

QUEST FOR IDENTITY

&

IQBAL

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IQBAL IN UNIVERSE OF MUSLIM IDENTITIES

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In writing this paper I feel like revisiting the universe of Muslims of India, conceptualised by me earlier; this time in the august company of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal. Not merely to acknowledge the courtesy of the Iqbal Institute for reading this paper but more importantly to acknowledge the influence of the great man in shaping and sharpening these identities.

Iqbal's testimony is not indispensable for my formulations. Nor is it my intention here to prove or disprove any theory. Whatever theorisation I have to do is based on my comprehension of the facts which might be limited but is unblinkered. I am therefore under no compulsion to distort the philosopher-poet, who is so temptingly distortable.

As I viewed it, Muslims of India simultaneously belong to four broad verticle levels of identities i.e. International subcontinental, national and regional in addition to sharing several other identities with other communities horizontally like those of class, profession, ideology, party and so on. The degree of allegiance to these identities varies from person to person and situation to situation. Though under a particular stimulus, a particular identity seems all consuming at a particular moment, no single identity can possibly satisfy the wide range of human urges in the present complex society. In fact identities proliferate to meet the needs of a growing personality. As a family grows, a man simultaneously becomes a son, a brother, a husband and a father. Tagore explains the same idea by citing the analogy of a seed which has a single identity. But when blossoms forth into flower, it gets differentiated into petals and leaves. The same is true of the societal growth; which follows the twin processess of differentiation and integration simultaneously. Increasing inter-dependence and increasing self-awareness are two facets of modernisation. Differentiation as such

does not lead to disintegration but refusal to allow the natural process of differentiation does threaten integration as well as growth.

Iqbal is not entirely unaware of various dimensions of Muslims identity. But his emphasis on one dimension at a time does give the impression of exclusiveness on this account. In his own time and perception, nature of Muslim identity has been varying. Much more drastic changes have taken place after him. Some allowance must also be made for the inadequacies of his sociological tools.

For he does not aspire to be a social scientist or a coherent system builder. He belongs to the genre of prophets whose mission is to translate his vision to reality. In that role he does grapple with the task of reconciling the diverse facets of reality as he perceives them.

INTERNATIONAL UMMA : Iqbal reiterates the obvious when he underlines the cosmopolitan character of the Islamic Umma transcending time and space. There is hardly any other faith that inspires so much international solidarity among its followers as Islam does. And it is the Muslim community of the subcontinent that "today leads the Muslims of the world in their zeal and practical behaviours for the spread of their faith".² No evidence need therefore be cited to prove the affinity which Muslims in different parts of the world feel and demonstrate on many occasions.

There are three main aspects of the international community of Muslims-political, ideological and cultural. At political level, of the Pan-Islamic reflect the urge for unification of the Muslims under one Islamic World. Traditionally Pan-Islamic has been an ally of Indian nationalism. The Khilafat movement was an outstanding example of the alliance. Gandhi invested his entire political and emotional power on it to enlist Muslim support³ for the national cause. A Staunch nationalist passion of Muslims. Even today Pan-Islamic tendencies do not close with the interests of Indian nationalism. Both have instance adopted non-aligned frame work of the world politics.

Iqbal, on the other hand has much less illusion about the unification of Muslims of the world into a political State and reject the contention that even Jamal-ud-Din Afghani was ever associated with this "dream".⁴ He, in fact, suspects that the idea was planted by the British to divert attention of the Muslims of India from internal political questions and to "dissipate their power of action by lip sympathy with Muslim World."⁵ He considers it significant that "in no Islamic language-Arabic, Persian or Turkish-does there exist a phrase corresponding to Pan Islamism."

On Khilafat also, Iqbal was less sentimental than most of its Hindu and Muslims supporters in India. He rather believed that spirit of Islam was at work through Attaturk who abolished the Khilafat.⁶ He criticised religious doctors of Islam of India for not appreciating Turkish view which according to him was "perfectly sound".⁷ In any case this ideal, according to him, had become ineffective and could no more be used as a vital force in the re-organisation of Islam.⁸ He also observes that International ideal of Islam has been hitherto overshadowed or rather displaced by earlier imperialism of earlier centuries of Islam.⁹ The nearest that Iqbal comes to the political aspect of the international identity of Islam is a sort of League of Nations without precisely defining it or discussing the means of achieving it. But if the nations of league are to be sovereign, would their foreign relations be influenced by their perceptions of the national interest or of ideology of Islam?

As for as ideological aspect of Islam is concerned, it treats Islam just as the international communist movement treats Marxism. Its primary interest is in the promotion of ideology of Islam as conceived by it-and not of the interest of the Muslim Community as such. Maulana Maudoodi, the founder of the Jamat, rejects the concept of Muslim nationalism as well, which he regards to be as Un-Islamic and vicious as Indian nationalism.¹⁰ In fact ideology of Islam might be as much threatened by "Munafeqeen" within the Muslim community as by outsiders.¹¹ It wants to revive the pristine purity of Islam.

Iqbal's views are in glaring contrast with those of the Jamat. His basic concern is Muslim Community. In order to meet its growing needs, he even attempts revision and reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. His views on Islamic ideology are far from puritanical. "Even the most orthodox Mullah has no right to expel anybody from Islam as long as he has faith in its two basic principles, viz Tauheed (oneness of God) and finality of Mohammad's prophethood; even though he might commit any mistakes in the interpretation of Quranic verses and Islamic jurisprudence."¹² To him social polity of Islam seems more important than its theology. He stresses the identity maker role of Islam. In order to make Islam living force in the world of today, Iqbal insists on the need of Ijtehad (innovation in religious thought) and of satisfying cultural urges of its followers. "For being a live member of the Muslim Community, unconditional faith in Islam is not enough. One must imbibe its culture as well."¹³ Instead of engaging himself merely with metaphysical exercises, the usual role of religion, he aims at outlining a comprehensive and balanced sociological order for raising the standard of life. In a letter to Dr. Nicolson, he writes that the objective of his Persian poems was not advocacy of Islam. His urge and quest were concentrated on finding a modern polity". In spite of "universality of his humanitarian objective"¹⁴, his appeal is addressed to the Muslim Community which alone is suitable instrument for his objectives.¹⁵

In his search for a viable basis for the international level of Muslim identity, Iqbal lays a special emphasis on its third aspect viz its cultural component, in a comprehensive sense of the term. It includes history, sociology, literature, fine arts, crafts etc. He makes ecstatic references to the past glory and achievements of Muslims in these fields and some of his finest poetry is inspired by those themselves. It invites a retort from Niaz Fatehpuri that he was not so much concerned with Islam and its ethical teachings as with Islamic history and Islamic conquests.¹⁶

On this point, Iqbal is also vulnerable to attacks from Jamat-i-Islami school of thought on the one hand and from nationalists and

secular liberals on the other. Thomas Arnold, who gives a glowing account of the legacy of Islam, observes that "there is little peculiarly Islamic in contributions which accidental and Oriental Muslims have made." The arts and sciences that comprise the legacy were those that flourished "under the protection and patronage of the Islamic empires".¹⁷

Firaq Gorakhpuri similarly argues that religion and culture are not synonymous. If Germany or England or America is converted to Islam, their culture would not become the Hajazi culture, he adds.¹⁸

Religion has undoubtedly influenced and inspired culture all over the world. But it has been influenced by numerous other factors as well such as race, region, language, history, ideology, aesthetic and creative urges and so on. Arabic has, for instance, so much contributed to the Islamic culture that "Islam and Arabic have often been used as interchangeable terms."¹⁹

Iqbal anticipates this sort of criticism and makes ample concession in it. The concepts of the East and West, recurring throughout his poetry, clearly implies acceptance of close inter connection of geography and culture. The potentiality of Islam, according to him lies in the fact that on account of its geographical location, it is the meeting ground of the East and the West.²⁰ The geographical location obviously refers to the West Asia which is the centre of what may be called Muslim culture.

Iqbal also traces racial components of Islamic culture. While conceding that the Arabs, who gave birth to Islam, contributed to its political evolution, he recalls the valuable contribution of non-Arabs in the field of arts and sciences, philosophy and medicines.²¹ He considers Iran as the single greatest factor in the growth of Islamic culture and civilization. "Our Islamic culture," he says, "is a by product of the mixture of Semitic thought and Aryan speculation..... It got its subtlety and charm from the womb of its Aryan mother and inherited its dignity and forbearance from its Semitic father".²²

Like a competent sociologist, Iqbal takes accounts of various factors that go to make a culture viz religion, geography, race, history and language. But the only snag is that his concept of Islamic culture has a West Asian orientation and is not universal enough to include say, African Islam or Indonesian Islam. International Muslim identity portrayed by Iqbal thus, betrays some political, ideological and cultural inadequacies.

Coming to the next level of Muslim identity i.e. national, it is ironical that Iqbal outgrew concept of nationalism and used West Asian model of Islam to undermine it at a time when resurgence of territorial nationalism swept across that region. He tried to resolve the dilemma by conceding that Islam and nationalism can be reconciled where Muslims are in a majority and where the two are practically synonymous.²³

Iqbal's scathing attacks on the concept of territorial nationalism, as a form of political ideology, thus seem motivated mainly by his strong urge to preserve the identity of Muslims of the sub-continent. His ideas expressed in his presidential address to Muslim League Conference in 1930, communications to Qaide Azam and Pandit Nehru and public debates with Ulemas should be studied in totality to know his exact mind on this controversial issue.

While rejecting political ideology of nationalism, he, however, maintains that "If nationalism means patriotism and sacrifice of one's life for the honour of one's country, such nationalism is a part of Muslim faith."²⁴

He dispels the impression that Islam is opposed to racial identity as such and quotes Quranic verse which says :

"We created you in the form of tribes so that you could be identified."²⁵

In his reply to the criticism of Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani who maintained that nations were based on country and not

religion Iqbal agrees that the Quran used word Umma and not nation for the Muslims. But he merely asserts superior status of Umma over the nation.²⁶

He goes another step further and expressly confidence in harmonising religion and patriotism in India if cultural entity of Muslim could be preserved²⁷ for which he suggests his term.

Addressing the Muslim League session in 1930, he said that Muslims of India would not spare greatest sacrifices for the freedom of their country if their right to autonomous growth within the country under their own traditions and culture was conceded."²⁸

Concretely, Iqbal suggested reorganisation of the country on the basis of language, race, history, religion and economic interests within the Indian federal system with maximum autonomy for the States. In order to guarantee Muslim identity, and create a Muslim centre of political power he wanted amalgamation of north western States of Punjab, Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan into one State within India and demanded one third representation to Muslims of the rest of the country in the federal legislature.²⁹

If this formula was accepted Iqbal was sure that it would strengthen sense of responsibility and patriotism among the Muslim and that they would prove best defenders of the borders of India against outside armed or ideological attacks.³⁰

After the fear of Hindu domination was removed through his formula and the British imperialism left the country, he believed Islam in India would then be in a position to liberate itself from the influence of Arab imperialism and thus end the stagnation that had gripped its civilisation, culture, Shariat and education for centuries³¹

Thus West Asian orientation of Iqbal was in a way his defence mechanism against the fear of Hindu domination. Otherwise he is no less keen to protect the Muslim identity of the subcontinent from the Western side.

Recently a Pakistani writer repressed similar apprehension against the fatal friendly embrace of Saudi Arabia and Iran, both of which were competing for the soul of Parkistan.³²

Paradoxically driven by his ruthless logic, Iqbal eventually comes to seek territorial basis of the identity and patriotism of his community.

His son Javeed Iqbal is not far wrong in believing that if his logic was extended further and had he been alive till the creation of Pakistan (i.e. concretisation of his imaginary and vague concept), he would have founded another concept and called it Pakistani nationalism.³³

The debate on whether or not Iqbal was responsible for the creation of Pakistan is generally concerned with the desire to credit him for the "achievement" or exonerate him from the "guilt". The fact is that while ideologically his contribution to the concept of Pakistan is much less than others, culturally he represents it much more than all those who led the movement for it. Islam is certainly the most vital component of it. But he wanted its culture to include Nanak and Ram Tirath also and to protect it from "Hindu domination" as well as "Arab imperialism".

In his letter to Jinnah, dated 21 June 1937, Iqbal did suggest a separate federation of Muslim provinces. But crucial point to note is that he was demanding a right of self determination for particular territorial cultures and not a home land for the entire Muslim Community of India. He specifically advised Jinnah "to ignore Muslim minority provinces". He approved the idea of "holding of a North-West Indian Muslim Conference"³⁴.

By excluding Muslims of the present India from the campaign of Muslim League, Iqbal had intended to do a better service to them that was done by the League. If his approach had been accepted, India would have been spared of much of the scars left by the partition on the minds of its two major communities.

Those who call Pakistan a Going Musoleam³⁵ of Iqbal overlook the fact that a part of him is still living there, a part of him is substantial and another part is universal.

SUBCONTINENTAL IDENTITY : Iqbal has made significant contribution in creating a sense of pride, identity and mission among the Muslims of the subcontinent. He believed in the special destiny of the community which was the greatest Muslim Community of the World in his time. For "It was no exaggeration to say that India is the only country of the the World where unifying potentialities of Islam got its finest expression.³⁶ The interests of the subcontinental Muslims were foremost in his mind and his appeal was primarily addressed to them. He did not want the uniqueness of this community to be compromised either under the name of notionalism-within-India-or of Islam-represented by Arabia.

Subcontinentel dimension of the identity of Muslims of India has survived the partition of the subcontinent. Iqbal who was a prominent champion of this identity continues to be one of its symbols and sources of inspiration. The identity has other deep emotional, cultural, racial and historical roots as well. After all Pakistan was claimed to be a homeland of the Muslims of undivided India and was demanded more intensely by those who now form part of the present India.

However, in the common subcontinental identity, Indian Part of Muslim Population used to be treated as a poor and sick relation. According to Javeed Iqbal, the split in the freedom movement of India led to the parting of ways Islam and India³⁷; implying that India is or would be without Islam. I.H. Qureshi pessimistically predicted that "in a hundred 'years, perhaps in a shorter time, the Muslim people may cease to exist" in India.³⁸ In his characteristic consistency and forthrightness. Jamati Islami leader Maulana Maudoodi, on migration to Pakistan, left the following advice for his followers in India : "We should try to create on a large scale a public opinion among the muslims that they should, as community, have nothing to do with the government and its administration and

should assure Hindu nationalism by their attitude that there is no other political nationalism in the field to fight it.³⁹ He conceded that India should be a Hindu State.

I need hardly quote top Muslim League leaders who said Khuda Hafiz to their coreligionists in India adding a few words of Pity and piety for them. I am also aware of soul searching debate within Pakistan over "the whole orientation of Muslim politics during the British period of Indian history."⁴⁰ The senior most Muslim League leader of the subcontinent Khaliq-ul-Zyama became sceptic about the two nations theory which proved "positively injurious to the Muslims of India and on a long view basis for Muslims everywhere."⁴¹

Again, W.C. Smith holds the creation and existence of Pakistan to be mainly responsible for the plight of Muslims in India. It inter alia, loaded them with a sense of guilt and hardened the attitude of Hindu Chauvinists against them. "They made an intolerably tall demand which we conceded. Let them now keep quiet". So runs the argument.⁴² An illiterate Muslim farmer devoid of any political vision, Smith adds, can be kicked with a taunt : "Why don't you go to your Pakistan ? The activities of the Islamic State (of Pakistan) remained, according to Smith, a stumbling block in the way of Indian Muslims."⁴³

A perceptive Pakistani writer MB Naqvi challenges the notion that Hindus of India have not reconciled to the vivisection of Mother India. They would not, he believes, like to force upon Pakistan even a secular orientation. For "that can knock out the basis of the 1947 settlement which has so much benefitted the Hindu communalists at the expense of Muslims."⁴⁴ Only Muslims of India would be benefitted by Akhand India, he said.

Not with standing the consequences of the brute logic of the partition for the Muslims of India, if not for the subcontinental Muslim identity, W.C. Smith believed, as early as, in 1957 that Islam

in India would outgrow these limitations and emerge more progressive dynamic, liberal and creative than Pakistani Islam.⁴⁵ In discussing the potentiality of Indian Islam. I do not want to sound xenophobic. But the following elementary facts might bear recounting.

“It is the Muslims of India who alone have inherited the continuity of history, tradition and culture of the subcontinent; whereas Pakistan and Bangladesh have mostly borrowed them from India. Important Islamic institutions like Aligarh, Deoband and Jamia and prestigious symbols of what is called Muslim glory like the Red Fort and the Taj Mahal have remained in India. The real home of Urdu—the official language of Pakistan is also here. Even the essence of the concept of Islam dominant in the other two countries was evolved in the Indian part of the subcontinent, by Chisti to Ulmmas of Daraulum and other institutions of Islamic learning and its secular practices were shaped by the policies of the imperial rulers of Delhi. The basic fact that a section of Muslims of India and their tradition and culture were incorporated by Pakistan and to a lesser extent by Bangladesh and not the other way round—has already asserted itself. Moreover, with two thirds of the population of the Muslims of the subcontinent being out of Pakistan, Islamabad is no more in a position to remain the centre of their inspiration. Geohistorically, Delhi is now better placed for that role.⁴⁶

Its south Eastern links are an additional advantage. Comparative study of trends in Pakistan may not be necessary. Vocal champions of what are called Pak-Indians are already asserting their cultural links with the Indo-Islamic civilisation. Other Pakistanis are also unlikely to have remained completely uninfluenced by, say, achievements of Indian Federalism, in particularly in reintegrating a Muslim majority State of Kashmir. “Further more, on account of India’s geopolitical importance, its size and part, the relative better performance of its political and administrative institutions, its democratic system, its superior material, technological and military strength, India is becoming an attractive model for the intelligentsia of

Pakistan and Bangladesh. In their struggle for restoration of civil liberties, they tend to look to India for moral support"⁴⁷.

I had once offended the susceptibilities of an eminent Pakistani scholar by pointing out the unpleasant fact that Pakistan had lived on a borrowed ideology (Indian Islam) borrowed history (Indo-Islamic), a borrowed language (Urdu) and a borrowed leadership (Jinnah, Liyaqate & Bhutto).⁴⁸

I do not mind it Pakistan outgrow its-basic philosophy. But as long as it does not, it cannot afford to snap its ties from the sub-continental framework. Nor do I think that it is either possible or desirable for Indian Muslims to shape their subcontinental ties. Their transnational affinities neither amount to extra-territorial loyalties nor imply that they must necessarily look across the border for emotional, moral and intellectual support in, a one way traffic. Indeed the reverse trend..... of a bigger traffic has already been noticed.

I do not deny that in terms of political power, Indian Muslims are not as important as they would have been in the united India or as they are in the other two countries of the subcontinent. But if Iqbal is right in emphasizing the role of cultural factors in the growth of Islam, Indian Muslims have obvious advantages. However, it is difficult to draw upon him in discussing the subcontinental identity of Indian Muslims as they were not divided into two nations in his life time and he could not have anticipated their problems after division. But if Pakistani nationalists and Pakistani Muslims insist on monopolising him, they would deprive themselves of a vital link with the subcontinental identity at their own cost.

INDIAN IDENTITY :

I am not unaware of the problems of Muslims of India and of the wide gap between their potentialities and actual achievements. That bring me to the third level of their vertical identity i.e. national.

Indian diension of identity of Indian Muslims asserted itself more clearly after Indo-Pak war of 1965 in which it clashed with

their subcontinental identity. Their role in a national war against their co-religionists established their patriotic credentials on the one hand and strengthened their self-confidence, self-awareness and self-affirmation, on the other. Mean while a new generation of Muslims matured into adulthood which had no hand in the partition of the country. The crucial role of the community in the governmental changeovers of 1977 and 1980 increased its involvement in the political system of the country. The new situation created fresh tensions and revived some old questions.

What are the legitimate forms through which the Muslim identity should manifest itself in the national life? In what degree and in what fields it should assert its autonomy? What should be the relation of this identity with the national identity?

Can we revert to Iqbal for answer to these questions? Could he have reconciled to the reality- and not ideology- of Indian nationalism, having recognised nationalism of Turkey, Iran, Arab States and, by implication, of Pakistan? Iqbal was proud of his Indian and even Brahamanic origin. He said, "I am sprung from the same stock; India is older than Hinduism and Islam, and will remain when we and our creeds have become one with Yesterday's seven thousand years."⁴⁹ However, in the context of the situation then prevailing, he also justified the right of Muslims, if they were in a minority, to seek autonomy as a cultural identity. But he did not work out the form and quantum of this autonomy. He is silent about relations of Muslims and non-Muslims even if it were possible for the former to acquire a political unity in the world. Let history answer this question, he said.⁵⁰ He does not deal with the question as to what should be done when a country is neither a Dar-ol-Islam nor a Dar-ol-harb; the two models of Islamic polity which divided humanity among believers and non-believers. He never refers to the third model of a contract while some ulemas had suggested.

It has often been said that Muslims in the past have either been rulers or ruled and generally speaking have not shared powers with others. In India they are having a new experience of not only sharing power as a minority with a non-Muslim majority but also sharing

it as a majority in part of India (Kashmir) with a non-Muslim minority. As Muslims in India are seeking a role within a universe of non-Muslim majority—which is exactly what Muslims are doing in the world as a whole in the same proportion—India has become an experiment begging many questions; partly to be answered by Muslim theologians and intellectuals and partly by others.

Far apart from the minority character and historical background of Muslim Indians, it is the peculiar character of Hinduism which influences their attitude. “More than a creed or a set of practices, Hinduism is a geographical and racial entity..... For most Hindus, as Aurbindo put it, nationalism is religion. Indian history merges into Hindu religion so that ancient heroes, epics and literature have a religious character.”⁵¹

The dilemma of a Muslim Indian is that in his journey back to his own history—history of his own country—he slips into a domain that also belongs to another religion.

Hinduism meets Islam not as just another creed but as a representative of the ancient and native heritage of the nation. It is the assimilative and integrationist character of Hinduism—that seems to threaten the Muslim identity.⁵²

As Hinduism has been called a Parliament of religions and owes allegiance to many books and prophets, Gandhi found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking the same reverence for the Koran and the prophet. But he disappointingly “found the difficulty in Mussalman circles about evoking the same reverence for the Vedas or in the incarnations;⁵³ obviously because Muslims believe in a final book and a final prophet.

Some of the confusion about Indian nationalism is due to the fact that Hinduism grows out of it and there is no unanimity on a clean concept and full contents of it.

Many fair minded scholars tend to justify Muslim separatism by equating it with and describing it as a reaction to aggressive

Hindu communalism; the two sides of the same coin type of argument. This is most reaction to the then established concept of Indian nationalism. Jinnah reacted against Gandhi and not Savarkar, who was a non entity.

The question of the Status of the Muslim identity in the country must be discussed in the wider context of relations of the national identity with numerous intermediary identities—between an individual and the nation. It might necessitate a clearer definition of nationalism itself.

REGIONAL IDENTITY :

In this context, regional identity, the fourth level of identities in the vertical order that we have been discussing after international (Pan-Islamic), subcontinental, and national- is of crucial importance for the Muslim community. It is at this level that the community can find roots in the soil and get integrated with other communities more harmoniously. As regional identities, regional cultures, regional histories and regional heroes are generally not much coloured by standardised Hinduism, Muslims tend to own their pre Islamic heritage at the regional level more readily than they do it at the national level. In fact, in each region of the country, there are saints, reformers, and warriors, who symbolise its common and composite heritage and inspire emotional allegiance of all its communities. But such symbols are fewer at the national level. While many Muslim faqirs and pirs are revered by non-Muslims at local levels, Krishna is integrated into Muslim consciousness at folk level in Braj and Mewat areas but not elsewhere.

Even Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharana Pratap, who are projected as symbols of Hindu revivalism at the national level for having struggled against the so-called foreign Muslim rule, were essentially regional heroes who endeavoured to protect the autonomy and rights of Marathwar and Mewar, respectively, against the then central national authority—as did many regional Muslim rulers do at that time. Similarly, Guru Nanak and Baba Farid represent the common spiritual heritage of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs of Punjab,

on both sides of the international border. Tagore and Nazar-ul-Islam also represent the indivisible common cultural heritage of not only Hindus and Muslims but also of India and Bangladesh. Regionalisation is thus undoubtedly the single greatest integrating force between nations of the subcontinent.

It is no accident that Kashmiri and Pathan Muslims, who were intensively proud of their respective regional cultures, became the main bulwark against the movement of the Muslim League sweeping over the rest of the subcontinent. The process of regionalisation (hence of secularisation) of Muslims has been more pronounced where they constituted a majority i.e. where their Muslim identity had been ensured. This vindicates Iqbal's contention that in Muslim majority areas Islam and territorial patriotism become synonymous. Historically also, the peripheral regions of the subcontinent, including Muslim majority areas like Kashmir, Frontier, and Bengal, have regarded imperial rulers of Delhi like the Mughals as aggressors and have manifested deeper regional consciousness. But the process is unmistakably extending to Muslims of other areas as well.

But what would be the correlation between regional and communal consciousness? Both are likely to be sharpened as a consequence of modernisation, co-existing with and to some extent also balancing each other. Bangladesh would illustrate the point. "Muslim Bengal asserted its Muslim personality in 1947 against its co-linguist Hindu neighbours. Twenty-four years later, it asserted its regional personality also, through a revolt against its co-religionist West Pakistanis. But 1971 did not contradict 1947: it only supplemented 1947 later. Emergence of Bangladesh, above all, demonstrated that a Bengali Muslim was a Bengali as well as Muslim."⁵⁴ "In the case of Kashmir also, the process covered two stages, though in reverse order. Kashmir asserted its regional personality in 1947 against the threat from its co-religionist neighbours in Pakistan. But later its Muslim character precipitated its emotional alienation from the rest of India, till it recovered its balance through the Accord of 1975. Kashmiri Muslims have also demonstrated that they are

Kashmiris as well as Muslims. No wonder they looked to Iqbal for inspiration.

His relations with Kashmir were not merely political and intellectual but spiritual and emotional. His deep attachment for the land of his birth and concern for its people is expressed through some of his eloquent verses. His personality, political role and creative writings have played a significant role in firing the people of the Valley with a sense of Kashmiri patriotism.

It is difficult to verify his reported advice to Kashmiri leaders to broad base Muslim Conference and to convert it from a Muslim party to a Kashmiri party. For no authentic documentary evidence is available. But it is not inconsistent with his known views about the role of territorial patriotism in Muslim majority areas and his role in Kashmir politics.

It would seem obvious that Iqbal is conscious that regional-cultural-linguistic urges are vital for Muslims as for any other community. In fact the sense of 'identity of Muslims'—as distinct from 'Muslim Identity'—would remain incomplete if these urges are not satisfied.

Though region, culture and language, generally form an integral whole, the case of Urdu is somewhat special. Notwithstanding its secular and composite heritage, it has admittedly become a symbol of Muslim aspirations. But its role in providing a common linguistic identity to all Muslims is severely limited. It cannot replace, for instance, Kashmiri, Bengali, Malayalam or Tamil, without culturally impoverishing Muslims belonging to the respective regions and distorting their integral personality.

In reality, it is the Urdu-speaking Muslim community which is most rootless and alienated and which is suffering from a crisis of identity most acutely. One reason is that it lacks a regional identity. Second is that it lives in the heartland of Indian nationalism which on account of its conceptual inadequacy and imprecision, does not

satisfy the urges of all the communities alike. This explains why the idea of a separate Muslim homeland had its staunchest and largest support in this area.

Perhaps a new state around Delhi—which would include the Urdu speaking belt and the main centres of Islamic learning and Muslim culture of India might satisfy some of the psychological and sociological needs of the community. Urdu can also claim and receive more intensive encouragement in this area rather than the thinly spread patronage all over the country that it is receiving today. Far from being a Muslim State it would still be of a composite character in which Muslim aspirations would be satisfied and reconciled with those of the majority community and get a linguistic-cultural-regional sense of belonging.

Apart from verticle levels of identities of Muslims of India—shared and exclusive—there are many groups at horizontal level with which they are identified. The form and extent of their expression through them vary from group to group.

What possible role can Muslims aspire for in, say, economic, cultural and political fields ?

CLASS IDENTITY :

The role of economic factors in inter-communal relations is highly exaggerated. They have often been held responsible for a sense of separateness among Muslims whereas in reality there might be greater separateness between Muslims belonging to different classes than between them and the Hindus of the same class.

Class and communal identities do overlap to some extent in some cases. There might also be certain economic disadvantage on account of membership of a community. In such cases economic causes act as catalytic agents and rationalisers of communal tensions. In general, communal consciousness grows in spite of and not because of class consciousness. The two identities often cut across each other.

Whatever be the strength of communal sentiments, they can never supplant class divisions in the economic sector of national life. How can trade unions and associations of employers be persuaded to dissolve themselves to make room for communal identities? Thus in the economic field, Muslims can satisfy their urge for identity by sharing it with non-Muslims unless class and community are coterminous.

What is the stand of Iqbal on this point? He has been called Marx of the East and first Islamic Socialist.⁵⁶ There is much in his writings which gives comfort to the socialist minds and can be called a clarion call to workers, peasants and other exploit classes. He is also believed to have expressed his dissatisfaction with the class character of the Muslim League. But none of these facts is directly relevant to know his attitude towards an identity based of class.

However, he does specifically suggests that struggle for amelioration of the economic condition of the people should be on completely non-religious lines. He writes: "anybody who aspires to resolve this problem, should keep his mind completely free of all religious and communal differences." The economic problems, that are equally affecting Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis, he continues loudly proclaim that leaders of different communities cannot agree on other matters, they should pool their heads at least on economic matters and think of measures for the common welfare of the country.⁵⁷ This is a significant and categorical acceptance of the desirability of class identity which Muslims should share with non-Muslims. As economic issues form a major part of political ideologies, alignments on non-communal lines for economic issues pleaded by Iqbal would have serious implications for political and ideological alignments of communities.

It is generally suggested by many secularists that religious communities might retain their autonomy in social and cultural field but not in politics.

There are certain obvious limits beyond which social life cannot

be compartmentalised. Clubs, restaurants, sports and recreation cannot and should not be segregated on religious lines. The limits within which religious identities do manifest are confined to religious rituals and festivals. However, within these limits we could conceive of a sub-identity of Muslims within the social identity.

Culture- literature, music and arts- too, we have seen cannot be exclusively based on religious identities. Whatever be his other affiliations.....emotional and ideological.....a Kashmiri Muslim, though pronouncedly influenced by Islam, is nevertheless closer to a Kashmir Hindu than, say, a Tamil or a Bengali Muslim. Again, it is conceivable that within each regional culture, there might be some symptoms of a sort of a Muslim culture. Or to put it differently a Muslim shares some common cultural traits with the wider Muslim community. In this context he has a cultural sub-identity within the broader community.

The real controversy central round the political role of Muslims of a community. In fact the standard definition of communalism is an organisation of political parties exclusively on the basis of religious affiliations.

Just as there cannot be complete autonomy in social and cultural fields for Muslims or any other religious community, they cannot be completely devolved in the political field. For without an equitable share in political power for all communities..... whether religious or non-religious..... a harmonious polity cannot be built up.

I would not discuss here various means—constitutional and institutional, formal and informal.....through which Muslim identity can or should seek recognition and autonomy in India. But would confine my observations mostly to what Iqbal said, explicitly or implicitly on the subject.

Iqbal had in mind some sort of dual federal polity, territorial as well as communal. But he did not work out the details and implications of the latter. For a mere fixation of quota for the community which in the contest of his own time he fixed at 33%.....

in the central legislative, does not ensure share in political power unless certain constitutional changes are made to provide for a compulsory coalition government giving a fixed representation to each community.

A more serious difficulty would arise how far religion and politics can be separated from a government in which Muslims and non-Muslims are participations. How far modern legislation be made independent of the traditional sources of jurisprudence and who has the right of Ijtehad.

Iqbal definitely suggests that the power of Ijtehad be transferred from Ulemas to the legislature. But he is aware of the difficulties this suggestion might create in a country like India where the legislature would include non-Muslims also. While discussing the issue in another context, he conceals that "Concept of separation of church and state is not altogether unknown to Islam."⁵⁸ But this separation, he hastens to add, is essentially that of functions and not of beliefs.

Again, referring to the rejection has terkey of the old ideas about the function of state and Religion which accentuated the separation of church and state, he maintains that the structure of Islam as a religio-political system, no doubt, does permit such a view. All that he insists is that the state should not be more dominant and rule all other ideas embodied in the system of Islam. In Islam, he adds, the nature of an act, however secular in its import, is determined by the attitude with which the agent does it.⁵⁹

It is a perfectly logical position. For while the subjects may be divided—into secular or religious, state or church—the person dealing with them must have an integrated mind. It is conceivable that people deriving inspiration from different source—religious and philosophical—agree on some common socio-economic and other ideological issues. It is an agreement on such issues that is the basis of a political identity called party. Iqbal has already conceded non-communal approach on economic issues. It would not grossly violate Iqbalian framework if the list of such issues is enlarged.

His assurance of "respect from his heart for the laws, rites and cultural and religious institutions"⁶⁰ of other communities indicates a further scope of flexibility in his stand. As the concept of Indian secularism does not preclude belief in religion and only insists on respect for all religions, Iqbal might not be as far as he seems.

However, in stead of stretching the logic of Iqbal to fit into the concept of modern secular state, some ijtehad (innovation) may be necessary in Iqbal's thoughts in view of the drastically changed situation since he wrote these lines, in the same spirit in which he used to subject religious thoughts to ijtehad.

There are many formal and informal arrangements in operation for working out a system of what may be called a multiple federation of regions, culturcs, communities, castes, classes, ideologies and so on superimposed as well as cutting across one another. Many more constitutional and institutional innovations are possible and necessary to preserve various identities and provide them a sense of participation in the national affairs.

In any case it has got to be a complex polity in which Muslims must belong to a multiplicity of identities, vertically and horizontally, exclusively as well as in partnership with others, in order to maintain their own identity and play a meaningful role in peace with other communities of India, as also to satisfy their own modern multiple urges and in the process strengthen the country.

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THE HINDU IDENTITY

Quest for identity is a significant preoccupation of man in society. It is quite rewarding as long as it goes on within the broad perspective of the total man. It may tell out an individual or a group from another, or even isolate each as a distinct phenomenon. It may even become a sinister assertion of reactionism and defence of vested interest. Instead of making an individual or a group healthily conscious of the self it may make one morbidly self-conscious if it fails to correlate itself with some other identity or identities within that identity. Therefore the relevance of what I call the broad perspective of the total man. Or, should we call it the total ethos of man ?

Despite the generally explicit evidence of the accident of birth or the name or the dialect or the exterior or some other behavioural gesture, the quest for Hindu identity poses a number of fundamental queries like :

Who founded the religio-philosophical system to which the Hindu belongs ? Who formulated its basic tenets ? Who is the final authority to which a moot point be referred for definitive interpretation ? Which is the basic scripture of the Hindus ? Has Hinduism been revealed or has it developed from time to time in response to specific realities of an age ? Can it develop still further ? Or it is a closed system, too sacrosanct to admit of any modification ? What faith do the Hindus profess ? Need a Hindu invariably believe in God ? Has the Hindu concept of Godhead remained unchanged throughout, or has it also evolved in due course ? And so on.

Answers to these queries may be broadly summed up as :

What is called Hinduism is not a faith or a religion revealed by any prophet; nor is it founded on a single scripture. It has rather gradually developed as a way of life conceding to each individual the right to believe according to his rights, genuinely appreciating the scope for diversity and divergence in the modes of spiritual experience. It is not a single system of religio-philosophical thought, but a complex of a number of systems with affinity as well as divergence in spiritual aspiration and modes of belief and behavior. This right to explore the various dimensions of the reality and to question the relevance of what is offered as a ready-made tenet was boldly asserted by the savant of the Mahabharata age over three hundred years ago. According to him :

Logic stands on no terra firma;
Vedic utterances are of various shades.
No single *Rishi* can be definitive;

The truth of *Dharma* rests in the cave (of consies) whatever way the great souled treads is verily the *path* proper.

(to quote the original : (MAHABHARATA, Vara; 313, Very 117)

तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयो विभिन्नाः
नैको ऋषिर्यस्य मतं प्रमाणम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायाम्
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥

Dharma is what upholds. (धारणाद धर्म इत्याहुः) It needs must stand the test of reason too.

यस्तर्केणानुसंधते स धर्म वेद नेतरे । (MANU)

And what is *dharma* if it does not lead to elevation as well as release :

यतोऽभ्युदयनिः श्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्म । (JAIMINI)

It was to facilitate the comprehension of *dharma* that *darshanas* were evolved as insights into the various aspects of the Ultimate Reality that a Hindu has learnt to visualise as a vast ocean into which

various rivers of creed, belief and faith cannot but flow. Pushpa-danta's outpouring addressed to the ultimate Reality in the *Shiva-mahimnastotra* tellingly reverberates the deep conviction of a Hindu that :

“The Vedas, the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Pashupata and the
Vaishnava

have various starting points and lines of argument :
this, the superfine; that , suitable too.

But you alone are the goal of individuals who in keeping with their various bents of mind take to various paths direct or circuitous, just as the ocean is the last resort of rivers vending various ways,” staight or serpentine.

In the original it runs as :

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति
प्रभिन्ते प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्याह जुकुटिलनानापथजुषां
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

Madhava (17th cent) in his *Sarva-darshana-sangraha* presents as many as 15 *darshanas*; i.e.: Charvaka, Baudha, Arhata, Ramanuja, Poorna-prajna, Nakulisha-Pashupata, Shaiva, Pratyabhijna, Raseshvara Aulukya, Akshapada, Jaiminiya, Paniniya, Sankya and Patanjala. The basic tenets of the Hindus are, thus, essentially an articulation of ideas, beliefs and theories which not only reflect the emotional makeup of the Hindus, but also determine their behavioural patterns as well as their socio-religious institutions. There is no single scripture of the Hindus, which could be looked upon as the basic or foundational text governing what has been called the Hindu way of life, The complex known as the religio-philosophical systems of the Hindu, has developed during over a thousand years of speculation and systematisation. These systems, as is apparent from the reference already made to the *Sarvadarshana-sangraha*, include theistic non-theistic as well as atheistic and even anti-theistic ones. Thus the Hindus have given rise to :

The ritualistic system of the *Mimansa*; the pluralistic theism of the *Nyaya-Vaisesaka*; the pluralistic system of the spiritual practice of the *Yoga*; the Godless rationalism of the *Sankhya*; the *Lokayata* or the anti-theistic materialism of the *Carvakas*; the *Isvara-vada* or the super-personalism of the *Bhagavad-Gita*; the *Advaita* or super-theistic monism of Sankara; the dualistic theism of the *Shaivasidhhanta*; the monistic theism of the *Shaivas*; the *Shakti-vada* or the spiritual dynamism of the *Tantras* the *Pratyabhijna* or Recognitive Theism of the Kashmir Shaivas; the *dvaita* or dualistic theism of Madhva; the *Visishtadvaita* or qualified monism of Ramanuja; the *Dvaitadvaita* or the dualistic monism of Nimbarka; the *Achintya Bhedabheda* or the super-rational dualistic monism of Chaitanya; the *Suddhadvaita* or pure monism of Vallabha; the Supermind theistic Yoga of Aurobindo; and the Vedantic humanism of Vivekananda; and so on. Mention may also be made here of outstanding cults like the Gorakhnathi Hathyoga and the Virashaiva; of the *panths* like those of Kabir, Dadu and Raidas; of *Samajas* like the Brahmo, Prarthana, Arya and these like the Radhaswamis.

Despite such a proliferation of sects and subsects within the Hindu fold, a Hindu has throughout had (though not always exercised) the choice of association or non-association with any or all of these systems and sub-systems as long as he is aware of the basic need to realise the Ultimate on his own. He is, in fact, expected to rise above all these, of course, in terms of self-realisation (आत्मानुभव). Every Hindu is entitled to have his *Ishta-deva*: (the divine ideal of his/her own choice); and, accordingly, concedes the same right to others too.

The quest for identity, as a Hindu, however, started only when the Hindus came face to face with a religious culture which refused to get merged into what had come to be looked upon as the mainstream of the religious thought of India, irrespective of race or cult or sect. (Alberuni's observation on the Hindu's look of awareness of cultures other than his own is nevertheless, quite revealing in this respect, as a symptom of parochial arrogance.)

But talking of Hindu identity one has also to mind the semantics of the term *Hindu*. Initially the term was used by non-Indian travellers or observers as a territorial label of the people living on the *Sindhu*, the river Sind which was the first landmark noticed by the Persians and the Greek on their march into the subcontinent. Centuries before the term denoted a nationality, it had appeared in the *Avesta* and also the inscriptions of Darius (521-486 B.C.) as just a territorial index. Later on the entire community of the Aryan settlers in the Indo-Gangetic Plains were given the label. The first mention in Indian writing, however, is found in a Tanttik work (: the *Kalika-Purana*) of the VII/VIII century, compiled most probably by one fairly conversant with the Yavana traditions current in North-west India. The term was gradually adopted as an umbrella coverage for all those that lived in India before the Turks settled down along with them. By then it had already come to signify the Indian nationality vis-a-vis the newcomers, the Turks (including the Afghans, later on joined by the Turko-Mongols too). By the time of Amir Khusro (c. 1250) the term Hindu had, thus, come to indicate the totality of India's religion and culture as a living tradition. Its frequent recurrence in the popular verse of the Bhakti poets like Namdev (c. 1269-1344), Kabir (1380-1460), Nanak (1469-1538), Dadu (1544-1603), Rajjab (c. 1565) and Maluk (c. 1570) points to the grave concern of these poets to undo the mischief done by the semantic polarisation of the terms *Hindu* and *Turk*. Kabir's reference to the two communities as separate entities of the Indian population is quite significant in view of his zestful eagerness to see both living in active amity as sincere collaborators in the quest for Truth. Similar was the endeavour of other Bhakti poets like Nanak, Dadu and Rajjab whose popular utterances in simple yet telling diction gave vent to the common man's genuine concern for a truly spiritual re-approachment between the aggressive creeds contending for sole monopoly of religious sales-manship. Let us hear a few of them. Says Namdev :

हिन्दु अंधा, तुर्कौ काना । दुवौ ते ज्ञानी सयाना ॥

हिंदु पूजै देहरा मूसलमान मसीद ।
नामा सोई सोविया जहो देहरा न मसीद ॥

Kabir asks :

वही महादेव, वही मुहम्मद, ब्रह्मा आदम कहिये ।
को हिंदू को तुरंक कहावै, एक जिमी पर रहिये ॥

And Dadu observes :

दोनों भाई हाथ-पग, दोनों भाई कान ।
दोनों भाई नैन हैं, हिंदू मूसलमान ॥

ना तहं हिंदू-देहरा ना तहं तुरक-मसीति । दादू आपै आप हैं, तहां न राह न रीति ॥

Here I deem it necessary to point out that what was by the tenth century recognised as Hindu hood had already absorbed various non-Aryan elements like the Harappan and the Dravidian, and the foreign elements like the Austrics, the Iranian Parsikas, the Scythian Sakas, the Ionian Greek Yavanas, the Yuechis, the Kushans and the Huns. All these disparate torrents of various cultures had flowed down into the mainstream of Indian culture; and the Hindu tradition had accepted and absorbed the multifarious traits in spite of inhibitive constraints prescribed by the *Varnasrama* theory. Yet the process of assimilation could go only upto a point. It could not combat the divisive tendencies fortified by caste prejudices. The newcomers that were absorbed, also fell into some caste pattern or the other; and the hierarchic considerations ceased to be pragmatic. Vested interests dictated a highly rigid social order reared on exclusive privilege, condemning thereby a fairly large sector of the community to an abject existence. The popular aspirations voiced by the Bhakti poets and duly supported by enlightened synthesisers like Akbar and Dara Shikuh remained unfulfilled mainly because the Hindu society of the period had grown extremely conservative and had failed to restructure its social setup realistically enough to attract and accommodate the latest newcomers, the Turks who professed a young blooded faith unhampered by any deadweight of caste-complex. Even the compilation of an *Allahopanishad* would not win over these Turks into the Hindu fold, for a separate identity suited

them better in terms of political supremacy. The Hindu identity had not remained by now merely *religio-cultural* but had become more and more *socio-political* too.

The quest for identity, therefore, became more and more defensive; it could no longer be regarded as coterminous with the Indian identity. The earlier splinter groups like the Jaina and the Baudha had, no doubt, been incorporated into the Hindu fold as sub-identities just like the Shaivas and Vaishnavas. Yet the Sikhs also were assuming a distinct identity of their own, while even the sub-identities of other panths like these of Gorakh, Kabir and Dadu were evolving separate identities of themselves though still choosing to remain within the broader circumference of the parent culture. The Christian Mission's impact further politicised the issue of identity with the result that the quest became extremely uneasy and challenging. The Hindu identity had, therefore, to be modified and redefined from time to time so as to reconcile a number of new developments within the parameters of ethos already accepted as historical legacy, the ethos of unity in diversity.

Despite shifts in connotation of the term, thus, in varying contexts, the Hindu is now identified as one who is supposed to profess what he regards as *dharma* (loosely called Hinduism), which has a connotation broader than that carried by the *suffixism-Dharma*, as already pointed out earlier, comprehends a way of life in accordance with certain metaphysical notions nurtured by some insight known as *darshana* (generally rendered into English as philosophy). The Hindu identity, accordingly, appears to be a sense of belonging to the totality of the religio-philosophical heritage of India, without any obligation to take the whole or part of it as Gospel Truth. It is, in fact, this very enlightened sense of belonging to an Indian confederacy of religio-philosophical sects or dispositions that have developed in the ethos of interdependence, which discerns meaningful unity in bewildering diversity.

This view of identity may not sound quite definitive to some who may find it wide enough to be taken as the identity of any

Indian irrespective of the faith he professes; but it would be too much to expect that a non-Hindu Indian would invariably have a sense of belonging to the totality of the religio-philosophical legacy of the land, which certainly is not the same thing as the *socio-cultural* legacy that no Indian can afford to disown.

The Hindu identity is, thus, no hard and fast differential of creed or dogma. It is neither a point nor a line, nor even a multilateral enclosure of faith and conduct. It is rather a spectrum of spiritual choice within the socio-cultural framework of India's total history, unfettered by an all-time requirement insisting on conformity to any exclusive or monolithic ideal. In terms of India's total history the spectrum of choice, no doubt, covers a wide cross-section of belief as well as behaviour coming down over four millen right from the pre-Harappan age to the present-day realities of the post-independence era; yet it does not insist on any specific cult or code of conduct over and above the temper inspired by a sense of belonging to the total religio-philosophical heritage of the land.

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IDENTITY AND AGONY OF THE MUSLIMS

The range of Muslim world is as wide as the human race, and its people are deeply involved in every major problem that confronts our common humanity. The spectres of hunger and of nuclear destruction, of inflation and war, know no boundries. Across the Muslim world there are as many varied voices to be heard as elsewhere reasoned hopes and desperate fears, despair and optimism cynicism and idealism, ideas that are world embracing of egocentric. Some experience that power and problems of unaccustomed wealth. Most straggle for a living.

But to-day as the Islamic world enters the fifteenth century of its earth'ly existence, the Muslims are passing through the most critical period in their history, experiencing any acute social, economic and political agony. No doubt all societies tend to underestimate the difficulties and problems faced by the people of other times and overestimate their own. But in the context of the various divergent forces and the everchanging political and socio-economic environment surely the problems of the contemporary muslim world are of greater unusually warrisome and frighteningly more complex and as time passes, they get more and more entangled and complex.

So long as the Muslims were in the vanguard of knowledge they led the civilized world in culture, science and philosophy. No one can deny the priceless contributions of the Muslims to the world of scientific and cultural thought. They did not hesitate to learn or borrow from non-muslims for had not the Prophet told them to go even as far as China in the quest of learning. By taking from others and improving or refining it as well as improving and refining their

own and by integrating the two Muslims were able to establish their superiority whether it was in science or philosophy, art architecture or astronomy, in agriculture transportation or techniques of war. It was during this period of glory that Muslims dominated and related to the west from a position of strength. But that is all history and now the world of Islam relates to the west from a position of dependence whether the world of Islam seeks technology or technicians, machinery or medicines, educational instructions or military training or simply capital for development. There is not a single Muslim country at the start of the 15th century after Hijira which stands independently of or relates to the west from a position of strength.

The decline of the Muslim world dates roughly from the beginning of the 13th century. Henceforward all the Muslim countries witnessed a terrible decline not only in their political status but also in their intellectual and cultural life. Whereas the other people, especially in the west, progressed, the Muslims frittered away their energies in fruitless controversies. Blind imitation of the past became the hallmark of the Muslims. The verdict of 'Imams' and jurists were accepted more in letter than in spirit. While religious thinkers of Islam never claimed infallibility or finality for their legal and theological decisions, the Muslims thought that the last word has been said on the subject and that any amendment or departure amounted to sacrilege.

The Quran repeatedly asks the Muslim community to use reason, to reflect, to speculate. The flourishing of science in the early period of Islam was the result of the fact that early Muslims took this injunction seriously. Thus, inspired they constructed within a short period of two hundred years, a civilisation whose achievements are unmatched. However, with the rise of the conflict between the Asharites and Mu'tazilites and the consequent success of the Asharites a new paradigm enveloped the Muslim scholars. This paradigm was *taqlid*—unquestioning following and obedience. The anti-thesis of *taqlid* is *ijtihad* to do one's best to know something. *Ijtihad* was practised upto 700/1300 but the concept was largely enveloped by Muslim law and jurisprudence. It is not known why

the gates of *Ijtihad* were closed by Muslim theologians. The most probable reason was the common abuse of *Ijtihad* by many people who were not qualified, and so the pious scholars, fearing a massive misuse of *Ijtihad* and aiming at stopping the unqualified, declared that it was not allowed for anyone to exercise independent reasoning. However, when *taqlid* was accepted as the dominant paradigm, the dynamic phase of the Muslim civilization came to an end.

The creed of *taqlid* is diametrically opposed to the spirit of enquiry. The stereotype of the traditional scholars created by the overpowering influence of *taqlid*, is a perfect masters of Islamic law and theology, but their manic pre-occupation with memory and imitation does not really help creativity. Besides, they have converted secondaries into fundamentals. They have lost sight of individual freedom, the dynamic nature of many Islamic injunctions and creativity. They have provided political legitimacy to despotic and nepotistic systems of government. Because there is no dynamism nor virility left in the traditional culture they represent. Our modern educated youth cannot help but associate everything Islamic with what is poor, primitive backward, old and dying. No wonder then, that the majority of Muslims today pay little attention to them.

However, we must be careful and not vest the blame for the decay of Muslim civilization entirely on the shoulders of traditional scholars. Amongst them have there been many scholars of perspective who devoted their thoughts, and their energies to the task of redirecting the Muslim caravan back to its original course.

Historically, the Muslims had stood the cross-currents of four great civilizations, the Greeks, the Semitics, the Persians, and the Indians and at each encounter they learnt, although with difficulty in some cases, to adopt and adapt without losing their own cultural identity. However, the European domination brought an experience unparalleled in Muslim history, an altogether different historical phenomenon. While in the previous cases Muslim intellectual and cultural superiority speedily led to the assimilation of contacting civilization, Western civilization presented a different kind of picture.

Firstly, the Muslims themselves were both intellectually and culturally weak and degenerate. Secondly, the Industrial Revolution gave the west the superiority of mechanization and on account of its organizational and technological superiority first rolled back the Islamic outposts and thereafter overran the heartlands of Islam.

The intellectual superiority of the West was largely seen in its science and technology. It was thus natural that western civilization was adored and presented as the ideal type by large number of Muslims. The chief instruments of the process of westernization were the various western-type schools and technical colleges that were introduced.

On the political level western law and administrative style completely replaced Islamic law and administration in certain areas and were appended to it in others. Much of these changes took place under colonial rule. The various social groups, the traditionalists the westernisers, the secularists, were all at loggerheads with each other. Besides these there was yet a another group, the revivalists, who exercised great hold on the minds of Muslims.

The divergent elites of these warring groups did unite, in certain areas against the colonial rule, under a new ideology-Nationalism.

Nationalism is a blanket term applied to a number of different realities. In the Muslim world nationalism became a manipulative tool. In the Middle east it served a dual purpose. It was the main catalyst in the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and it rallied the masses to fight against the colonial powers. The aggressive-pan-Arabism, so rampant in Abdul Nasir's time, is an expression of anti-colonial feelings. In the post colonial period, this feeling is reserved for 'imperialism'.

In Persia Reza Shah Pahlavi propogated a Persian nationalism that based itself on ancient Persian culture with a tinge of shi'ism to get the right mix.

In the Indian subcontinent, nationalism emerged as "the just

call for a separate homeland for the Muslims, and developed into the national states of Pakistan". It was here more than any others place that "Nationalism found, for the want of a better world Islamic, expression".

Kemal Attaturk's nationalism was an entirely different type. His point of departure was pride in being a Turk and Pride imitating Europe. He desired no remnants of Islam in Turkey. The Caliphate must be abolished, traditional scholars must be humiliated, even Arabic script and headwear must be abolished. Attaturk's modernist reforms, however, did little for Turkey.

The colonial rulers had also left the new Muslim nations, economically poor, technologically backward, socially disorganized. The newly independent states were underdeveloped and in a situation of dependency. The Muslim nations aspired to become developed, as they still do today and to achieve, this, the developed nations, the former colonial rulers, were to be imitated. The developed countries in their turn set up and applied aid programmes for the developing countries in the form of technical assistance, expertise and technology. In actual practice the aid programmes were new forms of colonialism, and this led to the disintegration and dislocation of the economics, cultures and societies of the Muslim world, as well as mental, educational and ideological dependency. The later kind of dependency is the most destructive. Once one's mind comes under someone else's control one loses his identity, his very soul, his essence his right to exist.

But it would not help any body to blame "the others" for our ills and failings. We should rather seek a practical solution to our common problems together by a concerted effort. Such a common effort will only be possible and successful if we tackle our specific problems on a national and individual level in a way best suited to our particular condition. Then, and then only, can we make a useful contribution to our collective human advance, on the basis of historical continuity and individual and collective responsibility.

Muslims to look at the contemporary Islamic world, have shown to be long on sentiment, on rhetoric, on resolution but short on action on organization and on disciplined endeavour. Seeking refuge in time-worn cliches, in withdrawing into traditional cocoon, in relying upon thundering rhetoric Muslim community will remain static and stagnant. What Muslims need is a fresh introspection, a critical examination, a realistic evaluation of the methods of those who have forged ahead, and a practical programme of action. The beginning of the 15th century of Hijra can become the start of a meaningful, purposeful and deliberate revival of Muslims if they dare to enter the new age with courage and determination.