manipulation of the Muslim masses. It is such attitudes that fix separateness and, thus decreasing social intercourse and thus generating hostility, and assists in perpetuating political exploitation. Another issue to comprehend is how did the Quran, revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) in Arabic get mediated in India, to a non – Arabic speaking region and people? The other issue is how did India become home to almost a third of the world's Muslim population? "The only explanation to this scenario can be explained through a broader absorption process, through cultural and societal assimilation; via language, social intercourse and by the Quran itself, being adapted to Indian literary genres and modes of communication. This was exemplified further by the embracing reality of the use of the Persian– Arabic script that gradually facilitated a direct transmission of Islamic terms and, the ideas that they carried; this eventually became the Indian Islamic vernacular tradition. Thus concepts originally expressed in Arabic gradually entered the Indian Muslims vocabulary and thought processes, and became a great part of their vernacular communication" (Singh, 2009: 21).

The Indo – Islamic traditions served to shape Islam in terms and within the existing cultures of India and served to also connect Muslim Indian cultures to a wider global community of faith. "There were two distinctive strands, one stretching from Lahore to Delhi, then south to Hyderabad; then east towards Patna and west to Ahmadabad in Gujarat. The pronounced styles here were Persian. Beyond this, in parts of Sindh, other areas including Rajputana, Tamil Nadu, Malabar, Kashmir and Bengal, Islam remained imbued of the local styles and Idioms" (Eaton, 2002). In areas where the Persian Islamic traditions were dominant that distinctive culture began to represent the culture of the rulers, these were /are the ashraf\*, the global people whose ancestors had come from other cultures.

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**\*Ashraf (Arabic plural of Sharif, 'noblemen) is a term used for the Muslim Persian – Arab – Turkish immigrants into India. The Ashraf group has sub – groups like Sayyids, Shaikhs and so on. the non – ashraf Muslim castes have three levels of status, converts from high Hindu castes, mainly rajputs, in so far as they have not been absorbed into Shaikh castes, then the artisans such as Julahas and the lowest converted, untouchables (Singh, 2009: 589).**

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The ashrafs had a well defined vision of themselves and they still do, and that they had to rule and, this wielding of power was a natural right. It was the Kashmiri Brahmins who assisted them in business, the running of government and they cultivated and cherished Persian – Islamic standards. They shunned the poor and these converts from the poorer classes had little to do with their world, and these were the mullahs, the hewers of wood and the fetchers of water, they were the atrap (Muslim artisan and peasants from the rural areas)" (Singh, 2009: 20). By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the very basis on which Persian – Islamic culture rested in India began to weaken and, by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Muslim 'power' had been reduced to Awadh, to Hyderabad, and the North – Western border lands. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries therefore, became a period of the highest refinement and flowering of Persian

culture in India. Does this not mean as the Arab saying wisely says and cautions, “Once the House is built the decline starts. Of this decline of the great Taimurids and the resultant chaos, amongst the most moving accounts is the testimony of C. B. Saunders, officiating Commissioner and agent to the lieutenant governor, who when examined by the judge advocate on Friday 12 February 1858, during the pretence of the trial of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, testified:

Question: Can you give the court any information as to the circumstances under which the kings of Delhi became subjects and pensioners of the British government in India?

Answer: Shah Alam, Emperor of Delhi, after having his eyes put out and having suffered every indignity from the hands of Ghulam Kadir, fell into the hands of the Mahrattas in the year 1788. The Emperor, although vested with nominal authority over the city of Delhi, was kept in confinement, more or less rigorous, until the year 1803, when General Lake has seized Aligarh, marched with the British troops against Delhi. The Mahratta Army drawn out at Patparganj, six miles from Delhi, was attacked by General Lake and utterly routed. The city and fort having being evacuated by the Mahrattas, the Emperor Shah Alam sent a message to General Lake, applying for the protection of the British Authorities, and on 14 September 1803, the date since rendered more memorable by the successful assault in 1857, the British troops entered Delhi: from the time the Kings of Delhi have become pensioned subjects of the British Government, and have exchanged the state of rigorous confinement in which they were held by the Mahrattas, to one of one of more lenient restraint under the British rule. The Prisoner succeeded to the titular sovereignty of Delhi in 1837. He had no power whatever beyond the precincts of his own Palace: he had the power of conferring titles and dresses of honour upon his own immediate retainers but was prohibited from exercising that power on any others. He and the heir apparent alone were exempted from the jurisdiction of the Company’s local courts: but were under the orders of the Supreme Government.

Question: Was there any limit to the number of the prisoner’s armed retainers?

Answer: The prisonet requested Lord Auckland to be permitted to entertain as many men in his service as he thought proper. The governor – general, in reply, accorded permission to his entertaining as many men as he could pay out of the income allotted to him.

Question: Can you state the amount of pension granted by the government to the prisoner at the time of the outbreak?

Answer: He was in receipt of a stipend of one lakh rupees per mensem, of which 99 000 rupees wee paid at Delhi, and 1, 000 at Lucknow to the members of his family there. He also was in receipt of revenue to the amount of one and a half lakhs of rupees per annum from the crown lands, in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He also received a considerable sum from ground – rents of houses and tenements in the city of Delhi.” (A lakh is about \$1400 in today’s currency- a humiliatingly paltry sum of money). (As reported from records by Singh, 2009: 22).

This was a travesty of justice, when one considers the pomp, ceremony, grandeur and acumen of the sultanate of the Mughals, together with its contribution to undivided India, in the form of culture, architecture, the arts, poetry, military engagements and, the majesty of its contribution to all facets of life in the subcontinent, was second to none, coupled with its strategies of a large empire. And thus the great Mughalia Sultanate (Mughal dynasty), which is why in 1857 was but an obituary, there really remained nothing more to end after General Lake’s conquest. It is a crying shame that the British government was so callous and cruel in settling issues that brought great shame to its understanding of humanity, to people they defined differently and, must stand accused of shaming a mighty empire because of its colonial designs, and greed in India. It was a contrived humiliation of a great civilization engineered by design and requires an explanation from the British crown and government.

Bahadur Shah Zafar II (1775 – 1862), “the elderly Mughal Emperor, was the eldest but not favourite son of the Emperor Akbar Shah II. He was a calligrapher, Sufi, theologian, patron of painters of miniatures, creator of gardens and a very serious mystical poet, but by the 1850’s he held little real day – to day power beyond the still potent mystique attaché to the Mughal dynasty and was in many ways a ‘chessboard king.’ Though he was initially horrified by the rough and desperate sepoys who barged into his palace on 11 May 1857, Zafar ultimately agreed to give his blessings to the uprising, seeing it as the only way to save his great dynasty from extinction. It was a decision he later came to regret bitterly” (Dalrymple, 1988). “In Rangoon in 1872, a shrouded corpse was escorted by a small group of British soldiers to an anonymous grave at the back of a walled prison enclosure. The ceremony was brief. The British authorities had made sure not only that the grave was already dug and quantities of lime were on hand to guarantee the rapid decay of both bier and body. When the shortened funeral prayers had been recited, no lamentations or panegyrics were allowed. The British had ensured that no remains would indicate the place of burial. It was only a week later that, the British Commissioner, Captain H. N. Davies, wrote to London to report that he had passed: He wrote as follows:

“Have since visited the remaining State Prisoners, the very scum of the reduced, Asiatic harem; found all correct. None of the family appears much affected by the death of the bed – ridden old man. His death was evidently due to pure decrepitude and paralysis in the region of the throat. He expired at 5 0’ clock on the morning of the funeral. The death of the ex – king may be said to have had no effect on the Mohomedan part of the populace of Rangoon, except for a few fanatics who watch and pray for the final triumph of Islam. A bamboo fence surrounds the grave for some considerable distance, and by the time the fence is worn out, the grass will again have properly covered the spot, and no vestige will remain to distinguish where the last of the great Mughal rests”(Dalrymple, 2008).

Irrespective of the malice and interpretation of the British military and some British historians as concerns Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II (Dalrymple 2008) records that, “Bahadur Shah Zafar II, the last Emperor of the Great Mughal Empire was a mystic. A talented poet, and a skilled calligrapher, who though deprived of real political power by the East Indian Company, succeeded in creating a court of great brilliance, and presided over one of the great cultural renaissances of Indian history. In 1857, it was Zafar’s blessing to a rebellion among the Company’s own Indian troops that transformed an army mutiny into the largest uprising the British Empire ever had to face.”

The words of Davies exhibits narrowly as to how the British felt of Islam and Muslims, and how uncaring they were in respect of a Great monotheistic religion, people of the book and no different to their Christianity. It is astounding that a lowly ranked British captain in the form of Davies was not compelled to follow military protocol when reporting to his superiors about the death of an Emperor of the Great Mughal Empire. His choice of words should have been sanctioned in no uncertain terms. That Davies had the temerity to report in such derogatory terms and with no recourse to his low rank. It is a travesty of justice and, perhaps the word scum should be reserved for him. It is more astounding that no action was taken against him by his British military superiors who generally purport to hold high, the dignity of the office of the military. It was the death Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II. “Zafar was the last Mughal Emperor and, the direct descendant of Genghis Khan and Timur, of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan” (Dalrymple, 1988). This brought an end and close to a great Mughal dynasty. The manner in which it was done, defines the British, it defines colonialism. It defied humanity. It defied respect for Muslims and Islam. One shudders to think what would have happened, if this was done to a British Monarch? This portrays the callous nature of British rule in India and elsewhere in the world. It defies logic that the ruler of such a Great Empire, greater than the British Empire, at that time and, perhaps an Empire second to

none could have met such a fate. The British were simply, inhumane plunderers, who should be held accountable for defying basic protocols of humanity and respect for people that they defined differently and, scant reference must be paid to their sense of justice, equality, and their democracy. They must be charged for crimes against humanity.

#### THE PATRONS THEN BECAME PETITIONERS

“From about 1830 onwards this Persian Islamic culture withered, rather collapsed with speed. This was due to an emerging power, the conquering culture of Britain who was already the administrators of large parts of India. This led to ownership of land by the British. There was also undermining by Muslims and Hindus from within. 1857, finally shattered the remaining illusions of Islamic power and smashed the grip of Persinate aesthetics” (Robinson, 2001). The design to regaining political power, Britain was now to endow the Muslim communities, separate from the Hindus, in terms of political character, by treating them from 1857 as a political collectivity, in terms of maintaining the political balance of India and therefore, creating great suspicion and division among Muslims and Hindus. Thomas Metcalf (1965: 298) summed up a rather typical British attitude to the uprising of 1857: “The first sparks of disaffection, it was generally agreed, were kindled by the Hindu sepoy’s \_ \_ \_but the Muslims then fanned the flames of discontent for they saw in these religious grievances the stepping stone to regaining political power. In the view of the British, it was Muslim intrigue and Muslim leadership that converted a sepoy Mutiny into a political conspiracy, aimed at the extinction of the British Raj.” This view is highly contestable, knowing the cunning of the British government.

“Sir George Campbell (1893: 243 – 244) “describes the bitterness of British feelings towards Muslims, as he encountered them in the North Western Provinces of India. It was at Meerut that, I first realized the strong feelings against Mohammedans, for they had no excuse from their caste grievances which was the immediate occasion of the Mutiny. We were disappointed when Mohammedan sepoys in regular regiments went with the rest. We were also aggrieved when the irregular cavalry, generally Mohammedan, who we had thought will stand by us, went too.” The original ‘military mutinies were, according to Canning (In Singh, 2009) “were sparked off by Hindu sepoys, who feared for their caste, their honour and their self – respect. The civil risings in Awadh, Bihar and Central India were mostly Hindu. In contrast the Muslims themselves were divided by personal, class and religious affiliations as were the Hindus according to the literature. In 1857, among the Muslim princes and aristocrats the likes of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Nawabs of Rampur, Karnal and Dacca amongst others remained loyal to the British.

Other Nawabs were opposed to the British. Muslims in Bengal who suffered the most economically from the expropriatory ways of the British East India Company was not persuaded to raise their voice in protest. There was intrigue in India, during this period, divisions among Hindus and Muslims were stark and reached a stage of almost no return. This was aided and abetted by the British. “The internal strife and hostility had placed India into a path of destruction, much to the satisfaction of the British colonial power. During this uprising, the Muslims did not generally join the uprising although they were most given to ‘religious fanaticism’, like the Farazis and the Mopillas in South India and, remained entirely uninvolved” (Singh, 2009: 59).

With the recapture of Delhi, in September 1857, dire vengeance visited upon the hapless Muslims of the city. Bahadur Shah Zafar was put through the indignity of a mock trial and exiled to Rangoon; “Mughal princes were beheaded, with Hodson boasting about it, wine glass in hand” (Hodson, 1821: 158). “Worse, a great catastrophe then befell the Muslim intelligentsia of Delhi and who were desirous of returning home “were forced to pay a fine. Prime Minister Palmerston ruled that every building connected with the Mohammedan

tradition should be leveled to the ground, except the Jama Masjid (for obvious reasons, because it would have caused a massive carnage in India, the Muslim world and would have invoked massive criticism and condemnation). No judicial process was observed by the British and the backbone of the rural economy was broken through wholesale confiscation of property in the affected provinces. The approach of the British was guided by vengeance for the upsurge of 1857” (Singh, 2009). So much for human rights, so much for the Judeo – Christian ethic and, these barbaric acts were justified by the colonial master. The great trauma of 1857 marked the formal end of a long period of Muslim political primacy and destroyed the image of the rulers. “Despite this shattered image Muslims remained a major social interest group, ready whenever an opportunity arose to assert their position as one of the two great political communities of India. It must be noted that 1857 could not destroy the Muslim as a weight in the religious, social and political balance of British India. Their paragons would not be Akbar the Great or Aurangzeb; it is the British who would dictate” (Hardy, 1972: 71). “Those with a Muslim past losing to those with a British future” (Hardy, 1972) and, a new class of Muslim landlords began to serve the British as collectors and the followers of \*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s followers promoted Western education and collaborated politically and administratively with the British.

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\*Sir Sayyids Ahmad Khan was born in October 1817 but not eminent and was attached to the Mughal Court in Delhi. In 1838, he entered the judicial service of the East India Company and in 1857 rose to the position of sub – judge. Most of his work was aimed at Muslims indicating that Western thought was not anti – Islamic.

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The British in an act of continuing humiliation and patronizingly granted to the scions of the nobility pensions both, in the very act of grant and the paltry amounts doled out so gracefully. Hardy, (1972:72) points out that “British attitude after 1857 exhibited a dualism: accepting them as an important interest group, yet combining that acceptance with severe rebuffing of any political pugnacity.” The British feared being expelled from India if the two great communities of Hindus and Muslims combined their forces. They thus intensified the concept of divide and rule, exhibiting British shrewdness. “The distinctive contributions in all spheres of life, including the sciences made by Iran and Central Asia to Indian Islam, began to lose their relevance and cultivated less and less. Instead traditions that emphasized the study of the Quran and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet) and which mingled with the Naqshbandi\* and, accent on reform became ascendant in Islamic thinking and, seeds of introspective Sufism planted long back by \*Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi, began to flower. Islam began to move towards the orthodox, with a sharper, more fundamentalist hue. This did not affect the Ashrafs because they followed the British.”

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\*Naqshbandi is one of the major Sufi orders (tariqa) of Islam formed in 1830, a sober order which recites dhikr – remembrance of Allah – God and suhbat, an intimate relationship between student and master. It is a Persian word taken from the name of the founder of the order, Baha – ud – Din Naqshband Bukhari.

\* Sarhindi: Scholar and follower of the Chistia Order and was born in 971 in Punjab, was related to Caliph Umar and was a hafiz and an academic of great stature. He protested against the Great Akbar.

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The reformist movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew Muslims, but from outside the ruling circles and about the Sayyids, Ahmad of Bareilly was openly critical and his movement became a jihad and he was killed in 1831. Sayed Ahmad came into open conflict with the Congress from 1887 and warned his followers not to support the Congress and outlined his

Muslim Policy. He was overtly criticized by the Congress leadership. He also asserted that the Muslims were a separate people, a separate nation. He was on the side of the British. He stated that Muslims should elect their own and the policy was drawn up by his son Mahmud and Theodore Beck, the principal of Aligarh College and thus this became the core for a separate Muslim state whether in or out of India. The other significant personality was Sayed Jamal ad – Din al Afghan (1839 – 97). “Upon a visit to India he was disturbed in terms of his experiences and, became a critic of British rule. He did not accept the rhetoric of Sayed Ahmad Khan. He advocated nationalism rightfully, for the times and, advocated a linguistic and territorial variety of this nationalism implying a unity of Hindus and Muslims with little said about Indian Muslims or with Muslims of other lands and, advocated a common language, especially Urdu and these views are astonishingly current, considering that they were expressed in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Afghani well understood the context of his times and therefore, rather than emphasizing religious unity, stood for linguistic unity. His anti – imperialist and anti – British purpose was best served by this approach, an approach that in every sense was the opposite of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He opposed Western learning and held the principles of the Sharia (Islamic law)” (Keddie, 1968: 55 – 56).

### **MUSLIM REFORM MOVEMENTS**

As with any other religion, when faced with decline, Islam had to now go through a period of very serious introspection in India and therefore, post 1857, it underwent such a process. At this time there rose in Bengal, religious movements closer to the Indian soil to the daily life and struggles of the Muslim cultivator, the Faraizi\* movement. “The peasant struggles of the Dadu Mian\* and Titu Meer\* had idioms similar to that of Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly; he spoke for all Muslim reformists and spoke of the need for a purified

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\*The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a movement known as Faraizi Movement (1830 – 1857), in East Bengal. It was founded by Haji Shariatullah. The movement was in opposition to the British agrarian policy and the consequent dealing with the zamindars (landlords and landowners). This movement concentrated on the depressed class of Muslims, who were asked to give up UN – Islamic practices – to concentrate on Faraiz or duties.

\*Dadu Mian was the son of Haji Shariatullah the founder of the Faraizi Movement and influenced peasants and craftsmen. He opposed taxes imposed by landlords on Muslim peasants for the decoration of the Hindu image Durga, particularly during Puja (prayer /festival) celebrations.

\*Titu Meer – Muslims assembled around him (Mir Nasir Ali) him against Hindu landlords and, he was moved by the suffering of the Muslims. He defeated the Hindu landlord Krishna Deva Raj and provisionally set up a government. He died fighting the British forces.

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Islam. This now led to a political association with a will for joint action” (Hardy, 1972). Essentially, such movements worked for a rejection of the medieval, Persianised, soft Islam in India, and a return to the earlier purer, harder forms of Islam. They said that Muslims should not Adopt Hindu ways. In addition these movements also dealt a blow to the upper middle – class Muslim culture, which by then was already in decline. Poetry, painting, the cultivation of the senses, all collapsed, exacerbated by strained economic circumstances post 1857. An ardent faithfulness emerged and this is true of the experiences of adversity and was and is not peculiar to Islam, but to all faiths.

At the leading edge of the Islamic reform movement, was Deoband, founded in 1867 by Ulema (priests or Maulanas) imbued by the traditions of Shah Waliullah.\* They believed that education should no longer be for the purpose of training Muslims for serving the Empire. The Ashrafs yearned for the Perso – Islamic base because

\*Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (1703 – 62) was an important Islamic reformer who worked for the revival of Muslim rule in South Asia and hoped to purify the religion and unify all Indian Muslims under the banner of the truth (Haq).

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They believed that their forebears came to India to rule and therefore, the wielding of power was in their blood; it was their birthright and, it was a question of time for power to return to them. This attitude laid, perhaps still does, at the heart of most Muslim politics, certainly in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; this was the case in India and perhaps even today in Pakistan. The reflection of this thought inspired the writings of the Aligarh Movement, as was demonstrated by the persistence with which the All India Muslim League continued to assert the political importance of Muslims, by means of the infusion of the great works of the poet Muhammad Iqbal. This led to the demand for a separate Pakistan and thus confused the political thought in then India. These were the last expressions of Perso – Islamic values in India, imbued with other contradictions, several paradoxes and a self – defeating inwardness by many among the Muslim and Hindu leadership of India and, stoked by the designs of British colonialism.

Deoband, the great Islamic seminary, some distance from Delhi and now renowned internationally as one of the great centers of Islamic learning, was in its early days of formation, supported by voluntary contributions. No English and no sciences were taught and the teachings were traditional. Students came from all parts of India, Afghanistan and even from Iran. The Delhi Madrasa was destroyed by the British. So much for British respect for Islam. So much for British morality and its values of accommodation and tolerance for the religion of others, and yet it espoused on the world stage, a brand of misguided democracy couched upon the Judeo – Christian ethic. This was hypocrisy at its height. The Barelwis, another reformist group were in opposition to the Deobandis, began to take shape in the 1880's. Representing Barelwi views, Ahmad Riza Khan's\* assessment that the interests of Hindus and Muslims were

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\*Ahmed Riza Khan: Founded the Barelwi school in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It called for the revival of many old practices and was opposed to the Deoband School and its philosophy.

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intrinsically opposed but Christians were people of the Book, but the Hindus were irredeemable; they were kafirs (unbelievers). They had doctrinal differences with the Deobandis, into which it would be ecclesiastical minefield to traverse, for obvious reasons. The division between the Deobandis and Barelwis, true to form was exploited by the British to neutralize the Deobandis and to entrap the Barelwis in the loyalist camp of the British.

#### **ISLAM, IMAGE AND REALITY**

Singh (2009: 35) reports that Lord Dufferin, in 1888, viceroy of India described the Muslims of British India “as a nation of some 50 million, with their monotheism, their iconoclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices, their social equality and their remembrance of the days when, on their own in Delhi, they reigned supreme” (Hardy, 1972). This description of Muslims was a typical British response that exemplified the world according to the standards set by themselves and by the Western conception of people, irrespective of Islam's and Muslims magnificent contributions to the world at that time, as was imaged by the great Muslim civilization. Indeed by gone glories of the Muslim empire had by now diminished and their hold over large parts of India as the dominant political entity, in reality was now over and further exacerbated by the all embracing reality that, they could not now highlight the illusory nature of their self – image. “Given their diminished status, it went against their grain of being in India, being an Indian, and also being Indian Muslim. Islam came to India with Persian and Arab traders and the faith was adopted, and the Muslim fleet appeared at

Thane, near Bombay, in AD 636, during the Caliphate of Umar, just four years after the death of the prophet (PBUH). By the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Muslims had gained near total domination of the sea routes to India. But as long as their commercial activity brought revenue to the Hindu rulers, they remained mostly welcomed. They were also welcomed because they acted as mercenaries for the Hindu rulers. They swept through India with alacrity; nothing could stop them, especially from 1080 to 1114 and then 1133 and AD 1169. During this period Islam was consolidated and many converted to the religion because large grants were made available for the expansion of the Muslim religion and the accompanying Islamic culture. (Epigraphic Indica, 1969; Hardy, 1972; Singh, 2009). The concept of jazia\* was consolidated during this time.

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\*Jazia – It was an institution of the Islamic state whereby its non – Muslim citizens paid a tax into the treasury for protection. They were not required to pay zakat (benevolent dues as prescribed by the Quran) and other dues like Muslims. It was imposed for the last time during Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s rule, even if a Muslim state was in the minority.

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By 1857, the British had convinced themselves that the Mughals in Delhi had become an anomaly. Thus the Muslims, in a continuing search for a new role and a new relevance made them now to reach outwards and they involved themselves in political activism. This search resulted in an initiative to the Simla delegation of 1906. It now resulted in separate electorates of the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which gave Muslims a separate constitutional identity, but always the subjects of the British Empire. It now saw the partitioning by Lord Curzon of Bengal, which was politically disastrous. This proved conclusively the theory of unintended consequences.

### **THE LANGUAGE DIVIDE**

The two faiths, Islam and Hinduism were also separated by the medium of education, and language. The paper does not delve into these issues because they are largely self – explanatory. However, because the concentration of the paper is on Islam and Muslim identity, it is necessary to pronounce upon the Wahabi\* influence. The influence was great especially upon those Muslims that followed the Sunni interpretation of Islam as opposed to the brand or description of Shia Islam and Sufi interpretation. Wahabism had a great influence on Islam in India and, its essence is briefly explained in the note hereunder. Sunni Islam and Shia Islam are diametrically opposed to each other as exemplified in the Sunni world and led by Saudi Arabia. Shia Islam is in the main led by Iran and is followed in Iraq, Syria and other countries. The Sunni Muslims are by far in the majority in terms of numbers worldwide, as opposed to Shia Muslims. This division is even today exploited by the West to sow further division amongst Muslims worldwide and, in an attempt to fragment the great religion of Islam.

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\*Wahabism: It is the branch of Sunni Islam which is the official religion of Saudi Arabia. It was founded by Wahab, an 18<sup>th</sup> century literalist, who some maintains and, equate to a Puritan or revivalist figure. It is intolerant of particularly Shia and Sufi faiths which it considers heretical.

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It must be noted that the issues in respect to Bengal are important but beyond our discussion on the basis of the language divide, except to state that the differences were real, stark emotive and touched upon “racist” or communal underpinnings, in - sighting fear among both Hindus and Muslims. The campaign for Hindi and Devngari was a prominent aspect of the promotion of and protection of Hindu interests. For Hindus, Hindi as a language was purged of Arabic and Persian influence, and for Muslims, Urdu came to signify power and influence;

the Arabic script, in consequence, acquired a completely unwarranted religious significance (However, its influence today is real and rising throughout the Muslim world). This was by second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by when Urdu had replaced Persian as a language of government. Hindu nationalists like Pundit Pratap Narain and Bhartendu Harishchandra espoused the supremacy of the Hindi language and virtually attempted to relegate the importance of the usage of Urdu, which was a rich language of India, and can hold itself with head high, with any other language throughout the world. (These aspects are so voluminous that they require a separate discussion in another paper).

In the final analysis, it was more the fact rather than any prospects a partitioning of Bengal that crystallized Muslim opinion against an anti – Partition agitation launched by the Hindus. Rural Hindus in Bengal opposed partition, before and after it had occurred. “In historical terms, the division of Bengal and then the joining of the separated East Bengal with Assam, and of this destructive politics, which brought about the concept of the right to usurp land now became pronounced. Political activism, separate identities, assertive claims of political equality with Hindus by Muslims, all by now had arrived and, all this within a half century of 1857. This was the precursor to a sad partition of India. Once Eastern Bengal, a Muslim majority province had got established, leading Muslims then began to see its many advantages. The government of India was unhelpful and did not support the Muslims and this brought the Muslims of East Bengal politically nearer to their co –religionists in North India, rather unexpectedly. The Hindu leaders of the anti – partition movement, searching for a national hero endeavoured to import from Bombay the cult of Hindu nationalist, and warrior Shivaji (A Mahratta) (It must also be noted that the Maharashtrians to which Shivaji belonged, had also sowed not only Hindu nationalism, but his image engendered a distinct ethnic characteristic, which was to become part of the rabid and ethnic Maharati political movement led by the late Bal Thackeray, in the form of the Shiv Senna, with headquarters in Bombay). All of this appealed to the religion of the multitude by placing their efforts under the patronage of Kali, the goddess of strength and destruction in order to confront the Muslims” (Singh, 2009). This was now the politics within India. It almost reached a point of no return and the seeds for vivisection and partition were now implanted into the psyche of both Muslims and Hindus.

### **THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY**

During this period of transformation in the development of Muslim identity was the emergence of the young Muslim element in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were drawn from the families of rich landlords and were professionals having been endowed with education and were politically assertive. They emerged as a force and now challenged the existing conservatives of Islamic thought and action. These young came mainly from the United Provinces and included Muhammad Ali,\* his brother Shaukat Ali and Hakim

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\*Muhammad Ali (1878 – 1931): His pen name was Jauhar and he was the leader of the Khalifat movement. He was the brother of Shaukat Ali. He was a brilliant writer and orator. He wrote for English newspapers and launched the Urdu weekly Hamdard and the English Comrade in 1911. He expanded the Aligarh Muslim University (Previously known as the Mohammedan Anglo – Oriental College and was a founder member of the Jamia Millia Islamia in 1920. He attended the meeting of the All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 and served as President in 1918 and was active in the League up to 1928.

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Ajmal Khan (Indian freedom fighter renowned physician and educationist). Conservative leadership received a big blow and could now not emerge against this tide of the young Muslim element. The British via Morley and Minto\* (Viceroy of India in 1905 and Morley was the Secretary of State for India) were determined to influence Indian opinion for their

own sake and to smother governance in India. There was an emergent unity between Hindu and Muslim intelligentsia and the British became apprehensive and tried to win the Muslims back and this became the official policy of the cunning British. It became a period of divide and rule which the British perfected over time and, much to the peril of Indian unity and ultimately the division of India by means of partition was being secured. The British in fact and reality, incited, created and encouraged a separate tendency as a number of historians assert. It saw Jinnah and other Indian leaders of the Congress come forward. It was also a period of the entry of Aga Khan as recorded by British history. Many political issues were raised by many others such as Montagu and Viceroy Lord Chelmsford, Lord Olivier, Ramsay MacDonald and many others that go beyond the realm of this paper and discussion. "No one with any close acquaintance of Indian Affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there was a predominant bias in favour of the Muslim community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make – weight against Hindu nationalism" (Nagarkar and Zimand, 1975). The issue of the concept of British policy of divide and rule can not be left out of this equation. It was a period of devastating politics, a period that defies logic, a period of British manipulation, creating its own agenda and ushering in a period of fear among Muslims and Hindus, but more importantly dividing Indian leadership, in order to meet their imperatives of the division of a great land and a great people within the subcontinent of India. The aspirations of the Muslim youth were natural and, the British imperative was not to drive them into the arms of the Indian Congress Party, and at this time they had no representation in respect of the negotiations that were proceeding. "The British exploited the religious divide and the fact that these differences existed in terms of political interests of Hindus and Muslims and that, of other communities were identical, but Muslims and Hindus did not think so. At the heart Muslims were against the British government in India and, to this end greater division was implanted by the British by propagating that the professional Muslims and the landowner Muslims were drifting apart" (Gilbert, 1966). Gilbert further pointed out (1966) that "out of the tangle of warring ideas are slowly emerging and reemerging the two persistent parties in Indian politics, the party for the government and the party against it." Hindsight and clarity of thought, will inform in terms of a purposeful analysis that the path of electoral separateness master minded by the British, in ensuring an appropriate share in the political office of the country could only become more insatiably demanding, and there being no ultimate leveling out, it would always result in creating greater inequalities. Morley, in December, 1908 in the House of Lords stated as follows: "if I were attempting to set up a parliamentary system in India, or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it" (Butler Papers, 1965). It ought thereafter to have been abundantly clear what the imperial intent was. And yet another step had not engraved on the memory templates of those times; fate was dragging India towards political separateness and Indian leadership both Hindus and Muslims went unheedingly along because they failed to read the warning signals that had by then begun to flash" (Singh, 2009).

It was in these circumstances that Muslims, now conferred with the identity of a separate community, equipped themselves with a political organization. It was essentially the self – appointed, from almost the whole of India, who had as Muslim leaders, gathered together for the Simla deputation. Inevitable and convenient, too, that a formal Muslim political organization ought to now emerge from the chrysalis of this very Simla process. An All – India Muslim Confederacy was born. There was division amidst this painful scenario that had emerged (There is much greater detail of these issues that go beyond the thrust of this paper). On the 30 December, 1906, members of the Mohammedan Educational Conference met in Dacca and convened themselves in to the All India Muslim League (AIML). It was reliant on the support of the Muslim Nawabs and princes. In order, to paper over all of these cracks, a

neutral resolution was adopted. At this stage, no attempt was made to spell out the nature of Muslim political interests needing protection or promotion. The League, at this juncture was only a loyalist body. The most dramatic revelation of the League's political limitations was its incapacity to even protest effectively against a British decision, construed as a blow to Muslim interests to revoke, in 1911, the partition of Bengal. It travelled a very long distance from these observations to actually becoming the 'sole' representative Muslim body, and for Mohammad Ali Jinnah to be the "sole spokesman" of the Muslims.

During the days of the Khalifat the Muslim League lived merely on paper and thereafter a new set of Nawabs' wrested control of the League. 'Even with the Nawabs they had no say, besides some of the courtesies offered to them, and this could be interpreted as an enchanting world of the ashraf, playing at national politics, and so self – importantly. "In the early 1920's the League was skeletal and its membership did not cross 1200 at that time. In terms of the meeting of the AIML, at the end of the proceedings of the League, it was to spell the end of the organization for that year" (Pathway to Pakistan, 1961: 137 – 138.). "In the early years, the AIML was really more like an amateur playing not in a command performance, but to an invited audience (Hardy, 1972: 166). One thing was certain much to the peril of Indians in general for, it would now very strongly in the years that lay ahead lead to partition because of the different agendas of both Muslims and Hindus in the undivided subcontinent, fanned firstly by the cunning colonial master Great Britain and later by the Congress Leadership to buy into the theory of a divided India. The British and the conservative Muslims both, had succeeded through separating the electorates on a very narrow property based franchise, in isolating the young progressive Muslim element from both the radical Congress politicians and from Muslims outside the charmed circles. However, they underestimated the resilience of the young Muslims.

This younger group had votes as graduates; in addition, they canvassed for larger popular support by working with those who had the ear of Muslims outside the British educational system, the Ulema, the Muslim religious scholars, and in this manner to seriously then bid for the leadership of the Muslim League. By conceding separate electorates, the British had conferred upon Muslims of India and their rich and inseparable history beginning in AD 632, tragically, a distinctive political role in British India. Singh (2009: 57) states that "It is a totally different matter that with time the British awakened to the fact that the writing of the script for that role had got snatched out of their hands, that they had ceased to now call the shots that made the Muslims obey; the theory of unintended consequences had asserted itself, again. Those Muslims who had organized the Simla Deputation and who, with eager British assistance, had secured separate electorates were in reality now more concerned about preserving their own quality of life, their status and their standing against their own lower orders, than achieving any electoral domination over the Hindus." The Muslims of the Simla Deputation had in reality sought more the certainty of their own co – option, their own hierarchical status continuing in the faded Empire. The possibility of any political or ideological independence from the British, they did not, for all the emphasis in their 'Muslimness', even seriously contemplate, perhaps did not even consider them.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was here that Mohammed Ali Jinnah arrived to etch his own and also the political future of Indian Muslims, in the great undivided subcontinent. Jinnah was the founder of Pakistan, for this founding in terms of its grounding was already prepared by the complex sequence of events. These events, in time culminated in the great tragedy of 1947 which led to partition. Millions were uprooted and death and vengeance stalked this ancient and mystical land as the undivided subcontinent that was India. A new but different political order was now emerging in India. Was this the quest? Or was it the failure of Indians to tell the British were they had to get off, quit undivided India and allow Indians to handle and settle their own affairs,

irrespective of how volatile the situation was and, there was no need for India and Indians to be under the tutelage of a foreign colonial power and intermediary; that with all its cunning, devious designs, its tactics of divide and rule and, with fury, the colonial power, had, its own political agenda. Or was it a failure to grasp the import of the need that led to 1947?

In our discourse, in this paper we journeyed by travelling with Islam's growth in India, very mindful of the fact and, the all embracing reality that, it was not possible to approach and adequately condense the epic saga and magnificent history of Islam, and Muslim identity that, certainly made the tapestry and fabric of Indian history, all the more richer and colourful. In spite of the difficulties experienced in this journey, that was filled with many trials and tribulations. The totality of this epic saga of Islam's advent and growth in India was a journey of many centuries and, therefore, it is well nigh impossible to cover, all aspects of this journey, nor the entire range of human experience. It needs to be brought to the fore that, through the grinding passage of time, the challenge of altering circumstances, and robust insolence of those conquering traders, from the distant island of Britain; the Muslims, rulers in large parts of undivided India, until then patrons of power and dispensers of favours, sank slowly to the humiliating position of petitioners of the firangi (white settlers and conquerors, the English). The trading British had brought with them the very same freebooting spirit and attributes of dare – devilry that the early Muslim invaders had come endowed with.

The second paper in this series will attempt to look at some of these issues through the eyes of the great Indian Congress Leader Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and, would reflect on Viceroy Lord Mountbatten's role, and analyze the role of an array of Indian Congress leaders that bought into the British plan to divide and partition the great Indian subcontinent. The partitioning of India is an unpardonable sin, a tragedy of our times, and must be understood as such. In this regard the British are culpable and the world must hold them accountable for allowing this dastardly act or crime and, they must also be held responsible for a crime against humanity. The world cannot be looked at from Western lens alone and, free thought and, the settings of standards of justice is not the sole purview of the Western colonialists and imperialists that, the British were, throughout the world, plundering, massacring, subjugating, dividing the local populations and, all that went with colonial and imperial designs, living a hedonistic life and ridiculing the 'natives' by devaluing their worth, and their intellectualism and dignity and, in many ways killing the 'native' spirit with it. But the locals were not to be defeated because they did not succumb without a just fight. History will surely judge the British and indeed the government of Britain harshly and, in this regard history and the people of India will not be forgiving.

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NOTES:

1. Karodia, A. M. (1974). Observation Notes From Visits by Road to Parts of India, Kashmir, Ladhak, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, to Observe and Experience Muslim Identity and Islam. Unpublished Notes.
2. Muslim Rule: Was not colonial from some Central Asian Homeland nor national, as of a victorious political national domiciled in India \_ \_ \_ armies of Turkish slaves and Afghans, led by Eastern Iranian Chieftains of Ghur, east of Heart, dominated parts of the Indo – gangetic planes between 1192 and 1206 \_ \_ \_By 1221, the ghurid power had disappeared in Afghanistan and their (Ghurid) troops in India isolated by the Mongols under Chengez Khan. The Delhi sultanate was established during the period (1211 – 36) and at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the disintegration of the Delhi sultanate was ensured by the Turk, Amir Timur (1370 – 1405) and incorporated in to the regional sultanates of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur.
3. India: It is important to note that until the arrival of the Europeans on the soil of the subcontinent, the word India did not exist. It was Hind and Hindustan (Bharat). The word India came with the British. Colonial distortion was a feature of European settlement throughout the world.
4. Max Weber: German political economist and sociologist are considered to be the founder of modern sociology and public administration. He was involved with the Treaty of Versailles and was member of the Commission that drafted the Constitution of the Weimar Republic. His most famous work was ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.’ He did not research Islam but contended without reason that Islam could not evolve naturally because, it was a warrior group, and that, the religious message of Islam was transformed into a set of values compatible with the needs of this warrior group. (An amazing analysis that borders on racist connotations without any empirical evidence).
5. European Intrusion: the late 15<sup>th</sup> century had brought with it, competition between the Moppillas of Malabar and the dominant Hindu castes for social and economic influence. As a reaction to the British conquest and the consequence shift of balance in agrarian relations, the Moppillas had engaged in a long series of attacks on the Hindu – landed castes. The climax of these attacks was the rebellion of 1921 – 1922 in which the Moppillas strove to bring Islamic ideology to an advanced state of practice by trying to establish an Islamic state.
6. Hodson, Major William: a British soldier who joined the Indian Army in 1845, fought through the first Sikh War. He became the head of intelligence in the Punjab and commanded an irregular cavalry regiment named later as Hodson’s Horse. He took part in the sieges of Delhi and Lucknow. He captured the Moghul Emperor; killed the young princes with his own hands, and a few months later fell him while storming a palace in the city.
7. Sadar Amin: under British Administration of the period, the designation of the highest office any Indian could aspire for was that of a deputy collector in the executive and a sadar amin in the judiciary.
8. Hadith: (transliteration – al – Hadith) is the traditions relating to the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hadith collections are regarded as the authoritative tools for determining the Sunnah, or the Muslim way of life, by all traditional schools of jurisprudence.
9. Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly: He sought to spread Islam through the aggressive movement of revival and reform. He aimed to rid Islam of Hindu practices, to end belief in the intercessionary power of saints and to establish an ideal Muslim

- community where Muslims could live according to the Holy law. His movement became a jihad and Ahmad himself was killed in 1831. His followers continued to create stir in many parts of India till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
10. Jajmani: Was a reciprocal social and economic arrangement between families of different castes within a village community in India, by which one family exclusively performs certain services for the other, such as ministering to the ritual, barbering or providing agricultural labour. These relations continue from one generation to another.
  11. Sir Bampfylde Fuller: Was the first lieutenant – governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam and held office from 16 October 1905 until he resigned on 20 August 1906.
  12. Persianised form of Hindi: A name derived from the ‘Urdu – e – Mu’alla, a ‘bazaar’ outside Delhi Palace. The foreign troops settled around Delhi had to use the local dialect. Allaudin Khiligi compiled a book in which Persian equivalents of common Hindi words were compiled. The book was named Khalikbari and was distributed to foreign Muslim troops. What the foreign troops spoke became known as Urdu, a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Hindi. For some 500 years Urdu remained just a spoken language, only later to become a written language. Urdu, written in Arabic script distinguished it from Hindi where the script was Devnagari. It was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Urdu began replacing Persian, finally acquiring prominence during Bahadur Shah Zafar’s time (Mughal Emperor). Urdu was the language of the court throughout Northern India when the British usurped power.
  13. Nawab Wiqar – ul – Mulk: He led the education movement of the Muslims and added a political dimension to it. He advocated a separate political party for Muslims. When the Muslim League was founded in 1906 he became its joint secretary. The annulment of the partition of Bengal led to his disillusionment with the British and he wrote his famous article ‘musalmano’s kaa Ayendah Laiha – e – Amal’ (The future course of action for the Muslims) and published it in the Aligarh Institute Gazette as a public expression of the anti – British stance. He died in January, 1917.
  14. Sir Gilbert John Murray Kynynmond Elliot: Was the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Minto. After serving as Governor General of Canada, he became the viceroy of India in 1905. Instituted many reforms. He retired in England in 1910 and was made Knight of the Garter, for services rendered to Britain.
  15. Blackburn John Morley: Was viscount (1938 – 1923) and was made Secretary of State for India. He was known for extensive remodeling in India, of the system of government in India, in order to introduce a more representative form of government.
  16. The Metcalfe’s: There were three of them. Sir Charles Metcalfe (1785 – 1846) and married Sikh Indian women and renounced his allegiance to the House of Timur. He was a Member of the Council in Calcutta. Sir Thomas Metcalfe (1795 – 1853), he arrived in Delhi in 1813 and was assistant to his brother Sir Charles Metcalfe and was a very fastidious person. He was a negotiator and spoke highly of Emperor Zafar, although he said that he was a weak ruler. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe – ‘Theo’ (1828 – 1883) was a junior magistrate. He took bloodthirsty revenge because of the uprising on 11 May, 1857.