

PUPPETS OF FAITH

theory of communal strife

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BS Murthy

Puppets of Faith: Theory of Communal Strife

A critical appraisal of Islamic faith, Indian polity 'n more

BS Murthy

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Dedicated to -

All those men, women and children, who ever suffered at the hands of bigots
on account of the dogma of their faith, and to those sacrificial animals
that become victims of religious superstition.

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Preface of Strife

The lava of the volcano on which the world sits is the disaffection the *Musalms* nurse towards the *kafirs*. While its chemistry world over is the Islamic religious rigidity, in India it is compounded by the Hindu 'historical' hurt, aggravated by the Muslim-appeasing political ethos of the State. It's thus the Indian landscape is dotted with many of its earlier eruptions, but the one, in the wake of Godhra's 'burning train' in 2002, affected everyone as never before. That a fanatical band of *Musalms* should dare torch their *Ram Sevaks* in a railway coach of that *Sabarmati Express* seemed to the *Sangh Parivar* like Saladin crossing the *Lakshman Rekha*. And that the *dalits* too joined the hysterical Hindu mobs to burn their persons and property was beyond belief to the ghettoed *Musalms* nevermind that many among the rioters were felled by police bullets.

In that setting, the prospect of a new-found Hindu unity spoiling their electoral party was something galling to the pseudo-secular politicians, who have been icing their caste-divisive Hindu electoral cake with the cream of the consolidated Muslim votes. The self-serving fourth estate that meanwhile expanded its 'mass' base, courtesy the *idiot box*, saw in all this a godsend 'breaking news', enabling the Islamapologic columnists (Islamapologia is about condescending to descend to the *Musalms*) as well as Islam-naïve Hindu intellectuals to score a Brownie point or two into the Indian pseudo-secular goal. Not the ones to miss any opportunity for Hindu bashing, the ideologically afflicted left-liberals, as well as the half-read Hindu columnists, who ever shy as ever to stare at the Islamic fundamentalism straight in its face, had joined the anti-Hindutva bandwagon albeit by pushing the ghastly Godhra manifestation of Islamism under the secular carpet. Above all, the politicians of all 'secular' hues, alive as they are to every opportunity that presents itself to consolidate their Islamist constituencies, wouldn't let this pass; so, they were in no hurry to leave the scene, but continued to stoke the communal fires to keep the electorate warm.

But yet to sustain the public interest for the sake of its profitability, even as the media needed to name a villain and focus its spotlight on him, Sonia the Italian, who had long usurped the grand old party of India, invented the one for it in Narendra Damodardas Modi, the Chief Minister of the riot-torn Gujarat and dubbed him *maut ka*

saudāgar (merchant of death) unfairly though. It's another matter however, that the media-maligned Modi, after many trials and tribulations, was anointed by Indians as their *mukhiya* (head), after a Hindu *pushkara* (12 years), to become the harbinger of the much need change, overdue by a long shot that is. History is naughty for it first creates chaos and then brings about order.

But the problem with a problem is that until one admits that it exists, one cannot address it, and unless it is addressed, it persists. Make no mistake here is this *Musalmans* disaffection for *kafirs* for the world to contend with, and the Hindu-Muslim discord is but its Indian variation. The pseudo-secular sophistry has it that when it comes to the basic tenets, all religions carry a premium on peace and all the believers seek social harmony but for a few misguided fanatical elements on either side of the communal divide.

However, sadly though, the ground reality is that to the average Hindu, it seems as if the *Musalmans* suffer from the symptoms of Islamic fever caused by a diseased mind-set afflicted by the *sharia* fervor. The Muslim compliment to the Hindu is the contemptuous *kafir*, destined for hell and all that goes with it. Indeed, it is but owing to the glossing over of these entrenched misgivings by the pseudo-secular politicians, who cater to the Islamic whims of obscurantist *mullahs* and *moulvis* as a means of appeasing the *umma*, that the communal lava erupts periodically to hurt the tenuous Hindu-Muslim coexistence in India, ironically partitioned, based on the Islamic premise that the *umma* cannot coexist with the Hindus.

This book seeks to outline the background of the *Musalman-kafir* animosity on one hand, and the Hindu-Muslim communal divide on the other. It would seem that these are the products of one or more of the scriptural notions, religious dogmas, medieval history, and modern politics, or all put together. As one cannot understand man unless he understands his religion, all must be abreast of the basic religious tenets of the competing or conflicting faiths, more so the sectarian Semitic dispensations. Then, it would be revealing how the religious scriptures *per se* contribute to social discord and communal disaffection, and /or both. In the strife-torn world of ours, it's our grasp of this canvas of conflict that might eventually enable us to paint the picture of peaceful coexistence of the faithful of mutually contradicting belief systems.

Thus, the social evolution as well as the spiritual ethos of Hinduism and Buddhism on one hand and that of the Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the other are sketched here in its rudiments. Also, since man carries the historical deadwood, in spite of himself, the history that connects and disconnects the Abrahamic faiths, and that which divides the Hindu-Muslim emotions is pictured for one to appreciate the background of their unceasing strife.

After all, there is more to religion than that meets the eye, which is the overriding faith and feeling of the believers in its divine inerrancy. Given that the Islamic creed is more so a product of Muhammad's persona, the influence of his character in shaping the ethos of the *umma* has been analyzed. Won't the *Musalmans* themselves concede that their endeavor would be to follow the straight path of Islam as earnestly as they could, as others, any way, have strayed onto the satanic path? Since it is this mind-set that makes the *Musalmans* apart in the religious sense, how this could possibly govern the Muslim psyche is scanned with "I'm Ok – You're Ok" the famous work of Thomas A. Harris, with their religious creed from Roland E Miller's "Muslim Friends—Their Faith and Feeling" as the probe.

All this might not only enable the 'the others' to appreciate the Muslim constraints but also understand their own aberrations. Likewise, it could be hoped that the

Musalmans too would ponder over the apprehensions of the 'the others' as well as their own afflictions that are behind the *Musalman-kafir* confrontation.

Chapter 1

Advent of Dharma

As opposed to the purported revelation of the God's 'chosen path' to man through some messiah, which forms the basis of the Semitic faiths, the essence of Hinduism has been for one to adhere to his *dharma*, supposedly sanctified by their gods in communion with the *rishis* of yore. And *dharma*, though varies from man to man, *per se* is the common course for the salvation of the souls. It is this salient feature of its religious character that gives Hinduism its theological variety and philosophical edge, sorely lacking in the Semitic faiths, each moulded in the persona of its prophet, moreso the Mohammedan cult of Islam.

Well, in the Semitic religions, the essence of the faith is the implicit obedience to the All-Knowing Almighty, and strict compliance with the dogma enunciated by the messiah, ostensibly received from the Creator Himself. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the faithful to believe that 'the God' revealed to their prophet the right 'path of life' for them to unquestioningly follow so as to stand them in good stead on the Day of Judgment. Besides, it is the unique feature of the Semitic religious dogma in that the messiah is believed to be endowed with the power of intercession on behalf of the faithful on the Fateful Day. If anything, this precept seems more pronounced in the Christianity and Islam than in the Judaism. This unmistakably led to the Semitic habit of the faithful looking up to the messiah to help them attain salvation, or reach the paradise as the case may be. Intended or otherwise, the messiah became the fulcrum of the faith as well as the icon of the Abrahamic religious ethos. In the process, as it were, the Lord God of the religion got relegated to the background, nevermind the pretence to the contrary.

In such a religious setting, it was only time before the vulgar minds insensibly allowed the prophet to rule their religious space in the practice of the faith, supposedly founded by him at the behest of 'the God'. The Semitic idea of decrying idol-worship, ostensibly to let 'the God' not suffer any rivals, seems to have been diluted by the gentiles who embraced the Christianity in the medieval times. Of course, that was well after Moses' Hebrew herds worshipped that golden cow in the ancient times. At length, in the practice of the faiths, this 'no rival to the God' dogma turned out into an 'accent on the prophet' culture. But in the end, the Christian model insensibly found the savior sharing the ecclesiastical dais with the exalted preachers of his faith enshrined as Saints. And seemingly Islam wanted to avoid that ever happening to its prophet, and designed a mechanism to forever preclude that possibility driven by human proclivity. But in the process, the *Musalmans* came to condition themselves to revere their prophet rendering Islam into Mohammedanism in practice.

However, in the precepts of *sanātana dharma*, aka Hinduism, even as one's religious ethos is to seek God's favour for his *moksha*, in the philosophical sense he perceives Him as his own spiritual self, *aham brahmasmi brahma*. Conceptually thus, such a relationship between man and his maker, without the intermediary of a messiah, enables the worshipper experience a sense of oneness with the One worshipped. Hence, it is no blasphemy for a Hindu to tirade his God, strange though it may seem, when felt let down by Him.

Thus, going by the precept and practice, Hinduism cannot be deemed a dogma in the Semitic religious sense. Naturally, our enquiry should be directed at exploring the causative factors that should've induced this unique Hindu spiritual oneness with God,

as against the Semitic religious projection of him as an overseeing 'n overwhelming outside power, to whose Will, believed to be conveyed to their prophet, the faithful should submit themselves regardless. Well, had the Lord 'God' stopped his divine intervention in man's mundane affairs after bestowing the Ten Commandments to his chosen people through Moses, our worldly things would have been all different. But he not only thought it fit to alter his Will twice but also chose to communicate the contradicting things to his peoples, first through Jesus his Son and later Muhammad his Messenger, but for which the world wouldn't have been as strife-torn as it has been ever since.

It has often been suggested, unfairly though, that Hindus have no sense of history and thus failed to record their journey down the historical lane. However, what is not appreciated is that the grand libraries in Takshasila 'n Nalanda Universities, among their premier seats of learning of yore, which could have held the records of their history from the ancient times, were vandalized by the bigoted *Musalmans*. That Nalanda itself is believed to have housed over nine million books and other literary works, which sustained its arson by Bakhtiyar Khilji's for three months in 1,193 C.E., should give one an idea of the magnitude of the Hindu 'historical' loss.

Thus, bereft of their ancient history and having been fed thereafter with the unpalatable diet prepared for them by *Musalmans* and the Christians, who together ruled them for a millennium, Hindus have no clue about their past moorings. So, needless to say, the 'in vogue' Indian history is the victors' version of it about the vanquished that the Hindu left-liberals and the Islamic supremacists lend credence to, and what is worse; the Hindus are made to believe they were not even their native selves but the hybrids of Aryans who migrated to India from Eurasia in 1,500 B.C.E.

The moot point is whether the Aryans descended upon *Ila Varta* aka *Bharat Varsha* with all four Vedas in their kitty to rechristen it as *Arya Varta*. Had it been the case, then it is reasonable to assume that there would have been claimants for the Vedic legacy in Eurasia as well, but as it is not the case, it can be said without any contradiction that the theory of the Aryan migration is devoid of any base. Moreover, now the growing school of thought, supported by DNA analysis that India's populace is both indigenous as well as homogenous should debunk this theory invented by the Whites, probably to appropriate the 'admired' Hindu philosophical legacy to their race or as a ploy to divide the Hindus, they came to colonize, on racial lines for political ends and / or both. Even if Aryans did indeed migrate to India that would have been in their nomadic state and it was India's evolved environs that would have enabled them to acquire their intellectual sophistication that they displayed in the *Vedas*, *Brahmasutras*, and *Upanishads* in later years. And for the doubters, once out of silvery, haven't the Jews, in due course, transformed themselves into an intellectually formidable race on earth.

Be that as it may, for the final nail in the coffin of the doubtful theory is yet to be hammered home, we may still go along with it for the sake of analyzing the evolution of the Hindu social order, which may hold well even in the non-Aryan setting. So, an enquiry into the origins and the evolution of *sanātana dharma* in *Bharat Varsha* is warranted, however bearing in mind the discovery, of the presence of the Indus Valley Civilization at Mohen jo daro in Sind and Harappa in Punjab way back in 3,500 B.C.E, which is bound to address the question of the Aryan philosophical purity as well.

By the time of the said Aryan arrival, or the more probable emergence of a fair-skinned Indian tribe bearing the same name, or a similar sounding one (*Native namesake*), as the dominant force, even if the glorious ancient civilization were to be extinct by then, yet the remnants of its culture should have been still extant. After all, a civilization is but the cultural ethos of a people, and culture itself is a synthesis of the communal arrangement in a given society. Hence, it can be assumed that a stable polity

would have been in existence in the ancient *Bharat Varsha*, probably dating back to 7,500 B.C.E. that is going by the recent discovery of a submerged city in the Gulf of Khambhat, off the coast of Gujarat.

That being the case, the usage of 'Aryan' in this study should be taken as the generic term referring the people, be it aliens or natives, who came to shape the Hindu social and religious order.

But, the Aryan cultural hegemony, over the life and times of all others, that anyway is to be expected, left no traces of the old social order for us to divine that is owing to the destruction of its archives by Muslim marauders and others. Thus, for all practical purposes, the prevalent communal code with caste as creed, apparently in vogue from the Vedic times, is the only known social mores of India's ancient past.

Though we might remain clueless about the ancient Indian social arrangement, yet, we may speculate about its probable influence on the evolution of the new way of life, under the aegis of the Aryans, which eventually became the Hindu way of life known as *sanātana dharma* in the times of yore and Hindutva in the current age. Just the same, as they were set to dominate the polity of the land that came into their hand, they could be expected to have been acquainted with the nuances of the cultural ethos of other native tribes.

Hence, it would be interesting to speculate as to how the Aryans should've subdued the native majority, without a fight, only to absorb their culture in the polity they evolved. It seems probable, notwithstanding their mental prowess exemplified by the civilization of Mohen jo daro and Harappa; those people might not have been martial races. Added to that, they should have been either depressed economically or depleted in numbers or even disjointed politically, could be owing to famines, floods or fights among themselves occasioned by petty jealousies of the communes. Whatever, they obviously were unable or unwilling to offer any significant resistance to the incoming Aryans or their Native namesakes, as the case may be; also, the latter's adventurous spirit should have overawed them into surrendering to that emergent force. In support of this presumption, in all of Vedic literature, we have no account of any battle royal fought by them with the other inhabitants. Well, the battle of Mahābhārata was fought some 1,500 years before these newbies are said to have arrived on the scene in the ancient land. Besides, won't the latter-day Indian history – of Islamic invasions and British colonization - vouch for this native characteristic?

Whatever it was, the new lords became the overlords of all they purveyed in the land they took pride in as *Arya Varta*, which they came to believe as their *karma bhōmi*. It goes without saying that these newbies would have needed a social structure in place to dominate the others they subdued. It was thus, the colour of the skin could have played its part in stratifying the society, and it is not without significance that as they would have been fair-skinned, they made the concept of caste as *varna*, which in Sanskrit means colour. The subdued people, probably a mix of brown and black, could not have measured up to their fair skin, and thus in the psychological sense, were unequal to them to start with. Why wouldn't the Whitemen's psychological dominance of the physically far more endowed African blacks in modern times, so much so that they could enslave them, support this proposition? Just the same, on account of the real politick; the newbies could not have afforded to keep the others out of their socio-cultural orbit, and yet, it was imperative for them to preclude any politico-cultural threat from them as well. It was to serve these ends that they might have looked for ways and means for keeping the others in an extended social fold, albeit at arm's length. And the result of this newbie's political compulsion could have been behind the evolution of the caste system, so unique to the human experience.

Needless to say, an organized culture, as the one available to the native tribes, would have had some class structure of its own. The imperative for the newbies would have been to devise a new social order, without disturbing the old, in a way to accommodate all the others at the lower ends; needless to say, placing themselves at the acme of the new social pyramid they built. Thus, the native brown-skinned would have been 'casted away' as *vaisyas* and *sudras* in that order, depending upon their social status or occupation, and / or both. It's thus; the caste system so devised by them to integrate themselves into the polity, while dividing the others from one another, was brilliant though cynical. With the newbies' social comfort zone thus drawn, the unfortunate blacks amongst the natives were dubbed as *antyaja* only to be eventually relegated as untouchables.

To enforce their caste law as law of the land, the newbies would have earmarked muscle-men amongst them as bouncers, who in time came to be christened as *kshatriyas*. At some length, however, their intellectual class might have wanted to institutionalize their social supremacy for all times to come, and it was towards this end that they posited themselves as Brahmans at the apex of the caste structure, which they helped build over the ruins of the then prevailing social orders. And in order to perpetuate the caste hierarchy thus evolved, the Brahmans envisioned the concept of *swadharma*, which, being caste specific, not only defined the caste ethos but also drew the caste boundaries. It was thus, Brahmans, as a caste, came to be the shepherds of the Hindu philosophy and culture for centuries to come.

So, it were these very Brahmans who gifted Sanskrit to the world, whose incredible beauty makes the Hindus believe that it is the *deva bhasha*, the language of the gods. Hence, it's no wonder that the British Indologist, Sir William Jones, a Greek and Latin scholar, who mastered it as well, should have remarked that, 'Sanskrit is of wonderful structure, more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either'.

Nowhere in the annals of human history that a small group of people, by the privilege of birth or the faculties of mind, and / or both, came to monopolize the soul of a people, the spirit of a culture and the destiny of a society for so long as the Brahmans in Bharat did. Only a unique sense of their destiny, or the arrogance of their perceived superiority, should've enabled the Brahmans to eventually posit themselves as angels on earth, endowed with, lo the power to control the gods themselves, well, with the mantras, composed by them in the language of the gods at that. And that is what *Nārāyana Upanishad* expostulates as follows:

*daiva dēnam jagat sarvam, / mantrā dēnantu daivatam,
tan mantram brāhmanādēnam, / brāhmano mama dēvata.*

It's on god that hinges all / Mantras rein in that godhood
Controlled are those by Brahmans / Making them our own angels.

In the end, it was this Brahmanical arrogance that brought about the degeneration of the expansive *sanātana dharma*, evolved by their forebears, into the narrow Brahmanism, exemplified by *swadharma*, to the eternal hurt of Hinduism. However, to be fair to them, it's not that they committed any fraud on the gullible public on that score, for they truly believed that the gods could indeed be appeased with their *mantras*. Besides, they felt it was their destiny to intercede between gods and man for the well-being of the latter, and thus strived to equip themselves to fulfill the unique role their *swadharma* ordained them.

So, for the supposed benefit of mankind, they devised appropriate *mantras* to propitiate the gods for their rewarding man in his every endeavor. To help serve the public cause, they led a spiritually righteous life that involved a high degree of self-

discipline as well as self-denial. Besides, for their *mantras* to be effectual on the gods, they strived unremittingly to attain the required chastity in the intonation of their recitation. Be that as it may, whatever could be the effect of the Vedic *mantras* on the gods; the sheer lyrical beauty of their composition has the power to enthrall all Hindus, nay, every listener for that matter.

Thus, in a unique phenomenon, their intellectual quality and a righteous lifestyle, gave the Brahmans an unmatched spiritual supremacy, which combined with the credulity of the public, enabled them to retain their premier status in the Indian society till very recently. However, their methodology for monopoly over the gods curiously led to a religious system that helped as well as harmed the Hindu society in the end. In the Hindu system of heavenly rewards, the devout can seek them at their own dwellings, of course aided by the Brahmans, who through their *mantras*, strive to invoke gods' blessings on them albeit for a fee. It was thus, in the Brahmanical scheme of worship, there was no felt need for a temple for their gods as such.

However, the temple with its presiding deity in the sanctum sanctorum was a latter-day innovation in the *puranic* period and even then; the periodic visits of the Hindus to temples are but supplementary to their ceremonies in their homes. Thus to this day, every Hindu home, if not a *pooja room* as such, has an earmarked space for private worship that is treated as a 'temple' by the family. And the Brahman *purohits* continue to perform numerous Vedic rituals at individual residences, designed for the benefit of the believers' prosperity on earth and happiness in the heaven. Even in the temples, it is through *mantras* that the Brahman priests seek to invoke the deity's blessings on the thronging devotees.

It is interesting to see how this unique religious model virtually frees the non-priestly classes that include the majority of the Brahmans as well, from the obligation of religious education as well as a prayer regimen. All this enables the rest of the population to improve the productivity of the nation, assured of their own salvation, albeit of a lesser station. On the negative side, it distanced the masses from the nuances of Hindu spirituality, and that kept them ignorant and illiterate, religiously and otherwise too. And it is this shortcoming of the Brahmanical religious model that fails to address the theological grooming of the illiterate masses, which rendered, and still does, the Hindu caste fringes susceptible for religious conversion into the alien faiths of the Christianity and Islam. And the proselytizing zealots from both these faiths fail not to exploit this grand Hindu religious fault line by means fair and foul.

It is one thing for the newbies to have established socio-cultural hegemony over Bharat, and it was another, given their numerical minority, to avoid their social disintegration in the long run. As would be seen later on in this book, it was this very circumstance that compelled Muhammad to shape his creed of Islam the way it was shaped. The newbies too would have been alive to the nature of man to covet other man's spouse, while being possessive about his own mate, and thus wanting to possess the others' women, their men would have been constrained to detain their fair sex from succumbing to the charms of the other male folks. It was thus, they would have come up with a code that served them both ways.

While allowing the union of a higher caste man with a lower caste woman in *anuloma*, through *pratiloma* they strived to ensure that cupid's 'other' arrows wouldn't strike the newbie women. And to deal with the recalcitrant of their stock, motherly sentiment was brought in as a possible hurdle to deter them from opting for *pratiloma*, especially, with the lowly men, in view of which it was decreed that the offspring of a newbie woman through a union with a *sudra* would be jeopardized as *chandāla*, as an outcast. It would have dawned on the Brahmans, sooner than later, that for its effective adherence, it would be imperative to back the social code with divine sanction as well. It

is thus, the *Manu Dharma Sāstra*, with its adverse features that are inimical to the good of women as such, should have been the outcome of their compulsion to deter their females from coveting the other males.

It is inconceivable to imagine that a well-evolved ancient civilization, such as the Mohenjo-daro one, should be bereft of a religious custom, if not a theological creed as such. The Brahman intellect would have divined that the dogma or prejudice of the others brooks no abrogation; so it is realistic to assume that in fashioning the Vedic rituals, if not their *mantras*, the Brahmans should have co-opted, or modified, the others' mores to suit their tastes or fancies, and / or both. This could be the reason why the ancient folklores of *Ramayana* and *Mahābhārata* would've been adopted as Hindu *purānās*. In this context, it is relevant to note that both Rama and Krishna, the *puranic* heroes, respectively of those epics, were indeed dark skinned and thus were not from among the ranks of the newbies.

Likewise, the ongoing debate about the much repeated reference to *samudra*, the sea, in the Rig Veda, the first scriptural composition of the newbies, apparently a land locked people, yet to venture south of the Vindhyas from the Gangetic plains to have reached a beach, would suggest the Indo-Dravidian influence on the newbies' thought-process and religious practices. Hence, they would have co-opted the social mores and the religious symbols of the others, maybe such as the hallowed *Om* and the sacred *Swastika*, for their appeal or as an expedient, and / or both. Sadly though, in the modern times, Adolf Hitler, in pursuit of the Aryan hegemony over the Anglo-Saxon races, made the *swastika* infamous by giving it an artistic turn and a satanic twist.

Nevertheless, having accepted the inferior social status, for their part, the other natives would have had no difficulty in embracing the emerging doctrine of the newbies that accommodated their own religious symbols, if not their dogmas. This probably was the great Brahman religious coup that enabled their dominance of the Indian society for millennia to come.

Chapter 2

God's quid pro Quo

In what could have been the first irony of human history, at the very time when the Aryans / Namesakes were subjugating the free people in Bharat, the Jews, in slavery, were enabled by 'the God' to escape from Egypt, the land that enslaved them, that too by parting the sea to make way for them.

The God, as though in reciprocity, demanded of the Jews to submit to His Will, made explicit in the Torah; and having gained their servitude, as if to massage their ego, He proclaimed them as His Chosen People. Nevertheless, to rein them in, He imposed a code of conduct upon them through the Laws He revealed to Moses, the Prophet chosen for that purpose.

Besides, as an incentive to their compliance with those harsh Laws, 'the God' promised to lead them into Israel, the 'Promised Land' for them. Just the same, the All Knowing God felt all that might not be enough to ensure an everlasting obedience and the abiding gratitude of His Chosen People; and thus, as though to keep the flock all to Himself, he warned them of their destruction if they ever worshipped other gods.

Hence, it is imperative to understand the nature of Jehovah, the Judaic God, and the tone and tenor of the Mosaic Laws to appreciate the life and times of the Semitic people in that distant past.

The Ten Commandments, with the God's preamble, read thus:

I am Jehovah your god who liberated you from your slavery in Egypt.

1. You may worship no other god than me.

2. You shall not make yourselves any idols: no images of animals, birds, or fish. You must never bow or worship it in any way; for I, the Lord your God, am very possessive. I will not share your affection with any other God!

And when I punish people for their sins, the punishment continues upon the children, grand children, and great-grand children of those who hate me; but I lavish my love upon thousands of those who love me and obey my commandments.

3. You shall not use the name of Jehovah your god irreverently, nor use it to swear to a falsehood. You will not escape punishment if you do.

4. Remember to observe the Sabbath as a holy day. Six days a week are for your daily duties and your regular work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest before the Lord your God. On that day you are to do no work of any kind, nor shall your son, daughter, or slaves - whether men or women - or your cattle or your houseguests. For in six days the Lord made the heaven, earth, and sea, and everything in them, and rested the seventh day; so he blessed the Sabbath day and set it aside for rest.

5. Honour your father and mother, that you may have a long, good life in the land the Lord your God will give you.

6. You must not murder.

7. You must not commit adultery.

8. You must not steal.

9. You must not lie.

10. You must not be envious of your neighbour's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or want to own his slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else he has.

In the New Stone Tablets that He gave to Moses, Jehovah further implores the Jews thus:

"Be very, very careful never to compromise with the people there in the land where you are going, for if you do, you will soon be following their evil ways. Instead, you must break down their heathen altars, smash the obelisks they worship, and cut down their shameful idols. For you must worship no other gods, but only Jehovah, for he is a God who claims loyalty and exclusive devotion.

No, do not make a peace treaty of any kind with the people living in the land, for they are spiritual prostitutes, committing adultery against me by sacrificing to their gods. If you become friendly with them and one of them invites you to go with him and worship his idol, you are apt to do it. And you would accept their daughters, who worship other gods, as wives for your sons – and then your sons would commit adultery against me by worshipping their wives' gods. You must have nothing to do with idols."

Having thus laid the moral code of conduct for His Chosen People, besides revealing the religious regimen of Judaism, Jehovah advanced the enabling provisions of conformity that came to be regarded as the 'Laws of Moses'. Understandably, these Laws lay down the prescriptions and proscriptions intended by 'the God' for man in the journey of his life 'here'. What is more, and inexplicably at that, the Mosaic Laws detail the ordained punishments based on 'eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth' jurisprudence.

As the Mosaic Laws reveal, Jehovah comes out as an Impersonal Being, content Himself at punishing the wrongdoers in a legalistic fashion, rather than concerning Himself with imparting spiritual guidance to the Jews, His Chosen People, for their salvation. Nonetheless, as the following passages from the Torah illustrate, when it

comes to His own relationship with them, Jehovah appears to be a very personal and demanding God.

“You must not worship the gods of the neighbouring nations, for Jehovah your God who lives among you is a jealous God, and his anger may rise quickly against you, and wipe you off the face of the earth. You must not provoke him and try his patience as you did when you complained against him at Massah. You must actively obey him in everything he commands. Only then will you be doing what is right and good in the Lord’s eyes. If you obey him, all will go well for you, and you will be able to go in and possess the good land which the Lord promised your ancestors. You will also be able to throw out all the enemies living in your land, as the lord agreed to help you do.’

“In the years to come when your son asks you, ‘What is the purpose of these laws which the Lord our God has given us? you must tell him, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with great power and mighty miracles – with terrible blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. We saw it all with our own eyes. He brought us out of Egypt so that he could give us this land he had promised to our ancestors. And he has commanded us to obey all of these laws and to reverence him so that he can preserve us alive as he has until now. For it always goes well with us when we obey all the laws of the Lord our God.”

The rewards that Jehovah accords to His Chosen People in exchange for their obedience are all materialistic as stipulated in the Torah thus:

“You must obey all the commandments of the Lord your God, following his directions in every detail, going the whole way he has laid out for you; only then will you live and lead prosperous lives in the land you are to enter and possess.”

“If you obey all of my commandments, I will give you regular rains, and the land will yield bumper crops, and the trees will be loaded with fruit long after the normal time! And grapes will still be ripening when sowing time comes again. You shall eat your fill, and live safely in the land, for I will give you peace, and you will go to sleep without fear. I will chase away the dangerous animals. You will chase your enemies; they will die beneath your swords. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you, ten thousand! You will defeat all of your enemies. I will look after you, and multiply you, and fulfill my covenant with you. You will have such a surplus of crops that you won’t know what to do with them when the new harvest is ready! And I will live among you, and not despise you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people. For I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would be slaves no longer; I have broken your chains so that you can walk with dignity.”

“When the Lord brings you into the Promised Land, as he soon will, he will destroy the following seven nations, all greater and mightier than you are: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites.”

Equally significantly, the punishments of disregard too are mundane to the core.

“But if you will not listen to me or obey me, but reject my laws, this is what I will do to you: I will punish you with sudden terrors and panic, and with tuberculosis and burning fever; your eyes shall be consumed and your life shall ebb away; you will sow your crops in vain, for your enemies will eat them. I will set my face against you and you will flee before your attackers; those who hate you will rule you; you will even run when no one is chasing you!”

“And if you still disobey me, I will punish you seven times more severely for your sins. I will break your proud power and make your heavens as iron, and your earth as bronze. Your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its crops, nor your trees their fruit.”

“And if even then you will not obey me and listen to me, I will send you seven times more plagues because of your sins. I will send wild animals to kill your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your numbers so that your roads will be deserted.”

“And if even this will not reform you, but you continue to walk against my wishes, then I will walk against your wishes, and I, even I, will personally smite you seven times for your sin. I will revenge the breaking of my covenant by bringing war against you. You will flee to your cities, and I will send a plague among you there; and you will be conquered by your enemies. I will destroy your food supply so that one oven will be large enough to bake all the bread available for ten entire families; and you will still be hungry after your pittance has been doled out to you.”

“And if you still won’t listen to me or obey me, then I will let loose my great anger and send you seven times greater punishment for your sins. You shall eat your own sons and daughters, and I will destroy the altars on the hills where you worship your idols, and I will cut down your incense altars, leaving your dead bodies to rot among your idols; and I will abhor you. I will make your cities desolate, and destroy your places of worship, and will not respond to your incense offerings. Yes, I will desolate your land; your enemies shall live in it, utterly amazed at what I have done to you.”

“I will scatter you out among the nations, destroying you with war as you go. Your land shall be desolate and your cities destroyed. Then at last the land will rest and make up for the many years you refused to let it lie idle; for it will lie desolate all the years that you are captives in enemy lands. Yes, then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths! It will make up for the rest you didn’t give it every seventh year when you lived upon it.”

“And for those who are left alive, I will cause them to be dragged away to distant lands as prisoners of war, and slaves. There they will live in constant fear. The sound of a leaf driven in the wind will send them fleeing as though chased by a man with a sword; they shall fall when no one is pursuing them. Yes, though none pursue they shall stumble over each other in flight, as though fleeing in battle, with no power to stand before their enemies. You shall perish among the nations and be destroyed among your enemies. Those left shall pine away in enemy lands because of their sins, the same sins as those of their fathers.”

“But at last they shall confess their sins and their fathers’ sins of treachery against me. (Because they were against me, I was against them, and brought them into the land of their enemies.) When at last their evil hearts are humbled and they accept the punishment I send them for their sins, then I will remember again my promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will remember the land (and its desolation). For the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as it lies desolate. But then at last they shall accept their punishment for rejecting my laws and for despising my rule. But despite all they have done, I will not utterly destroy them and my covenant with them, for I am Jehovah their God. For their sakes I will remember my promises to their ancestors, to be their God. For I brought their forefathers out of Egypt as all the nations watched in wonder. I am Jehovah.”

Thus, in essence, it seems that the religion of Judaism emphasizes the duty of the Jews to follow the Will of their God, in gratitude for His benevolence of their deliverance from slavery. It was this remarkable covenant of Jehovah, which made them His Chosen People that should have enabled them to brave the pogroms in alien lands for centuries with unrivalled forbearance. Besides, the underpinnings of reward and punishment regimen that their faith inculcates in their consciousness would have served the Jewish people sustain hope in the face of adversity for millennia.

On the other hand, Jehovah, for His part, kept His word, first by punishing the Jews as he said He would, and then, in the end, gave them the Promised Land, also as promised,

though as Golda Meir once quipped “Moses dragged us for 40 years through the desert to bring us to the one place in the Middle East where there was no oil”. Whatever, on the basis of the executed threats and fulfilled promises, and going by the recorded history of religions, the Judaism of Jehovah has a claim for authenticity amongst the faiths of the world. Thus, as Jehovah settled scores with the Jews ‘here’ itself, won’t the proposition be valid that, after all, there could be no Hindu *swarga*, no Christian Paradise and no Islamic Hereafter for man to contend with?

And inexplicably, Jehovah, in His Islamic avatar as Allah, revealed to Muhammad that the ‘Hereafter’ and not ‘here’ is all that matters for the new set of believers. And in times to come, the propensity of the zealot *Musalmans* to put their lives on line to make it to the appetizing paradise has become the scourge of mankind ‘here’.

Chapter 3

Pyramids of Wisdom

It would be interesting to speculate what would have been the religious tenor of the Hinduism and its early derivatives, the Jainism and the Buddhism, if only the tribes of India were equal to the task of thwarting the Aryan domination in their individual domains. Would it not have brought about a confrontation between the Aryan gods and the deities of the others? Wouldn’t have Indra, the Aryan spearhead of a god, forced them into a covenant with Him to destroy the alien gods of the rest of the Indian tribes? Fortunately for the Hindu spirituality and the Indian philosophy, that was not the case. Though Indra spared the local deities of his wrath, his wards were less considerate to the souls of the very land they coveted.

As the brawn of the newbies should’ve successfully relegated all other tribes, save those from the hilly habitats - they were out of reach, and, besides, would have been beyond their interest - into subordinate castes, their Brahman brain got into the act of drafting the *dharma* in the Rig Vedic mould. However, it was only time before the Aryan’s political conquest of the *Bharata Khanda* was conceptualized through *aswamedha yāga* of Yajur Veda. At length, when the *kshatriyas* were on the conquering course, the Brahmins went about composing two more Vedas - *sāma* and *adharva* - to define the spiritual tone of *sanātana dharma*, which in latter-days evolved into Hinduism.

In due course, the breadth and depth of the Brahman intellect, nourished in the comfort of the Indian climes, came to shape, first the *Brahmasutras*, and then the *Upanishads*, as adjuncts to the four Vedas. And that fashioned the Hindu Vedanta of yore; but, the culmination of the Brahman thought process and the crowning glory of the Hindu philosophy is the *Bhagvad-Gita*, aka *Gita*. The intellectual achievements of the Brahmins have so fascinated the modern philosophers and scholars of the West that they went eloquent about them.

Jawaharlal Nehru thus compiled the eulogies of Western scholars about the Hindu intellectual achievements, symbolized by the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagvad-Gita* in ‘The Discovery of India’, published by Oxford University Press.

“Schopenhauer felt that “from every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit.... In the whole world there is no study.... So beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads.... (They) are products of the highest wisdom... It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people.” And again: “the study of the Upanishads has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.”

“Writing on this, Max Mueller says: Schopenhauer was the last man to write at random, or to allow himself to go into ecstasies over so-called mystic and inarticulate

thought. And I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say that I share his enthusiasm for the Vedanta, and feel indebted to it for much that has been helpful to me in my passage through life.”

In another place he says: “The Upanishads are the.... sources of ... the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme.”

Max Mueller’s wonderment about the Upanishads seems unending going by what Nehru quoted:

“I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedantic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains - so simple, so true, if once understood.”

“Formulating his admiration for the Hindu thought and culture, he further said that,” Nehru continued, “there is, in fact, an unbroken continuity between the most modern and the most ancient phases of Hindu thought, extending to over more than three thousand years. If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow – in some parts a very paradise on earth – I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant - I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life - again I should point to India”

“Romain Rolland, who followed him, was no less eloquent: “If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.”

“G. W. Russell, the Irish poet, privy to the power of inspiration said about the inspiring value of the ancient Hindu scriptures: “Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau among moderns have something of this vitality and wisdom, but we can find all they have said and much more in the grand sacred books of the East. The Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads contain such godlike fullness of Wisdom on all things that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be sure.”

Given the above, it would be imperative to have a peep, first into the *Upanishads*, and then into the *Gita*, that fascinated so many modern intellectuals of the East and the West alike. It could be said, ironically so, that the Brahman intellectual quest that was exemplified by the *gāyatri mantra* of the Rig Veda, 3.62.10, which forms the Hindu daily prayer was in fact composed by sage Vishvāmitra, the *kshatryia rishi*, and it reads thus:

*Om bhūr bhuvah svaḥ / tatsaviturvareṇyam /
bhargo devasya dhīmahi / dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt*

“We meditate on the Spiritual Splendor of that supreme and Divine reality, source of the physical, astral and celestial spheres of existence. Allow that divine being supreme to illuminate our intellect, so that we can realize the supreme Truth.”

The following excerpts are from '*The Upanisads*' translated by Valerie J. Roebuck that was published by Penguin Books India, expostulate some of the many facets of Hindu knowledge thus:

“OM. That is full; this is full;
Fullness comes from fullness:
When fullness is taken from fullness,
Fullness remains.
They who worship ignorance
Enter blind darkness:
They who delight in knowledge
Enter darkness, as it were, yet deeper.
Whoever knows knowledge and ignorance-
Both of them, together -
By ignorance crosses over death
And by knowledge reaches immortality.
They who worship non-becoming
Enter blind darkness:
They who delight in becoming
Enter darkness, as it were, yet deeper.
Whoever knows becoming and destruction -
Both of them, together -
By destruction crosses over death
And by becoming reaches immortality.
From the unreal lead me to the real.
From the darkness lead me to light.”

Now, contrast this with the Torah line where the God forbids Adam to eat the fruit from the Tree of Conscience for that would open his eyes, and thus makes him aware of right and wrong, good and bad! And yet, it is the Jews and the Christians, though not the *Muslims*, of the Semitic religious dispensations that have reached the heights of science and technology in modern times! And sadly, the Hindus, who once hovered about the intellectual horizon of the world, have sunk into the depths of collective ignorance and prejudice for reasons not far to seek.

However, the most fascinating aspect of the Upanishads, as expostulated in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, composed around 700 B.C.E, is its theorization that man himself was the creator of the gods in heaven, and the *dharma* on earth, in more ways than one.

The following excerpts from Valerie's *The Upanisads* elaborate upon this fascinating theory:

“In the beginning this was self (*atman*), in the likeness of a person (*purusa*). Looking round he saw nothing but himself (*atman*). First he said, 'I am!' So the name 'I' came to be. Even now, when someone is addressed, he first says, 'it is I', and then speaks whatever other name he has. Since before (*purva*) all this, he burnt up (*us-*) all the evils from everything, he is *purusa*. Whoever knows this, burns up anyone who wants to be before him.

He was afraid: so when alone one is afraid. Then he realized, “there is nothing else but me, so why am I afraid?” then his fear departed. For why should he be afraid? Fear arises from a second.

He had no pleasure either:

So when alone one has no pleasure. He desired a companion. He became as large as a woman and a man embracing. He made that self split (*pat -*) into two: from that husband (*pati*) and wife (*patni*) came to be. Therefore Yajnavalkya used to say, 'In this respect we two are each like a half portion.' So this space is filled by a wife. He coupled with her, and from that human beings were born.

She realized:

"How can he couple with me when he begot me from himself? Ah, I must hide!" She became a cow, the other a bull, and so he coupled with her. From that, cattle were born. She became a mare, the other a stallion; she became a she-donkey, the other a he-donkey: and so he coupled with her. From that, solid-hoofed animals were born. The one became a nanny-goat, the other a billy-goat; the one became an ewe, the other a ram: and so he coupled with her. From that, goats and sheep were born. In that way he created every pair, right down to the ants.

He knew: "I am creation, for I created all this." So he became creation. Whoever knows this, come to be in this, his creation."

"When they say, "Sacrifice to that one!", "Sacrifice to that one!"- some god or other, that is his varied creation, and he himself is all the gods.

Then he created from seed whatever is moist, and that is Soma. All this is just food and the eater of food. Soma is food, and Agni is the eater of food.

This is the higher creation of Brahma, since he created gods who are better than he: and also because, being mortal, he created immortals, it is his higher creation. Whoever knows this, comes to be in this, his higher creation."

And here is another of the many an Upanishadic creativity.

"In the beginning, *brahman* was all this, just one. Being just one, it was not complete. So it created over itself a better form, royalty (*ksatra*), those who are royalty among the gods: Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrtyu, and Isana. Therefore there is nothing higher than royalty: therefore at a king's anointing the Brahmana sits below the Ksatriya and he confers this honour on royalty alone.

Brahman is the source (*yon*i) of royalty. So even if a king attains the highest state, in the end he takes refuge in the priesthood (*brahman*) as his own source. So whoever harms the priesthood attacks his own source: he becomes more evil, like one who has harmed a superior.

He still was not complete. So he created the people (*vis*), those kinds of gods who are named in groups: the Vasus, the Rudras, the Adityas, the Visvedevas and the Maruts.

He still was not complete. So he created the Sudra class, Pusan. This earth is Pusan, for it nourishes (*pus*) all this, whatever there is.

He still was not complete. So he created over himself a better form, *dharma*. *Dharma* is the royalty of royalty, so there is nothing higher than *dharma*. Through *dharma* a weaker man overcomes a stronger one, as though through a king. *Dharma* is truth: so they say of one who speaks truth, "He speaks *dharma*", or of one who speaks *dharma*, "he speaks truth". Both are the same.

So there were *brahman* (priesthood), *ksatra* (royalty), *vis* (the people) and *sudra* (the labourer). *Brahman* came into being among the gods through Agni; as a Brahmana among human beings; as a Ksatriya through the Ksatriya: as a Vaisya through the Vaisya: and as a Sudra through the Sudra. So folk seek a world among the gods in Agni, and a world among human beings in the Brahmana, for *brahman* came into being through these two forms."

As against this, the manner in which the God created the world, as propounded by Judaism and subscribed by the Christianity, is narrated in the Torah thus:

“There were no plants or grain sprouting up across the earth at first, for the Lord God hadn’t sent any rain; nor was there anyone to farm the soil. (However, water welled up from the ground at certain places and flowed across the land.)

The time came when the Lord God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And man became a living person.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and placed in the garden the man he had formed. The Lord God planted all sorts of beautiful trees there in the garden, trees producing the choicest of fruit. At the centre of the garden he placed the Tree of Life, and also the Tree of Conscience, giving knowledge of Good and Bad. A river from the land of Eden flowed through the garden to water it; afterwards the river divided into four branches. One of these was named the Pishon; it winds across the entire length of the land of Havilah, where nuggets of pure gold are found, also beautiful bdellium and even lapis lazuli. The second branch is called the Gihon, crossing the entire length of the land of Cush. The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of the city of Asher. And the fourth is the Euphrates.

The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden as its gardener, to tend and care for it. But the Lord God gave the man this warning: “You may eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the Tree of Conscience – for its fruit will open your eyes to make you aware of right and wrong, good and bad. If you eat its fruit, you will be doomed to die.”

And the Lord God said, “It isn’t good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs.” So the Lord God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever he called them, that was their name. But still there was no proper helper for the man. Then the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and took one of his ribs and closed up the place from which he had removed it, and made the rib into a woman, and brought her to the man.

“This is it!” Adam exclaimed. “She is part of my own bone and flesh! Her name is “woman” because she was taken out of a man.” This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife in such a way that the two become one person. Now although the man and his wife were both naked, neither of them was embarrassed or ashamed.”

What doth the Quran aver: “He hath created man from a drop of fluid” (v4, s.16) and “And the cattle hath He created, whence ye have warm clothing and use, and whereof ye eat” (v.5, S.16). It is another matter that Muhammad would have us believe that the first revelation to him read, “In the name of thy Lord Who createth. Createth man from a clot.”

While the stress on religious belief led the Semitic people to take the Lord God’s word without demur, the Brahman inquisitiveness went on to explore the relation between the self (*ātma*) and the god (*paramātmā*), besides the nature of the soul and its probable immortality. It is this essential feature of Brahmanical enquiry that was possibly carried on for centuries, which culminated in the Vedānta. However, in the end, the quintessence of the Upanishadic wisdom got crystallized in *the Bhagvad-Gita*, which William von Humboldt described as ‘*the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue.*’ What is more, Humboldt’s admiration for the *Gita* was such that in praise of it he is said to have written seven hundred verses, equaling its numbers.

What is it that makes *the Gita* so unique and fascinating to the Hindus and other seekers alike?

To start with, it is the setting: the battlefield of Kurukshetra where were assembled the armies of Paandavās and Kauravās, the estranged cousins, and the dilemma faced by Arjuna, the warrior-in-Chief of the former, about the propriety and usefulness of the fratricide that war ensues. Could the spiritual and temporal conflict in human existence go any farther than that? And the highly sophisticated philosophical discourse that ensued between Krishna, the supposed incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and Arjuna his *alter ego*, has a universal appeal to humanity at large, irrespective of the individual's religious orientation and belief.

After all, the *Gita* is not a sermon of religious conditioning of man; it is a philosophical kit for his self-enlightenment. Apart from its peerless philosophy, the *Gita* postulates the presence of one Universal Spirit, nursing no sectarian interests on religious lines. And one might contrast this with the unabashed partiality of the Semitic God to His protagonists, which, if only we were to go by the Quran, was prone to shifts and turns as well.

It is this concept of a universal, though uninvolved, god, as can be seen from the following verses from the *Gita*, which sets Hinduism apart from the Abrahamic faiths that seek to appropriate 'the God' all for their dogma besides prejudicing their followers towards other faiths.

Doctrine of Faith

Chapter 12

6

Whosoever hath faith in Me
And leans on Me heart 'n soul -

7

Him I help to cross over
Ocean vast of births 'n deaths.

8

If thou develop faith in Me
Take for granted I take thee.

9

Were thee to fail develop faith
It's not thou reached blind alley,
Ever Me having in thy mind
Practice lets thee turn the bend.

10

If thou feel that's hard as well
Indulge then in deeds Me please.

11

If thou find that difficult too
Give thyself to Me Supreme
Act then with thy subdued mind
With no thought for what follows.

12

Scores thought over mere roting
Betters meditation awareness too
What helps man to find moorings
Are acts his with no axe to grind.

This is about the famed Hindu religious tolerance, and now for a sample of its philosophical sparkle in Lord Krishna's postulations.

All about Life

Chapter 2

13

Wise all realize
Embodies selfsame spirit all one
From birth to death, in every birth.

17

Spirit in lay us All-Pervading
Given that not to destruction,
What sense doth it make to think
That ever immutable gets destroyed!

20

Unbound being ever unborn
Ageless since it's endless too
Goes on Spirit, beyond life-span.

22

Change as men fade if clothes
So doth Spirit as frames are worn.

47

Hold as patent on thy work
Reckon though not on royalty
With no way to ceasing work
Never mind outcome but go on.

48

It's but yoga
If thou strive
Wants without
Emotions bereft.

49

Work well greedy with motive
Work wise not with result in mind.

50

Wise not sentiment bring to work
That's hallmark of art of work.

51

Freed from bonds with mind even
Act wise regardless ever composed.

52

Clears if reason one's illusion
Bothers he not to what's over
Or for what might lie in store.

61

Rein in senses, hone thine effort
Rely on Supreme, that's true wisdom.

Theory of Action

Chapter 3

36

Thus spoke Arjuna:
Why should one with right intent
Stray ever on the wayward ways!

37

Thus spoke the Lord:
Well, it's passion, lust 'n wrath
Drag that man on path painful.
38
Flame 'n mirror as shrouded
Without let by smoke 'n dust
As well embryo in the womb
Wisdom is by wants clouded.
39
Wise all tend to cap all wants
Which like fire all burn to core.
40
Veiled off wisdom sees not man
Mind and body steeped in wants.
41
Rein in matter with thy mind
Thus thou nip thy wants in bud.

Art of Renunciation

Chapter 5

2
Thus spoke the Lord:
Give up all 'n thou be freed
So is the case with selfless work
But know latter scores much better.
3
Wise neither want, nor they shun
Thus they give up ever engaged.
4
Way action 'n path learning
Know not ignorant not different.
5
Work highway 'n lane freedom
Know the learned are the same.
6
What thou forego if thee quit
Deeds selfless make acts forsake.
7
Such one realized
Self-willed, dutiful
Within self remains
Without ever engaged.
15
Takes not Supreme credit or fault
Grasp none have of this uncouth.
16
He that keeps his bias at bay
Sun-like he shines being wise
17
In clear conscience 'n fairness
Faith in Him gives man freedom.

In stark contrast to the scriptural exclusivity of the Abrahamic dispensations of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that ironically are mutually skeptical and hostile as well, thus runs the all-inclusive Hindu philosophical stream of the *Gita*.

And yet, as if to prove that the destiny of man is but to suffer in strife, either of religious bigotry or of racial prejudice, and/or both, the Brahmanism had abused the all-inclusive Hinduism by subjecting large sections of the Indian society to In-humanism.

The above verses are excerpted from the author's free ebook, Bhagvad-Gita: Treatise of self-help, sans 110 verses interpolated in the version in vogue.

Chapter 4

Ascent to Descent

After their remarkable progress in spirituality and rationality, the Brahmans made an acknowledged advance in astronomy as well. The exposure to the mysteries of the universe that their astronomical pursuits afforded, insensibly led them to probe the vicissitudes of life and fathom the fate of man through the astrological vision. The fascination Brahmans felt for the charms of crystal gazing, in a way, put the wheel of the Brahmanic enlightenment in the reverse gear.

As the predictions about man's future brought the predilections of his present to the fore, and as the acceptance of the former led to the remedial need for the latter, charlatanry became a corollary of the Hindu wisdom. Thus, the imperfect science of astrology and the perfect sense of exploitation together came to dictate the Brahman ethos, and in time, the Hindu social psyche, even to this day.

Besides, it was this Brahmanic propensity for things astrological that insensibly led to superstitious practices amongst the Hindus at large, giving a go by to the *Upanishadic* wisdom of yore and all that goes with that. It was thus, in an ironical twist of human destiny, the unmatched intellect of the Brahmans that contributed so much to the World Bank of Knowledge and Wisdom, at first deprived their fellowmen by denying them the scope to learn, and in the end, depraved themselves as well, caught as they were in the quagmire of prejudice and superstition.

But then, what were the Brahman intellectual achievements that became legends in the annals of human learning! To start with, we have the astronomical reach of the Brahmans, depicted in his 'Indica' by Alberuni, written around 1,030 A.D. It may be noted that for this exercise in dissection, the implements are drawn from Alberuni's cabinet of Indica, presented in English by Dr. Edward C. Sachau, and published in India by Rupa & Co.

"The science of astronomy is the most famous among them, since the affairs of their religion are in various ways connected with it. If a man wants to gain the title of an astronomer, he must not only know scientific or mathematical astronomy, but also astrology. The book known among Muslims as *Sindhind* is called by them *Siddhanta*, i.e. *straight*, not crooked nor changing. By this name they call every standard book on astronomy, even such books as, according to our opinion, do not come up to the mark of our so-called *Zij*, i.e. handbooks of mathematical astronomy. They have five Siddhantas:-

1. *Surya-siddhanta*, i.e. the Siddhanta of the sun, composed by Lata.
2. *Vasishtha-Siddhanta*, so called from one of the stars of the Great Bear, composed by Vishnuchandra.
3. *Pulisa-Siddhanta*, so called from Paulisa, the Greek, from the city of Saintra, which I suppose to be Alexandria, composed by Paulisa.

4. *Romaka-Siddhanta*, so called from the Rum, i.e. the subjects of the Roman Empire composed by Srishena.

5. *Brahma-Siddhanta*, so called from Brahman, composed by Brahmagupta, the son of Jishnu, from the town of Bhillamala between Multan and Anhilwara, 16 *yojana* from the latter place (?)”

The table of contents of the twenty-four chapters of the *Brahma-Siddhanta* listed by Alberuni indicates the extraordinary range of the Brahmanical pursuits.

1. On the nature of the globe and the figure of heaven and earth.
2. On the revolutions of the planets; on the calculation of time, i.e. how, to find the time for different longitudes and latitudes; how to find the mean places of the planets; how to find the sine of an arc
3. On the correction of the places of the planets.
4. On three problems: how to find the shadow, the bygone portion of the day and the *ascendens*, and how to derive one from the other.
5. On the planets becoming visible when they leave the rays of the Sun, and their becoming invisible when entering them.
6. On the first appearance of the moon, and about her two cusps.
7. On the lunar eclipse.
8. On the solar eclipse.
9. On the shadow of the moon.
10. On the meeting and conjunction of the planets.
11. On the latitudes of the planets.
12. A critical investigation for the purpose of distinguishing between correct and corrupt passages in the texts of astronomical treatises and handbooks.
13. On arithmetic: on plane measure and cognate subjects.
14. Scientific calculation of the mean places of the planets.
15. Scientific calculation of the correction of the places of the planets.
16. Scientific calculation of the three problems.
17. On the deflection of eclipses.
18. Scientific calculation of the appearance of the new moon and her two cusps.
19. On *Kuttaka*, i.e. the pounding of a thing. The pounding of oil producing substances is here compared with *the most minute and detailed research*. This chapter treats of algebra and related subjects, and besides it contains other valuable remarks of a more or less arithmetical nature.
20. On the shadow.
21. On the calculation of the measures of poetry and on metrics.
22. On cycles and instruments of observation.
23. On time and the four measures of time, the *solar*, the *civil*, the *lunar* and the *sidereal*.
24. About numeral notation in the metrical books of this kind.

These, now, are twenty-four chapters, according to his (*Brahmaputra's*) own statement, but there is a twenty-fifth one, called *Dhyana-graha-adhyaya*, in which he tries to solve the problems by speculation, not by mathematical calculation...Such books as do not reach the standard of a Siddhanta are mostly called *Tantra* or *Karana*. The former means ruling under a governor, the latter means following, i.e. following behind the Siddhanta. Under *governors* they understand the *Acaryas*, i.e. the sages, anchorites,

the followers of Brahman. There are two famous *Tantras* by *Aryabhata* and *Balabhadra*, besides the *Rasayana-tantra* by *Bhanuyasas*."

As Alberuni had observed, as under, the Hindu intellectual descent was evident by the turn of the first millennium of the Common Era.

"The religious books of the Hindus and their codes of tradition, the Puranas, contain sentences about the shape of the world which stand in direct opposition to scientific truth as known to their astronomers. By these books people are guided in fulfilling the rites of their religion, and by means of them the great mass of the nation have been wheedled into a predilection for astronomical calculations and astrological predictions and warnings.

The consequence is, that they show much affection to their astronomers, declaring that they are excellent men, that it is a good omen to meet them, and firmly believing that all of them come into paradise and none into hell. For this the astronomers requite them by accepting their popular notions as truth, by conforming themselves to them, however far from truth most of them may be, and by presenting them with such spiritual stuff as they stand in need of.

This is the reason why the two theories, the vulgar and the scientific, have become intermingled in the course of time, why the doctrines of the astronomers have been disturbed and confused, in particular the doctrines of those authors - and they are the majority- who simply copy their predecessors, who take the bases of their science from tradition and do not make them the objects of independent scientific research."

What of the Hindu astrology? The fascination Cheiro felt for the Hindu astrology could be seen from his foreword to 'Cheiro's Book of Numbers'.

"During my earlier years, when traveling in the East, it had been my good fortune to come in contact with a certain sect of Brahmins who had kept in their hands from almost prehistoric times, studies and practices of an occult nature which they regarded as sacredly as they did their own religious teachings.

Among other things, they permitted me to learn certain theories on the occult significance of numbers and their influence and relation to human life, which subsequent years and manifold experiences not only confirmed, but justified me in endeavoring to apply them in a practical sense so that others might also use this knowledge with, I hope, advantage to themselves and to those around them.

The ancient Hindu searchers after Nature's laws, it must be remembered, were in former years masters of all such studies, but in transmitting their knowledge to their descendants, they so endeavored to hide their secrets from the common people that in most cases the key to the problem became lost, and the truth that had been discovered became buried in the dust of superstition and charlatanism, to be re-formed, let us hope, when some similar cycle of thought in its own appointed time will again claim attention to this side of nature.

When examining such questions, we must not forget that it was the Hindus, who discovered what is known as the precession of the Equinoxes, and in their calculations such an occurrence takes place every 25,827 years; our modern science after labours of hundreds of years has simply proved them to be correct.

How, or by what means they were able to arrive at such a calculation, has never been discovered - observations lasting over such a period of time are hardly admissible, and calculation without instruments is also scarcely conceivable, and so science has only been able, first to accept their statement, and later to acknowledge its accuracy.

Their judgment, together with that of the Chaldeans, as to the length of what is now known as the cycle of years of the planets, has been handed down to us from the most remote ages, and also by our modern appliances has been proved correct, so when one comes to a study such as this, as to the value of the numbers 1 to 9, which, as the seven harmonies of music are the bases of all music that has ever been conceived, these above-stated numbers are the basis of all our numbers and calculations, it is then only logical to accept the decisions of those great students of long past ages and at least examine their deductions with a mind free from bias and prejudice.”

Cheiro’s admiration for the Hindu astrology made him say at one stage that the only reason why one should believe in it is because the Hindus invented it. What is more, the Brahman intellectual finesse that conceptualized ‘zero’ in the mathematical sphere, had accorded ‘nil’ value to all things mundane in the economic zone; and in this lay the seeds of the Hindu philosophy that shaped the Indian psyche of contentment, for good or bad, which is at odds with the materialistic order of the day.

If anything, the newfound materialistic opportunities that PV Narasimha Rao’s liberalization of economy ensued had upset the social *karmic* balance of yore – one owes his position on the social ladder to the good (*sukarma*) or bad (*kukarma*) deeds of his previous life. However, in their materialistic chase for the goodies of life in the western tracks, Hindus have not cared to borrow the kit of western work culture, thereby undermining the Indian moral ethos.

It is thus, the antics of Bal Thackeray’s *Shiv Sainiks* against the Westernization of the society represent the growing frustration of the traditionalists. However, maybe, once the charms of Mammon begin to wane in time, the core Hindu outlook of life, shaped by the soul of its philosophy, could be resurgent. Or, would it be a case of a people losing out, in spite of the *karmic* philosophy, so beneficially imbibed by their forbears for forbearance against the vicissitudes of life! Only time would tell.

Be that as it may, the seeds of the eventual Hindu social decay could be traced back to Cheiro’s eulogy of the Brahman virtuosity in astrology.

Chapter 5

The Zero People

While the Brahman genius paved the way for the Aryan’s intellectual superiority, the others of the land were denied access to education as a ploy to stall their challenge to them for all times to come. Nonetheless, the indigenous genius was allowed to find expression in arts and crafts earmarked to their castes; thus, by and large, their social re-engineering seems to have worked wonderfully well to justify Max Mueller’s eulogy.

The Brahmans who invented the zero, and the decimal as well, had however marginalized the *sudras* besides turning the outcasts into ciphers, only to eventually degenerate themselves as well. The caste system of the Aryan social expediency was in time given the Brahmanical religious sanction through interpolations in the *Gita* itself through the one below, v13 in chapter 4, Practical Wisdom, and such others.

By Me ordained born beings
In tune with their own natures
Environs in such govern their life
But tend I not them to their birth.

Alberuni describes the caste ridden Hindu society as he found it between 1017 and 1030 A.D thus:

“The Hindus call their castes *varna*, i.e. colours, and from a genealogical point of view they call them *jataka*, i.e. *births*. These castes are from the very beginning only four.

1. The highest caste are the Brahmana, of whom the books of the Hindus tell that they were created from the head of Brahman. And as Brahman is only another name for the force called *nature*, and the head is the highest part of the animal body, the Brahmana are the choice part of the whole genus. Therefore the Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.

2. The next caste are the Kshatriya, who were created, as they say, from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. Their degree is not much below that of the Brahmana.

3. After them follow the Vaisya, who were created from the thigh of Brahman.

4. The Sudra, who were created from his feet.

Between the latter two classes there is no very great distance. Much, however, as these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings.

After the Sudra follow the people called *Antyaja*, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker, and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver. The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them.

The people called Hadi, Doma (Domba), Chandala and Badhatau (sic) are not reckoned amongst any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty work, like the cleansing of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class, and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact, they are considered like illegitimate children; for according to general opinion they descend from a Sudra father and a Brahmani mother as the children of fornication; therefore they are degraded outcastes.

The Hindus give to every single man of the four castes characteristic names, according to their occupations and modes of life. E.G. the Brahmana is in general called by this name as long as he does his work staying at home. When he is busy with the service of one fire, he is called *ishtin*; if he serves three fires, he is called *agnihotrin*; if he besides offers an offering to the fire, he is called *dikshita*. And as it is with the Brahmana, so is it also with the other castes.

Of the classes *beneath* the castes, the Hadi are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean. Next follows the Doma, who play on the lute and sing. The still lower classes practice as a trade killing and the inflicting of judicial punishments. The worst of all are the Badhatau, who not only devour the flesh of dead animals, but even of dogs and other beasts.

Each of the four castes, when eating together, must form a group for themselves, one group not being allowed to comprise two men of different castes. If, further, in the group of the Brahmana there are two men who live at enmity with each other, and the seat of the one is by the side of the other, they make a barrier between the two seats by placing a board between them, or by spreading a piece of dress, or in some other way; and if there is only a line drawn between them, they are considered as separated. Since it is forbidden to eat the remains of a meal, every single man must have his own food for himself; for if any one of the party who are eating should take of the food from one and the same plate, that which remains in the plate becomes, after the first eater has taken part, to him who wants to take as the second, *the remains of the meal*, and such is forbidden."

The social duties of non-Brahmans as pictured by Alberuni are -

“The Kshatriya reads the Veda and learns it, but does not teach it. He offers to the fire and acts according to the rules of the Puranas. In places where, as we have mentioned, a tablecloth is prepared for eating, he makes it angular. He rules the people and defends them, for he is created for this task. He girds himself with a single cord of the threefold *yagnopavita*, and a single other cord of cotton. This takes place after he has finished the twelfth year of his life.

It is the duty of Vaisya to practice agriculture and to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to remove the needs of the Brahmins. He is only allowed to gird himself with a single *yajnopavita*, which is made of two cords.

The Sudra is like a servant to the Brahman, taking care of his affairs and serving him. If, though being poor in the extreme, he still desires not to be without a *yojnopavita*, he girds himself only with linen one. Every action which is considered as the privilege of a Brahman, such as saying prayers, the recitation of the Veda, and offering sacrifices to the fire, is forbidden to him, to such a degree that when, e.g. a Sudra or a Vaisya is proved to have recited the Veda, he is accused by the Brahmins before the ruler, and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off. However, the meditation on God, work of piety, and alms giving are not forbidden to him.

Every man who takes to some occupation which is not allowed to his caste, e.g. a Brahman to trade, a Sudra to agriculture, commits a sin or crime, which they consider only a little less than the crime of theft.

All other men except the Candala, as far as they are not Hindus, are called *mleccha*, i.e. unclean, all those who kill men and slaughter animals and eat the flesh of cows.”

The ironclad caste arrangement that might have initially helped the work culture of specialization, insensibly led to the economic ruin of the society in the long-run. Those who didn't have an aptitude to the craft that was earmarked to their caste, or had an inclination towards the art reserved for another, at the very best, must have been invariably half-hearted in their 'forced' pursuits; or, at the worst, they became parasites on the society at large. Understandably, their progeny who were supposed to learn the nuances of the craft or tricks of the trade from such should've lost their ropes for the lacking of their parents. Equally inimically, the watertight work culture could have prevented the flow of consultative corrections from one section of the society to the other, resulting in the stagnancy of skill that invariably led to the eventual decay of the craft itself.

In time thus, the social insult and the economic plight would have driven the numerically dominant fourth castes and the fifth outcasts into a state of despondency. And owing to the segregated nature of the society, the *kshatriyas* too might have lost the pulse of these very people they were supposed to govern. It was under such circumstances that Buddhism and Jainism made their appearance to threaten the hitherto unchallenged Brahmanism socially, and the *sanātana dharma*, sanctified by them, morally.

The account of the rise and fall of Buddhism, which initially challenged Brahman hegemony, only to lose out in the end, but, not before becoming the prevalent religion of Asia, is well recounted by Romila Thapar in 'A History of India' published by Penguin Books India.

“The Buddha (or the Enlightened One), as he was called, came from the republican tribe of the Shakyas, and his father was the *kshatriya* chief of this tribe. The legend of his life has curious similarities with the legendary episodes in Christ's life, such as the idea of the Immaculate Conception, and temptation by the Devil. He was born in about

566 B.C. and lived the life of a young prince but with increasing dissatisfaction, until he left his family and disappeared one night to become an ascetic.

After an austere six years he decided that asceticism was not the path to salvation and discarded it. He then resolved to discover the means of salvation through meditation, and eventually on the forty-ninth day of his meditation he received enlightenment and understood the cause of suffering in this world. He preached his first sermon at the Deer Park at Sarnath (four miles from Banaras) and gathered his first five disciples.

This sermon was called the Turning of the Wheel of Law, and was the nucleus of the Buddhist teaching. It incorporated the Four Noble Truths (that is, the world is full of suffering, suffering is caused by human desires, the Renunciation of desire is the path to salvation, and this salvation is possible through the Eight-Fold Path), and the Eight-Fold Path which consisted of eight principles of action, leading to a balanced, moderate life, (right views, resolves, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, recollection, and meditation, the combination of which was described as the Middle Way).

To understand this sermon did not call for complicated metaphysical thinking, and the rational undertone of the argument was characteristic of the Buddhist emphasis on causality as the basis of analysis, particularly in a system where nothing is left to divine intervention. Salvation lay in achieving *nirvana*, or extinction, freedom from the wheel of rebirth. Thus the doctrine of *karma* was essential to the Buddhist system of salvation. Unlike the brahmanical idea, *karma* was not used to explain away caste status, since the Buddha rejected caste.

Buddhism was also atheistic, in as much as God was not essential to the Universe, there being a natural cosmic rise and decline. The universe had originally been a place of bliss but man's capitulation to desire has reduced it to place of suffering. Brahmanical ritual was almost entirely eliminated and was disapproved of in the early pure form of Buddhism: popular cults such as the worship of trees and funerary tumuli were accepted and Buddhists were thus able to associate themselves with popular worship."

Romila Thapar further notes the effects of Buddhism, and its cousin Jainism founded by Mahavira, on the Hindu social strata thus:

"There was much in common between Buddhism and Jainism. Both were started by members of the *kshatriya* caste and were opposed to brahmanical orthodoxy, denying the authority of the Vedas, and antagonistic to the practice of animal sacrifices, which had by now become a keystone of brahmanical power. Both appealed to the socially downtrodden, the *vaishyas* who were economically powerful, but were not granted corresponding social status, and the *shudras* who were obviously oppressed. Buddhism and Jainism, though they did not directly attack the caste system, were nevertheless opposed to it and can, to that extent, be described as non-caste movements. This provided an opportunity for those of low caste to opt out of their caste by joining a non-caste sect. The lack of expenses involved in worship, as contrasted with brahmanical worship, also attracted the same stratum in society."

The challenge posed by Buddhism brought changes as well in Brahmanism that eventually evolved as Hinduism, and this phenomenon is described by Romila Thapar thus:

"The successful attack of the 'heretical sects' on Vedic sacrifices and gods strengthened the trend of monotheistic thinking in brahmanical teaching, which trend had originated in the philosophy of the *Upanishads* with its concept of the Absolute or the Universal Soul. This concept also resulted in the idea of the trinity of gods at this time, with Brahma as the Creator, Vishnu as the Preserver, and Shiva as the god who

eventually destroys the universe when it is evil-ridden. This concept was associated with the cyclical conception of nature where creation, preservation, and destruction were seen as the natural order of things. Of the three gods, Vishnu and Shiva gained a vast following and through ensuing centuries the *Vaishnavas* and the *Shaivas* remained the two main sects of Hindu belief, each believing that its god represented the Absolute. Brahma receded into the background.”

However, though having enjoyed the support and patronage of the rich and the powerful, the Buddhism, on the other hand, lost ground in the country of its origin. The causes of this decline are well described by Romila Thapar thus:

“It is not to be wondered at, therefore that monasteries were richly endowed, that huge *stupas* were built, and that the Buddhist Order became affluent and respected. Some of the monasteries had such large endowments that they had to employ slaves and hired labour, the monks alone not being able to cope with the work. Gone were the days when the Buddhist monks lived entirely on the alms which they collected during the morning hours, for now they ate regular meals in vast monastic refectories. Monasteries were built either adjoining a town or else on some beautiful and secluded hillside far removed from the clamour of cities. Secluded monasteries were well endowed to enable the monks to live comfortably.

The Buddhist order thus tended to move away from the common people and isolate itself, which in turn diminished much of its religious strength, a development which one suspects the Buddha would not have found acceptable. Improvement in communications led to an increase in pilgrimages, which in turn led to the spread of new ideas.

Buddhism had become very active in sending missions to various parts of the subcontinent and outside, and, in the process of proselytizing; Buddhism also began to receive new ideas. This inevitably led to reinterpretations of the original doctrine, until finally there were major differences of opinion and the religion was split into two main sects. This schism, as well as the growing tendency of the Buddhist clergy to live off the affluent section of society, bred the seeds of decay in Buddhism.”

“The more orthodox Buddhists maintained that theirs was the original teaching of the Buddha and they are called the *Hinayana* sect or the followers of the Lesser Vehicle. Those that accepted the new ideas were called the *Mahayana* sect or the followers of the Greater Vehicle. Eventually, *Hinayana* Buddhism found its stronghold in Ceylon, Burma, and the countries of south-east Asia, whereas Mahayana Buddhism became the dominant sect in India, Central Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan.”

When Buddhism ceased to be a force in the land of its birth, Hinduism eventually sealed its fate by proclaiming the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, unmindful of the irony of it all for going by the theory of Divine Incarnation expostulated in the *Gita* through v 6 - 8 of ch 4, Practical Wisdom, as follows.

Beyond the pale of birth 'n death
On My volition I take birth.

Wanes if good 'n vile gain reign
Know it's then that I come forth.

It's thus I from time to time
Manifest here to uproot ill
And uphold well for public good.

The above verses are excerpted from the author's free ebook, Bhagvad-Gita: Treatise of self-help, sans 110 verses interpolated in the version in vogue.

Well, of what avail was the Buddha-avatar? If it were meant to destroy the oppressive Brahmanism and protect the suppressed castes and the outcasts, it was a failed avatar as Alberuni found in the early 11th century itself. On the other hand, by owning up the Buddha as an *avatar* of Vishnu, the Brahmins seemed to have unwittingly admitted to their own guilt for having deprived some sections of the Hindu fold. But, the near extinction of Buddhism pushed the oppressed masses of the Indian mainland back to the square one in the socio-religious game of snakes and ladders.

However, earlier, as they moved into the hinterland, the political acumen of the Aryans / Namesakes didn't seem to match with their spiritual quest. After all, they did advance without guarding their flanks, didn't they? And inevitably, many others from the Central Asia followed the very Aryan / namesakes' footsteps into, what they referred as Hindustan. However, while most were insensibly absorbed into the Hindu cultural mainstream as sub-castes, some in the Sind, and yore, tenuously remained in the Hindu fold, only to jump into the Buddhist embrace in time. Thus, there developed in the populace near the Hindukush, an indifferent, if not hostile, attitude towards the Hindus, which made them apathetic to their cause. And this rendered the strategic Western frontier an Aryan barren land with disastrous consequences to the Hindu hinterland in due course.

Owing to the incompetence or corruption, and /or both, of the rulers, slowly but surely, the great medieval Aryan empires of the Gangetic plains got disintegrated. All that naturally led to the mushrooming of minor kingdoms, raised for most part by the hitherto integrated foreign races. Thus, in time, while the society was fractured by the Brahmanical order, the land was sundered by political disorder. Moreover, the visions of greater glory of the Rajahs of these minor kingdoms for themselves set them on expansionist campaigns against the neighboring entities. And inevitably, all this wasted the resources of the land besides tiring its warriors depleted their stock. It is thus, at length, the war-torn land became a wasteland, and that plunged its masses into depravity.

Amidst this anarchy, the by then weakened Buddhist religious buffer in the frontier paved the way for the then emerging religion of Islam for it to gain a foothold in the *Aryavarta*. However, that Arab conquest of the Sind in 712 AD didn't disturb the Hindu complacency, as the arrival of St. Thomas in Malabar in 52 A.D. hadn't before that.

And the question that naturally arises is why it was so? Alberuni seems to have captured the peculiarities of the then Hindu character and psyche thus:

"... there are other causes, the mentioning of which sounds like a satire - peculiarities of their national character, deeply rooted in them, but manifest to everybody. We can only say, folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings 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.

According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is."

Well, Alberuni could not have been wrong in his speculation concerning the generations of the Hindus that passed by then, going by the intellectual reach of

Chānakya, who under the pseudonym of Kautilya authored the celebrated *Artha Shāstra*, during 325 B.C.E. After all, having envisaged the threat Alexander the Great posed to India, he, with political vision, personal sagacity, and moral will, galvanized the Hindu kings to face the *yavana* challenge. But sadly, in the early 11th century, when the Afghan–Turkish threat loomed large on its western horizon, there was no Chānakya in Hindustan to grasp the Islamic ethos of expanding its religious space with the power of the sword, and gauge the zeal of the *Musalmans* for *jiḥad*. Thus, the warring princes and the dispirited populace were not galvanized enough to thwart the Quranic advance into the Hindu heartland.

Chapter 6

Coming of the Christ

Elsewhere in the world, in the land of Israel too, the priestly class of Levites, armed with the Mosaic Laws, oppressed the Jewish masses. At length, the Jews found their Buddha in the persona of Jesus, only to be rubbished by their Rabbis, and crucified by the Romans. However, there is so much commonality in the mental makeup of these two great preachers, the chief ones being their concern for the weak and tolerance as a strength. It is the ironical destiny of Buddhism and the Christianity, founded based on their teachings; five-hundred years apart that is, were eventually rejected in the lands of their birth, only to be nourished by the nations of their neighborhoods.

While Buddha's fight was against the Brahmanism, symbolized by ritualism and orthodoxy on one hand and casteism and untouchability on the other, Jesus' aim, as the Sermon on the Mount clearly shows, was to give a healing touch to the divine, though harsh, Laws of Moses.

"One day as the crowds were gathering, he went up the hillside with his disciples and sat down and taught them there.

Humble men are very fortunate!' he told them, 'for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them. Those who mourn are fortunate! for they shall be comforted. The meek and lowly are fortunate! for the whole wide world belongs to them.

Happy are those who long to be just and good, for they shall be completely satisfied. Happy are the kind and merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. Happy are those whose hearts are pure, for they shall see God. Happy are those who strive for peace - they shall be called the sons of God. Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

When you are reviled and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers - wonderful! Be *happy* about it! Be *very glad*! For a *tremendous reward* awaits you up in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted too.

You are the world's seasoning, to make it tolerable. If you lose your flavour, what will happen to the world? And you yourselves will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the world's light - a city on a hill, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light! Let it shine for all; let your good deeds glow for all to see, so that they will praise your heavenly Father.

Don't misunderstand why I have come - it isn't to cancel the laws of Moses and the warnings of the prophets. No I came to fulfill them, and to make them all come true. With all the earnestness I have I say: Every law in the Book will continue until its purpose is achieved. And so if anyone breaks the least commandment, and teaches others to, he shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But those who teach God's laws *and obey them* shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But I warn you - unless your goodness is greater than that of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders, you can't get into the Kingdom of Heaven at all!

'Under the laws of Moses the rule was,

"if you murder, you must die." But I have added to that rule, and tell you that if you are only *angry*, even in your own home, you are in danger of judgment! If you call your friend an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse him, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your sacrifice to God. Come to terms quickly with your enemy before it is too late and he drags you into court and you are thrown into a debtor's cell, for you will stay there until you have paid the last penny.

The laws of Moses said,

"You shall not commit adultery." But I say: Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if your eye - even if it is your best eye! - causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. Better for part of you to be destroyed than for all of you to be cast into hell. And if your hand - even your right hand - causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Better that than find yourself in hell.

The law of Moses says,

"If anyone wants to be rid of his wife, he can divorce her merely by giving her a letter of dismissal." But I say that a man who divorces his wife, except for fornication, causes her to commit adultery if she marries again. And he who marries her commits adultery.

Again, the law of Moses says,

"you shall not break your vows to God, but must fulfill them all." But I say: Don't make any vows! And even to say, 'By heavens!' is a sacred vow to God, for the heavens are God's throne. And if you say 'By the earth!' it is a sacred vow, for the earth is his footstool. And don't swear 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the capital of the great King. Don't even swear 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. Say just a simple 'Yes I will' or 'No, I won't.' Your word is enough. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong.

The law of Moses says,

"If a man gouges out another's eye, he must pay with his own eye. If a tooth gets knocked out, knock out the tooth of the one who did it.' But I say: Don't resist violence! If you are slapped on one cheek, turn the other too. If you are ordered to court, and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat too. If the military demand that you carry their gear for a mile, carry it two. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

There is a saying,

"Love your *friends* and hate your enemies." But I say: Love your *enemies*! Pray for those who *persecute* you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even scoundrels do that much. If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathen do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

It is interesting to note that while commissioning the Twelve, Jesus sent them out with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel – God's lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure the lepers, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!"

But as it happened, it was the Gentiles, who were enamored by what Jesus preached, helped spread his word around the world towards the end, as wished by him, though not by them: "And the good news about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it, and then, finally, the end will come!"

In a way, indeed, some two thousand years after the Gospel came into being; the end did come, in more ways than one. After all, the Christian faith hinges upon the belief in the miracles of Jesus and his apostles, and the rational mind of the since developed West in the end found it hard to stomach these supernatural powers attributed to the Messiah and his apostles. Maybe, it's the disbelief in miracles that occasioned the inevitable dilution of the faith in the Christian West, and that helped buttress its belief in materialism, which, any way, was anathema to Jesus.

Be that as it may, it is a paradox of the Christianity in that while it seeks to inculcate the nobility of humility in its believers, it tends to burden their psyche with a sense of guilt, buttressed by the feeling of sin. Interestingly, the baggage of sin that the Christianity carries like a cross on its conscience might be a psychic relic of the not so human-friendly diktats of Jehovah as enshrined in the Mosaic Laws. However, after centuries of Papal oppression, exemplified by the dogma of sexual sin, the Christian West broke loose from its puritanical shackles, as though with a vengeance. And the end result was the penchant for taboo-less sex, which eventually transformed into free sex in the hippy movement of the sixties of the 20th century.

On the other hand, the Christian dogma that salvation is beyond those who won't keep faith in the Son of God, and his Gospel, might have insensibly sowed the seeds of racism in the Gentile hearts. Thus, if untouchability is the 'speck' in the Hindu eye, the proselytizers might realize that anti-Semitism, nay, racism is a 'board' that obstructs the Christian spiritual vision. Well, when six million Jews got exterminated in the Holocaust, attribute that to the Fuehrer's Final Solution, but if an odd Hindu *dalit* is abused, blame it upon the Hinduism *per se*. Oh, what a double standard! Of course, in all this, it is not difficult to see the proselytizing hand with the Christian axe out to grind on the *dalit* discontent and the tribal self-isolation in Hindustan.

It may be the moot point to ponder over whether the deep-rooted anti-Semitism in the West is a manifestation of the Christian hurt of Jesus' crucifixion, believed to be brought about by Judas the Jew. Be that as it may, while rightly castigating the obnoxious Hindu untouchability, the Christian credo seems to have no qualms about its own atrocities against the native races in the Americas and elsewhere in the virgin world. Well, though the Christian West went scot-free on that account, its crime of enslaving the blacks of yore came to haunt them in the form of street violence in these changed times. And what could be more galling to the Whites than to see the despised niggers, in numbers, becoming the masters of their own women. And what better poetic justice from the slavish angle!

Nevertheless, the commendable Christian ethos of service to humanity reflects the innate nobility of its religious character. In a way, what Hinduism conceptualized as *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (world is one family) that latter-day Brahmanism negated with its prejudices, the Christianity symbolizes that with its service by reaching out to the non-Christian peoples as well. Is not the world better off owing to the penchant of the

Christian missionaries in setting up schools to impart secular education and build hospitals to provide healthcare in every nook and corner of the globe?

However, the misplaced zeal of some of its proselytizers to rope in the hapless or gullible, and / or both, from alien faiths into the Christian fold, by means not always fair, places them in the company of the dubious. It's by no means wise to push under the carpet the resentment of a Dara Singh against the unabated proselytizing of Odisha's tribals by Graham Staines, the Christian missionary from Australia, which led to the dastardly act of slaying him in his station wagon along with his two sons. Nevertheless, it is to be appreciated that while the short-sighted Indian constitution provides a free hand to the evangelists, the politically constrained Indian State is ever averse to rein in the aggressive proselytizing hands that insensibly alter its demography to the chagrin of the Hindus, who lost a third of their ancient land, not so long ago, to the *Musalmans*. So, soft-pedaling the vexatious issue might serve some to buttress their secular image but it fails, say, the Indian social harmony in the long run.

Thus, it's for the Christians themselves to ponder over what Max Mueller and others have said about the Hinduism, and read an *Upanishad* or two for widening their narrow-minded outlook of salvation. Beside, on the mundane plane, it might serve the Papacy better if it watches out its own backyard from which its Blacks are slipping into the Islamic fold. And this at a time when Islam is branded as a religion of terrorism and publicized besides! That Islam, in spite of its bad brand image, should be the fastest growing religion on the planet is something that should alarm the world, and indeed this book, in the main, is about exploring the dichotomy of that inimical creed.

Just the same it's in the Christian credo, the proselytizing forerunner of the Semitic Orders, that the seeds of strife that Islam sows everywhere nowadays were originally farmed. Why, when Islam forced its way into its Holy backyard, crusades against the *Musalmans* became the medieval Christian calling; and now, the mere footmarks of the American GIs on the Islamic Holy land of Saudi Arabia was cause enough for an Osama bin Laden to call for a *jihad* against the Christian West. If ever the *Musalmans* came to dominate the Western world again, the predictable Christian response would be a crusade all over, maybe a guerilla war, if not with the *fidayēn* force. But then, who knows? After all, it is the paranoia of both these proselytizing faiths to ever expand their religious spheres of influence that came to be the curse of the mankind.

Maybe, Jesus had seen it all coming when he said about his mission on earth:

"Do you think I have come to give peace to the earth? No! Rather, strife and division! From now on families will be split apart, three in favour of me, and two against – or perhaps the other way round. A father will decide one way about me; his son, the other; mother and daughter will disagree; and the decision of an honoured mother-in-law will be spurned by her daughter-in-law."

The call of the Christ to spread the faith and the prophetic warning about the coming strife in the world was the harbinger of the destabilization of the religious harmony of the ancient world, achieved, as Edward Gibbon had observed, by 'the facility with which the most different and even hostile nations embraced, or at least respected, each other's superstitions.'

Chapter 7

Legacy of Prophecy

"This son of yours will be a wild one - free and untamed as a wild ass! He will be against everyone, and everyone will feel the same towards him." - The Genesis

This prophecy of Gabriel, the Archangel of the Lord, revealed to Hagar, the surrogate wife of Abraham, was about Ishmael, their son, still in her womb then. In time, as their

foolhardiness earned them the wrath of Sarah, the spouse of Abraham, the maid and her son were banished into the wilderness of Beersheba.

Preoccupied as it was with Isaac, the second son of Abraham, born to Sarah later, and the Hebrews, his descendents, 'The Torah' mentions about Ishmael becoming an expert archer, and in the passing refers to his marriage with an Egyptian girl. And that was all there to Ishmael in the Book, as thereafter it chose not to record his life and times for the posterity.

Thus, there would have been no more to the tale of Ishmael, if not for the advent of Muhammad, his most illustrious descendant. And as the world knows, it was Muhammad who founded Islam, some six hundred years after Jesus, the peach Isaac's progeny that ushered in the Christianity. Nonetheless, the Quran, the Script of Islam, too doesn't contain any reference to the saga of Ishmael in so far as the said prophecy is concerned.

However, going by the strife in Muhammad's life and the stances *Musalmans* tend to take in the name of the faith he founded, one might wonder at the truism of this telling prophecy with regard to Ishmael's progeny. Whether it was owing to divine design or human aberration, and / or both, the acrimony between the *Musalmans* and the 'others' they dub *kafirs* seems to have come to stay. In a way, the Semitic schism could be attributed to the will of 'the God' after all.

It's a wonder why did 'the God' ordain Abraham to beget Ishmael through his surrogate wife Hagar, even as He enabled him to sire Isaac later through Sarah, his old, though, wedded wife! But now the moot point is whether in this age and time, driven by information technology, won't be a change of the Semitic order be in order? And the imperative for man is to find out an agreeable detour from the centuries old vexatious route laid in the Semitic religious tracks.

It is interesting to note that it invariably is the case with all the so-called revealed religions that the persona of its prophet tends to shape the course of its propagation. Besides, the sublimity of Jesus as a preacher and the divinity associated with his miracles, in The Gospel there is no reference to his proclivities as a person. After all, the apostles of Jesus, who came to script The Gospel, would have been in the know of the messiah as man, and all that goes with being human.

And yet, they could have thought it fit to exclude from the Gospel the mundane of the Christ, lest human vulgarity should equate the divinity of the God with the frailties of His Son. In spite of this thoughtful omission by his apostles, yet, from time to time, the Christian world gets embroiled in controversies involving the speculation about Jesus' personal life, the *Davinci Code* being the latest.

On the contrary, as the divine got weaved with the mundane in Islam, the proclivities Muhammad captured in the *hadith* and *sunna*, became the corollaries of the Quran. Since it's in the nature of the believers to equate the mission of the Messiah with the message of 'the God', in time, the life of Muhammad turned out to be the essence of Islam. Well, Muhammad shaped Islam all by himself, aided though by the Quran, and didn't commission any to regulate his religion, as did the Christ.

But, seen in the context of the religion he founded, and Allah's mandate to fulfill his ambition, the course the Christ adopted would not have served Muhammad's cause. In essence, Jesus was a preacher of the Christian values more than the founder of the Christianity. But, Muhammad had assumed the role, not just of reciting the word of 'the God' to the willing through the Quran, but of setting the rules for Islamic practice and propagation, of course, as dictated by the circumstances of his life and times.

It is thus, while the Christian ethos is shaped by the preaching of Jesus that led to his crucifixion, the Islamic creed is a product of the conduct of Muhammad that gained him the *Kabah*. Hence, one cannot possibly appreciate the mind of a *Musalman* without understanding the psyche of Muhammad, shaped by the trials and tribulations he encountered in propagating the faith he had founded. An attempt is made here towards this end that owes the content, and at times the text even, wherever quoted, of “Muhammad – his life based on the earliest sources,” the remarkable biography by Martin Lings published by Inner Traditions International, USA.

It is said in the Quran, as ordained by ‘the God’, Abraham and Ishmael built the sanctorum of *Kabah* near the well of Zamzam in Mecca. And the history tells us that their descendents, the tribe of Khuzaah, by installing its idol had turned it into the house of Hubal. After a prolonged tussle for its possession, the guardianship of *Kabah* changed hands from Khuzaah to Quraysh, one of the powerful Arab tribes of Abrahamic descent. That was in the 4th century A.D, and the Quraysh were still in control of *Kabah* when destiny brought Muhammad into its stock.

However, to bring about Muhammad’s birth on April 22, 571 A.D, fate had to play its part in preserving the life of Abd Allah of the Quraysh. It was thus, Mughirah, the chief of Makhzum, intervened to save Abd Allah in his youth from being sacrificed at the *Kabah*, i.e. to fulfill the vow of his father Abd-al-Muttalib. However, the amiable and handsome Abd Allah wasn’t destined to live long; and he died when his wife Aminah was carrying Muhammad, their only offspring.

Some weeks before Muhammad was born, his mother had a vision, and heard a voice say to her thus:

“Thou carriest in thy womb the lord of this people; and when he is born say: ‘I place him beneath the protection of the One, from the evil of every envier’; then name him Muhammad.”

Apart from this prophecy, what Muhammad had for inheritance were five camels, a small flock of sheep and goats, and one slave girl, too meagre to match the hollowed pedigree of the Quraysh.

When Muhammad was only six, he lost his mother as well, followed by his grandfather, two years later. And that virtually made him an orphan in the redoubtable clan of Quraysh. However, his uncle, Abu Talib, took him under his caring wings, and his wife Fatimah tended Muhammad more than her own children. It could be for sentimental reasons that Muhammad could have named his fourth, and the favorite, daughter as Fatimah.

In time, Abu Talib tended his nephew into trade, and thus began to take him along to Syria on his business trips. But, when in Mecca, Muhammad was wont to occupy himself with archery in which he showed great skill. It was only time before Muhammad developed acumen for trading, and thus was able to fend for himself. At length, his honesty and integrity, in spite of his modest means, earned him the respect of the prosperous Meccans, who bestowed upon him the title of Al Amin.

At length, when he saw the possibility of marriage, Muhammad approached his uncle Abu Talib for the hand of his daughter Fakhitah, nay Umm Hani, for whom he developed great affection. Supposedly by that time, there were many portents about Muhammad’s prophethood, about which Abu Talib cannot be but privy. Besides, Bahira the Monk at Bostra, in the very presence of Abu Talib, identified Muhammad, when still a boy, as the envisaged Prophet of the Scriptures. And yet, inexplicably, Abu Talib refused his daughter’s hand to his nephew, whom he otherwise loved. Be that as it may, for then at least, it would have appeared to Muhammad that marriage was beyond his means.

Nonetheless, his personal integrity, business acumen and physical beauty, providentially pushed him into the matrimonial arms of Khadijah, a rich and twice widowed Meccan woman of forty, to all his twenty-five. Devoted as he was to his wife, and siring her children, Muhammad began to spend his life amiably in relative comfort. But then, all those who might have heard of the prophecies about his prophethood would have been dismayed. And Muhammad too didn't seem to lose his sleep over the apparent failure of Bahira's prophecy about his prophethood.

However, given Jehovah's disenchantment with His Chosen People by then, He seems to have had other ideas. It must have been galling for 'the God' to see what the Jews had meted out to Jesus, His Son and the Messiah. And by their rejection of the Gospel, the Jews didn't help their cause either for that could have made 'the God' truly angry. The irony that the religion of Jesus was usurped by the Gentiles, robbing its Semitic purity in the process, would have caused no less hurt to the jealous Jehovah.

Thus, the revengeful God of the Jews, whose temper His saintly Son helped soften up through his Christian mission, would have hardened His attitude towards the humans all again. It was in such a frame of mind that Jehovah would have remembered the long forgotten progeny of Abraham and Hagar, furthered by Ishmael, whom He allowed to languish for far too long in the sandy surface of Arabia.

By then, however, the idolatrous sons of Ishmael had desecrated Abraham's *Kabah* in whose precincts they installed a hundred statues for worship. And that no less offended the taste or sensitivity, and / or both of some of the Meccans, who as Hunafas, voiced their opposition to the idolatry of their brethren. In time, driven by the social appeal, or owing to his personal belief, Muhammad became a Hunafa himself.

Though the idolatrous sight of the progeny of Ishmael might have enraged Jehovah, soon He would have realized that their plight was of His own making. Why, didn't He, by not sending a prophet to the Arabic stream of the Abrahamic progeny, fail them in the proper worship of 'the God'? Thus, repentant at His own conduct, Jehovah might have deemed it fit to reveal the right path to the Arabs, exclusively shaped for them, albeit in the avatar of Allah. It was thus, 'the God' would have felt the need to have an Arab for His prophet to usher in the Quran, and would have been on the lookout for a proper candidate.

In a divine coincidence, by then, Muhammad turned forty, and his wife Khadijah, fifty-five. Though it was not uncommon for the Arabs of his era to go in for a fresh nuptial in such a 'marital' situation, or opt for a concubine, and / or both, Muhammad chose to remain faithful to his loyal wife. Instead, he chose to embrace solitude in a cave of Mount Hira, not far from Mecca. Of course, by then, Muhammad had successfully arbitrated the contentious issue plaguing Meccans at that time; and that pertained to which of the tribes had the right to place the Black Stone back in its place in the rebuilt *Kabah*.

In the process, that he could wrest the privilege of placing the sacred stone all by himself in its Holy place, i.e. after the tribal chiefs had lifted it on a clock, only illustrates his growing stature amongst the Meccans. Whatever, surely, this episode would have soared Muhammad's spirituality, nursed in the caves of Hira, straight to the heavens. And in that 'the God' could have discerned the charisma of a leader in Muhammad as well as the man-management skills so apparent in him, which needless to say, should have enhanced his credentials for the job in His eyes. With the choice thus made, the Lord God, entrusted His trusted Archangel Gabriel to recruit Muhammad for the post of the prophet for the Arabs albeit as His Messenger.

It was at that juncture in the month of Ramadan, Muhammad retreated to Mount Hira to meditate at his favorite haunt as was his wont, and the Lord's Archangel chose to

anoint Muhammad as 'the Messenger of the God', a hitherto unknown title for Jehovah's prophet. Thus, when Muhammad was alone in the cave that night, Gabriel went up to him in the form of a man. The account of Muhammad of what followed is described by Martin Lings thus:

"The Angel said to him: "Recite!" and he said: "I am not a reciter," whereupon, as he himself told it, "the Angel took me and whelmed me in his embrace until he had reached the limit of mine endurance. Then he released me and said: "Recite!" I said: 'I am not a reciter,' and again he took me and whelmed me in his embrace, and again when he had reached the limit of mine endurance he released me and said: 'Recite!', and again I said 'I am not a reciter.' Then a third time he whelmed me as before, then released me and said:

Recite in the name of thy Lord who created!
He createth man from a clot of blood.
Recite: and thy Lord is the Most Bountiful,
He who hath taught by the pen,
Taught man what he knew not.

He recited these words after the Angel, who thereupon left him; and he said; "It was as though the words were written on my heart." But he feared that this might mean he had become a jinn-inspired poet or a man possessed, So he fled from the cave, and when he was halfway down the slope of the mountain he heard a voice above him saying: "O Muhammad, thou art the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel."

He raised his eyes heavenwards and there was his visitant, still recognizable but now clearly an Angel, filling the whole horizon, and again he said: "O Muhammad, thou art the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel." The Prophet stood gazing at the Angel; then he turned away from him, but whichever way he looked the Angel was always there, astride the horizon, whether it was to the north, to the south, to the east or to the west."

And the rest, as we know, is history. But, it should not be missed that Muhammad was unlettered, and Gabriel wanted him to 'recite' in the name of 'He who hath taught by the pen'. Maybe, the Prophet's positioning of Islam thus is indicative of Muhammad's deprivation on that score. After all, man tends to miss his letters in spite of his social status while a man of letters holds his sway regardless of his position. Anyway, from then on, from time-to-time, 'the God' began to reveal to His Messenger as He did before to Moses, and prophets, so that the Arabs who took to idolatrous ways for so long could be put on to the 'straight path', and at any rate that's what Muhammad said, and the *Muslims* believe.

Reciting the revelations he received, Muhammad soon made bold to proclaim that 'there is no god but God' and that he was 'the Messenger of God', which expectedly scandalized the Quraysh and others in Mecca no end. But then, 'the God' is aware that "verily man is rebellious, that he thinketh himself independent." What is more, 'the God' by then, might have realized that the regimen of material rewards for compliance, His covenant with the Jews, didn't work as that only made them more covetous. So He seemingly thought it fit to devise a new world order for the *Muslims* in the Quran

It was thus, 'the God' in His further revelations to Muhammad sought to deprecate the life right 'here' while stressing upon the rewards in the 'Hereafter'. Some of these are excerpted in this book from Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's 'The Message of the Holy Quran', published by UBSPD, New Delhi.

"Let not the vicissitudes (of the success) of those who disbelieve, in the land, deceive thee (O Muhammad). It is but a brief comfort. And afterward their habitation

will be hell, an ill abode.”

“Even as those before you were mightier than you in strength, and more affluent than you in wealth and children. They enjoyed their lot a while, so ye enjoy your lot awhile even as those before you did enjoy their lot a while. And ye prate even as they prated. Such are they whose works have perished in the world and the Hereafter, such are they who are the losers.”

“O ye who believe! What aileth you that when it is said unto you: Go forth in the way of Allah, ye are bowed down to the ground with heaviness. Take ye pleasure in the life of the world rather than in the Hereafter? The comfort of the life of the world is but little in the Hereafter,”

“Allah enlargeth livelihood for whom he will, and straiteneth (it for whom He will); and they rejoice in the life of the world, whereas the life of the world is but brief comfort as compared with the Hereafter.”

“A similitude of the Garden which those who keep their duty (to Allah) are promised: Therein are rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk whereof the flavour changeth not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear-run honey; therein for them is every kind of fruit, with pardon from their Lord. (Are those who enjoy all this) like those who are immortal in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink so that it teareth their bowels?”

“Naught is the life of the world save a pastime and a sport. Better far is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Have ye then no sense?”

“Those who love the life of the world more than the Hereafter, and debar (men) from the way of Allah and would have it crooked: such are far astray.”

It is worth noting that ‘the God’ had ruled drinking a sin here, only to provide ‘rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers’ in the ‘Hereafter’. Maybe, it’s in the realms of Allah’s imponderables that while decrying the joys of life of here, He should have promised the believers earthly pleasures in the ‘Hereafter’! After all, won’t deprivation ‘here’ make the craving for the ‘Hereafter’ all the more intense in the believers? Be that as it may, it never seems to occur to the believers that with the body buried here, how one were to enjoy the joys of flesh the ‘Hereafter’ holds for him or her?

Well, ‘the God’ would have expected man viewing such diktats with skepticism, but then He must have banked on the “O ye believe” line of the Quran. After all, ‘the God’ could have reckoned that the ‘sense of belief’ insensibly undermines the faculty of reasoning. Oh, Lord God, contrast this with Lord Krishna’s proposition to Arjuna at the end of his talk in *Gita* (v63, ch18, Thy Looking-glass) *excerpted below from the author’s free ebook, Bhagvad-Gita: Treatise of self-help, sans 110 verses interpolated in the version in vogue.*

*That thee heard of this wisdom
For task on hand now apply mind.*

However, it is in the Islamic virtue of deprivation ‘here’ lay the urge to savor life after death in ‘the Hereafter’. And that seemingly enhances the craving of the faithful for the Paradise, and helps them get glued to Islam in hope. Besides, Allah well knew that all this would come in handy to Muhammad in raising a band of *jihadis* to serve his cause in times to come.

Armed with Allah’s revelations, and possessed by the faith he preached, Muhammad set out to show the ‘straight path’ to the Meccans. Such is the force of habit, and the inertia of mind for change, that even a faith so well-crafted to cater to the psyche of the poor and deprived ‘here’, initially failed to make even the poorest of the Meccans to

flock into His Messenger's fold. In the end, however, he could entice a few deprived poor into Islam that assuaged their discomforts 'here', and more pertinently, promised in the 'Hereafter' for them such comforts not only beyond the reach of Mecca's rich but unseen in the sands of Arabia. If not the Messenger of God he claimed to be, certainly Muhammad was the Merchant of Dreams. Nevertheless, compounding Muhammad's frustration 'here' on the Islamic front, the Meccan gentry looked at him with suspicion, and treated him with disdain.

As if stung to the quick by the obstinacy of the idolaters, and pleased with His Messenger's perseverance that was sustained by Khadijah's faith in him, 'the God' gave him hope.

Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee nor doth he hate thee,
And verily the latter portion will be better for thee than the former,
And verily thy lord will give unto thee so that thou wilt be content
Did he not find thee an orphan and protect (thee)?
Did he not find thee wandering and direct (thee)?
Did he not find thee destitute and enrich (thee)?

At long last, Muhammad's patience paid, and Islam got a foothold in Medina, the then Yathrib, with some of the residents becoming *Musalmans*. In Mecca too, to the chagrin of the Quraysh, Muhammad's new religion, though with its handful of faithful, began to create a sensation. However, to avoid a schism amongst their clans, some leaders of the town came up with a compromise, which envisaged that one should be allowed to practice Islam and the religion of their fathers as well, if he so wills.

Even before Muhammad could weigh the options for a decision, an alarmed Allah Ta'ala sent the message to him:

"Say: O disbelievers, I shall not worship that which ye worship, nor will ye worship that which I worship, nor have I worshipped that which ye worship, nor have ye worshipped that which I worship. For you your religion and for me mine."

It would be interesting to speculate what could have been the outcome of the fusion of Islam and the Arabian idolatry, if we may call it so, had Muhammad agreed to merge them both. Of course, he would have successfully bargained for the control of the *Kabah* with Hubal and all. If not during his life time, which anyway was to last a decade or so from then on, but certainly after his death, Islam would have lost its way amidst the idols of *Kabah*. But, in the bargain, the progeny of Ishmael would have retained the magical name of Islam for their worship of Hubal, and probably in the end, Islam would have given way to the Christianity in the Roman era. More importantly, vexed with Muhammad for his lack of faith in His revelations, 'the God' would not have showed him the 'straight path' that he unfolded later, and that would have been less of a discomfort to the surviving *Musalmans*. But then, the will of Allah or the ambition of Muhammad, and / or both, didn't let that fate befall Islam.

Chapter 8

War of Words

In the wake of Muhammad's refusal to their overtures, the Meccans decided to remove the Islamic thorn from their Bedouin flesh. However, Muhammad, on the mundane level, would have had his own informers to alert him about the conspiracy on his life or, for all that, his sixth sense, of a survivor, sensed the impending threat to his life, thus forcing his flight from Mecca.

Yet, in the divine plane, Allah, the All Knowing, might have come to know about the brewing plot to assassinate His Messenger, and He, not the One to be outdone by

Hubal's men, could have helped Muhammad in his flight, along with Abu Bakr, to Medina, the then Yathrib.

While the 'Helpers' of Medina welcomed Muhammad, the Jews of the neighborhood were scandalized by the *ayats* in circulation; for they felt that the Prophet of Islam was plagiarizing their Torah in Hebrew as Quran in Arabic. Though the Jewish diatribes put Muhammad on the back foot, going by the hostility exhibited towards them in the Quran, clearly Jehovah was not amused.

Thus, it seems the God's alienation with His 'once' Chosen People was complete, and that sealed the fate of the Jews, who by then came to flourish in the oases of Arabia.

"The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet apply it not, is as the likeness of the ass carrying books. Wretched is the likeness of folk who deny the revelations of Allah. And Allah guideth not wrong doing folk."

"Say (O Muhammad): O ye who are Jews! If ye claim that ye are favoured of Allah apart from (all) mankind, then long for death if ye are truthful."

"But they will never long for it because of all that their own hands have sent before, and Allah is Aware of evil-doers."

"Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Lo! the death from which ye shrink will surely meet you, and afterward ye will be returned unto the Knower of the invisible and the visible, and He will tell you what ye used to do."

However, unmindful of the Quranic warnings, which they dismissed as Muhammad's ranting, the Jews continued in their tirade against the 'new' prophet as an imposter. Besides, by making a common cause with the Quraysh of Mecca, and his enemies elsewhere, they had plotted for Muhammad's downfall.

It was then, 'the God' must have realized the dubious nature of man he created, and seemingly didn't want to take any more chances with the flocks of *Musalmans*, His new favorites.

Thus, 'the God' lost no time in stressing that the *Musalmans* are but the servants of Allah, and made their surrender to Him the *raison d'être* of Islam. Besides, 'the God' fashioned the Quran to psyche the *Musalmans* into Islamic paranoia with Muhammadan paraphernalia.

But still, as though not to leave any loose religious ends, and to eternally bind the believers in the Islamic blindfold, Allah sought to inculcate in the faithful, the habit of 'unquestioning belief' in Him that is in addition to 'utmost obedience' He earlier demanded from the Jews. Besides, combining the fear of hell with the promise of paradise, 'the God' took care to dangle the carrot and stick before the believing *Musalmans*.

However, the God's *coup de grace* appears to be in the psychological arena of the Islamic dogma. He sought to win over the compliance of the *Musalmans* by deriding the Jews and the Christians, the way a father harps on his hurt on account of his elder siblings to gain his youngest progeny's sympathy. Like that father, who wittingly or unwittingly imposes a psychic burden of obedience on his unfortunate son's conscience, so 'the God' seems to have succeeded in inculcating a habit of mechanical supplication amongst the *Musalmans* to everything Islamic.

Nonetheless, fearing that the prodigal Hebrews would tend to lead the new religious breed astray, 'the God' prohibited his new flock from having anything to do with them, and made a covenant to that effect with them in the Quran.

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam. Whoso is forced by hunger, not by will, to sin (for him) lo, Allah is forgiving, Merciful.”

“All they who disbelieve and deny our revelations, such are rightful owners of hell.”

“Allah made a covenant of old with the Children of Israel and We raised among them twelve chieftains, and Allah said: Lo! I am with you, if ye establish worship and pay the poor due, and believe in My messengers and support them, and lend unto Allah a kindly loan, surely I shall remit your sins, and surely I shall bring you into gardens underneath which rivers flow. Whoso among you disbelieveth after this will go astray from a plain road.”

“We made a covenant of old with the Children of Israel and We sent unto them messengers. As often as a messenger came unto them with that which their souls desired not (they became rebellious). Some (of them) they denied and some they slew.”

“Lo! We did reveal The Torah, wherein is guidance and a light, by which the Prophets who surrendered (unto Allah) judged the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests (judged) by such of Allah’s Scripture as they were bidden to observe, and thereunto were they witnesses. So fear not mankind, but fear Me. And barter not My revelations for a little gain. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are disbelievers.”

“And We prescribed for them therein: The life for the life, and the eye for the eye, and the nose for the nose, and the ear for the ear, and the tooth for the tooth, and for wounds retaliation. But whoso forgoeth it (in the way of charity) it shall be expiation for him. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are wrong-doers.”

“And because of their breaking their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts. They change words from their context and forget a part of that whereof they were admonished. Thou wilt not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. But bear with them and pardon them. Lo! Allah loveth the kindly.”

“The Jews say! Allah’s hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so. Nay, but both His hands are spread out wide in bounty. He bestoweth as He will. That which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord is certain to increase the contumacy and disbelief of many of them, and We have cast among them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. As often as they light a fire for war, Allah extinguisheth it. Their effort is for corruption in the land, and Allah loveth not corrupters.”

“They thought no harm would come of it, so they were willfully blind and deaf. And afterward Allah turned (in mercy) toward them. Now (even after that) are many of them willfully blind and deaf. Allah is Seer of what they do.”

“And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was (revealed) before him, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and a light, confirming that which was (revealed) before it in the Torah – a guidance and an admonition unto those who ward off (evil).”

“And with those who say: ‘Lo! we are Christians,’ We made a covenant, but they forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished. Therefor We have stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will inform them of their handiwork.”

“They indeed have disbelieved who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. Say: Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth? Allah’s is the Sovereignty of the heavens

and the earth and all that is between them. He createth what He will. And Allah is Able to do all things.”

“They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers.”

“They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not from so saying a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve.”

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how we make the revelations clear for them, and see how they are turned away!”

“When Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? He saith: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used say it, then Thou knewest it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in thy mind. Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Knower of Things Hidden.”

“I spake unto them only that which Thou commandedst me, (saying): Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when Thou tookest me Thou wast the Watcher over them. Thou art Witness over all things.”

“If Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgive them (lo! they are Thy slaves.) Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”

“The Jews and Christians say: We are sons of Allah and His loved ones. Say: Why then doth he chastise you for your sins? Nay, ye are but mortals of His creating. He forgiveth whom He will, and chastiseth whom He will. Allah’s is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and unto Him is the journeying.”

“Who is better in religion than he who surrendereth his purpose to Allah while doing good (to men) and followeth the tradition of Abraham, the upright? Allah (Himself) chose Abraham for friend.”

“O people of the Scripture! Now hath Our messenger come unto you, expounding unto you much of that which ye used to hide in the Scripture, and forgiving much. Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture.”

“Say: O people of the Scripture! Stress not in your religion other than the truth, and follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old and led many astray, and erred from a plain road.”

“Say: O, People of the Scripture! Do ye blame us for aught else than that we believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed aforetime, and because most of you are evil-livers?”

“Say: O People of the Scripture! Ye have naught (of guidance) till ye observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto you from your Lord. That which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) from thy Lord is certain to increase the contumacy and disbelief of many of them. But grieve not for the disbelieving folk.”

“So judge between them by that which Allah hath revealed, and follow not their desires, but beware of them lest they seduce thee from some part of that which Allah hath revealed unto thee. And if they turn away, then know that Allah’s will is to smite them for some sin of theirs. Lo! many of mankind are evil-livers.”

“O ye who believe! Whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom he loveth and who love Him, humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.”

“Those who choose disbelievers for their friends instead of believers! Do they look for power at their hands? Lo! all power appertaineth to Allah.”

“Shall I tell thee of a worse (case) than theirs for retribution with Allah? Worse (is the case of him) whom Allah hath cursed, him on whom His wrath hath fallen! Worse is he of whose sort Allah hath turned some to apes and swine, and who serveth idols. Such are in worse plight and further astray from the plain road.”

“And when ye call to prayer they take it for a jest and sport. That is because they are a folk who understand not.”

“Your friend can be only Allah: and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor due, and bow down (in prayer).”

“And whoso taketh Allah and His messenger and those who believe for friend (will know that), lo! The party of Allah, they are the victorious.”

“O ye who believe! Choose not for friends such of those who received the Scripture before you, and of the disbelievers, as make a jest and sport of your religion. But keep your duty to Allah if ye are true believers.”

“O ye who believe! Take not for intimates others than your own folk, who would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of) their mouths, but that which their breasts hide is greater. We have made plain for you the revelations if ye will understand.”

“O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.”

“Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoso doeth that hath no connection with Allah unless (it be) that ye but guard yourselves against them, taking (as it were) security. Allah biddeth you beware (only) of Himself. Unto Allah is the journeying.”

“They long that ye should disbelieve even as they disbelieve, that ye may be upon a level (with them). So choose not friends from them till they forsake their homes in the way of Allah; if they turn back (to enmity) then take them and kill them wherever ye find them, and choose no friend nor helper from among them.”

With these, and many such admonitions in the Quran, ‘the God’ seems to have succeeded in sustaining a large body of *Musalmans* to this day who strive to follow the ‘straight path’ laid down by Muhammad for them. What is more, should they ever feel wanting in their faith, they tend to suffer from a guilt complex, and that’s what tends to induce, as would be seen later, an inimical abnormality in the psyche of the *Musalmans*.

But, in spite of the creed of intolerance and the streak of aggressiveness that their faith unmistakably inculcates amongst them, there is this hurt in the *Musalmans* that the rest of the world considers Islam as anathema to the peaceful coexistence of mankind!

Chapter 9

Czar of Medina

Hijra changeth it all – the agenda of the Messenger, the content of the Quran, the character of the faith, and above all, the destiny of Islam. Had Muhammad, revealing the Quran, confined himself to Mecca, or had he continued with his meditation at Hira, probably, he would have ended up being the Bahira of *Kabah*. But, even as the rejection of the Quraysh steeled his will, the conversion of the Yathribs into Islam cemented his belief in himself.

In the end, the Hijra, with the accompanied submission of the Helpers, turned the Prophet of Mecca into the Czar of Medina. However, it was in the Battle of Badr that he discovered his unique skills of man-management, which kindled his ambition to conquer Arabia; and that changed the destiny of Islam as well as the harmony of the world.

If in Mecca, it was the promise of the 'Hereafter' that attracted the faithful into the Islamic fold, in Medina, it was the spoils of war and the prospect of Paradise, which swelled the ranks of the *Musalmans*. It may be noted that it was Muhammad who led by example in looting the Jewish settlements of the oases, one after the other. In the process, wittingly or unwittingly, its prophet gave Islam plunder as its legacy.

Much after his death, as *Musalmans* ran over the nations of the world, so to say with sword in one hand and Quran in the other, booty, besides becoming the creed of Islam, became the single source of income for the Arabs.

However, it was Muhammad who had set the trend by providing for his faithful with the spoils of war. As can be expected, living out of ransom and plunder wouldn't have shaped a work-culture amongst his faithful, and the nations of the West Asia, to this day, suffer from the lack of it. Thus, Muhammad's statecraft, based on parasitism, proved to be the economic nemesis of the Islamic world in the long run. And the Quran too played its part by deprecating the life 'here' and extolling the one in 'Hereafter'.

The politico-religious ascendancy that Medina afforded Muhammad enabled him to deal with the Jews, the Christians and the idolaters, read the Meccans, rather aggressively. The Quran's Medina 'revelations' provide enough, and more, clues to Muhammad's aggressive political agenda and expansive religious ambition.

Likewise, the socio-military consolidation that he could bring about in Medina finds reflection in his arbitrariness in dealing with his detractors. However, after pushing the Jewish settlers into Muslim subjugation, it's as though 'the God' left the Quran to Muhammad's care. After all, by then Jehovah was avenged well and true.

For his part, blessed with capable men to protect the faith he founded, Muhammad began to address himself to the administration of Medina, however, with an eye on Mecca. Living a frugal life, in spite of his one-fifth share of the ever-rising booty, he was wont to tend the poor and the needy amongst the Helpers. However, in time, with his politico-religious consolidation well underway, Muhammad turned his attention to the possibilities of life 'here' itself. Though by then, he had Sawadh and Ayesha, both of whom he married after Khadijah's demise, maybe driven by the desire for an heir to take over the mantle from him, or pushed by the dictates of his libido, and / or both, he began seeking more and more mates to cohabit

While Quran obliged him by waiving the four women ceiling for him, power, the magnet that draws women to men, fetched him nine more wives, not to speak of the slave girls that came with the spoils of war. After all, there was the divine sanction in place for the Semitic Prophets to keep the female slaves all for themselves.

That might make the skeptics wonder whether prophets were but tribal heads who donned the religious garb for better effect. Notwithstanding his fondness for women, Ayesha remained his favorite till the very end, though he was enamored of Mariyah, towards the end of his chequered life.

Those who won't vouch for Islam, in particular the Christians, tend to debunk Muhammad for his ways of the flesh, and by extension the faith he founded as well. To be fair to Muhammad, he never claimed himself to be a saint; indeed, he had all along maintained that he was, after all, human. Besides, while the culture of his tribe sanctioned polygamy, the proclivities of the war widows warranted it; and thus to measure the passions of the Arabic prophet on the Christian scale of missionary celibacy would indeed be erroneous.

His personal philosophy concerning the pleasures of life is best illustrated in his own words when one of his followers wanted to seek his permission to become an ascetic.

"Hast though not in me an example," said Muhammad, "And I go into women, I eat meat, and I fast, and I break my fast. He is not of my people who maketh men eunuchs or maketh himself an eunuch. For verily thine eyes have their rights over thee. And thy body hath its rights. As thy family have their rights, so pray, and sleep and fast, and break fast."

More than the personal character, it is the public posturing of this singular man, who rules the minds of millions of *Musalmans* to this day, which is worth examining. That the *Musalmans*, most of whom were converts from varied cultures and from far off lands, should treat every word of his as the eternal truth, and take his prescriptions, based on medieval injunctions, as divine sanctions, indeed make the faith of Islam but a creed of Muhammadanism!

To the perennial hurt of the *Musalmans*, and paradoxically at that, all the while waging war against idolatry, he forever encouraged his followers to worship his persona, and revere his personal affects. Why the inimical effect of this is there for all to see in the Islam of the day.

Above all, this account of an ambassador of Quraysh reveals it all:

"O people, I have been sent as envoy unto kings – unto Caesar and Chosroes and the Negus – and I have not seen a king whose men so honour him as the companions of Muhammad honour Muhammad. If he commandeth aught, they almost outstrip his word in fulfilling it; when he performeth his ablution, they well might fight for the water thereof; when he speaketh, their voices are hushed in his presence; nor will they look him full in the face, but lower their eyes in reverence for him."

It's as though Muhammad had put the fear of 'the God' in his followers so that they come to revere him, His messenger.

Chapter 10 ***Angels of War***

It was not long before Muhammad in Medina had his eye on Mecca, and in the Battle of Badr, the Quraysh in disarray threw open its gates for him. Though the *Musalmans* to this day gloat over Muhammad's so-called victory in that battle of Islamic destiny, it is another matter that the Quraysh fought half-heartedly. Nevertheless, what distinguishes the battle that is celebrated in the Islamic folklore is the unshakable belief that Allah, at the behest of Muhammad, had sent in warrior angels to assist the outnumbered *Musalmans*.

"When ye sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): I will help you with a thousand of the angels, rank on rank."

"When thy lord inspired the angels, (saying) I am with you. So make those who believe stand firm. I will throw fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Then smite the necks and smite of them each other."

Notwithstanding the euphoric feeling of the *Musalmans* about the angels of war, Muhammad, the military genius that he was, had commented to some of his companions after the Battle of Badr thus:

“I know that men of the sons of Hashim and others have been brought out despite themselves, without any will to fight us.”

Proving him right, the angels of war failed to attack Abu Jahl and his band that fought on with unabated ferocity till they all died in the battle even as other nobles deserted the cause and fled the battlefield with their folks.

Be that as it may, in the annals of the Arab legend there was a battle extraordinary in ‘the Year of the Elephant’, entirely fought by birds to save the precincts of *Kabah* the then Temple of the Hubal. That was not far down the Arab memory lane as it happened in the reign of Abd al Muttalib, the grandfather of Muhammad. That fascinating episode is described by Martin Lings thus:

“At that time the Yemen was under the rule of Abyssinia, and an Abyssinian named Abrahah was vice-regent. He built a magnificent cathedral in Sana, hoping thereby to make it supersede Mecca as the great place of pilgrimage for all Arabia. He had marble brought to it from one of the derelict palaces of the Queen of Sheba, and he set up crosses in it of gold and of silver, and pulpits of ivory and ebony, and he wrote to his master, the Negus: ‘I have built thee a church, O King, the like of which was never built for any king before thee; and I shall not rest until I have diverted unto it the pilgrimage of the Arabs’. Nor did he make any secret of his intention, and great was the anger of the tribes throughout Hijaz and Najd. Finally a man of Kinanah, a tribe akin to Quraysh, went to Sana for the deliberate purpose of defiling the church, which he did one night and then returned safely to his people.

When Abrahah heard of this he vowed that in revenge he would raze the Ka’bah to the ground; and having made his preparations he set off for Mecca with a large army, in the van of which he placed an elephant. Some of the Arab tribes north of Sana attempted to bar his way, but the Abyssinians put them to flight and captured their leader, Nufayl of the tribe of Khath’am. By way of ransom for his life, he offered to act as guide.

When the army reached Ta’if, the men of Thaqif came out to meet them, afraid that Abrahah might destroy their temple of al-Lat in mistake for the Ka’bah. They hastened to point out to him that he had not yet reached his goal, and they offered him a guide for the remainder of his march. Although he already had Nufayl, he accepted their offer, but the man died on the way, about two miles from Mecca, at a place called Mughammis, and they buried him. Afterwards the Arabs took to stoning his grave, and the people who live there still stone it to this day.

Abrahah halted at Mughammis, and sent on a detachment of horse to the outskirts of Mecca. They took what they could on the way, and sent back their plunder to Abrahah, including two hundred camels which were the property of Abd al-Muttalib. Quraysh and other neighbouring tribes held a council of war, and decided that it was useless to try to resist the enemy. Meanwhile Abrahah sent a messenger to Mecca, bidding him to ask for the chief man there. He was to tell him they had not come to fight but only to destroy the temple, and if he wished to avoid all bloodshed he must come to the Abyssinian camp.

There had been no official chief of Quraysh since the time when their privileges and responsibilities had been divided between the houses of “Abd ad-Dar and Abdu Manaf. But most people had their opinion as to which of the chiefs of the clans was in fact if not by right the leading man of Mecca, and on this occasion the messenger was directed to

the house of Abd al-Muttalib who, together with one of his sons, went back with the messenger to the camp. When Abrahah saw him he was so impressed by his appearance that he rose from his royal seat to greet him and then sat beside him on the carpet, telling his interpreter to enquire if he had a favour to ask.

Abd al-Muttalib replied that the army had taken two hundred of his camels and he asked that they should be returned to him. Abrahah was somewhat surprised at the request, and said that he was disappointed in him, that he should be thinking of his camels rather than his religion which they had now come to destroy. Abd al-Muttalib replied: "I am the lord of the camels, and the temple likewise hath a lord who will defend it." "He cannot defend it against me," said Abrahah. "We shall see," said Abd al-Muttalib. "But give me my camels." And Abrahah gave orders for the camels to be returned.

Abd al-Muttalib returned to Quraysh and advised them to withdraw to the hills above the town. Then he went with some of his family and others to the Sanctuary. They stood beside him, praying to God for His help against Abrahah and his army, and he himself took hold of the metal ring in the middle of the Ka'bah door and said: "O God, thy slave protecteth his house, Protect Thou Thy House!" having thus prayed, he went with the others to join the rest of Quraysh in the hills at points where they could see what took place in the valley below.

The next morning Abrahah made ready to march into the town, intending to destroy the Ka'bah and then return to Sana by the way they had come. The elephant, richly caparisoned, was led into the front of the army, which was already drawn up; and when the mighty animal reached his position his keeper Unays turned him the same way as the troops were turned, that is towards Mecca. But Nufayl, the reluctant guide, had marched most of the way in the van of the army with Unays, and had learned from him some of the words of command which the elephant understood; and while the head of Unays was turned to watch for the signal to advance,

Nufayl took hold of the great ear and conveyed into it a subdued but intense imperative to kneel. Thereupon, to the surprise and dismay of Abrahah and the troops, the elephant slowly and deliberately knelt himself down to the ground. Unays ordered him to rise, but Nufayl's word had coincided with a command more powerful than that of any man, and the elephant would not move. They did everything they could to bring him to his feet; they even beat him about the head with iron bars and stuck iron hooks into his belly, but he remained like a rock. Then they tried the stratagem of making the whole army turn about and march a few paces in the direction of the Yemen. He at once rose to his feet, turned round and followed them. Hopefully they turned round about again, and he also turned, but no sooner was he facing Mecca than again he knelt.

This was the clearest of portents not to move one step further forward, but Abrahah was blinded by his personal ambition for the sanctuary he had built and by his determination to destroy its great rival. If they had turned back then, perhaps they would all have escaped disaster. But suddenly it was too late: the western sky grew black, and a strange sound was heard; its volume increased as a great wave of darkness swept upon them from the direction of the sea, and the air above their heads, as high as they could see, was full of birds.

Survivors said that they flew with a flight like that of swifts, and each bird had three pebbles the size of dried peas, one in its beak and one between the claws of each foot. They swooped to and fro over the ranks, pelting as they swooped, and the pebbles were so hard and launched with such velocity that they pierced even coats of mail. Every stone found its mark and killed its man, for as soon as a body was struck its flesh began to rot, quickly in some cases, more gradually in others.

Not everyone was hit, and amongst those spared were Unays and the elephant, but all were terror-stricken. A few remained in the Hijaz and earned a livelihood by shepherding and other work. But the main part of the army returned in disorder to Sana: Many died by the wayside, and many others, Abrahah included, died soon after their return. As to Nufayl, he had slipped away from the army while all attention was concentrated on the elephant, and he made his way unscathed to the hills above Mecca.”

This miraculous incident, more fantastic than the one at the Battle of Badr, would illustrate the Arab penchant for the fanciful ‘birds of war’, much before the Quran gave them authenticity with its scriptural sanction. However, on the temporal plane, it is the profound statement of Abd al Muttalib - *I’m the lord of the camels, and the temple likewise hath a lord who will defend it* - that rightly deserves the attention of the *Musalmans* of the day. Sadly though, for them and ‘the others’ as well, they fail to inculcate this ‘truism of faith’ in their religious ethos, which makes them believe that their billion-strong religion is threatened even if a woman of their ilk intends to marry a man of another creed, and thus become paranoid that it is their bounden duty to guard their faith by preventing its happening.

Well, the penchant of the *Musalmans* to perceive as if ‘Islam is in Danger’ over trivial matters, not to speak of matters prophetic, is the bane of the social harmony in this world. Whatever, Allah didn’t send the angels of war to help *Musalmans* at the next turn in the Battle of Uhud, even though things became too hot for them against the Quraysh; though, after a series of strategic compromises and winning maneuvers Muhammad could subdue them to usurp the *Kabah* for Islam.

Be that as it may, the fighting birds of Hubal too were nowhere to be seen over the skies of Mecca as Muhammad pulled down the idols from their pedestals, and Islam sans the fighting angels could still spread its wings under the shadow of the swords where Muhammad said Paradise is beneath.

Chapter 11

Privates of ‘the God’

“Single robbers, or a few associates, are branded with their genuine name; but the exploits of a numerous band assume the character of lawful and honourable war. The temper of a people thus armed against mankind was doubly inflamed by the domestic licence of rapine, murder, and revenge” - so described Edward Gibbon, in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the condition of the Arab society into which Muhammad was born in the 6th century.

After the debacle at Badr, the Meccans led a great expedition to Medina which Muhammad joined battle at Uhud. Right after leading the prayer, as stated by Martin Lings, Muhammad addressed his seven-hundred strong troops thus:

“Verily this day ye are at a station that is rich in reward and rich in treasure, for him who is mindful of what he is about and who devoteth his soul thereunto in patience and certainty and earnestness and effort.”

After drawing the battle plan, Muhammad chose fifty of his archers to man a strategic height in the battlefield and addressed them, “Keep their cavalry from us with your arrows. Let them not come upon us from our rear. Be the tide of battle for us or against us, stay at this post! If ye see us plundering the enemy, seek not to have a share in it; and if ye see us being slain, come not to our aid.”

In spite of such express orders from Muhammad, forty of the archers, when they sensed the ground troops were on the verge of looting the enemy camp, deserted their

post amidst the battle to share the spoils. Needless to say, the archers' eye on plunder helped the Quraysh zero in on Muhammad's men from the rear. And that resulted in an embarrassing reverse for the *Musalmans* in the mortal combat that ensued. In that fight, Muhammad too was hurt in the mouth, and escaped death by the skin of his teeth.

The God above must have felt enraged at the conduct of the crowd, and felt the need for the Privates of His Own amongst them. Thus, he inspired Muhammad to inculcate the spirit of martyrdom amongst the *Musalmans* for raising a die-hard corps in the service of Him and Islam –

“Hast thou not seen those unto whom it was said: Withhold your hands, establish worship and pay the poor-due, but when fighting was prescribed for them behold! a party of them fear mankind even as their fear of Allah or with greater fear, and say: Our Lord! Why hast thou ordained fighting for us? If only Thou wouldst give us respite yet a while! Say (unto them, O Muhammad): The comfort of this world is scant; the Hereafter will be better for him who wardeth off (evil); and ye will not be wronged the down upon a date-stone.”

“They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord.”

“And whoso seeketh as religion other than the Surrender (to Allah) it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.”

“Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not.”

“Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah; and those who disbelieve do battle for the cause of idols. So fight the minions of the devil. Lo! the devil's strategy is very weak.”

“If thou couldst see how the angels receive those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs and (saying): Taste the punishment of burning!”

“And obey Allah and His messenger, and dispute not one with another lest ye falter and your strength depart from you; but be steadfast! Lo! Allah is with the steadfast.”

“O ye who believe! When ye meet those who disbelieve in battle, turn not your backs to them.”

“Whoso on that day turneth his back to them, unless manoeuvring for battle or intent to join a company, he truly hath incurred wrath from Allah, and his habitation will be hell, a hapless journey's-end.”

“Relent not in pursuit of enemy, If ye are suffering, lo! They suffer even as ye suffer and ye hope from Allah that for which they cannot hope. Allah is ever Knower, Wise.”

“And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah. But if they cease, then Lo! Allah is Seer of what they do.”

“It is not for any Prophet to have captives until he hath made slaughter in the land. Ye desire the lure of this world and Allah desireth (for you) the Hereafter, and Allah is Mighty Wise.”

“Let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the other. Whoso fighteth in the way of Allah, be he slain or be he victorious, on him We shall bestow a vast reward.”

“And call not those who are slain in the way of Allah “dead” Nay they are living, only ye perceive not.”

“Think not of those, who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are living. With their Lord they have provision.”

“And what though ye be slain in Allah’s way or die therein? Surely pardon from Allah and mercy are better than all that they amass.”

“Lo! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs: they shall fight in the way of Allah and shall slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran. Who fulfilleth His covenant better than Allah? Rejoice then in your bargain that ye have made, for that is the supreme triumph.”

“Enter the Garden, ye and your wives, to be made glad.”

“Therein are brought round for them trays of gold and goblets, and therein is all that souls desire and eyes find sweet, and ye are immortal therein.”

“This is the Garden which ye are made to inherit because of what ye used to do.”

“Reclining on ranged couches. And We wed them unto fair ones with wide, lovely eyes.”

The Quranic exhortation to die for Islam to gain the favours of Paradise makes a compelling mix for the Privates of Allah to turn *fidayēn* for the cause of the faith. It is thus, the religion of Muhammad that goads the faithful to *jihad* for the pride of Islam, and promises a voluptuous Paradise for those who perish in the process, was destined to play a disruptive role in the affairs of nations.

Chapter 12

Playing to the Gallery

Muhammad, after all, came from an exalted family and all along socialized with the nobility of the Meccan tribes. Whatever were his childhood deprivations as an orphan, his marriage to Khadijah brought him recompense when still young. Thus, for over forty years, the chance of his birth shaped his sense of belonging to the higher crusts of society. On the other hand, as the circumstances of his life post-Hijra, forced him into the company of the poor, it can be seen that as the Czar of Medina, he condescended to descend to the Helpers like the Quraysh of Mecca he was.

If any proof were needed for this proposition, here it is. The inconsiderable loot and ransom collected in the wake of the Battle of Hunan and the siege of Taif, for most part, was gifted away by him to the members of sixteen influential families of Mecca and the four chiefs of other tribes who all embraced Islam by then. Maybe, apart from his desire to please the members of his own clan, Muhammad’s magnanimity could no less be the aberration of his exhibitionism.

Whatever, this tango of his with the Meccans that the four-thousand Helpers of Medina watched in dismay was not rhymed to the tune of gratitude, was it? Of course, knowing that his move had caused distress, and raised doubts in the minds of his old faithful, Muhammad dealt with them memorably as recorded by Martin Lings thus:

“Men of the Helpers, word hath come to me that ye are deeply moved against me in your souls. Did I not find you erring, and God guided you, poor and God enriched you, enemies each of the other and God reconciled your hearts?”

“Yea indeed,” they answered. “God and His Messenger are most bountiful and most gracious.”

“Will ye not retort against me?” he said.

“How should we retort?” they asked, in some perplexity.

“If ye wished,” he answered, “ye might say unto me, and say truthfully, and be believed:

‘Thou didst come unto us discredited, and we credited thee, forlorn and we helped thee, an outcaste and we took thee in, destitute and we comforted thee.’

O Helpers, are ye stirred in your souls about the things of this world whereby I have reconciled men’s hearts that they may submit unto God, when you yourselves I have entrusted unto your Islam? Are ye not well content, O Helpers, that the people take with them their sheep and their camels, and that ye take with you the Messenger of God unto your homes? If all men but the Helpers went one way, and the Helpers another, I would go the way of the Helpers. God have Mercy upon the Helpers, and on their sons, and on their sons’ sons.” They wept until their beards were wet with their tears, and with one voice they said: “We are well content with the Messenger of God as our portion and our lot.”

This episode singularly illustrates the cunning of Muhammad to position his political necessity as human solidarity. After all, he could have surely known which side of the Islamic bread has butter. Deserting the die-hard *Muslims* of Medina at that stage would have amounted to jeopardizing the future of Islam which he so painstakingly nurtured. Besides, that memorable speech should have made Muhammad to populism what Goebbels had been to propaganda. Thus, it’s no wonder the despots of the Muslim States follow in their Prophet’s footsteps by giving the poor their Islam, and the rich their goodies, all the while serving their own cause of staying in power.

Nonetheless, Muhammad’s continuance of animal sacrifice, and his countenance in throwing stones at the devil at Mecca, and such other pre-Islamic rituals, should leave one pondering whether his opposition to idolatry was a matter of conviction or a strategy to give a cause of action to Islam. Can’t the origin of the so-called false revelation said to be in praise of Al Lat, Al Uzza and Manat be seen in this background?

Maybe, it’s an idea for the *Muslims* to see whether or not these vexing as well as perplexing ‘Satanic Verses’, whose authorship Muhammad had denied, are indeed Quranic interpolations. And we have the Quranic challenge to go by for that –

“And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We revealed unto our Slave (Muhammad), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witness beside Allah if ye are truthful.”

Why the *Muslims* won’t set the ‘deviant verses’ against Quran’s ‘authentic *ayats*’ to see how they fare in comparison and thus settle the issue once and for all?

However, it should not be missed that the Quranic tirade is more vehemently directed against the Jews and the Christians than the idolaters. It is relevant to note that there is this tradition of worshipping the supposed relic of Muhammad’s hair at Hazrat-Bal in Kashmir. And the commotion its theft and the relief its alleged ‘retrieval’ occasioned in the *ummah* once might show that at heart man, even the *Muslim*, is by nature idolatrous, in spite of his religious conditioning to the contrary. The *dargahs* at which the *Muslims* revere their *fakirs* that dot the landscape of the Indian subcontinent is a pointer to this peculiar side of human nature. Nonetheless, the faithful of Islam wouldn’t admit, unlike the Xians of India who insensibly gave up that pretence for too long now.

Remarkably, in spite of his exalted position, power didn’t go to Muhammad’s head for he had too shrewd a mind to allow that happen. But, he seems to have betrayed his

sense of power and unrivalled status in subtler ways. For one thing, the ninth *sura* that proclaims the immunity from obligation towards the idolaters is the only one in the Quran, which is without the obligatory recitation – “In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful” – and for another, lo, the proclamation itself was a joint command of Allah and His messenger - “Freedom from obligation (is proclaimed) from Allah and His messenger toward those of the idolaters with whom ye made a treaty.”

“And a proclamation from Allah and His messenger to all men on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage that Allah is free from obligation to the idolaters, and (so is) His messenger. So if ye repent, it will be better for you; but if ye are averse, then know that ye cannot escape Allah. Give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom to those who disbelieve.”

“(How much more seemly) had they been content with that which Allah and His messenger had given them and had said: Allah sufficeth us. Allah will give us of His bounty, (and also) His messenger. Unto Allah we are suppliants.”

Going by the aforesaid, the Quran seems to be indulgent towards Muhammad, having all the while condemning the Christians for ascribing partners to Allah, as can be seen from the following!

“We shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve because they ascribe unto Allah partners, for which no warrant hath been revealed. Their habitation is the Fire, and hapless the abode of the wrong-doers.”

However, towards the end, Muhammad felt bold to write to the Roman Emperor, the Persian Prince and the Egyptian King, inviting them to join Islam. While the far off Caesar ignored his call, the Persian ruler tore off the letter; the Egyptian neighbor felt it was wise to give an evasive reply, however, accompanied with enticing gifts. Thus received Muhammad, mounds of gold with Mariyah, and her equally attractive sister Sirin, the Coptic Christian slave girls, for his dispensation.

As anticipated by the wily Al-Muqawqis, Muhammad marveled at Mariyah's charms, and as Abraham did with Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl of Sarah, he readily took her under his amorous wings. It was only time before Mariyah, to Muhammad's delight, presented him a son, whom he named, again at Gabriel's behest, Ishmael, as did Abraham before him. It would have seemed then to Muhammad and his followers that the divine wheel turned a full circle, but not quite as the later development proved.

Be that as it may, Muhammad named his first son from Khadijah as Qasim, and of course that was much before the revelations at Mount Hira. And then, the forgotten Abrahamic pedigree of Arabs didn't get Muhammad's racial focus either. But, now that Islam was firmly in place in Mecca, and Abraham's *Kabah* was rid of the idols, it was but natural that the heir of the Arabic Prophet should bear the name of Ishmael, the progenitor of them all. However, Muhammad's filial joy ensured a reprieve of peace in the region till death snatched, first his infant son, and shortly thereafter, him as well. With the death of Muhammad, the Islamic sword that Mariyah managed to keep in its sheath, was unsheathed by his followers on the neighbouring nations in pursuit of, what else, but plunder.

Soon, as Egypt was brought under the Islamic shackles, it was only time before the Islamic straight, but narrow, path was firmly laid in the land that once nourished one of the earliest and greatest civilizations of the world. And it was only the beginning of the end of the old world cultures in the adjoining continents, and in time, wherever Islam pitched its tent, it was all about sporting a beard and wearing the skull cap. Oh, how much Islam made the world poorer we would never know, but the glimpses of what is still extant on the ground and that which preserved in museums would make us sigh.

Some thirteen centuries after Muhammad revived the Abrahamic legacy of the Arabs, Adolf Hitler advocated the theory of Aryan racial superiority in Germany. It's the strange fate of the Jewish people that they were the victims of both, first that of the ambition of Muhammad and then of the prejudice of the Fuehrer. If the Jewish posturing against Muhammad as an imposter earned them his wrath, his hostility towards idolatry unwittingly put his followers at odds with the Hindus in later times.

"This son of yours will be a wild one - free and untamed as a wild ass! He will be against everyone, and everyone will feel the same towards him.", the prophecy of the Lord's Archangel about Ishmael finally seems to have come true, in as much as the faith of his progeny grew up in time to be the troubled child of the family of the world religions.

Chapter 13

Perils of History

Napoleon was wrong in stating that kids should be taught history to enable them to learn from past mistakes for history has unerringly demonstrated that as grown-ups, instead of learning from the wrongs of the history, they tend to be bitter about the perceived injustices of the past.

The history of man, as taught by the Torah, inculcated a sense of injustice in the collective consciousness of the Arabs that was captured by Edward Gibbon thus:

"They pretend that, in the division of the earth, the rich and fertile climates were assigned to the other branches of the human family; and that the posterity of the outlaw Ishmael might recover, by fraud or force, the portion of inheritance of which he had been unjustly deprived....

If a Bedoween discovers from afar a solitary traveler, he rides furiously against him, crying, with a loud voice, "Undress thyself, thy aunt (*my wife*) is without a garment. A ready submission entitles him to mercy; resistance will provoke the aggressor, and his own blood must expiate the blood which he presumes to shed in legitimate defense."

To this sense of Arab self-righteousness to plunder, the Quran accords it the religious sanction through the verses of 'Spoils of War'.

"They ask thee (O Muhammad) of the spoils of war. Say: The spoils of war belong to Allah and the messenger, so keep your duty to Allah, and adjust the matter of your difference, and obey Allah and His messenger, if ye are (true) believers."

Thus, by a quirk of destiny, in Muhammad's war against the idols, the Quranic creed of Islam and the mundane agenda of his warriors made a common cause. When the flag of Islam was finally hoisted on the *Kabah*, the progeny of Ishmael became a nation of the *Musalmans*. Besides, the old Bedoween resentment gave way to the zeal of the *Musalmans* even as the Arab greed for plunder underlined the agenda of aggression.

It was thus, the might of the Arab tribes, hitherto misdirected in internecine quarrels, was to become the force of Islam that set upon the world to undo the historical wrong done to Ishmael and them. The capabilities of succeeding Caliphs and the Paradise of wine and women that Muhammad had promised the *jihadis* provided the cutting edge to the Islamic swords. Thus, in time, as considerable part of the old world fell prostrate at the feet of the *Musalmans*, the posterity of Ishmael had had their revenge after all.

For years thereafter, the Arabs, the deprived race of Ishmael, ensconced in the conquered lands, went about their life as though to compensate for their lost out forebears. What is more, they had ensured to make the subdued peoples of the conquered lands the servants of their God that is after enslaving them. It appeared as if Ishmael could have had the last laugh as his progeny planted Islam in the rich and fertile

climates that he felt were unjustly denied to him, and what is more his tormented soul could have rested in peace, when, in the end, the *Musalmans* hoisted the flag of Islam in Jerusalem itself!

However, the hatred for the idols that Muhammad inculcated in his believers, though as a tool to conquer Mecca, eventually fetched the highest dividends for Islam in Hindustan. Mahmud Ghazni, who opened its gates to the faith of Muhammad, would have had no reason to think of undertaking the task but for the tempting prospect of plundering its temples replete with riches besides defiling their deities falsified as idols by the *Musalmans*.

Alberuni might have had a correcting influence on Ghazni's mind regarding the so-called Hindu idol worship had he preceded him; and then, perhaps, the subsequent Indian history would have been far less vicious! It is interesting to note Alberuni's observations regarding the religious beliefs and the philosophical orientation of the Hindus around the turn of the eleventh century.

"The main and most essential point of the Hindu world of thought is that which the Brahmans think and believe, for they are specially trained for preserving and maintaining their religion."

"Since, however, here we have to explain the system and the theories of the Hindus on the subject (*idol worship*), we shall now mention their ludicrous views; but we declare at once that they are held only by the common uneducated people. For those who march on the path to liberation, or those who study philosophy and theology, and who desire abstract truth which they call *sara*, are entirely free from worshipping anything but God alone, and would never dream of worshipping an image manufactured to represent him. A tradition illustrative of this is that which Saunaka told the king Pariksha in these words: -

"There was once a king called Ambarisha, who had obtained an empire as large as he had wished for. But afterwards he came to like it no longer; he retired from the world, and exclusively occupied himself with worshipping and praising God for a long time. Finally, God appeared to him in the shape of Indra, the prince of the angels, riding on an elephant.

He spoke to the king:

"Demand whatever you like, and I will give it you."

The king answered:

"I rejoice in seeing thee, and I am thankful for the good fortune and help thou hast given; but I do not demand anything from thee, but only from him who created thee."

Indra said:

"The object of worship is to receive a noble reward. Realize, therefore, your object, and accept the reward from him from whom hitherto you have obtained your wishes, and do not pick and choose, saying, 'not from thee, but from another.'"

The king answered:

"The earth has fallen to my lot, but I do not care for all that is in it. The object of my worship is to see the Lord, and that thou canst not give me. Why, therefore, should I demand the fulfillment of my desire from thee?"

Indra said:

"The whole world and whoever is upon it are obedient to me. Who are you that you dare to oppose me?"

The king answered: "I, too, hear and obey, but I worship him from whom thou hast received this power, who is the lord of the universe, who has protected thee against the attacks of the two kings, Bali and Hiranyaksha. Therefore let me do as I like, and turn away from me with my farewell greeting."

Indra said:

"If you will absolutely oppose me, I will kill you and annihilate you."

The king answered;

"People say that happiness is envied, but not so misfortune. He who retires from the world is envied by the angels, and therefore they will try to lead him astray. I am one of those who have retired from the world and entirely devoted themselves to worship, and I shall not give it up as long as I live. I do not know myself to be guilty of a crime for which I should deserve to be killed by thee. If thou killest me without any offence on my part, it is thy concern. What dost thou want from me? If my thoughts are entirely devoted to God, and nothing else is blended with them, thou art not able to do me any harm. Sufficient for me is the worship with which I am occupied, and now I return to it."

As the king now went on worshipping, the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a man of the grey lotus colour, riding on a bird called Garuda, holding in one of the four hands the *sankha*, a sea-shell which people blow when riding on elephants; in the second hand the *chakra*, a round, cutting orbicular weapon, which cuts everything it hits right through; in the third an amulet, and in the fourth *padma*, i.e. the red lotus. When the king saw him, he shuddered from reverence, prostrated himself and uttered many praises. The lord quieted his terrified mind and promised him that he should obtain everything he wished for.

The king spoke:

"I had obtained an empire which nobody disputed with me; I was in conditions of life not troubled by sorrow or sickness. It was as if the whole world belonged to me. But then I turned away from it, after I had understood that the good of the world is really bad in the end. I do not wish for anything except what I now have. The only thing I now wish for is to be liberated from this fetter."

The Lord spoke:

"That you will obtain by keeping aloof from the world, by being alone, by uninterrupted meditation, and by restraining your senses to yourself."

The king spoke:

"Supposing that I am able to do so through that sanctity which the Lord has deigned to bestow upon me, how should any other man be able to do so? For man wants eating and clothing, which connects him with the world. How is he to think of anything else?"

The Lord spoke:

"Occupy yourself with your empire in as straightforward and prudent a way as possible: turn your thoughts upon me when you are engaged in civilizing the world and protecting its inhabitants, in giving alms, and in everything you do. And if you are overpowered by human forgetfulness, make to yourself an image like that in which you see me; offer to it perfumes and flowers and make it a memorial of me, so that you may not forget me. If you are in sorrow, think of me; if you speak, speak in my name; if you act, act for me."

Again on the idol worship itself Alberuni's had this to say:

“ ... that such idols are erected only for uneducated low-class people of little understanding; that the Hindus never made an idol of any supernatural being, much less of God; and, lastly, to show how the crowd is kept in thralldom by all kinds of priestly tricks and deceptions.

Therefore the book Gita says: “Many people try to approach me in their aspirations through something which is different from me; they try to insinuate themselves into my favour by giving alms, praise, and prayer to something besides me. I, however, confirm and help them in all these doings of theirs, and make them attain the object of their wishes, because I am able to dispense with them.”

On the subject of idol worship Alberuni's views as follows are worth noting by Muslims who tend to revere, if not worship, the symbols of Islam:

“It is well known that the popular mind leans towards the sensible world, and has an aversion to the world, of abstract thought which is only understood by highly educated people, of whom in every time and every place there are only few. And as common people will only acquiesce in pictorial representations, many of the leaders of religious communities have so far deviated from the right path as to give such imagery in their books and houses of worship, like the Jews and Christians, and, more than all, the Manichaeans.

These words of mine would at once receive a sufficient illustration if, for example, a picture of the Prophet were made, or of Mekka and the Ka'bah, and were shown to an uneducated man or woman. Their joy in looking at the thing would bring them to kiss the picture, to rub their cheeks against it, and to roll themselves in the dust before it, as if they were seeing not the picture, but the original, and were in this way, as if they were present in the holy places, performing the rites of pilgrimage, the great and the small ones.”

Contrast this with what we have now. The Quran is not only venerated as the Holy Quran but also handled reverentially in book form by every *Musalman* and his woman! The pictures of the *Kabah* adorn the walls of every Muslim home and business establishment! When it comes to Muhammad, it is hero-worshipping all the way, more fervent than any idol-worshipping ever.

Besides, Muhammad's name in Islamic print must be obligatorily suffixed with *pbuh*, the short form of 'Peace Be Upon Him'. For whatever that might suggest to the *Musalman*s, the skeptics would feel that given the strife in his life the practice could be apt.

However, sadly for the *Musalman*s, the legend of Muhammad, accentuated by the hearsays of his personal proclivities, vicissitudes of his life and the attitudes of his detractors, which the mechanism of their *ummah* perpetuates, shapes their abnormal psyche. What is worse, the sublimity of his preaching in Mecca and the severity of his sermons in Medina that make Islam a Janus-faced faith forever bedevil their minds to their and the others' eternal hurt. And that makes Islam a catch-22 from which Allah Ta'ala's Call is the only plausible escape.

Chapter 14

Pitfalls of Faith

If the ecstasy of the Quran is the soul of Islam, the legend of Muhammad is the mind of the *Musalman*. The exalted sense of his pedigree could have made Muhammad fiercely honest, even in the state of deprivation. It is to be appreciated that neither his insignificance as an orphan affected his self-worth nor his poverty dented his self-esteem. While nature endowed him with a shrewd mind his destiny seems to have

helped him cultivate a sense of purpose. Though unlettered, he obviously possessed native intelligence, and thus was alive to every opportunity that came his way. Above all, at some stage at least, he seems to have developed an unwavering faith in his own destiny. As can be seen, he was an uncanny man manager and mob manipulator extraordinary.

His exemplary personal courage in battle enabled him to lead by example, and this single character of his played no mean a part in the battles his faithful fought to raise the standard of Islam in the nations of the world. Though he grew up in an environment of sentimentality, he imbibed a balanced outlook that his stint as the Czar of Medina turned into statesmanship. The frugal lifestyle he adopted at the height of his fame and fortune could be owing to his personal proclivity or the public posturing, and / or both. It was thus, he was known to avoid material comforts, save his fondness for perfumes, apart from women; and that his faithful didn't mind as their culture acquiesced in both. Traditionally, there appears to be an inbuilt advantage for the prophets in the Abrahamic Order in that while it granted them to indulge as humans, it ordained the believers to revere them as divine just the same.

While Muhammad's reconciliation with Abu Talib's refusal of Fakhitah's hand for him reflects his pragmatism, his marriage to Khadijah underscores his practicality. However, it would be erroneous to misconstrue his devotion to her as a necessary evil to ensure her munificence, for he remained faithful to her memory till the very end. It is worth noting that he considered his years with her as the happiest of his life.

But what is remarkable was his fidelity to her in spite of her advanced age, and that too in the prime of his life, that was, notwithstanding his gusty libido. Needless to say, it reveals a rare strength of character and a great ability for self-sacrifice born out of strong personal conviction. And, for all that, it might have been for a purpose. But, whatever it was, that served him well in sustaining his creed in spite of odds.

The very fact that in his otherwise well recorded life, there was nothing amiss in the lengthy chapter of Khadijah indicates that he could have led an amiable married life unmarred by scandal or quarrel. Sans Islam, still he would have had his place of honor in Meccan memory as Al Amin, and possibly remembered for long in his country. But that night of Ramadan, in a cave of Mount Hira, made all the difference to his memory.

Given that the legend of Muhammad is a memorized byline of the *Musalmans*, for the teeming multitudes of believers there is much in the Muhammad's life to give solace and hope in this world whose worth the Quran deprecates any way. It could be owing to Muhammad's influence on them that the poorer sections of the Muslim community, even in today's materialistic world, tend to lead as frugal a life as possible.

Thus, even as his billion strong faithful across the globe revere him as the Messenger of God, the rest of the world is wont to be skeptical about his personal ethics and question his credentials for prophethood. And what is worse, it decries his legacy for the fanatical intolerance and extremist adventurism of a band of his faithful. But then, one has to pay the price for power and fame; and if anything, so extraordinary a life like that of Muhammad would naturally earn the envy and suspicion of many. Whatever, in the history of man, there is no other man like Muhammad, who vertically splits the world opinion about his character and legacy, and /or both.

However, even the genius of Muhammad could not have anticipated the antipathy of the Jews towards the Quran though he would have expected the hostility of the Quraysh on account of his antipathy towards their idols. On the other hand, he could well have hoped for the Jewish support in his tirade against the Arab idolatry as the Quran co-opted the Torah and the Jewish Prophets alike. Unfortunately, the

overbearing Jews made fun of Muhammad's prophethood and poked holes in his preaching beside.

This unexpected development gave rise to a unique situation in which Muhammad, while pursuing his agenda against Arab idolatry, had to defend Islam in the battle of dogma that the Jews forced upon it. After all, with the Jews being a formidable race who mastered the Torah for ages; Islam faced a theological crisis to Muhammad's chagrin, and that occasioned a schism amongst the Semitic Order. While the Quran accused the Jews and the Christians as renegades, the accused in turn called the Islam's prophet an imposter and plagiarist besides.

This mutual acrimony has disastrous consequences for the human destiny, as the hostility that the Quran exhibits towards the *kafirs*, besides infusing a sense of separateness in its believers, inculcates in them a streak of aggression as well. Nevertheless, in the face of the Jewish onslaught, 'the God' tried to defend Muhammad thus:

"Or they say: He hath invented it? Say: Then bring a surah like into it, and call (for help) on all ye can besides Allah, if ye are truthful."

"Say: Verily though mankind and the Jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another."

"And if ye do not and ye can never do it - then guard yourselves against the fire prepared for the disbelievers, whose fuel is men and stones."

"And if they deny thee, say: Unto me my work, and unto you your work. You are innocent of what I do, and I am innocent of what ye do."

As can be seen, the unceasing Jewish nagging seems to have had an unintended effect on the Quran itself, making it repetitive as if to drive home the issue rather desperately. Even otherwise, by and large, repetition is the characteristic of the Quran. Innumerable admonitions such as we have seen above, and elsewhere, get repeated, over and over again, in chapters and verses in similitude. It's as though 'the God' wanted to zero in on the human propensity of believing fervently what is repeated frequently.

Besides, wouldn't censure directed against those whom we tend to abhor sound music to our ears? The Quranic accounts of the verbal tussles that Muhammad had with the Jews, the Christians and the idolaters invariably coloured its divine message itself. Moreover, the private conduct and the public campaigns of Muhammad that are integral to the Quran make it contextually mundane and temporally aggressive. Thus, the body of the Quran in its instructional mode accords Islam a code of conduct sans philosophy of discourse.

However, as love and hate are the obverse and the reverse of the same human emotion, the feeling of alienation towards 'the others', nevertheless, brings in the *Musalmans* a sense of rare togetherness. In turn, this tends to inculcate amongst them the lofty ideal of the Muslim Brotherhood, which, ironically, in modern times causes them so much emotional hurt.

Herein lay the dichotomy of Islam in that while it tries to bestow peace on the believers, it pours out scorn on the nonbelievers. While many *Musalmans*, probably unaware of the genesis of the WE -THEY syndrome steeped in many a contextual Quranic verse or those who deliberately ignore these, conclude that the rest of the peoples are unfairly hostile to the Muslim populace, and thus come to grudge the *kafirs* even more for that nevermind who's divisive in the first place.

On the other hand, and sinisterly at that, the misguided Islamists, by taking the many inflammatory verses of Quran out of context, would be able to indoctrinate the gullible *Musalmans* in *madrasas* and the *masjids* to set them on the destructive course of *jihad*. Well, in turn, to the dismay of the world, the more cynical or more covetous of hurries among them turn into *fidayēn*. It is thus; one comes to hear two voices of Islam – the hurt voice of the well-meaning *Musalmans* that their ‘religion of peace’ is being unfairly dubbed as the ‘doctrine of death’, and that of the Islamic fundamentalists spewing venomous hatred on the nonbelievers with Allah hu Akbar rants.

Nonetheless, this dual dimension of Islamic reaction is not difficult to fathom either. That the Quran is recited in Arabic the world over, its *ayats* rendered to rhythm would have no more than a reverential impact on the majority of the *Musalmans*. Thus, they would be unaware of the Quranic instigations against the *kafirs* in such *surahs* as Al-Baqarah, Ali-Imran, Al Ma idah, Al-Anfal etc. Such of the run-of-the-mill *Musalmans* in the know it, whatever their intellectual perception at finding such in a Holy Book, would not wager much on them. But the fundamentalists and the Paradise seekers swear by these very inimical verses of the Quran.

It is another matter, that such *surahs* of the Quran would only sicken the nonbeliever of a reader soon enough, though he might realize they are all contextually linked to Muhammad’s life. Even a cursory reading of the Quran would bring to the fore the paradox of banning books perceived as offensive to the religious sentiments of a community in a country. Oh, how the Quran can afford to abuse the Jews and the Christians, and still have a free reign everywhere! And the poor *kafirs*, so roundly condemned, still have to contend with it being referred to as ‘The Holy Quran’ by the believers.

Be that as it may, the Muslim mind finds itself doubly squeezed by a wronged feeling on one side and the change of value system on the other in the modern era. It is the tragedy of the *Musalmans* that they would be trained to treat the contextual content of the Quran as the unalienable code of Islam. And that hampers the fluidity of their thought that is needed to cope up with the realities of the given times. Muhammad’s autocracy and obscurantism that denied freedom of expressing what he himself had led them to believe, leave alone to thinking for themselves, might have inadvertently contributed to this debilitating Muslim inability. The following episode in Martin Ling’s biography of Muhammad would be illuminative.

“At his (‘Uthman’s) funeral the Prophet heard an old woman address the dead man with the words “Be glad, O father of Sa’ib, for Paradise is thine.”

The Prophet turned to her somewhat sharply and said: “What giveth thee to know that?”

“O Messenger of God,” she protested, “It is Abu s-Sa’ib!”

“By God,” he said, “we know naught but good of him.”

Then, to make it clear that his first remark had been in no sense directed against ‘Uthman’ but merely against her for saying more than she had right to say he turned to her again and added:

“It would have been enough for thee to say: “He loved God and His Messenger.”

It was as if the purity of Islam would have been polluted even by the noble utterance of a pious believer.

Just as Muhammad’s Quran is averse to having partners to Allah in Mary and Jesus so it seems he himself kept out others from the legacy of his *hadith*. It’s thus Muhammad saw to it that Islam is all about Allah and His Messenger unlike Jesus who thought it fit

to Commission the Twelve for the sake of Christianity. It's as though the Seal of the Prophets imbibed the divine character of Jehovah the jealous God who couldn't stomach sharing the Jewish affection with any other god."

The Muslim dilemma about how to tread on the straight path in the ever changing world of every age owes to the constraints and contradictions of Muhammad's life in his quest to establish Islam. Needless to say, the *mullahs* who follow the Prophet's suit deny freedom of expression to the congregated faithful even in the precincts of the *masjids*. Try putting an inconvenient theological question, or air an unconventional Islamic view, and one should consider himself to be lucky if only he were to be debarred from the *masjid*, and not manhandled as debauched.

It's thus; the Islamic tune came to be set in the Quranic "O ye believe" tone sans the accompanying instruments of debate and discussion. Hence it is no wonder that the intellect of a *Musalman* is measured on the scale of the Islamic theology.

Coupled to this is the ghetto mentality that only accrues the 'frog in the well' vision to the Muslim intellect, which furthers their inability to see things from the others' point of view, and this makes it hard for the *Musalman*s to gain cosmopolitan insight to nurse an egalitarian mind-set amongst them. On the other hand, the Islamic emphasis of Muslim separateness insensibly leads to the stagnation of the *Musalman*s in the medieval Quranic age. This is about the burden of belief that Islam imposes upon its believers, and without a demur the *Musalman*s submit.

And that is something to say about how a faith can condition the mind and the mood of its followers regardless of the change in the surroundings. True, the faith of Allah needed a band of blind believers then to help Muhammad achieve his ambition to hoist the flag of Islam on the *Kabah*, but what for are they needed except to pursue the unachievable Islamic dream to see the whole world in green hues. Above all, how the *Musalman*s are going to progress in the modern times without imbibing the process of inquiry so essential in acquiring knowledge and wisdom? It is this trap of belief into which the *Musalman*s are born and there is no reformist around anymore, after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk the Great to extricate them out of the Islamic quagmire.

Chapter 15

Blinkers of Belief

Though Muhammad's religious constituency was the 'meek of the world', as paraphrased by Jesus, he seemed to have shaped Islam but to their detriment. Thus, it calls for an analysis as to how his personal agenda would have influenced the Islamic credo that has come to mire the lives of the poor *Musalman*s, moreso its women.

So, it is for the women in Islam, the 'educated' among them, to delve into the proclivities of their prophet that shaped the precepts and practices of their faith to their detriment. However, instead, blinded by their faith, they tend to take the aberrations of their life as the Will of Allah and the price they have to pay to be on His right side on the Day of Reckoning, well, with Muhammad in tow with Him. Moreover, being born a Muslim, nevermind even as a female, is in itself the greatest blessing 'here', paving the way for eternal bliss in the Hereafter, such is the Mohammadan brainwash.

Leave aside the plight of women in the Muslim brotherhood; it is not too hard to see how the faith, supposedly shaped for the poor among men, in theory is heavily loaded against them in practice. But then that's the religious crocodile craft, the crafty prophet had perfected in his famous address to the Yathribs,

"O Helpers, are ye stirred in your souls about the things of this world whereby I have reconciled men's hearts that they may submit unto God, when you yourselves I have entrusted unto your Islam?",

which is seemingly designed to favour the privileged of the faith. That is not all, what is inimical to the poor amongst the faithful is that the long and uncertain path to the 'Hereafter' is paved with sharp needles of *sharia*.

It was Muhammad's ideal of a puritanical society that seems to have unwittingly pitted the poor of Islam against its cruel penal code, copied though from the Mosaic Laws. Well, why should the well-to-do steal at all, to land up on the wrong side of the *sharia*! Needless to say, it's the poor of the faith that most satiate *sharia*'s devilish urge to mutilate as well as decapitate human beings. And true to its character, *sharia* is at its cruelest best when it comes to women that stray out of their marital bed, whatever be the provocation, no questions asked, no explanations sought, but stoned to death in, and by, the public as a religious duty. It doesn't seem to occur to the *Musalmans* how all that depraves them as human beings besides becoming inhuman towards those their faith frown upon; it's thus their barbarism against the others stems from their cruelty towards their own folks.

But when it comes to male promiscuity, Islam goes out of the way to be accommodative. After all, the four wives norm, not counting the divorces and remarriages, with *nikah halalas* as bonuses for a lucky few, would provide the required female variety to spice up the *Musalmans*' sex life, wouldn't it? As if that concession is not good enough for the libido of the men of means, there is the *sharia*-sanctified instant *nikah* lasting but, lo, a single ejaculation, if one so pleases. Why the world was witness to that sexual convenience at the height of the Islamic moral policing in Iran that brought brisk business to its poor *kazis*. And this is about the height of Islamic hypocrisy in that even as it frowns upon adultery and punishes the involved female with savagery, yet it provides to its resourceful males enough and more detours to circumvent the *sharia* to satiate their lust with gusto 'here', where life is not only depreciated but deprecated too in the Quran.

But then, why only blame the *sharia* when even the modern penal code too is tilted heavily against the poor to ensure that they are kept at arm's length from the privileged, so as not to spoil their party. Why doubt that for the theft of a thousand the law is smart to catch up with the poor thief but when it comes to the embezzled millions under the white collars, it is slothful in sniffing at the scent of the conmen. Well, law is not an ass, made to explain away its aberrations, but in effect is the watchdog of the rich to ward off the poor.

Nonetheless, the hard up *Musalmans*, who tend to be better *Musalmans* 'here' than their well-heeled brethren, so to say, get even in the Islamic 'there' but then the wait is long and its hard grind as well! So be it, but yet they serve the faith 'here' by enabling their women in bringing more believers into its fold than they can reasonably bear, nevermind that confines them all to the lowest rung of the economic ladder. But meanwhile, the *sharia* lets the rich and the mighty get away with even murder, albeit through the bribe route of blood-money.

Unjustifiably though, the *Musalmans* are proud that their faith grants equality to women vis-à-vis men, i.e. in spite of polygamy. It's true; the Quran ordains that in any polygamous arrangement, the *Musalmans* should treat his wives equally. But, what sort of equality would polygamy entail those multiple wives of a *Musalmans*, well, pegged at four! It should not be lost on any that even in bigamy, besides emotional restraints, woman has to bear with the sexual constraints it imposes, and so it's not hard to imagine how frustrating it could be for her as and when her man opts for her co-wife while she herself was in the right mood then. But in Islam, we are not even dealing with bigamy but polygamy, involving four women at that! And how the All-Wise Allah Ta'ala missed this female conjugal constraint is anybody's guess. What's worse, he denied women any sexual escape route in that, so to say, he made them wear chastity belts all

the while 'here'. But what if the rationed intimacy and limited emotionality of a polygamous marriage trip women over the promiscuous line into the adulterous arena, and what solace doth the *sharia* provide for such pining females in a wrong embraced? Why, stoning to death!

However, in the 'Hereafter' though Islam grants its women their polyandrous time; but besides being a long wait that wouldn't make it a level playing 'sexual' field for them as it's not a case of role reversal there either for men too have their *hurries* for the asking 'there'. Well, it's a different matter though that Islam has so much concern for the satiation of all those black-eyed virgins 'there', who are wedded in their scores to the Muslim martyrs. Why, Allah increaseth the vigour of each and every martyr a hundred fold to indulge with his harem of *hurries seventy-two*. So, 'there', man's virility is not subject to the innate limitations biology imposes upon him 'here'! And that could be no less an attraction for the believing *Musalmans* to crave to go over 'there', earlier the better. But then, the *Musalmans* too have this Mirza Ghalib's *sher* to ponder over 'here':

za'iat ki hakikat hame mālōm hai lekin / Heaven is myth for all we know
dilko behalāne ke liye ye khayāl ac̣hā hai / Yet feels it nice to think it's there.

Above all, wonder why it does not occur to the *fidayēn* that with his martyr' body, or parts of it, buried 'here' itself, there is no way for him to sexually engage the black-eyed virgins over 'there'! Not for nothing had Muhammad ensured that *Musalmans* do not develop the faculty of thought and reasoning that comes with it.

And what does veiling women in Islam mean? Won't it reveal the lack of masculine understanding of feminine emotions? Oh, how the veil and all that goes with it stunt the female sexuality in the Islamic half! Maybe the embarrassment of Muhammad in desiring Zaynab, wife of his adopted son Zayd, could have caused him to stress upon the veil for the female as a barrier against male frailty. Besides, he was extremely possessive about his women, in particular Ayesha; in fact, he hoped that she were dead ahead of him though she was some forty-three years younger than him, and in spite of the divine diktat that wives of the prophet were barred from a fresh nuptial.

The Islamic burka thus, is the legacy of a man, who was extremely fond of women while at the same time believing them to be objects of male possession, if not vassals as such. And ironically, it is his dual attitude towards women that denies the fair sex of *umma* the feel-good that normal socializing would have afforded them! Though the medieval man's attitude, all over, towards women was, no different, more or less, from that of his, the burka he ordained the women of his creed to wear, deprives them whatever little freedom their sisters of other faiths have!

Thus, if the globe were to become an *umma* as Muhammad had dreamed, if and when that happens, as its mullahs are bound to rein its fair sex, half of it would be reduced to 'walking tents'. On this score, can it not be said that Islam, exhibiting its lack of concern for the female well-being, is inimical to the development of half of its believers? And yet, some hypocritical apologists of the burka would have it that what the Muslim women are hiding from the public view is not their personas but their poverty, exemplified by the rags they wear!

However, the moot point that Islam misses here is the need for the male to develop self-restraint in the society of females and not to veil them, so to say, from head to foot, for that's what burka does. But then, if the veil is so vital for the *niyyat* (character) of the *Musalmans*, why Islam has no remedy for those male believers living in the non-veiling societies of 'the others'? The answer to this, as well as to other predicaments of the Islam is that Muhammad had devised the Islamic code for the Arabic culture and society of his time but not beyond.

Well, if burka were to be a barrier against male promiscuity, then it's still worth its cloth, if not for anything but to avert the exploitation of women, but it's not the case either. Thus, it's an irony of Islam that in veiling its women it veils the vision of its men as well. It is this mind-set of Muhammad that made the word of a 'believer' woman unequal to that of the male believer in the Islamic evidentiary value system! Nonetheless, Muslim women are wont not to complain about this and other such gender biases of Islamic socio-religious practice and precepts. And that speaks for the potential of Islam to stymie women's mental development in the Islamic socio-religious fold.

But it's naïve to think it's the God's Will that way for he didn't ordain the Jewish and the Christian women to confine themselves in burkas. What is worse, while providing no clues for the Islamic adaptation to the changing times, the Quran and the *sharia* blindly bind the believers to the medieval values. It's thus Islam turns the *Musalmans* into square pegs in the round holes of life everywhere, including in *dar al-Islams*.

Chapter 16

Shackles of Sharia

"Say: O disbelievers, I shall not worship that which ye worship, nor will ye worship that which I worship, nor have I worshipped that which ye worship, nor have ye worshipped that which I worship. For you your religion and for me mine."

This revelation, which is endlessly repeated by the *Musalmans* to showcase the Islamic tolerance towards other religions, as is known, came to Muhammad when the leaders of the Quraysh tried to persuade him to agree to a compromise. And that was to avoid the schism his Quranic creed was causing in Mecca.

Had the revelation revisited Muhammad after he broke Hubal's back at the *Kabah*, it is a different matter though that the history of religious strife would not have been what it has been. As is seen, the unique feature of the Quran as a Scripture is that its '*revelations*' are invariably linked to Muhammad's life 'n times besides being contextual to his mission 'n means, which characteristic though the *Musalmans* seem to miss or are blind to it.

A large body of the *umma* has no means to read, much less comprehended, much that is in the Quran, save those faith-invoking *suras* of obedience and submission originated in Mecca and recited ad nauseam in the *masjids*. And it is these simple folks, who habitually cling onto Islam, and live like frogs in the Muslim wells. These poor and pious *Musalmans*, largely illiterate, try to subordinate their lot 'here' to their faith in Allah, and look up to Muhammad for deliverance in the 'Hereafter'. However, it is on their religious dogma that the fundamentalist elements and their power hungry despots feed upon. These simple folks could be turned into street mobs, at will that is, by the unscrupulous elements amongst them with the false alarm of 'Islam in Danger', either from within or without.

Next in the list, numerically speaking that is, are the *mullahs* who, by training as well as by occupation, strive to keep Islam as pure and as straight as possible in this ever-changing world. The more the threat of dilution to their faith, all the more fundamentalists they tend to become, and one cannot blame them for it is thus the *umma* brings them into being. In a way, the *moulvi-mullah* combine erects the Islamic dams to protect the faith from being inundated by un-Islamic currents so that the masses that share alike the poverty of life as well as passion for the faith remain incapable to sniff beyond their Muslim noses. It's thus, owing to their lack of modern education or personal moderation, and /or both, large masses of the *Musalmans*

confine themselves to the economic fringes, even in developed societies in which they happen to live.

However, the Muslim rich, like their counterparts in any religious group, wouldn't, any way, share the religiosity of 'the God mad' poor though they make pretence of it. But, all the while, they grab the joys of the 'here' with both hands without any compunction as the pleasures of the 'Hereafter' are theirs anyway, for the mere fact of their being born *Musalmans*. After all, they have the Islamic assurance that a crook of a *Musalman*, and not even the saint of a *kafir* like Mahatma Gandhi, has a slot in the Paradise. Thus, the privileged *Musalmans* live in the rarefied world of Islam as their own masters, however, pretending to be the servants of Allah.

That leaves the educated Muslim middle-class to complete the grand spectrum of Islamic dichotomy. Well, their education and occupation wouldn't be conducive to nursing the pure *Musalmanic* souls in their contemporary bodies, as per the Islamic tenets that is. Besides, while their middle-class earnings would enable them access to the worldly goodies for mundane comforts that Islam is inimical to; their exposure to the secular outlook befuddles their religious belief. With the imbibed faith coming into clash with their acquired lifestyles, the middle-class *umma* tends to suffer from a certain religious guilt. Though they realize the benefits of going easy on Islam, and wish as well that their community sheds the oppressive Arab cultural baggage that forms its religious burden, the accompanying guilt feeling makes them voiceless.

It is the paradox of the Islamic umbrella that under its Quranic shade the rich could indulge in an un-Islamic life, the clergy could exercise their religious license, the middle-class could gloat over their material goodies, and the poor could live on the religious diet, of course, all in the name of Allah the All Knowing. It is thus, in the *umma* the resourceful would draw their own lines, the poor dare not cross the one drawn by the *mullahs*, and the liberal minded get squeezed in between. In spite of it though, thanks to the pull of the Prophet, Islam emotionally unites them all against 'the others' while the *sharia* effectually divides them from them.

But it is the ignorance of the faithful and the self-interest of the *mullahs*, and the rulers alike, help keep the faith the way it was fashioned by Muhammad well into our times, and into eternity as it appears, well, unless the Islamic world turns upside down at some point of time in the future that is! However in the Indian context, even now, it is the impotency of the Muslim middle-class opinion that enables the obscurantist *moulvis*, *mullahs*, and others among them to forever have a free rein on the Islamic bigotry and obstructionism. If anything, the *mullahs* remain averse to loosening their *sharia* grip on the *umma* for the fear of losing their clerical eminence and social control as happened with Brahmans, who lost their preeminence once the Hindu society began taking a reformist turn to catch up with the modern trends.

But then, what this *sharia* is all about, and why the *Musalmans* are so sensitive to it? We may as well learn from Roland E Miller's *Muslim Friends – Their faith and feeling, An introduction to Islam* published by The Orient Longman, Hyderabad.

"*Sharia* is the crystallization of the Quranic message and the Prophet's example into a body of livable law. Whereas other religious traditions may emphasize an individual's interior faith, Islam is more concerned with providing a unified structure for pious behaviour."

"The theological origin of the Law is the basic relation between God and humanity that is governed by the twin poles of Command and Obedience. God is al-Rabb, the Creator-Master-Lord-Ruler-Judge Who gives commands to His creatures, and His commands become laws for His creatures. God is the Master, and a master's will is made known in specific instructions. The opposite of master is servant (*abd*). Islam

teaches that Muslims are the servants of God, who surrender to His will and obey His command. Moreover, there is an element of human need and divine mercy in the relationship. Servants need directions to guide them on the path of life, and God is a merciful master Who provides the needed guidance (*hidayat*). The sum of the guidance constitutes the clear road along which God's servants should walk. The ideas of Master-Command, servant-obedience, and guidance-direction combine to produce the strong Muslim sense of religious duty that underlies and gives birth to the *sharia*. Islam is a religion of law. The *sharia* is the formal expression of this reality, and Muslim obedience to the *sharia*, in turn, reinforces the reality."

"Even though ordinary Muslims cannot and do not pick up a book called the *sharia* and read it, the *sharia* has become the habit of Islam. Its intricacies are the concern of specialist scholars who can be called upon in time of need. The fundamental principle underlying the *sharia* is the idea that God is the Ruler and we human beings are His subjects. As Sovereign Lord, God must rule and does rule. He directly and actively governs His people. This is true both of individuals and the community. He rules through His power by which He exercises lordship over His creation, and He rules through specific commands by which He provides the needed laws for the correct conduct of life. "Thinketh man that he is to be left aimless?" (75:36). Thus the Sovereign Ruler is also the Supreme Legislator. As Legislator, He gives His subjects adequate prescriptions to carry on their personal and social lives. His subjects are dependent on His power and obey His commands."

"The great divide owes to the Muslim belief that "the principles and institutions of Islam are all-comprehensive. They include the whole of human existence, emotions, thoughts, actions, economic deals, social relationships, bodily urges, spiritual demands, and every other value... Religion works as a complete code of life. The Muslim life consists of no dichotomy. In what a Muslim has to do in secular transactions, in his actions for social deals, individual interests, national demands, international brotherhood, nay, in all relations of human civilization, there is a complete direction, contained in the institutions which a Muslim follows... The name given to the whole system is *Sharia*."

"Owing to the complexity of the *sharia* the intricacies are the concern of the Imams and this is the source of the strength and hold of the clergy on the Muslim society. Since the Muslims live in societies not governed as per Islamic tenets they appreciate that every land has a set of laws drawn from human experience, accepted by public agreement and defined in human legislation, which its citizens should obey. Muslims understand the necessity of such national laws and obey them.

But they generally do not think of the *sharia* as a human system. Human beings have certainly given the *sharia* language and force and have worked it out in practice, but the religious law of Islam is not viewed by Muslim believers as the product of human wisdom. It is founded on the Word of God and drawn from the example of the Prophet. The *sharia* therefore is sacred law, a higher law, the highway of God's guidance along which Muslims should walk. As such this all-embracing code of life is also a code of religious duty. It is not the believer's choice, nor the nation's choice, but it is rather the imperative of *din*, the following of God's will. We may therefore define the *sharia* as *the Muslim code of religious duty that embraces all of life*."

It is as though, to deprive the *umma* any time-sense whatever, the *ulema* had conspired to stop the Islamic clock at Muhammad's death, for them to grind their axes over the wheels of the *sharia*. While it's okay with them that those inhuman penal provisions of the *sharia* are done away with everywhere, save in the land of Muhammad, they block every move at reforms relating to the Muslim Personal Law, which empowers the *mullahs*, besides catering to the Muslim male chauvinism.

Moreover, there is an accompanying fear that a diluted *sharia* would obviously weaken the socio-religious hold of the *mullahs* on their community. Amidst this male clamor for the *sharia*, which is Muhammad's diktat for the believers, which is so much in their favor, the interests of the Muslim females wouldn't seem to count anyway.

However, it would be an idea to resolve the issue of the *sharia* by leaving it to the *umma* in a referendum - whether they endorse it in toto – the personal as well as the penal *sharia* – or opt for the law of the land they live in, say like in India, where they are preponderant. It should be interesting to see how many *Musalmans*, even in their Islamic hibernation, would like to have the rigors of the *sharia* all for themselves. And the outcome could well be the harbinger of change in the Islamic community conditioned for so long by the medieval mind-set of the *mullahs* that is besides the deliverance of its women from the *burka*, *nika halala* etc.

In the context of divinity of a religious message, it is worth recalling Jawaharlal Nehru's profound observation in 'The Discovery of India' thus:

"It has always seemed to me a much more magnificent and impressive thing that a human being should rise to great heights, mentally and spiritually, and should then seek to raise others up, rather than that he should be the mouthpiece of a divine or superior power. Some of the founders of religions were astonishing individuals, but all their glory vanishes in my eyes when I cease to think of them as human beings. What impresses me and gives me hope is the growth of the mind and spirit of man, and not his being used as an agent to convey a message.

Mythology affected me in much the same way. If people believed in the factual content of these stories, the whole thing was absurd and ridiculous. But as soon as one ceased believing in them, they appeared in a new light, a new beauty, a wonderful flowering of a richly endowed imagination, full of human lessons. No one believes now in the stories of Greek gods and goddesses and so, without any difficulty, we can admire them and they become part of our mental heritage. But if we had to believe in them, what a burden it would be, and how, oppressed by this weight of belief, we would often miss their beauty. Indian mythology is richer, vaster, very beautiful, and full of meaning. I have often wondered what manner of men and women they were who gave shape to these bright dreams and lovely fancies, and out of what gold mine of thought and imagination they dug them.

Looking at scripture then as a product of the human mind, we have to remember the age in which it was written, the environment and mental climate in which it grew, the vast distance in time and thought and experience that separates it from us. We have to forget the trappings of ritual and religious usage in which it is wrapped, and remember the social background in which it expanded. Many of the problems of human life have permanence and a touch of eternity about them, and hence the abiding interest in these ancient books. But they dealt with other problems also, limited to their particular age, which have no living interest for us now.

Many Hindus look upon the Vedas as revealed scripture. This seems to me to be peculiarly unfortunate, for thus we miss their real significance - the unfolding of the human mind in the earliest stages of thought. And what a wonderful mind it was! The Vedas (from the root *vid*, to know) were simply meant to be a collection of the existing knowledge of the day; they are a jumble of many things: hymns, prayers, ritual for sacrifice, magic, magnificent nature poetry. There is no idolatry in them; no temples for the gods. The vitality and affirmation of life pervading them are extraordinary. The early Vedic Aryans were so full of the zest for life that they paid little attention to the soul. In a vague way they believed in some kind of existence after death."

Now the moot point for the *Musalmans* to address is, wouldn't Muhammad's genius be behind fashioning the faith of Islam, after all? Well, Martin Lings picks up the threads of history after Muhammad had the honor of placing the Holy Stone at *Kabah* as it was rebuilt.

"It was not long after this outward sign of his authority and his mission that he began to experience powerful inward signs, in addition to those of which he had already been conscious. When asked about these he spoke of "true visions" which came to him in his sleep and he said that they were "like the breaking of the light of dawn." The immediate result of these visions was that solitude became dear to him, and he would go for spiritual retreats to a cave in Mount Hira, not far from the outskirts of Mecca."

After all, wouldn't the power of concentration insensibly nudge one's mind into the realms of divinity? Well, many scientists and artists had affirmed the divine inspiration they received in their mundane endeavors, didn't they? Why that couldn't have been the case with Muhammad as well? After all, didn't he say that his mind's eye would be awake even when his eyes sleep? It is in this context it is interesting to note that many Quranic revelations, such as the following one, mention his inspiration:

"And when thou bringest not a verse for them they say: Why hast thou not chosen it? Say: I follow only that which is inspired in me from my Lord. This (Quran) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe." 203. VII

As Nehru so convincingly argued, one can perhaps appreciate the real genius of Muhammad in shaping Islam if only the Quran is approached as the testimony of his inspiration. It is only then the Quranic injunctions could be seen in the given context for much of what is contained in it is contextual to the discerning mind. Thus, it would be interesting to note the breach of an eminently humane Quranic injunction even during the time of Muhammad.

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor -due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing."

Yet, all the believing *Musalmans* kept their share of slaves, got as spoils of war, without qualms, and even Muhammad, who claimed that Gabriel would come to him every Ramadan to make sure that nothing of the Revelation had slipped from his memory, only freed his slaves, among them women, just before his death! The tendency of the *Musalmans* to revere Muhammad, though he himself maintained that he was just human, and approach his life with a sense of divinity binds them to the *hadith* and *sunna* without regard to the context in which he said what he said, and did what he did.

The problem with the *Musalmans* is that they fail to reckon the motive behind Muhammad's moves in a given context. Even otherwise, it's worth noting that the *hadith* and *sunna* are based on what Muhammad's followers said that he said, and at any rate, they were all but an overawed crowd to be able to retain objectively in Muhammad's prophetic presence. Was it not possible, the hallucinations, if not inventions, of such folks might have made their way into the *hadith*? Besides, hearsay is the bane of best of the times, even in the transparent age of ours, no less on the informed mind. That being the case, it is to be appreciated that the *Musalmans* are dealing with the *hadith* and *sunna* fashioned at a remote place of a bygone age.

After all, weren't there thousands of remarks attributed to Muhammad that were found to be incredulous while standardizing the *hadith* on a latter-day! Thus, even at the best, the *hadith* but contains what the eminent compiler of it felt were genuine utterances of Muhammad and for the *Musalmans* to make themselves hostage to the judgmental authenticity of a single scholar, eminent though human, and thus fallible, is extraordinary indeed!

It is also worth the consideration of the *Musalmans* that for all the awe his followers felt for Muhammad, many as well dissented his decisions on occasion. Besides, the success of his prophethood led to the birth of three more prophets - Musaylimah, Tulayhah and Aswad – and a prophetess, Sajah. What is more relevant, they all held sway over their own considerable following in competition to the Prophet of Islam. Obviously, the antiquity of history had lost track of the other prophets, leaving the legend of Muhammad to rule the roost as the 'Seal of the Prophets', and to mould the *sharia*, clouding the mind of the *Musalmans* in the bargain. Thus, the inability of the *Musalmans* to conceptualize the *sharia* in the context of Muhammad's life and times tend them on a path of blind alley.

Chapter 17

Anatomy of Islam

'A single people refused to join the common intercourse of mankind,' so wrote Edward Gibbon about the Jews, and thought that 'the Jewish religion was admirably fitted for defence'. If the Jews puzzled the medieval world, their religious cousins, the *Musalmans*, with their accent on separateness, perplex the modern world. What Nehru wrote in 'The Discovery of India' seems to prove the parody that is the Muslim Brotherhood.

"When Italy suddenly attacked Turkey in the Tripoli War of 1911, and subsequently, during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, an astonishing wave of sympathy for Turkey roused Indian Moslems. All Indians felt that sympathy and anxiety but in the case of Moslems this was keener and something almost personal. The last remaining Moslem power was threatened with extinction; the sheet anchor of their faith in the future was being destroyed. Dr. M. A. Ansari led a strong medical mission to Turkey and even the poor subscribed; money came more rapidly than for any proposal for the uplift of the Indian Moslems themselves."

One might contrast this hackneyed clamor of the *Musalmans* to the low-key Hindu murmur when Mahendra Choudhary was ousted in a coup in Fiji, and made captive besides. The ready explanation for the universal nature of the Muslim agitation is that in them it is cultivated that Islam in essence is a brotherhood of believers transcending races, cultures, and nations. Laudable though the Islamic precept is, what indeed motivates the *Musalmans* to be so moved by it needs our understanding?

It is, of course, the Muslim credo that Islam is a body of believers as well as belief, and admittedly, this belief could be sustained only by the collective compulsion of the community to stick to the tenets of its faith. And this practice invariably leads to paranoia of belief, which occasions a collective resistance to change, fearing that might insensibly weaken their faith that sustains that credo.

While religion is meant to mend man's soul and as human psychology tends his mind-set, it is imperative to probe into the psycho-cultural underpinnings of the Islamic upbringing, for which we have *I'm Ok – You're OK* (Avon Books, New York) of Thomas A. Harris, who, after synthesizing the theories of many a psychologist, had come out with a psychological connectivity of the Parent, Child and Adult in human beings in that famous book as under:

"The parent is a huge collection of recordings in the brain of unquestioned or imposed external events perceived by a person in his early years, a period which we have designed roughly as the first five years of life. This is the period before the social birth of the individual, before he leaves home in response to the demands of society and enters school.

While the external events are being recorded as that body of data we call the Parent, there is another recording being made simultaneously [that is of the Child]. This is the recording of the internal events, the responses of the little person to what he sees and hears. In this connection it is important to recall Penfield's observation that the subject feels again the emotion which the situation originally produced in him and he is aware of the same interpretations, true or false, which he himself gave to the experiences in the first place. This evoked recollection is not the exact photographic or phonographic reproduction of past scenes or events. It is reproduction of what the patient saw and heard and felt and understood.

The Adult is a data-processing computer, which grinds out decisions after computing the information from three sources: the Parent, the Child, and the data, which the Adult has gathered and is gathering. One of the important functions of the Adult is to examine the data in the Parent, to see whether or not it is true and still applicable today, and then to accept it or reject it; and to examine the Child to see whether or not the feelings there are appropriate to the present or are archaic and in response to archaic Parent data. The goal is not to do away with the Parent and the Child but to be free to examine these bodies of data. The Adult, in the words of Emerson, 'must not be hindered by the goodness, but must examine if it be goodness'; or badness, for that matter.'

The Adult develops later than the Parent and Child and seems to have a difficult time catching up throughout life. The more one knows of the content of Parent and Child (in him) the more easily one can separate Parent and Child from the adult. The more sensitive one is to one's own Parent and Child, the more separated, autonomous, and strong becomes the Adult.

Ideally the P-A-C circles are separate. In many people, however, the circles overlap. The overlap of the Parent and the Adult would result in a contamination of the latter by the dated, un-examined Parent data which is externalized as true. This is called prejudice. Prejudice develops in early childhood when the door of inquiry is shut on certain subject by the security-giving parents. The little person dares not open it for fear of parental rebuke.

The contamination of Adult-Child overlap affects in the form of feelings or archaic experiences which are inappropriately externalized in the present. Two of the most common symptoms of this kind of contamination are delusions and hallucinations. A delusion is grounded in fear. A hallucination is a phenomenon produced by extreme stress, wherein what was once experienced externally - derogation, rejection, and criticism - is again experienced externally even though 'no one is there'. A recorded experience 'comes on for real' and the person 'hears' voices that existed in the past reality.

In addition to the contamination there is another functional disorder that explains how we differ: exclusion. Exclusion is manifested by a stereotyped, predictable attitude which is steadfastly maintained as long as possible in the face of any threatening situation. The constant Parent, the constant Adult, and the constant Child all result primarily from defensive exclusion of the two complementary aspects in each case.

And this is a situation in which an excluding Parent can 'block out' the child or an Excluding Child can 'block out' the Parent. Typical of the Parent - contaminated Adult with a Blocked -Out child is the man who is duty dominated. It is as if, at some point in

his childhood, he was so utterly quashed by serious, stern, duty-bound parents that he found the only safe way to proceed through life was to turn his Child off completely.

A more serious difficulty, particularly to society, is presented by the Child - Contaminated adult with a Blocked - Out Parent. This condition develops in the person whose real parents, or those who fulfilled the parental role, were so brutal and terrifying or, in the other extreme, so doltishly indulgent that the only way to preserve life was to 'shut them off.' or block them out. This is the typical of the psychopath.

The Decommissioned Adult is the psychotic who had a Blocked - Out Adult. His Adult is not functioning, and therefore he is out of touch with reality. His Parent and Child come on straight, frequently in a jumbled mixture of archaic data, a jumbled replay of early experiences that do not make sense now because they did not make sense when they were recorded."

Thus, considering every human being is a product of his own P-A-C, it would be interesting to study the psyche of the religious mind of the average *Musalman*. Perhaps, there could be no contradiction in the assumption of an 'average *Musalman*' since Muhammadans tend to be homogenous in the socio-religious sense, irrespective of their race, color, occupation and domiciliation.

'Most Christians might shrug if asked whether they really believed that Jesus turned water into wine, or raised Lazarus from the dead. Muslims by contrast do not doubt that Allah's angels helped the Prophet at the Battle of Badr. Allah is a living god to them, as palpable and meaningful as an ideal parent might be.' - M.J. Akbar in 'The Shade of Swords'.

This clearly indicates the prevalence of the Decommissioned Adult phenomenon, by and large, in the *Musalman*s all over. But how come such a large multitude of people, many of them living amidst other religious groups, in contemporary times at that, could be so dogmatic about their religious beliefs? And, that too, in a world which is being driven by modernity backed by information technology! It should be our endeavor to understand this unique Muslim intellectual stagnation in psychological terms by wedding the P-A-C theories of Thomas A. Harris to our Islamic borrowings from Roland E Miller's *Muslim Friends - Their faith and feeling, An introduction to Islam*.

The Parent component of *Musalman*s, so well expostulated by Miller, comprises of Allah the Almighty, Muhammad His Messenger, the *ulema*, the Muslim clergy, and of course the biological parents or family guardian of an individual.

We have seen in the Quran that the relationship between 'the God' and the believer is that of the Master and the servant, which provides for a strict religious parentage. Thus, it is but natural, that the role of 'the God' as the Parent in the life of the *Musalman* is considerable as noticed by Miller thus:

"The entire religious context of Muslim life underlines the Reality of God, and is designed to make and keep Muslims aware of that Reality. From birth to death, and in all that lies between, the Reality of God encompasses Muslim life. Muslim faith and life are marked by an overwhelming sense of God. Muslims are the people who simply believe that God is Real, and really to be feared.

They live like people who are standing in the Presence of God. The ordinary Muslim sense of God may be defined as an attitude of deep respect rather than emotional extravagance. Their attitude towards the Almighty is deferential rather than presumptuous, austere rather than excited, devout rather than passionate. Behind that attitude of restraint lies the Muslim understanding of the utter greatness of God.

The Islamic emphasis on God's transcendent power produces attitudes of awe, respectful fear and solemn praise among believers. Most Muslims are not very interested in attempting to probe further into the transcendent mystery of God's being. It is a deep sea, venture not into it, said Muhammad, when asked about the decree of predestination. Thus Muslims prefer to bear witness to His greatness and mystery. A Muslim who is alive to God is alive to the praise of God and His power.

Since the Muslims cherish an overwhelming sense of God, it is natural to speak of the fear of God. This does not imply fear in the sense of being afraid, although the emotion cannot be eliminated. It means a rather holy fear, a combination of profound awe and overwhelming respect that maintains the awareness of God in a seemingly godless world. "they only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned...(8.2). Perhaps at no time do Muslims feel this emotion more deeply than when they attend the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Finally it is the obedient service to God. The glory of humanity is to be the servants of God. Do not aspire to be more than that, for in being a servant of God you have achieved the highest thing. It's enough to be faithful servants of God. Muslims do not wish to be less than that, nor more than that. The frame of reference for their obedience is the Law of God, for God the Master has prescribed a way of life, the path, the clear road that believers should tread."

Millar continues his account of the Mohammedan mind-set thus - "The Muslims believe the God had chosen and called Muhammad to be the final and Universal guide for humanity as confirmed by the Quran:

"And those who believe and do good works, and believe in that which is revealed unto Muhammad... He riddeth them of their ill-deeds and improve their state."(47:2)

"He (Allah) it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion... Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." (48.29)

"Since Quran calls Muhammad a noble pattern... for all who hope in God (33.21) to follow him, and to imitate him, is to be authentically on the path of God and it is every devout Muslim's personal goal."

"And make our calling down of blessing on him a key, and by it open to us, O Lord, the veil of acceptance, and accept, by the blessing of my Beloved... the litanies and vocations which I now recite, and my love and magnifying of Thyself."

Further, as Miller found out, the respect for Muhammad's role and character amongst the believers is so profound that it makes possible the saying: "To understand Islam is to understand Muhammad."

"The affection for Muhammad is expressed in various ways - by the remembering of whatever he said and did (*Hadith*), by the celebration of his birthday (*milad al-nabi*), by the stories of his exploits that are recited in public and in homes (*mawluds*), but above all by the calling down of blessing upon the Prophet and his family (*tasliya*). You may have noticed an unusual phenomenon that takes place in Muslim groups whenever the name of Muhammad is mentioned. A sound ripples through the audience, the recitation of the Arabic phrase *salla llahu ala n-nabi*, that is, "May God bless the Prophet!" When Muhammad's name appears in print in English-language publications, four letters, *pbuh*, are added in parentheses behind his name. The letters stand for "Peace be upon him!" The calling down of God's blessing upon the Prophet is not only an act of due reverence, but it is also an action that brings great personal merit."

Thus as neither age withers nor custom stale the appeal of Muhammad to the *Musalmans*, the *hadith* remains the sacrosanct parent to a Muslim child, the data of which is but the recollections of Muhammad's followers of his actions and utterances. A few of them as quoted by Miller in his 'Muslim Friends' read thus:

"Ibn 'Umar reported God's Messenger as saying, 'Islam is based on five things: the testimony that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the observance of the prayer, the payment of *zakat*, the pilgrimage, and the fast during Ramadan.

Al-'Abbas b. Abd al-Muttalib reported God's messenger as saying - 'He who is well-pleased with God as Lord, with Islam as religion, and with Muhammad as messenger will experience the savour of faith.

Ubada b. as-Samit said: I heard God's messenger say, 'If anyone testifies that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger, God will keep him from going to hell.

Ubad b. as-Samit reported God's messenger as saying, 'Five times of prayer have been prescribed by God. If anyone performs the ablution for them well, observes them at their proper time, and perfectly performs the bowing and showing of submissiveness during them, he had a covenant from God to forgive him; but if anyone does not do so, he has no covenant. If he wills He may forgive him, but if He wills not, He may punish him.

Malik b. Anas...reported God's messenger as saying, "As long as you hold fast to two things which I have left among you, you will not go astray: God's Book and His messenger's *sunna*.

Jabir reported God's messenger as saying. "To proceed: The best discourse is God's Book, the best guidance is that given by Muhammad, and the worst things are those which are novelties...

Al-Miqdam b. Madikarib reported God's messenger as saying, I have indeed been brought the Quran and something like it along with it; yet the time is coming when a man replete on his couch will say, "Keep to this Quran; what you find in it to be permissible treat as permissible, and what you find in it to be prohibited treat as prohibited. But what God's messenger had prohibited is like what God has prohibited..."

However, contrast the above with the following quote in Martin Lings biography about Muhammad's conversation with Mu'adh on the eve of the latter's departure to Yemen as a judge:

"How will you decide when a question arises?" He replied: "According to the Book of Allah," "And if you do not find the answer in the Book of Allah?" "Then according to the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah." "And if you do not find the answer neither in the *sunna* nor in the Book?" "Then I shall come to a decision according to my own opinion without hesitation." Then Muhammad slapped Mu'adh on the chest with his hand saying, "Praise be to Allah Who has led the messenger of the Messenger of Allah to an answer that pleased him."

The Mu'adh model of individualistic intellectualism might have played its role in the early stages of Islamic evolution, but as Miller noted, "As time passed, however, free and independent reasoning seemed to many Muslims to be a source of confusion and even threatening. It is pious obedience, not rational argumentation that is the Muslim way; after all, it was said the sin of the devil was that he had argued with God instead of obeying him! So as to avoid the possibility of Islam sinking into individual anarchism Muslim ethos got wedded to the *hadith*."

Herein lay the dichotomy of the *Musalmans*, as *hadith*, after all, is the record of the life and times of Muhammad, by no means an autobiographical account of his, but at best attributed to him by his followers, or at worst invented by the enamoured. Thus are caught the *Musalmans* between the Islamic deep sea of *hadithian hearsay* and the devil of *blind belief*. It is one of the many ironies of Islam that its believers should sink into a collective anachronism trying to avoid individual anarchism.

It is another matter though, that the *Musalmans* fail to appreciate the logic of change, even though the Quran maintains that revelations are subject to amendments:

“Such of our revelations as We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest though not that Allah is Able to all things?”

And abrogate Allah did, his original revelation to Muhammad about drink and dice. Verse 219. II reveals: “They question about strong drink and games of chance. Say: In both is great sin, and (some) utility for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness.”

However, the amendment contained in 90.V reads thus: “O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan’s handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed.”

Incidentally, Allah’s original revelation about the punishment to lewd women reads thus in 15. IV:

“As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them. And if they testify (to the truth of the allegation) then confine them to the houses until death take them or (until) Allah appoint for them a way (through new revelation)”

But, seemingly to address Ayesha’s predicament, when she strayed in the desert, and bought back to Muhammad by Safwan, the revelation (19. XXIV) has it that:

“Lo! those who love that slander should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter. Allah knoweth. Ye know not.”

So, that being the case, the *sharia* would have the woman accused of adultery stoned to death when Allah seemed to have willed to the contrary.

Be that as it may, when Allah, the All-Knower, the Seer and the Wise, with the experience of having given the Torah and the Gospel earlier to his prophets, still admits in the Quran that there is scope for improvement for Him even, isn’t it strange that the *Musalmans* should swear that the *hadith* is the be all and end all of all the worldly wisdom, divine as well as mundane, for all times to come! And, indeed, of life itself! Isn’t such a creed something like being more Christian than the Christ? Well, it’s for the *Musalmans* to think about that.

Besides, it is beyond belief that the *Musalmans* should believe that the All-Knowing Allah could have suffered from selective amnesia when he was fashioning the straight path for them. After all, what does His modifying some *ayats* or rescinding the others suggest? Above all, how could have He erred in such a vital matter of man’s rebirth, on which He changed tack in the Quran! First of all, there is this *ayat*, 55.20, in an early *Mecca Surah*, Ta Ha -

“Thereof We created you, and thereunto We return you, and thence We bring you forth a second time.”

What was this revelation if not about ‘rebirth’ that the God had done away with later on in Quran, and for what purpose?

Why, was not the Quranic foundation for a permanent Paradise, on which the edifice of the Islamic martyrdom was built, meant to serve the cause of Allah and His Messenger alike in their fight for the *Kabah*? After all, it's the desire to reach the 'Hereafter', and remain there forever thereafter without a bother, which is the motivating factor of martyrdom in Islam that is besides the tempting black-eyed virgins in their scores. Even otherwise, what sense doth it make for the believers to come down 'here' again after having heard the Quran deprecating it in so many chapters and verses? Does it!

If one were to be skeptical about the proposition, then it is all there to see and hear in the pre-recorded audio-video cassettes of the martyrs perpetually aired through the idiot boxes. Whatever, the contradictions in the Quranic *ayats* cited above are not all encompassing, and it is for the *Muslims* to scrutinize their Scripture that is the fulcrum of their faith. However, the *ulema* as the religious Parent of the *Muslim* can be seen from Miller's observations thus:

"In spite of the Islamic theory of equality, clergy not only developed in Islam but in the end their influence became as powerful as that of clergy in religions that maintain a priestly principle.

A traditional Muslim clergyman admires the Quran above everything else and dedicates his life to it, even though more often than not he has to work for very low pay. In terms of its explanation, he has the deepest respect for past authorities. His study of the Quran is therefore more related to what previous generations have believed about it, rather than to its fresh application to the present age. For him the Quran is the solace of Islam and the source of all true knowledge, and he gives equal respect to the traditional doctrines of the faith.

The second group of clergy and scholars may be called progressive teachers. They are those who wish to stress the authority of the Quran over human traditions, to go back to it, to make it a living Book, and to reinterpret it in the light of contemporary needs and conditions. Though these teachers are still in the minority, their number is increasing.

In *madrasas* that the clergy preside over are attended by the majority of the Muslim children, the topics of study include an introduction to the Muslim faith and practice, worship forms, biography of the Prophet Muhammad, and stories of other heroes of the faith. *Madrasas'* purpose is not so much to open the mind as to impress the spirit. They seek to set a tone and to provide some simple rules for being a Muslim.

Though new forms of *madrasa* education are developing the overall impact of the *madrasa* experience on Muslim faith and feeling is a powerful one. Above all, what Muslim boys and girls learn is respect for the Sacred Word. Combined with that, they also gain a sense of their identity as Muslims. The effect of this early concentrated exposure to the Quran is to leave a virtually indelible mark on Muslim spiritual consciousness."

No less, the Muslim parents, as the Parent of the *Muslim*, play their synchronizing part to the boot in Miller's picture of the life and times of a Muslim boy thus:

"The Islamic creed, the fivefold call to prayer, the annual fast, the steady mutual exhortation of Muslims, in short, the whole of Islam emphasizes the place of God in human life. Immediately after he was born sacred words would have been breathed into its ear. From the age of five to thirteen he would have attended a religious school to be educated in the Word of God (Quran). As a youth he would have listened to the night lectures of religious leaders that he could have attended during the month of fasting (Ramadan). As adults, he and his wife would have shared in the activities of the

community of believers that is dedicated to carrying the will of God, and they would strive to share this vision with their children, against the alternative visions that come to them from modern life.”

Thus, we see there is this external force, driven by the power and the fear of Allah, to impinge upon the mind of the *Musalman*. Besides, the admiration for and the desire to emulate Muhammad is omnipresent in the *mohallas* to rule the young Muslim mind, and if anything, in his growing-up as a *Musalman*, his imagination gets impregnated with the Quranic injunctions in *masjids* ‘n *madrasas*. It is this inculcation of belief in the doctrine of Islam within and without the Islamic home that occasions the all-consuming Parent of the *Musalman*s religious subconscious.

What about the ‘Harris’ recording’ of the internal responses of the little *Musalman* to this unceasing religious conditioning by the society around?

As the external inputs he would be receiving from the parent subscribe to the environment in which he lives in and interacts with, there should be perfect spiritual harmony in the Child about Islamic religiosity. However, this imposition of religious regimen on the tender ‘freedom loving’ childhood might result in the subconscious resentment against the Islamist Quadruple Parent as named above. This unique fusion between the external inputs that make the Parent, and the internal responses to the same which make the Child, would ensure that the Child in the adult *Musalman* would be either of ‘righteous consciousness’ type in case of compliance or the one imperiled by ‘guilty subconscious’ sort in case of partially complying / non-complying childhood. And so, as Harris has theorized, the former leads to prejudice and the latter results in delusion.

Nevertheless, it is the ‘Decommissioned Adult’ in the *Musalman* that shows a total lack of interest in contrary inputs that leaves no opportunity for processing the Parent-Child data for verification of its veracity. This is how, impervious to the realities of their surroundings, the *Musalman*s would be able to carve out their pan-Islamic Islands in every place they happen to live in. It’s thus; they find themselves out of sync with the national sentiments of their fellow countrymen, preoccupied as they are with their separate identity as *Musalman*s. It is as if they are simply indifferent to the happenings around that won’t concern Islam. The reality is, not that the *Musalman*s love their country of birth any less but they love the Muslim Brotherhood more!

Maybe, because of this abnormality in such a religiously conditioned Muslim mind-set, ‘the others’ too cannot be faulted for misconstruing their indifferent, if not hostile, behavior. More often, ‘the others’ tend to conclude that the *Musalman*s are unpatriotic, if not anti-national and it is this negative perception of ‘the others’ towards them that doubly hurts the *Musalman*s. But the ‘Decommissioned Adult’ in them would have rendered them incapable of seeing the other side of the emotional coin, and given their inability to adjust or adapt with ‘the others’, the *Musalman*s, somewhere or the other in the wide world, forever get embroiled in some dispute or controversy, and /or both. And that is good enough a reason for the *Musalman*s to believe that Islam is in danger, to protect which they feel no compunction to resorting to violence. Oh, in what ways this Islamic self-righteous aggressiveness, which its apologists make light as antics of Muslim frustration, the world has been experiencing to its hurt and dismay!

While ‘the others’ feel skeptical about the out-of-tune archaic Islamic personal laws, the *Musalman*s view that as poking into their religious nose, and their gut reaction is to retort that their *sharia* is their business as, in no way, it impinges upon the lives of ‘the others’. After all, social contract is all about making the individual needs subservient to the family good, family good to that of the community welfare, and the community welfare to that of the national interests.

But living in the Quranic wells in the non-Islamic lands, the Muhammadan Decommissioned Adult fails to appreciate all this. Just to cite an example, population control is in the national interest of any over-populous country such as India, but the Decommissioned Adult of the *Musalman* approaches the issue with his Parent-Child perspective that family planning is un-Islamic, after all.

Likewise, polygamy and *talaq*, more so the triple-*talaq*, might well serve the Muslim male interest, but aren't they inimical to Muslim female well-being?

Well, the Mohammedan Decommissioned Adult of the *Musalman*, unfortunately for him and his family, and by extension to his community and to the nation in which he lives, is incapable of receiving new Adult data. Instead, he relies on the irrelevant Parent-Child inputs, which, anyway, are obscurantist to say the least. It is these psychological aberrations among the *Musalmans*, never mind whether *madrassa* trained or convent educated, that produce Islamist terrorists, who became the scourge of the world, the Muslim world included.

Chapter 18

Fight for the Souls

During the middle of the 1st Century A.D, St. Thomas reached India's west coast of Malabar to establish the Church of the Christ, and having succeeded in cementing the Syrian Christian Order there, the evangelist moved on to Madras, now Chennai, to spread the message of the Gospel. However, the temper of the Tamilians ensured a hostile reception to his missionary zeal, and his persistence to proselytize them regardless had ended in his martyrdom for the Christianity. And after that, all was calm and quiet on the Indian religious front till the Buddhist Sind was painted Islamic green by the hand of bin Qasim in the early 8th Century.

Notwithstanding Ghazni's sack of Somnath, religious status quo still held good in Hindustan till the end of the 12th Century, when the sword of Allah wielded by Muhammad Ghuri firmly grounded the religion of the Arabs in the soil of the *Arya Varta* by enabling his lieutenant to establish the slave dynasty in Delhi. Thus was heralded the Muslim rule in India that was to last till the British signed off Bahadurshah Zafar the Last Mogul in the mid 19th Century.

While the oppressive Hindu phenomenon of untouchability worked well for the religion of the Arabs, it was as much the 'social oppression' as the 'religious denial' that would have made these outcastes feel, as if they were living in a no-man's land in Hindustan. Moreso in Bengal, so it seems, where in droves, they had embraced the alien faith of the Islam that came with an odd cultural baggage of Arabia, which in the end assumed the proportions of a near exodus into the Muhammadan arena. After all, while the caste Hindus denied the outcastes their gods by keeping them at arm's length from their *mandirs*, the *Muslimans* were prepared to share with them the precincts of their *masjids* for common prayers for Allah Ta'ala's grace. This caste Hindu refusal to share even one amongst their pantheon of gods with the outcastes of *Arya Varta*, made the latter, as latter-day *Musalmans*, to shoulder the Islamic urge to grab its 'land wings' for Pakistan. Oh, what shortsightedness of Hindu pigheadedness!

Thus, by the time the political prop came to the Missionaries of the Christ in the form of the East India Company, in the late 18th Century, the homes of most of the disgruntled outcasts and vulnerable Hindus and / or both, were firmly in the Islamic tent. Even otherwise, the bottom line of the alien religious appeal to the populace of Hindustan is that Islam and the Christianity could only impinge upon the fringes of its polity, that too when the rulers belonged to the respective religious dispensations. After all, this is understandable since man tends to weigh the temporal advantages more than the spiritual benefits when it comes to embracing a new religion, and depending on the

state of evolution in a given society or commune, the factors that prompt one's conversion change from time to time.

Nonetheless, as East India Company and later the British Viceroys were interested more in commercial exploitation than in religious conversions, the evangelists could not harvest as many souls, as Pope John Paul II had paraphrased it in recent times, as they would have loved to. Yet the Christianity made its Indian mark in remarkable ways, more so being instrumental in introducing secular education that ushered in social reengineering in an otherwise stagnant Hindu society, the sad relic of a once vibrant *Upanishadic* polity. Eventually though, what with so much reformist water having flowed down the untouchable bride, of course, pumped by the western educated Hindus leading up to the independence struggle and beyond, the caste color of Hindustan began to acquire a new shade albeit imperceptibly.

It was only time before modernism became the new *mantra* of upward mobility, and the western education, the preferred route to social savvy in the Indian society, but as Islam is conceptually antagonistic to both, at last, it lost its erstwhile sway over even among the disaffected *harijans*, nay *dalits*, who, instead, tended to seek the Standard of the Christ as a benign brand equity. Thus, it is no wonder that the Christian salvation had become the natural selection for the Hindu fringes, if only seduced with the right inducements from the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, unlike the Brahmanical indifference of yore to those unabated conversions into Islam, the Hindu mood of the day is in no mood to brook the compulsive Christian urge to proselytize, by means fair or foul. This justifiable Hindu resentment against the Christian zeal to convert others into its religious creed had unfortunately led to unjustifiable atrocities on the evangelists on occasion.

All said and done the so-called revealed religions that supposedly preach the pure message, or purportedly show the straight path, have failed to touch the mainstream of the Hindu polity. And that is in spite of the unceasing efforts of their proselytizers and the presence of their converts in their midst for a millennium! It is thus, the surprising resistance of the Hindu dharma to the dogma of Semitic religions, unlike the political capitulation of India to foreign forces, would be worth probing for the fault lines in the proselytizing faiths.

The assumption of the Christians is that only the Gospel could enable man's salvation, and that Jesus, the Son of God, only could intervene on behalf of man on the Day of Reckoning. The novel path of salvation through the Christianity that Jesus showed would have surely excited the Christian missionaries, and their desire to share their noble creed with the others is unexceptionable. But for the Christians to imagine that there could be no salvation sans their God's Son betrays the credulity of their minds at best, and their ignorance of the Hindu philosophy's sophistication at worst. It is a different matter though, that for the orthodox Jews, Jesus was a Judaic renegade, and for the idolatrous Arabs, Muhammad was but a deviant, and so on, which brings to the fore the fallacy of prophetic glorification.

Though it was the unwavering belief in Jesus that enabled the Christian missionaries, in spite of centuries of persecution, to spread his word on the continent and elsewhere that kept the Christianity alive to start with, the eclipse of the Greco-Roman Gods in the heart of the Roman Empire at its expense was achieved more through the conversion of Emperor Constantine than by the miracles of the Son of God and his anointed Saints. Whatever, this Christian conviction of salvation coupled with the mistaken belief that the Hindu souls were languishing for want of the message from the Messiah, which could have brought St. Thomas to the Malabar Coast half a century after Jesus had died on the Cross.

On the contrary, with the sword of Allah in one hand and Muhammad's Quran in the other, the Caliphs of Islam set out to pillage the world with an army of zealots, who had their eyes on plunder or Paradise, and / or both. Whatever, it was the good fortune of Islam, and the misfortune of its adversaries, that its adherents encountered little or no resistance from the nations of the world, by then exhausted after centuries of wars, to spread its wings all across. Oh, how one religion's food had turned out to be other religions' poison!

If the credo of the Christianity is courting other religious souls in covetous ways, the creed of the *Musalman* has been to turn the *kafirs* of the world into servants of their God, and by extension admirers of their prophet. After the destruction of the idols of the Arabia, the *mandirs* of India that the *Musalmans* might have heard about should have raised their hopes of mundane plunder, even as they would have outraged their religious sensitivity. Muhammad's allergy for the idols at the *Kabah* was to turn out, some three centuries later, to be the nightmare of the Hindu deities in their resplendent *mandirs*. The anecdote quoted by M J Akbar in 'The Shade of the Swords', published by Roli Books, is illustrative.

"The story of the Muslim conquest of central India may have begun with a misunderstanding: one man's pronunciation can become another man's poison. The three most revered pagan goddesses of pre-Islamic Mecca were Al Lat, Al Uzza, and Manat, denounced in the Quran as false deities and the source of the infamous controversy about the alleged 'Satanic Verses'. According to an old belief, when the Prophet smashed the idols of the Kaaba, the image of Manat was missing: it had been secreted away, and sent in a trading ship to a port-town in India called Prabhas, which imported Arab horses. According to this belief, idol-worshippers built a temple to Manat, and renamed the place So-Manat, or Somnath. The warrior king Mahmud, who built an empire from the Afghan city of Ghazni, waged the first jihad in the heart of India. His most famous raid was the one in which he destroyed the idol at Somnath and carried away enough booty to appease avarice."

However, the very fact that Mahmud raided the temples of Mathura, Thanesar and Kannauj before plundering Somnath would leave one wondering whether it was not a Muslim rationalization of the gruesome killing of over 'fifty thousand' souls, possibly, including a thousand Brahman priests, in the temple of So-Manat? But, what is relevant is the reported hope of Mahmud that once the idol of Somnath was captured and destroyed, the Hindus would become Muhammadans, a *la Meccans*. But, that didn't happen, and as though to signify the symbolism of Somnath to the Hindu ethos, even the secular government of Nehru's India thought it fit that the temple should be rebuilt.

What was in the Hindu *dharma* that soured St. Thomas' dream to proselytize the polity and belied Mahmud's hopes to see a Muslim India? The logical and rational answer would be that the Hindus are neither heathens as assumed by the Christians nor are they idolaters as presumed by the *Musalmans*. On the other hand, as against the single-scripture wisdom of the Abrahamic Orders and the dogmas of their prophets, the Hindu *sanātana dharma* is a spiritual way of life with an imbibed philosophical ethos that is steeped in deep-rooted culture and tradition. Thus, in terms of reach and approach, the straight but narrow paths of Judaism, the Christianity, not to speak of Islam, appear like by-lanes of bigotry compared to the Highway of Hindu Spirituality, exemplified by the dictum of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* – (world is one family).

However, the irony of Hinduism is that this laudable premise was neither passed on to the outside world, and what is worse, nor put in practice in its homeland either, if not why were there those untouchables and the downtrodden in the Hindu backyard? After all, notwithstanding their hallowed precepts, doublespeak and double standards seem to be the common features of all the religions. Just the same, while the Semitic religions

are faith driven, the *sanātana dharma* is philosophical in its orientation, and that enables the Hindus to probe the vicissitudes of life unbound by any scriptural dogma. And this has always been the strength of Hinduism notwithstanding its Achilles' heel of caste discrimination for possible course correction, all by itself, which, in time, led to the birth of the likes of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

It is in this context that the Roberto Baggio episode is to be seen. The Italian footballer, dejected as he was owing to his penalty goof-up that cost his country the World Cup, reportedly turned to Buddhism for solace for he felt that the Christian dogma had no philosophical inputs in it to face of the vicissitudes of life. That Jesus died for the sinners won't help his faithful in any way to handle their own predicaments. After all, the feature of the Semitic religious faiths is the dogmatic belief sustained by habit while spirituality epitomizes the search for the self in this world and beyond.

Whatever others might think of the Hindus of the day, their forebears once believed, as Americans do now, as Alberuni observed that,

"there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs".

If anything, as and when the hoped-for Hindu renaissance does take place, the tag of three thousand years old culture would be added to the above in their Hall of Fame.

Herein lay the Christian inability to proselytize India and the Muslim failure to attract the caste Hindus into the Islamic fold.

W. W. Hunter, aided by the Gibbonian insight, throws light on the nature of the mono and polytheism in *The Indian Musalmans*, published by Rupa & Co, India, thus:

"Yet many English Officers have gone through their service with a chronic indignation against the Muhammadan for refusing to accept the education which we have tried to bring to every man's door. The felicity with which the rest of the population acquiesced in it made this refusal more odious by contrast. The plain Hindu knew no scruples, and we could not understand why the Muhammadan should be troubled with them. But the truth is, that we overlooked a distinction as old as the religious instinct itself, the distinction which in all ages and among all nations has separated polytheism from the worship of One God. Polytheism, by multiplying the objects of its followers' adoration, divides its claims on their belief.

What Gibbon finely said of the Greeks, applies at this moment with more than its original force to the Hindus: 'Instead of an indivisible and regular system which occupies the whole extent of the believing mind, the mythology of the Greeks was composed of a thousand loose and flexible parts, and the servant of the gods was at liberty to define the degree and measure of his religious faith.' The Muhammadans have no such licence. Their creed demands an absolute, a living, and even an intolerant belief; nor will any system of Public Instruction, which leaves the religious principle out of sight, ever satisfy the devout follower of Islam."

Why not, the caste Hindus, prone to be biased against those borne into the so-called lower castes, yet are not abhorrent of the lesser gods worshipped by them, though they themselves ascribe no divinity to these minor deities that dubbed as *kshudra devatās*. While that portrays the religious tolerance of the Hindus to differing faiths, sadly it betrays their cultural intolerance towards the deprived fellow-human beings, upon which the Islam and the Christianity, espousing an egalitarian doctrine, had made inroads into the Indian religious milieu.

Yet, it is the paradox of the Semitic faiths in that while vouching for the selfsame God, who is believed to have enshrined the Torah, inspired the Gospel and gave the Quran, it was the Christians that ran the Crusades against the *Musalmans*, who had earlier

oppressed the Jews. While the unfortunate Jews suffered again at the Christian hands in the European lands in several pogroms before the Holocaust, given the Hindu tolerance for other religious dispensations, it was in India that they could breathe easy without let or hindrance pursuing their faith; which fact was gratefully acknowledged by the modern state of Israel.

But when it comes to the peoples of the Books, though all of them repose their faith in the selfsame God but as the dogmas of their cults vary, they tend to be at each others' throats, and in what can be said as the acme of the Abrahamic religious intolerance, the Ahmadiyas 'n Shias of Pakistan and the Shias of Iraq have come to suffer at the Sunni hands as the worst victims of the Islamic dogma.

Wish the Semitic scriptures contained some philosophy as well!

Chapter 19

India in Coma

The zeal of the Arabs to spread Muhammad's word that catered to their innate urge to plunder, which for Edward Gibbon made Islam 'the profitable religion of Arabia', obliterated the great cultures of the time, occasioned by his thesis that "the Koran inculcates, in the most absolute sense, the tenets of fate and predestination, which would extinguish both industry and virtue, if the actions of man were governed by his speculative belief."

Whatever, after the initial fanatical momentum of the booties, the Arabs, bereft of any political culture to name began to yield the pan-Islamic temporal ground to the very peoples - the Turks, the Persians and the Afghans - they had coerced into their faith. It's the irony of history that these very peoples, subjugated by the Arabs to the detriment of their gods, had furthered the cause of Islam with the swords of their own, of course, fired by their ambition and fuelled by the newfound religious zeal. No less paradoxically, as these converts came to undermine the Arab authority in the emerging *umma*, the purveyors of the faith retreated into their tents, which deprived them of any further partake in the affairs of the Islamic world, that is till the petrodollars made them the masters of the domain of the *Musal'mans* once again.

On the other hand the Brahmins, the authors of the Indian caste system that inflicted grievous wounds on the body polity of the grand land, continued to hold sway over the Hindu social consciousness with their intellectual savvy and religious orthodoxy that is well after the Arabs had resigned to their inglorious fate. Besides, in the Vedic times, the Brahmins were well adept at warfare too, as the exploits of the Dronacharyās, Aswathamās et al in the epic battle of *Maha Bhārata* would illustrate. Even in the earlier *Ramayana* times, Parashurama, Lord Vishnu's avatar as a Brahmin, emphasized the Brahmanical ethos thus:

agratas chaturō vēdān / Spar at not a Vedic soul
prushtash saran dhanō / Armed to the teeth as well
idam kshātram idam brāhmayam / Brain 'n brawn as thus combined
sepādapi sarā dapi. / Curse I might or subdue thee.

While *Arya Varta's* political fabric in myriad social colors, woven with the wharf of *varna* and the weft of *dharma*, was worn by varied caste groups in their accorded custom (*swadharma*), ordained by the country code (*sanātana dharma*), the power of the Hindu State willed in enforcing the *dharmic* order in all its manifestations. If each caste were to adhere to its own *dharma* without let or hindrance, so it was assumed, all was well with the State itself.

However in time, what with the gradual decline of the great Hindu empires giving way to tiny kingdoms and banana republics, internecine battles for the sole domination of *Arya Varta* or as much of it as within reach, became the norm rather than an exception. Understandably, the Brahmans could not have remained immune to the political turmoil around, which would have threatened their cultural hegemony that they had inherited, and so were embroiled in intrigues with a view to retain their hold on the political handles of what they came to call as the *karma bhōmi*.

But with the diminishing stature of the rulers of the land, their own political diminution was not far off, and so they too ceased to be the wise ministers they used to be. So, when Mahmud's father was building border roads in Afghanistan to enable his son to war his way into Somnath, there was no Chānakya in the Brahman ranks then to build the political bridges in India. And adding to the woes of the *Arya Varta*, its *kshatriyas* too, for far too long weren't producing Vikramādityas of yore either.

Thus, the decline of the Brahmanical sagacity and the pettiness of the *kshatriya* princes, together weakened the Indian political State further, setting in motion the Hindu socio-political degeneration that insensibly led the vexed multitudes into their regional shells of self-destruction. It was into this India in coma that the Afghan Armageddon of Mahmud of Ghazni had a cakewalk for unleashing an era of loot and plunder in the land of *sanātana dharma*.

The episode that shook the Hindus and shaken their pride like none else is thus narrated in Romila Thapar's *A History of India* published by Penguin India.

"Temples were depositories of vast quantities of wealth, in cash, golden images, and jewellery – the donations of the pious and these made them natural targets for a non-Hindu searching for wealth in northern India. Mahmud's greed for gold was insatiable. From 1010 to 1026 the invasions of Mahmud were directed to temple towns – Mathura, Thanesar, Kanauj, and finally Somnath. The concentration of wealth at Somnath was renowned, and consequently it was inevitable that Mahmud would attack it. Added to the desire for wealth was the religious motivation, iconoclasm being a meritorious activity among the more orthodox followers of the Islamic faith. The destruction at Somnath was frenzied, and its effect was to remain for many centuries in the Hindu mind and to colour its assessment of the character of Mahmud, and on occasion of Muslim rulers in general. A thirteenth-century account from an Arab source refers to this event.

'Somnat – a celebrated city of India situated on the shore of the sea and washed by its waves. Among the wonders of that place was the temple in which was placed the idol called Somnat. This idol was in the middle of the temple without anything to support it from below, or to suspend it from above. It was held in the highest honour among the Hindus, and whoever beheld it floating in the air was struck with amazement, whether he was a Musulman or an infidel.

The Hindus used to go on pilgrimage to it whenever there was an eclipse of the moon and would then assemble there to the number of more than a hundred thousand. They believed that the souls of men used to meet there after separation from the body and that the idol used to incorporate them at its pleasure in other bodies in accordance with their doctrine of transmigration. The ebb and flow of the tide was considered to be the worship paid to the idol by the sea. Everything of the most precious was brought there as offerings, and the temple was endowed with more than ten thousand villages. There is a river (the Ganges), which is held sacred, between which, and Somnat the distance is two hundred *parasangs*. They used to bring the water of this river to Somnat every day and wash the temple with it. A thousand Brahmans were employed in worshipping the

idol and attending on the visitors, and five hundred damsels sung and danced at the door - all these were maintained upon the endowments of the temple.

The edifice was built upon fifty-six pillars of teak covered with lead. The shrine of the idol was dark but was lighted by jewelled chandeliers of great value. Near it was a chain of gold weighing two hundred *mans*. When a portion (watch) of the night closed, this chain used to be shaken like bells to rouse a fresh lot of Brahmans to perform worship. When the Sultan went to wage religious war against India, he made great efforts to capture and destroy Somnat, in the hope that the Hindus would become Muhammadans. He arrived there in the middle of ... December A. D. 1025.

The Indians made a desperate resistance. They would go weeping and crying for help into the temple and then issue forth to battle and fight till all were killed. The number of slain exceeded 50,000. The king looked upon the idol with wonder and gave orders for the seizing of the spoil and the appropriation of the treasures. There were many idols of gold and silver and vessels set with jewels, all of which had been sent there by the greatest personages in India. The value of the things found in the temple and of the idols exceeded twenty thousand dinars.

When the king asked his companions what they had to say about the marvel of the idol, and of its staying in the air without prop or support, several maintained that it was upheld by some hidden support. The king directed a person to go and feel all around and above and below it with a spear, which he did but met with no obstacle. One of the attendants then stated his opinion that the canopy was made of loadstone, and the idol of iron, and that the ingenious builder had skillfully contrived that the magnet should not exercise a greater force on any one side - hence the idol was suspended in the middle. Some coincided others differed. Permission was obtained from the Sultan to remove some stones from the top of the canopy to settle the point. When two stones were removed from the summit the idol swerved on one side, when more were taken away it inclined still further, until at last it rested on the ground."

Shocked did Mahmud the Hindus into dejection, as Romila Thapar picks up the historical debris of Somnath thus:

"The raids of Mahmud did not make India aware of the world to her northwest or of the events taking place there. Confederacies had been formed, but not with a view to organizing defence on a national scale, utilizing resources from various parts of the subcontinent or even northern India. Defence was linked to the immediate purpose of assisting kings to maintain their kingdoms; the significance of Mahmud's raids as paving the way in northern India for further attacks from the north-west was not fully grasped. Mahmud was just another *mlechchha* as had been the Shakas and the Huns. They had been absorbed and forgotten, as so too presumably would Mahmud and his armies.

The death of Mahmud in any case removed the need for vigilance on the north-west, especially as his successors were less interested in the plains of northern India. The Indian rulers returned to their internal squabbles. When the second attack came from the north-west under the leadership of Muhammad Ghuri at the end of the twelfth century India was, for all practical purposes, as unprepared as she had been for meeting the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni."

Besides, what Alberuni saw around the time of Mahmud's onslaught on India corroborates Thapar's account of it.

"... From that time dates their aversion towards the countries of Khurasan. But then came Islam; the Persian empire perished, and the repugnance of the Hindus against foreigners increased more and more when the Muslims began to make their inroads into their country; for Muhammad Ibn Elkasim Ibn Elmunabbih entered Sindh from the

side of Sijistan (Sakastene) and conquered the cities of Bahmanwa and Mulasthana, the former of which he called *Al-mansura*, the latter *Al-mamura*. He entered India proper, and penetrated even as far as Kanauj, marched through the country of Gandhara, and on his way back, through the confines of Kashmir, sometimes fighting sword in hand, sometimes gaining his ends by treaties, leaving to the people their ancient belief, except in the case of those who wanted to become Muslims. All these events planted a deeply rooted hatred in their hearts.

Now in the following times no Muslim conqueror passed beyond the frontier of Kabul and the river Sindh until the days of the Turks, when they seized the power in Ghazna under the Samani dynasty, and the supreme power fell to the lot of Nasir-addaula Sabuktigin. This prince chose the holy war as his calling, and therefore called himself *Al-Ghazi* (i.e. *warring on the road of Allah*). In the interest of his successors he constructed, in order to weaken the Indian frontier, those roads on which afterwards his son Yamin-addaula Mahmud marched into India during a period of thirty years and more. God be merciful to both father and Son!

Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources."

Well, to add to this tale, there was the old Muslim misconception about Hinduism as an idol worshipping paganism, against which Muhammad infused hatred amongst the believers that the *umma* came to nurse. Hence, once Islam happened to reach the other side of the Hindukush, it was in no mood to either suffer the scent of the sanctums sanctorum of the Hindu deities or allow the *kafirs* a free reign over their monumental *mandirs* across those mountain ranges. So, again and again, for the satiation of the greed of the Ghazanis and the Ghuris, the marauders of a *Muslimans*, Hindustan became a logical destination for rapine and rape not to speak of manslaughter. Thus, over time, *Arya Varta*, the Hindu *karma bhōmi*, was reduced into fiefdoms of the *Musalman* Sultans and Nawabs.

The unique features of faith, as well as prejudice, are that they are subject to the cascading effect brought about by the tendency of the protagonists for enthusiastic one-upmanship. If the Islamic faith became a dogma of the *Muslimans* akin to paranoia, then the Brahman haughtiness was transformed into the Hindu insensitivity. The fate meted out by the insensitive Hindu polity, moulded in Brahman orthodoxy, to those of their ilk taken as prisoners by the *Muslimans* in the battles for the domain of Hindustan would illustrate the tragedy of the times. That these valiant men, who staked their lives in guarding their ancient land from falling into the alien Muslim hands, were not readmitted into the parent fold even after their release by, or escape from, their captors for their association with the *mlecchās*, their enforced confinement occasioned! And those valiant men, rendered hapless by the prejudices of the Brahmans, had nowhere else to go in their own land but to the Islamic camp. What rank Hindu ingratitude to those patriots out to protect their motherland and its ancient way of life! Wonder if there is any parallel of such a social cruelty in the annals of human history!

Arguably, the curse of those hurt Hindu souls, which were cruelly driven into the Islamic bodies that could be forever restless in their Muslim graves, could be behind the tragedies the Hindus faced for centuries on. Oh, what an eternal shame and won't the Hindus of the day, and those who would follow, owe an apology to the progeny of

those. But then, even now do we really care for, much less value, our men in the uniform as we should be doing? Wish the Hindus, instead of gloating over the wisdom of the *Upanishads* that they fail to imbibe, any way, would try to develop a historical sense of their cultural aberrations for a social course correction.

While Ghazani and Ghuri subjected Hindustan to their raids and runs of plunder, the Sultans who came in their wake had set up their domains of self-aggrandizement. The wealth of the land was misused for the grandeur of their courts and the upkeep of their harems, needless to say, to the detriment of the populace. The opulent palaces built for their living and the grandiose mausoleums erected for their dead that dot the Indian subcontinent bear testimony to the callousness of these settlers of *Musalman* rulers. It is as if they hadn't any value for life other than their own.

So, with the remnants of the Hindu State yielding ground, first to the Sultanates that eventually absorbed by the Mogul Empire and then to the British Raj, the *swadharma* of various *varnas* began to degenerate into varied caste creeds to the hurt of the Indian social unity and purpose. Thus, it can be said in hind sight that it was the concept of *swadharma* that was the undoing of India for it negated its *dharmic* unification, like *Hindutva*, for all to live by and die for. But it was the near millennia reign of the alien settler races, devoid of concern for the public good and lacking a stake in the welfare of the country, which for centuries on put India in a state of social coma. What is worse for the unfortunate citizens, as if the foreign rulers of yore had laid down the norms for ruling *Arya Varta* for all times to come, the politicians of free India have stuck to the ethos of the aliens in governing their own country.

Chapter 20

Double Jeopardy

It may be interesting to follow the Islamic fate of those unfortunate untouchables and other marginal caste groups of Hindustan, who had embraced the bigoted faith of Muhammad. True, the Hindu fringes, at last, got their God that the Brahmans so cruelly denied them, even one amongst their three crore deities, and what if Allah Ta'ala was an alien One for they were never allowed to feel like the coparceners of the land of their own forebears? Nevertheless, as the enshrined caste edifice was too strong even for the Almighty Allah to pull down, and since their Muhammadan masters would have only condescend to descended with them, the early converts might have been, to start with, tentative in their new faith. But yet, for the pain of circumcision, Islam afforded them the solace of faith and the hope of the 'Hereafter'.

Moreover, for them the Sufi sop of allowing them to nourish their new Islamic credos in their old Hindu habitats was like having the cake and eating it too. But for the caste Hindus, they became *mlechās*, apart from being the outcasts that is even as the alien circumcision earned them the ridicule of a *katua*. And making matters worse for them, it was only time before the Wahabi zealots forced the progeny of the Sufis' soft converts to shed their loose Hindu habits, and adopt the strict Muhammadan customs, which, to say the least, were cumbersome to the core. Thus, the double jeopardy of the Islamic religious rigidity and the Hindu caste prejudice would have insensibly pushed those hapless converts into the 'circle of hazard' of the life 'here', and, what is worse, tied their progeny to an alien lifestyle for all times to come.

This unjust happenstance should be a cause of regret for the caste Hindus that their progenitors so mistreated the forebears of these folks that forced them into an alien faith with a slavish ethos to the God and a narrow vision of life that is firmly coupled with burdensome religious precepts and practices. So, ironically, Islam, which attracted many outcastes of yore with its egalitarian tenets, had reduced their progeny into incorrigible obscurants of our times; whereas, their religiously removed caste cousins,

aided by the times, are now riding on the high tide of modernity, be it those who had retained the identity of their progenitors or such who are resisting to be trapped into the Church by the wily Christian missionaries (may the Hindus be thankful to them). This alone calls for an unqualified apology from the Hindus to the Indian *Musalmans* and their sub-continental cousins before the Subramanian Swamys of the world want them to own up their Hindu origins to usher in the laudable integral Indian nationalism.

Whatever, the unabated profligacy of the Sultan-Nawab nexus of the Islamic order should have depressed the Indian economy sooner than later, which wouldn't have improved the economic lot of the native converts for the *alien* rulers suffered no qualms for their lack of concern to the new but lowly additions to the grand *umma*, not to speak of their *kafir* subjects. But as the general economic condition of the Hindustan further deteriorated in time, being the poorest of the polity, the plight of the progeny of those converts would have only got worsened.

And yet, as the Islamic brainwash would have made them believe in their eternal bliss in the 'Hereafter', they could have derived a vicarious pleasure on account of the economic plight of their former tormentors 'here' as well for they had no scope to hope for the paradise that debars *kafirs* from entering its pristine precincts. And in the modern era, as the naivety of the Nehruvian socialistic pattern of society perpetuated the Islamic legacy of celebrating poverty, Mother India remained a pauper in the vice-like grip of the State, tightened further by his self-serving daughter Indira, till PV Narasimha Rao unshackled it with the Manmohanamic wrenches!

Whatever, we may delve into the factors that kept Islam going strong in India, and that too with certain vigor; to start with, the mundane condition of the marginalized Hindus had admirably fitted into Muhammad's Quranic glove that Islam is. Besides enhancing their self-worth, the cult of Muhammad promised them a certain heaven that Hinduism denied them anyway. While their social depravity was addressed by the equality before Allah Ta'ala, their economic poverty was solaced by the Islamic deprecation of life 'here' and its extolment of joys 'there'. While in their Hindu state they were kept out of its social fold as untouchables or retained as retainues at the social fringes, their religious transformation as *Musalmans* would have enabled them to develop a sense of solidarity in their ranks, easing the burden of their former social exclusion. All this could have inculcated a 'feel good' in the converts about their newness 'here' all the while assured of the mouthwatering 'Hereafter', owing to the happy circumstance of their having become *Musalmans*.

How remarkable that the temporal condition of a set of people and the religious dogma of a faith that makes deprivation a virtue should serve the cause of both! Their new-found religious status could have enabled those converts to perceive themselves, no longer as Hindu outcasts but as *Musalmans* in a pan-Islamic world. Above all, the satisfaction of belonging to the religion of the ruling class, not only in India but also of the best part of the world then, would have countervailed the plaguing caste Hindu contempt for them. So, their religious conversion should've enabled them to gloss over the drudgery of 'here' aided by the hope the 'Hereafter', which in turn would have cemented their faith in their new faith.

Besides, the converts could have perceived every humiliation of the Hindus, at the hands of their coreligionists, alien though, as an Act of Allah dispensing His poetic justice for their unjust oppressions of the past. While Muhammad exploited the Arab psyche of deprivation to nurture Islam in Arabia, providence helped sync it with the hurt of the outcasts of Hindustan, which had afforded the Abrahamic creed an unabated growth in it. And it was not long before Muhammad's irresistible socio-religious mix had spread far and wide in the land of the Hindus, to eventually transform it as the most populous Muslim part of the planet, albeit facilitated by the Brahman follies and abetted by the

Rajput foibles. Thus, with no change in the ground realities, and in spite of the burden of an unyielding religious dogma coupled with its tedious practices that the faith imposed upon them, yet the converts remained enthusiastic about their lot, thereby illustrating the power of Islam over the minds of the poor, to be precise on the poor men.

Why not, on the personal front, Islam has a lot to offer to the men of its faith, and sadly for the outcaste woman, as is the case with all womanhood, it was her man who calls the conversion shots for her and her children as well. Surely, variety being the spice of life, the appetizing prospect of 'four wives' the alien cult grants its men, as opposed to the native norm of 'monogamous monotony', would have made many a male, not religiously attached with Hinduism, enamoured of it. As for divorce that is an anathema to the *sanātana dharma*, the alien faith provided the Indian convert a free passage to get rid of any or all his boring wives. With no questions asked that is, and naturally that would afford the economically poor *Musalman* a sway in his home with his wife or wives in thrall, which is bound to bloat his ego sag.

Thus, while Islam gives its poor males a sense of invincibility within their homes, in spite of their vulnerability outside of it, for its privileged men, it accords the 'license of levity' for an unabated indulgence in the ways of the flesh. Sadly though, Islam, save the 'Hereafter', has nothing on offer for its women, who in the confines of the burka take the whims of their man as the diktats of the God, and thus subject themselves to their inimical Islamic order in perpetuity, so it seems.

It would be interesting though to speculate about the course Islam would have taken in Hindustan had the Sultans, with religious zealousness, made *sharia* – civil as well as penal part of it - mandatory for all the converts. Surely the rigours of the Islamic penal code - *chopping off the hands for theft, stoning to death for adultery, beheading of the apostates, lashing the backs for breaking the laws etc.* - would have put off even the hapless outcasts to ever contemplate about touching it even with a barge pole. That being the case, would there have been even one willing convert to Islam by vouching that "There is no God but Allah 'n Muhammad is His Messenger" to face the music of the *sharia*? Doubtful, isn't it?

In proof of it, while being enamored with the civil *sharia* that affords them medieval conjugal privileges and affords them deliverance from a nuptial contract of diminishing returns through *triple talaq*, the *Musalman*s of the day wouldn't lament for the shelving of the *penal sharia* in India and elsewhere as well. Isn't it a blessing in disguise for the Indian *Musalman*s that the *kafirs* have left the penal *sharia* alone to let them save their errant limbs and remain the masters of their homes, of course, contrary to what Allah Ta'ala had willed for them? That is about the hypocrisy of the *Musalman*s regarding *sharia*'s immutable divinity that is touted as the unalienable essence of Islam!

Chapter 21

Paradise of Parasites

The discovery, in 2,000 C.E., of a submerged city of 7,500 B.C.E. vintage, off the Gulf of Khambhat, would have made the 3,500 B.C.E.'s Mohen jo daro 'n Harappa seem modern in the ancient *Arya Varta*. As the North America and the Europe have proved in the modern times that economic well-being and social development are but the obverse and the reverse of the 'national' coin of healthy work ethics, it can be inferred that without a sound work culture, the Khambhats and the Harappas wouldn't have happened in the *Bharat Varsha* in the antique era. But then, how come the Indians of the day bade goodbye to the moral values of yore and came to yearn for easy money in the corridors of corruption!

The Aryans, who emerged after Mohen jo daro, in spite of their emphasis on spirituality, didn't seem to have hampered the work ethos of yore as would be evident

from the 'recorded' prosperity of the populace in the bygone eras. Maybe the *karma sidhanta* that exemplified the Brahmanical concept of linking the fate of men to the deeds of their past births could have even encouraged the have-nots to strive for bettering their lot in the birth to follow that is through good deeds in the life on hand. By the same token, the *kārmic* theory guarded man from the debilitating effects of envying the better-off, and that helped one and all build a society of happy souls striving to better themselves in word and deed, never mind their economic lot, well, till the mid 20th Century or so, before the 'why not me' phenomenon began to boot out the age-old Hindu wisdom from its *karma bhōmi*.

That being the case, we might search for the possible influence of the Islamic religious credo on the Indian work culture exposed as it were to it for a millennium. The Islamic way of life is best described by Freeland Abbot in his *Islam and Pakistan* of Cornell University Press, New York, as quoted by Mayram Jameelah in her book, *Islam and Orientalism* (Adam Publishers & Distributors, Delhi).

"The community held that the important thing in life was not to improve one's well-being but to get to heaven when one's earthly life was over. And the road to heaven was chartered as a clear path. That path, preserved and sharply defined by the traditionalists, included prayers and creed but it did not include so living as to avoid measles and small pox. The basic premise of Islam is that the faithful are the servants of Allah who are ordained to pray Him five times a day. This concept of faith presupposes that Allah is the provider to the faithful He being their Master. As though to make the prayer regimen a viable proposition the Hereafter was advocated as the be all and end all of life. As though to keep up the morale of the faithful to stick to prayer at the cost of the benefits of life that hard work entails, their eternal existence in the Hereafter is made peaceable and enjoyable."

If anything, the *Tablighi Jamātis'* total disregard for their, as well as the others', lives at the outbreak of the 'novel corona virus' in the early 21st Century, would only prove that *Musalmans'* stupidity of faith is an attendant feature of their life and times, in any age and time.

Be that as it may, in Martin Lings' biography of Muhammad, the following account of his meeting with Moses, in the wake of his ascent, along with Archangel Gabriel, to *The Lote Tree of the Uttermost End* illustrates the stress on prayer in Islam.

"At the Lote Tree the Prophet received for his people the command of fifty prayers a day; and it was then that he received the Revelation which contains the creed of Islam: *The messenger believeth, and the faithful believe, in what hath been revealed unto him from His Lord. Each one believeth in God and His angels and His books and His messengers; we made no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say; we hear and we obey; grant us, Thou our Lord, thy forgiveness; unto Thee is the ultimate becoming.*

They made their descent through the seven Heavens even as they had ascended. The Prophet said:

"On my return, when I passed Moses – and what a good friend he was unto you! - he asked me: 'How many prayers have been laid upon thee?' I told him fifty prayers every day and he said: 'The congregational prayer is a weighty thing, and thy people are weak. Return unto thy Lord, and ask Him to lighten the load for thee and thy people.' So I returned and asked my Lord to make it lighter, and He took away ten. Then I passed Moses again, and he repeated what he had said before, so I returned again, and ten more prayers were taken from me.

But every time I returned unto Moses he sent me back until finally all the prayers had been taken from me except five for each day and night. Then I returned unto Moses, but still he said the same as before; and I said: 'I have returned unto my Lord and asked Him until I am ashamed. I will not go again.' And so it is that he who performeth the five in good faith and in trust of God's bounty, unto him shall be given the meed of fifty prayers."

What should make the *Musalmans* ponder over this extraordinary 'divine encounter' is that while Moses felt that even a five-prayer regimen is a weighty thing, their prophet, in the first place, didn't even deem it fit to seek from his Lord any relief for them from the self-defeating, day in and day out burden of fifty prayers a day! Well, would fifty congregational prayers in a twenty-four hour cycle 'here' leave any time for them to sire their progeny to carry their faith forward? Even if they were to scrape through the procreative front with their libido, would there be any time left for them for some gainful occupation, so essential 'here' for tending their families? Surely it wouldn't have occurred to Muhammad, as anyway, he was providing his followers their fair share of the 'spoils of war' to take care of themselves but how the All-Wise Allah Ta'ala failed to realize that His faithful wouldn't be able to subsist for long on a daily diet of fifty prayers is the question. They should contrast this with the Hindu path to their gods; the Brahmans shoulder the burden of worship on behalf of their co-religionists to free them from their own religious chores, thereby letting them pursue their temporal endeavors for public good. Whether Brahmans were wise or vainglorious, and / or both may not be the point 'here'.

Be that as it may, it was Moses' concern for the *Musalmans* – "the congregational prayer is a weighty thing, and thy people are weak" - and his advice to Muhammad to bring some sense into that abnormal order of their God that saved the day for them all for all times to come. Viewed in this context, the *umma* should be indebted to Moses, not only for the reduced *namāzi* burden on them but also for the well-being of Islam itself. Shouldn't that make a case for the 'indebted' believers to concede a little more of His Promised Land to the Jews, Moses' people!

Well, it's as if to sustain the 'five prayers a day' regimen that Muhammad had continued his campaigns of plunder that satiated the need as well as the greed of his followers, and the Caliphs and the despots, who succeeded him, kept up the precedent set by their God's own messenger, that is till all that could be plundered from the subdued nations was plundered. Just to cite one example, as a case study, the royal palaces in Hyderabad Deccan and the chest of the Nizam's family jewels stand in stark contrast to the social backwardness and the abject poverty even of his *Musalman* subjects in the erstwhile State of His Royal Highness. So it was no wonder that the Nizams were the richest of men in the world well into the middle of the 20th century, when others overtook them with their innovation or enterprise, and / or both. And won't their famed collection of the priceless jewels give a measure of the poverty into which they had pushed the hapless populace of their vast province?

If only the 'Fortune 500' was in compilation in the times of the Muhammadan rule in India, it would have been no surprise that the *Muslim Nawabs* would have taken the cake, leaving the Hindu Rajas a few crumbs to satiate themselves with. Why for the Muslim parasites Mother India, the Hindu land of milk and honey, became the Islamic paradise 'here' itself. And yet, the *Musalmans* are ever averse to having *vandemātaram* as the Indian national anthem for it would require their veneration of her! What rank ingratitude for a land that contributed to Islam its *Musalmans* in their millions! But in catering to their Islamic whim, Gandhi's Congress gave India a national anthem that salutes Sind, a province of the 'conceded' Pakistan! What should be India's objection if its neighbour accuses her of hegemonic designs to set up an *Akhand Bharat*?

However, while the Quran had revealed how to share the 'Spoils of War' and Muhammad had stipulated the 'Code de Distribution' of the ransom amongst his followers, Islam has no clue about the generation of wealth. Added to the ingrained Arab belief in their moral right to loot, the religious sanction that Islam accords them to plunder the *kafirs* might have led the Muhammadan marauders to believe in their divine right to live off the wealth of the idolaters. It is another matter though; that the example set by Muhammad to distribute the loot among the faithful was diluted by the latter-day Sultans of Islam for the Muslim despots of the day to appropriate it all for themselves so as to indulge in a life of vile luxury.

Besides, preoccupied as it is with the 'Hereafter', Islam has no time to deal with the nation building 'here', and thus the Muslim rulers were at a loss as to how to bring the conquered countries back into economic well-being after their plunder rendered them into wastelands. What with the lands that came under their reign having become unyielding thus, and lacking the old *jihadi* zeal to embark upon plundering the European kingdoms, in time, the Islamic world sunk into economic decay and dissipation. That was the 'moment in waiting' for the West, industrialized in the meantime, for the wholesale colonization of the Muslim world that it coveted for so long. Well where the Christian crusades failed, the Western enterprise succeeded in subjugating the *Musalmans*!

Chapter 22

The Number Game

"If the Mughal monarchs had assumed their responsibilities as Muslim rulers and organized intensive *tabliq* or missionary work, the majority of Indians would have embraced Islam and hence the necessity for partition and all the disasters that followed in its wake, never would have arisen."

Well, this fascinating proposition of Maryam Jameelah in *Islam and Orientalism*, Adam Publishers, New Delhi, would deserve the indulgence of any historian.

It might be so that even as man's strengths could debilitate him at times, his weaknesses might become blessings in disguise for him, something akin to the Shakespearean assertion that "virtue itself turns vice being misapplied and vice sometime by action dignified." This paradoxical mirror effect, by extension to people's strengths and weaknesses, tend to shape the history of their nation, which seemed to have saved Hindustan from becoming a Sunnistan for Maryam's delight. Whatever, the political plight of the Hindus that paved the way for the Islamic onslaught on their sacred soil probably served the cause of their *sanātana dharma* in the long run!

It was the fragmentation of Hindustan into minor kingdoms and tiny principalities that enabled the Turko-Afghan juggernaut to overrun its Western and the Northern parts to begin with. However, it was one thing for the marauding invaders to turn parts of it into their pocket burrows and another to make the whole of it as an Islamic State, to achieve which they would have to run over many a Hindu kingdom / principality, spread far and wide in the vast landmass. That would have entailed unremitting *jihad* in umpteen battles, but probably, as the unlimited riches of the limited land they conquered would have made the Sultans stay put in their grand palaces annexed with vast harems.

Moreover, they would have been alive to the problems logistics would pose in fighting wars far off from their Afghan backyards, and so desisted from venturing farther into the hinterland of Hindustan. As for Allah's 'barren' soldiers, their urge to make it to the 'Hereafter' would have been fulfilled 'here' itself in Hindustan for it had all that their prophet said they would have 'there'. Hence the invaders would have been averse to the risk of defeat in expansionist wars and thus, for long, their political domain was

confined to some scattered Northern parts of Hindustan till in the latter-years Babur ushered in the mogul rule that his grandson Akbar expanded to some significance. But then, he tried to reconcile the subjects of his communally divisive empire through his Din-e-Ilahi, shaped by the best of Islam and Hinduism.

However, Aurangzeb, the Muslim zealot of his lineage, had in mind an intensive *tabliq* to Maryam Jameelah's approval, but owing to the impediment of a Shivaji and his Maratha warriors, he could do no more to Islam in India than to sack its temples, including the most sacred ones of Lord Vishwanāth in Kashi and Lord Krishna in Mathura, and going by some accounts that came to light in the court halls in *Ram Janmabhōmi–Babri Masjid* land dispute, Ram Lalla of Ayodhya as well. Thus, for centuries, the pleasure-seeking Sultans, militarily constrained to boot, failed to bring about the Islamic *tabliq* in Hindustan that is unlike the Arab conquests in other parts of the planet. Besides, the concept of *swadharma* that insidiously weakened the Hindu polity seems to have served as an obstacle for the Islamic *tabliq* in ways unexpected.

In the history of conversions, even as the religious dogmas *per se* are a set of beliefs; mistrust is an accomplice of human nature that enables others to sow the seeds of doubts in the minds of the believers about their own beliefs. That done, it would only be a matter of time before their minds become conducive for infusing a set of new religious beliefs into their mental arena. That's what enabled the Christ, with a new 'Code de Conduct' that was ingeniously sourced to the Ten Commandments, to induce some of the Jews to turn their backs on the Laws of Moses.

Later, borrowing the Christ's idea, Muhammad in his "O ye believe" refrain came up with a newer set of dogmas handed out to him by none other than Jehovah, albeit in His avatar as Allah Ta'ala, to alter the belief system of the entire Arabia to start with. Wiser to this human proclivity that enabled him to cement his new faith in the minds of the *Musalman*s, and to ensure that the mind of man would never be able to play the spoilsport for Islam, Muhammad had positioned himself as the Seal of Prophets and declared that the Quran is the God's final guidance to man for all times to come. Why, didn't Guru Gobind Singh likewise proclaim *Guru Grandh Sahib* as the final Guru of the *panth*?

It's no wonder then that when the statues of Zeus were pulled down all over the Roman Empire; its Pagan subjects had earnestly hoped that the Father of their Gods would destroy the Christians for the sacrilege. But as none of that happened, they lost faith in the religion of their progenitors, and thereafter, they needed no great persuasion from the evangelists to change their faith, more so as their Emperor Constantine himself had become a Christian. Nevertheless, the Pagan fate didn't visit Hinduism as Mahmud Ghazni hoped his destruction of the temple and the desecration of the Deity of Somnath would, but why? Maybe, the answer lies in the social ethos of Hindustan

Unlike the Semitic religions that are steeped in the realms of belief, the Hindu *swadharma* is a 'way of life', that at once is habit forming as well as pride inducing. As an illustration, if not as an analogy, we now have this American Way of Life, regardless of its ethno-cultural diversity, which the politicians of all hues in the U.S. vow to safeguard regardless. And since habits, unlike beliefs, die hard, the habituation of various caste groups to their own *swadharma* would have thwarted any Islamic attempt to uproot Hinduism from the social soil of *Arya Varta*.

It is a measure of the sway *swadharma* had on the Indian populace that the Imams of Islam were constrained to let the *Musalman* converts from the outcastes to retain their Hindu dress code and social mores in their new religious habitats, nevertheless as bait for conversion. Yet one may wonder, if not for this Sufi softening of the Islamic rigidity,

how many outcastes, in spite of their ill-treatment by the caste Hindus, would have embraced Islam in the first place?

Why wouldn't it be interesting to speculate as to what would have happened had there been an expansive Hindu kingdom in place in *Arya Varta* when the Ghaznis and Ghuris eyed it for plunder? Maybe, the might of such an empire, might have put paid to the Islamic misadventure at the foothills of the Hindu Kush itself. And probably Islam would have never been able to set its bigoted foot on the Hindustani soil to be able to convert part of its populace, occasioning its eventual partition into India and Pakistan.

But what if, had the *jihadi* zeal of the *Musalmans* to plunder 'here' or die for the joys of 'the Hereafter' overwhelmed the imperial might of an immense Hindu army in a Mahabharata-like war? Why the command of the Indian subcontinent then would have passed into the merciless hands of the bigoted *Musalmans* leaving the Hindus with the Hobson's choice.

So to say, with the cessation of the *Kshatriya* power to protect their *swadharma*, the Hindus would have been forced to decide whether to embrace Islam or death on offer, and probably Hindustan would have gone the Muhammadan way of Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, and such to its eternal hurt. Maybe, the accursed Hindu disunity, exemplified by myriad kingdoms, would have frustrated Maryam Jameelah's Islamic cause even during Aurangzeb's zealot mogul regime.

What if the Muslim imposters, prompted by their religious obligation, crossed the Hindu Rubicon and tried to Islamize India by force? Maybe in all probability, it would have proved counterproductive in the land of the *sanātana dharma* for such an Islamic *tabliq* would have forged the Hindu unity to the detriment of Muslim continuance in *Arya Varta*. As history bears witness, the policy of restraint, more so the expediency, of the Sultans, ensured an uneasy peace, in Hindustan that enabled the Sufis to spread the Islamic shadows on the peripheral *swadharms*, rather unhindered. All the same, it is worth probing the causative factors that helped Islam to gain a firm foothold in Hindustan that eventually enabled it to carve out Pakistan, for its *Musalmans*, from what is emotionally a Hindu land.

Sadly, the Brahmans, living in the sanctified arenas of their *agrahārās*, were impervious to the happenings in their backyards so long as their privileged position in the polity was ensured. Whether the *chandālās*, living on the Hindu fringes, became Buddhists or embraced Islam, was not something to disturb the Brahman sleep, and it was this intellectual apathy of theirs that failed to foresee the demographic catastrophe in the making that the political cross of Pakistan was eventually crafted in their *karma bhōmi*.

Added to this was the Hindu complacency that the Muslim invaders too would eventually settle down in one of the caste corners of the pan Hindu fold for, after all, weren't the alien intruders of yore were neatly tucked into the native caste network at some stage? All this combined to make the Hindus in general and the Brahmans in particular to pay a deaf ear to the *azans* of the *muezzins* from the *masjids* around, wanting the faithful to come over for the congregational prayers.

Thus it would seem that the '*mlecchā* apathy' of the Brahmans and the indifference of caste Hindus for the fate of the 'outcasts' were the contributing factors for the Islamic outreach in Hindustan as those marginalized became the easy pickings for the Islamic *tabliq*. Given a chance they would have readily got into the religious fold of the alien rulers as a means to assert their birth right in their coparcener land that the insensitive Hindu caste mores denied them.

Could human history get ironically better? Not even, when an African-American becomes the President of the United States, and indeed Barak Obama did become! Maybe it is this very psychic glee of the Indian *Musalman*s that could be behind their eagerness to see the Italian Sonia ascend the *Dilli gaddi*. Besides, it is a travesty of Hindustan that its media is ever at fanning this disaffection of theirs towards the Hindus so as to drive them, once again into a foreign camp, political though; what an irony!

Moreover, fortuitously for Islam, by the time the Sufi saints spread themselves out into the Indian countryside to sow the seeds of the Islamic faith in the hamlets of the untouchables; Buddhism became a spent force in Hindustan. Thus, these erstwhile Buddhists devoid of the guidance of the monks for their Nirvana could have been too eager to seek the paradise Muhammad had promised for the believers. The proposition of the Quran that the purpose of life 'here' is not for happiness and enjoyment as its true significance lies in its being a means to reach the 'Hereafter' through the Islamic straight path, could have been irresistible for the deprived outcastes of Hindustan.

Moreover, as the Hindu social mores too did not attach any value for their untouchable lives, the precepts of Hindu *punar janma* (rebirth) held no hope for them either in the births to follow. Oh how the psyche of Islam did sync with the deprived souls of the Indian social fringes to spread its wings, and how the Hindus, in the loss of their land, are condemned to carry the cross of their sins against their fellow humans into eternity! And that's history.

However, the *Musalman* rulers' inability to attract the elite of the land into the Islamic fold could have been two fold; for one, the Brahmans didn't condescend to descend to suffer their *Musalmanic* society though some of the Rajputs, as a political expediency, kept them in good humor. And for another, either owing to their inability to rope in the Brahman ministerial talent or being intellectually apathetic towards them, and / or both, the Turkish Sultans and their Afghan minions brought in nobles from theirs, or the Persian, lands to administer their Indian fiefdoms.

So, by and large, this parochial policy of the alien rulers precluded the possibility of the native eminence to embrace Islam even for their self-promotion, and thus, the nepotism of the *Musalman*s and the prejudices of the caste Hindus led to a lopsided Islamic growth on the caste fringes in the Indian social setting, save some sections of the *vaisyas*, who opted to get under the Muhammdan banner.

Well, the *vaisyas*, who always felt aggrieved at being deprived of their rightful exaltation in the Hindu polity, commensurate with their wealth, were ever prone to look for the greener social pastures; first in the Buddhist fold and thereafter under the Islamic order. Moreover, their business interests would have been better served if aligned with the religion of the rulers, isn't it?

Whatever, by and large, while the foreign nobles manned the Indian Islam, the native converts remained just that, which divide still manifests itself in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Thus, even after eight centuries of rule of the *Musalman* in Hindustan, and in spite of the lack of a Hindu backlash against its spread in its midst, Islam couldn't become the majority religion in the Indian subcontinent. But still even as the Turkish rule ruined the body economy of the land, owing to the Wahabism, Islam became cancerous in the end causing the contentious partition of Hindustan.

But the 'secular' wisdom tends to attribute Islam's initial sustenance and its latter-day surge in Hindustan to the convenient myth of Hindu religious tolerance. While the false proposition might help embalm the never healing Hindu wounds by rationalizing their defeatist past, India's minorities have come to decry the resurgent Hindu pride channeled through Hindutva. It's as if they would like to deny today's Hindus that which was denied to their forbears – pride in being themselves.

Chapter 23

Winds of Change

The Muhammadan downturn in the 18th Century that enabled the dawn of the British Raj in India turned out to be a godsend to the Hindu upswing. Historically, the parochial character of the myriad kingdoms precluded India's Hindus from imbibing a sense of belonging to their motherland, which continues to plague the political system of the Union of India that is Bharat.

In the chequered history of Hindustan, its Rajas, and their *Sāmants*, who came by dime a dozen, saw their adjoining territories as pieces of real estate to be grabbed to boost up their vanity or to satiate their greed, and / or both. So, ironically, Mother India, with its splintered political dominions, would have been a no man's land to its provincial potentates, and in later years, the Muhammadan usurpers, if anything, saw its riches as their personal endowments to cater to their pleasures and to perpetuate their memory 'here' forever through grandiose mausoleums, the Taj Mahal being the apogee. And that was the final nail in the coffin of the Indian economy.

The next victim of the Islamic misrule in India, of course, was the intellectuality, the prized possession of the Hindu civilization, nurtured from the times immemorial. With the advent of the Muslim Sultans, and the eclipse of the Hindu Rajas, short of royal patronage, the Brahman intellectual pursuits took a back seat. Besides, the overall downtrend of the Indian economy, brought about by the profligacy of the pleasure-seeking Islamic rulers, dried up the wells of charity affecting the Brahman well-being.

Moreover, their self-restraint from pursuing mundane activities, an anathema to their *swadharma*, contributed to the Brahman financial gloom, which eventually led to their intellectual decay as well. Hence, their collective sense of despair could have led to the feeling of dissipation that inexorably put them onto the path of laziness and prejudice. What with the *Kshatriya* power too on the wane, the traditional Hindu leadership remained dispirited and disjointed in the Islamic rule in India, and the Hindus, as though to seek a mass escape from life's hardships had turned to spirituality, which further distanced them from the social realities. Whatever it may be, the undercurrents of the Hindu-Muslim coexistence in India are their bi-polar interests that even Akbar's *Din-i-Ilahi* failed to reconcile.

However, all that changed under the aegis of the British Raj that lasted long enough to make a difference to the Hindu self-worth, and when India celebrates its hundredth year of freedom from the British yoke in 2047, its Hindus might heartily wish 'God bless the Great Britain'. But what could be the feelings of the Indian *Musalman*s towards the British, who dethroned the moguls to signal the end of the Islamic rule in Hindustan, and yet gave the parting gift of Pakistan to their faith across its borders, time only would tell. Maybe the plight of Pakistan then could shape the mind of the Indian *Musalman*s but one should be wary of the Muslim penchant to blame the *kafirs* for the Islamic ills of their own, and that of their God's, making.

Be that as it may, the Great Britain had wide opened the Indian windows to the developed world, closed for centuries by the Brahman social prejudice and the Islamic religious bigotry, which enabled its populace, the Hindus in particular, to breathe a whiff of fresh air of contemporary Western ideas. Above all, the British lent India their English tongue that gave class to its middle class, and all this led to the advent of the cosmopolitan India. But, on the flip side, the vested interests of the 'nation of the shopkeepers', so as to bolster their commercial interests had ensured that whatever left of the Indian enterprise and industry was truly undermined.

Nonetheless, after their initial skepticism about the liberal ways of the British, the Hindus, led by the Brahmans, stepped out of their *sanātana* cocoons to explore the Western outlook, which eventually resulted in their kids embracing the English secular education in numbers. But on the other hand, the Muhammadan elite allowed themselves to be drawn into the closets of self-recrimination, and fearing religious dilution, shied away from the secular ideas and ideals, and kept their children away from the convent education. That's how, as the Hindu masses ventured out of their caste closets, even the elite *Musalmans* stayed put in their mental ghettos and held on to Islam's obscurantist tenets even more. And in this dual response to the Western cultural infusion lay the revival of the Hindu intellectuality and the beginning of the Muslim despondency.

Thus, while the Muslim dominance of India caused its stagnation, the British deliverance from the same heralded the Hindu socio-political resurgence. The emotional relief of the Hindu to be rid of the political yoke of the *Musalmans*, after nearly eight centuries, evoked a feel-good in the country's majority. With the mainstay of the population, so to say, enamored of them, and they too having come to value the ancient Hindu philosophy, which got reduced to mere prejudice by then, the British loved India as best as their own interests would permit them to do. And having succeeded in subduing the squabbling *Nawabs* and the disjointed *Rajas*, the British slowly but steadily unified the country to usher it into the modern era; they built roads and bridges, brought in the radio and the railways, and the telegraph and the telephone.

But, to the chagrin of the *Musalmans*, the British banished Persian, the language of the Mogul Court, and introduced English to administer India, which turned out to be a boon to the Hindus for it facilitated their entry into the administrative portals, and that gave them an edge over the *Musalmans*, thereby ushering them into a new age in their ancient land. Even though the evangelists failed to take the Hindu souls *en masse* onto the Christian path of salvation, yet the British saved the Indian souls by modernizing the hitherto neglected healthcare system. And it was their educationists that enabled the Hindu's innate scientific temper to flower in the, Ramans, the Boses, and the Ramanujans et al.

Besides, the secular education that McCauley introduced produced a body of Hindu thinkers and reformers, mostly Brahmans, and predominantly Bengali at that – the Arabindos, the Tagores, the Bankimchandras, the Ram Mohan Roys, the Ambedkars, the Tilaks, the Malaviyas, the Gurajadas, et al – in their scores, which laid the seeds of equality in the Indian soil at long last. But yet there are the critics, who aver that his educational mechanism turned India into a nation of clerks, of course not without some justification; and as history tends to repeat itself, the skeptics of the day aver that the IT upsurge in the end would reduce humans into a bunch of keyboard operators; undeterred though the technology has set its eyes on AI. Whatever, there is a price to pay for a millennium of stagnation of slavery, isn't it?

So, the Brahmans, as though to make amends for the sins of their progenitors, strived hard to clear the social debris that Brahmanism had left on the Indian soil. The Hindu reformist zeal, with due help from the Western Samaritanism, which put the Brahman orthodoxy on the back foot, which, in turn, enabled the community to contain abominable practices such as *sati*, untouchability, child marriage et al, that is besides opening the altars for widow marriages.

With the momentum so gained on the social front, as the Hindus began to dream about changes in the political arena, Gandhi ingenuously transformed India's masses into 'Soldiers of Peace' to fight against the mighty British that stunned them in the end. While the world marveled at it, India showed to it as to how an ancient nation of peace loving people, with a dominant religion of philosophical orientation, can successfully

shape its struggle against a foreign rule in the modern world through non-violent means. How well, Pearl S. Buck captured it all in her assertion that only a religion like Hinduism and a country like India could have produced a Gandhi!

Nonetheless, India's struggle for freedom had had its righteous streaks of aggression as well as the pacifist stances of Islam, for even as Subhas Chandra Bose and others across the country, opted for an armed struggle, the Indian *Musalmans*, along with the majority of the Hindus, stuck to the Gandhian course of non-violence. That is, till Muhammad Ali Jinnah fired the Muslim imagination with the call for the creation of Pakistan, the separate homeland for the *Musalmans* of Hindustan. Whatever, as the Hindu hopes for freedom rose, so did the Muslim fears about the domination of their religious rivals in free India increased, and it seemed as if the wheel was about to turn the full circle for the Hindus and the *Musalmans* as well.

While for the Hindus, the end of the British Raj would seemingly herald a *Rama Rajya*, i.e. after a thousand year interregnum, for the *Musalmans*, whose domain of eight centuries the British had ended; it portended the worst – the Hindu domination of them. That was after the baneful land reforms of the British, which had already proved to be the last nail in the coffin of their parasitic life of leisure and luxury. Besides, given the propensity of the *Musalmans* to live by their glorious past, the prospect of a *Rama Rajya* would have seemed a setback for Islam in Hindustan.

Since the religious loss of face is something that the *Musalmans* dread the most, so, what would have salvaged the Islamic prestige than a separate nation for them in the subcontinent? Besides, a 'here' they can call their own, that would enable them to take home their fond memories of the past glories that the two-hundred-year mogul rule symbolizes. Moreover, as the notion of a Muslim nation would restore the loss of power and pelf under the British Raj, the craving of those *Musalmans* for Pakistan cannot be faulted.

But it's their hypocrisy behind the demand for separation on the specious ground that Muslims cannot coexist with the Hindus, that is abominable. Why didn't they live with the Hindus for a thousand years by then; oh, that was when they happened to be the rulers, isn't it? Well in reality, Indian *Musalmans* found it galling to live under the imminent Hindu rule in the independent India; and in an encore, the same supremacist psyche came to the fore in latter-years as the Hindu nationalists, at long last, had come to rule their Bharat that is India.

Whatever, after centuries of inimical Muslim misrule the Hindus have had to endure, they should have a reason to feel indebted to the British for having given them a modern nation, though truncated. Maybe, the *Singh Pariah's* nationalist lament over a lost *Akhand Bharat*, patriotic though, is misplaced for with one *Musalmán* for every two Hindus in it; Islam would have erected enough roadblocks for the undivided India to modernize itself. Moreover, if not for their grant of Pakistan as the homeland for the Indian *Musalmans*, the British could have unwittingly Balkanized India, or worse!

So, notwithstanding the unpalatable partition of their ancient land, the Hindus have every reason to be grateful to the British for releasing them from the Islamic shackles that their *Brahman-kshatriya* duo willy-nilly put them into. And for the same reason, the *Musalmans* are wont to grudge the British for having divested them of the *Dilli gaddi* that is in spite of their having ensconced them in Rawalpindi, which, of course, they see as a consolation prize. Won't the Indian *Musalmans'* resentment of the British validate the adage that "one's meat is another man's poison"? It's another matter though that in hindsight it appears that the Pakistani capital-shift from Rawalpindi to Islamabad was a forerunner into its Islamic disaster!

Chapter 24

Ant Grows Wings

Never in the history of Islam, not excluding that of its Messenger, was the destiny of the leader so providentially tied with the fate of his people as that of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Indian *Musalman*s. And like Muhammad before him, Jinnah (peace be upon him as well for his soul too must be restless in his grave) also did not survive long enough to bring about the political consolidation of Pakistan, and to the like effect. While the grand religion of Muhammad rendered itself into sub-faiths so soon after his death, Quaid -e- Azam's Pakistan, as if to prove the truism of the Italian saying, 'to its own hurt that ant grows wings', sundered itself into two nations that was before it could celebrate the Silver Jubilee of its coming into being. Just the same, by then, it had glaringly exhibited the brutality of the intra-Islamic intolerance on its Eastern stage, in all its Punjabi – Bengali variation, for all to see, and for any of those who might have missed it, it was reenacted in the Iran-Iraq war by Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein. Well if anything, their legacy of Shia-Sunni strife is sought to be perpetuated in all its cruelty in Iraq, Pakistan et al, seemingly forever.

Whatever, the roots of the Islamist separatism in Hindustan lay in the political ambitions of the Muslim aristocracy and the economic interests of the middle-class *Musalman*s, who wanted to have it easy in a country of their own bereft of any Hindu competition. But the separatist sentiment propelled by the *mullahs* and the self-interest of the elitist groups needed political fusion to facilitate Pakistan, and the leadership for that came from an unexpected source, in the persona of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whom Muhammad, if not banished him as an infidel, owing to political expediency, would have certainly branded him a hypocrite. Like the hostility of the Quraysh motivated Muhammad to capture the *kabah* for Islam, so was Jinnah's zest to take up the cudgels of Pakistan for the Indian *Musalman* arose from his desire to settle scores with Gandhi's Congress that sought to sideline him.

But unlike Muhammad, who provided for his faithful of Medina with the 'spoils of war', Jinnah was constrained in propping up Pakistan for Islam had no precedents for nation building, intellectually speaking that is. While Allah in his own wisdom withheld its wherewithal from Muhammad, he too did not survive long enough after the conquest of Arabia for him to have developed the grasp of managing the national economy. So the *Musalman*s have no *hadith* or *sunna* to go by on that count, and even otherwise, Muhammad's methods would show that he believed in the adage of 'ends justifying the means', rather than in the 'merits of the means applied'.

Given that man, in passing through the pathless woods of life, has to remain in tune with its ever changing currents, the *Musalman*s though are forever in a quandary sticking to 'whatever' dished out in the *quran*, *hadith* 'n *sunna*. True, they pore over their Islamic texts in the hope of finding a clue here or a hint there but to no avail; well how were Muhammad to know about the complexities of modern life in his desert times of yore. That is about the Muslim habit of viewing the ever-altering world through Muhammad's rusted medieval prism, and what they divine through that is there for all to see. After all, one only sees what one looks for, and no farther.

Moreover, being an autocrat that he was, besides being their sole arbiter, Muhammad had no compunctions in furthering the faith among his flock with "do as I say but don't do as I do" dictum. So the Caliphs, who succeeded him, and the Sultans, who followed them, found it expedient to follow in his convenient footsteps to the detriment of the *umma* though as an increment to the Islamic tradition that came in handy to others who followed them. It's thus the rulers of today's Islamic world, Saudis downward; tread on Muhammad's autocratic path with *hadithian* props. And true to

form, the democratic nation of Pakistan that Jinnah envisaged for the Indian *Musalmans* first came into the Quranic domain and, in the end, ended up being the fiefdom of its *fauzis* and fast ripening for being taken over by the *jihadis*.

And in time, thanks to Zia ul-Huq's political expediency that ushered in the *sharia* to humor the *mullahs*, the 'land of the pure' was turned into the backyard of the *jihadis* as well as the launching pad for the *fidayēn*, the martyr missiles of Islam. Well, as if to add insult to injury, Zia famously declared that democracy wouldn't suit the Muslim genius, nevermind their theologians proclaiming from the rooftops of the world that Islam as a religion is essentially democratic! While that only shows how far the 'frog in the well' vision can take one, Pakistan failed to infuse Iqbal's muse to better his *sāraē jahān se achchā hindōsitān hamārā*, which he penned for India before he pitched in for Pakistan

But much before Pakistan was tilled in the Islamic fields of Hindustan; its seeds of failure, as observed by W. W. Hunter in *The Indian Musalmans*, lay in the Wahabi roots of the Indian Muslims at the loss of their imperial power to the British.

"The Wahabis, now a scattered and a homeless sect, profess doctrines hateful to the well-to-do classes of Muhammadans. In formal divinity they are the Unitarians of Islam, they refuse divine attributes to Muhammad, forbid prayers in his name, and denounce supplications to departed saints. It is their earnest, practical morality, however, that contains the secret of their strength. They boldly insist upon a return to the faith of the primitive Muhammadan Church, to its simplicity of manners, its purity of life, and its determination to spread the Truth, at whatever expenses of the blood of the Infidel, and at whatever sacrifice of themselves.

Their two great principles are the unity of God and the abnegation of self. They disdain the compromises by which the rude fanaticism of Muhammad has been skillfully worked up into a system of civil policy, and adapted alike to the internal wants and foreign relations of Musalman States. They exact from every convert that absolute resignation (*Islam*) to the will of God, which is the clue to the success of Muhammad.

But while, like other reforming sects, they ceaselessly insist on this fundamental doctrine, they weaken their cause among the learned by their Unitarian divinity, and among the simple by a rude disregard of established rites and hallowed associations. In the greater part of Asia, the Wahabi convert must separate himself from the whole believing world. He must give up his most cherished legends, his most solemn festivals, and his holiest beliefs. He must even discontinue the comforting practice of praying at his father's tomb."

About the state of Islamic Educational institutions in India during the British Raj, Hunter had this to say in his well-researched work:

"Even the few among them, who, if left to themselves, would try to do well, had no means for obtaining any sound or practically useful knowledge. In the first place, the time daily devoted to teaching was too short. The fixed hours are from ten to two, from which about twenty minutes must be subtracted in order to allow masters and students to smoke a *hooka*, known in the College slang as Moses' Rod; and about half an hour for calling the roll - a ceremony which had to be performed twice a day, as many of the students disappeared finally at twelve O'clock. Some of the more diligent supplement the meager College curriculum by reading 'religion' in private Musalman schools outside.

Such external studies consist chiefly of the Muhammadan Tradition (*Hadis*) and law books of the fanatical medieval stamp - a sort of learning which fills the youthful brain with windy self-importance, and gives rise to bitter schisms on the most trivial points within the College walls. Not long ago, as the English Resident Professor was going his

evening rounds, he heard a tumult in the students' rooms. 'Your religion is all wrong,' and similar phrases, resounded through the corridors, and fierce were the denunciations on all sides.

He hurried to the scene of the uproar, and found that one of the students had found in a law-book that during prayer the heels should be joined, else the petition has no effect in heaven or on earth. Those who had said their prayers with unclosed heels denounced the discoverer of the new mode as a pernicious heretic; while he and a little band of followers consigned all who prayed in the old fashion to the eternal torments of hell.

Three hours' instruction is as much as they could possibly obtain from the College teachers in the day; - one who has practical acquaintance with it, tells me that the actual time of teaching seldom exceeded two and a half hours. Anything like preparation at home is unknown, and indeed is opposed to Mohammedan ideas. Each master reads out an Arabic sentence, and explains the meanings of the first, second and the third word, and so on till he comes to the end of it. The diligent student writes these meanings between the lines of his textbook, and by easy degrees learns the whole sentence and the interpretation thereof by heart.

To teach him how to use the dictionary at home, or to reason out the meaning of a passage on his own account, is an altogether foreign invention, possibly dangerous to his religious faith, and at any rate unknown in the Calcutta College. At the end of seven years the students know certain books by heart, text and interpretation; but if they get a simple manuscript beyond their narrow curriculum, they are in a moment beyond their depth. Such a training, it may well be supposed, produces an intolerant contempt for anything which they have not learned. The very nothingness of their acquirements makes them more conceited, they know as an absolute truth that the Arabic grammar, law, rhetoric, and logic, comprise all that is worth knowing upon earth.

They have learned that the most extensive kingdoms in the world are, first Arabia, then England, France, and Russia, and that the largest town, next to Mecca, Medina, and Cairo, is London. *Au reste*, the English are Infidels, and will find themselves in a very hot place in the next world. To this vast accumulation of wisdom what more could be added? When a late Principal tried to introduce profane science, even through the medium of their own Urdu, were they not amply justified in pelting him with brick-bats and rotten mangoes."

Then, the ultimate Muslim response to their loss of power, which possibly led to the blind alley of the Hindu-Muslim disaffection, is captured, again by Hunter thus:

"During the last forty years they have separated themselves from the Hindus by differences of dress, of salutations, and other exterior distinctions, such as they never deemed necessary in the days of their supremacy."

This new craving of the Indian *Musalman*s for separateness might have naturally led to the clamor for more *madrasas* for the intensification of religious education to the young things to make them more Muslim. About the reluctance of the zealous Muslims to send their children to secular schools, Hunter states thus:

"The truth is, that our system of Public Instruction ignores the three most powerful instincts of the Musalman heart. In the first place, it conducts education in the vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Mohammedans despise, and by means of Hindu teachers, whom the whole Mohammedan Community hates. The Bengali school master talks his own dialect and a vile Urdu, the latter of which is to him an acquired language almost as much as is to ourselves. Moreover, his gentle and timid character unfits him to maintain order among Musalman boys. 'Nothing on earth' said a

Mohammedan husbandman recently to an English official 'would induce me to send my boy to a Bengali teacher.

In the second place, our rural schools seldom enable a Muhammadan to learn the tongues necessary for his holding respectable position in life, and for the performance of his religious duties. Every Muhammadan gentleman must have some knowledge of Persian, and Persian is a language unknown even in our higher class District schools. Every Musalman, from the peasant to the prince, ought to say his prayers in one of the sacred languages, Persian, or Arabic, and this, our schools have never recognized. It was lately asserted on high authority, that the prayers of the Musalmans find no acceptance with God unless they are offered in the prescribed tongues. In the third place, our system of Public Instruction makes no provision for the religious education of the Muhammadan youth.

It overlooks the fact that among the Hindus a large and powerful caste has come down from time immemorial for supplying this part of a boy's training, while among the Muhammadans no separate body of clergy exists. Every head of a Musalman household is supposed to know the duties of his religion, and to be his own family priest. Public ministrations are indeed conducted at the mosques; but it is the glory of Islam that its temples are not made with hands, and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God's earth or under His heavens. A system of purely secular education is adapted to very few nations. In the opinion of many deeply thinking men, it has signally failed in Ireland, and it is certainly altogether unsuited to the illiterate and fanatical peasantry of Muhammadan Bengal."

Why the *Musalman*s failed to recover the lost ground, and how the Hindus regained the same was conceptualized by Hunter thus:

"Without interfering in any way with their religion, and in the very process of enabling them to learn their religious duties, we should render that religion perhaps less sincere, but certainly less, fanatical. The rising generation of Muhammadans would tread the steps which have conducted the Hindus, not long ago the most bigoted nation on earth, into their present state of easy tolerance, such a tolerance implies a less earnest belief than their fathers had; but it has freed them, as it would liberate the Musalmans, from the cruelties which they inflicted, the crimes which they perpetrated, and the miseries which they endured, in the name of a mistaken religion."

What all this proves is that in an open society, not constrained by religious dogma, there could be pro and contra view points for debate and discussion, leading to the eventual crystallization of public opinion and political mandate. But the bane of the closed Islamic societies is that there cannot be any contrary view of life than the one formulated in *quran-hadith-sunna* trio, which dogma has become the shared belief of the *Musalman*s and the imbibed prejudice of the *umma*. How sad, there is no countervailing political force to the religious dogma in the Islamic nations; won't the unrest in the Muslim world against the U.S., and Israel that is allowed to brew into destructive *jihadism* by its despots, prove that? Moreso, the fact that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could readily take Turkey back onto its Islamic ways from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secular path, once and for all, establishes that in the Muslim societies it's the pull of Quran that prevails in the end.

Thus, it could be said without any contradiction, that only Islam could have produced Taliban to afflict Afghanistan that suffered no qualms in debasing their own people in the name of their own faith! That is besides destroying the magnificent Budhas of Bamian, carved by their indefatigable ancestors, to be treasured by their progenitors, but then that is the power of Islam to malign the minds of man.

Bernard Shaw, though, was unfair to the *Musalmans* when he remarked that Islam is the best religion with the worst followers. But as might be seen, in reality, the *Musalmans* are the unfortunate victims of the Islamic dogma shaped by Muhammad's hostility towards 'the others' that was unambiguously aided and abetted by Allah Ta'ala through the Quran. Why is not Islam but Muhammadanism, shaped to serve the personal needs and meet the political ends of its messenger, and not the religion designed for the enlightenment or the emancipation of its followers? But, the *Musalmans* cannot see the reality as the bigotry of the community ensures that the Islamic blinkers are put on the young early on.

What is worse, there seems to be no way out for them as the *umma* goes to lengths to keep it that way for all times to come that is. Thus, it can be said that the *Musalmans* are the victims of a mind-set conditioned by the proclivities of their prophet, vicissitudes of his life, attitudes of his detractors and the credulity of his followers, which the mechanism of their *umma* perpetuates.

Chapter 25

Constitutional Amnesia

Muhammad Ali Jinnah got what he wanted for Indian *Musalmans* though in time, their Quranic zeal turned Pakistan into a Rogue State. What of India, the product of an irony of a partition in that while some *Musalmans* walked away with one-fourth of its land, others stayed back to nurse their separatist dogma in its truncated bosom?

While the Hindu nationalists lamented about the loss of their ancient land, the *Musalmans* intellectuals were alarmed at their reduced numbers vis-à-vis the Hindus. Even as the Golwalkars articulated the Hindu frustration in shrill tones, the Abul Kalam Azads voiced the Muslim apprehensions in secular tunes. Whatever, as Pakistan became an Islamic State for the *Musalmans*, India remained a habitat of varied interest groups, the *Musalmans* included! While the Indian political classes were beset with a sense of loss that partition brought in its wake, the Hindu intellectuals were upset by the age-old caste guilt that the reform movement occasioned in their collective consciousness.

It was in such a setting that India ventured to formulate a constitution for itself, of course, piloted by Babasaheb Ambedkar, the intellectual giant from the depressed classes. Yet the end product, touted as the bulkiest of the written constitutions in the comity of nations, turned out to be an exercise in selective amnesia.

"WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, reads the preamble of the Constitution of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic, and political;

LIBERTY of status, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

And to promote among all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

None can fault the lofty ideals of this august document but for the politicization of the testament itself, i.e. by the induction of socialism into it. Strange it may seem, won't the socialistic slant negate the economic justice that it seeks to provide? After all, socialism, as per the COD, is a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the community as a whole should own and control the means of

production, distribution, and exchange. How could there be an economic justice for an individual enterprising Indian then?

However, mercifully in the end, PV Narasimha Rao, the Accidental Prime Minister, aided by Dr. Manmohan Singh, his hand-picked Finance Minister, managed to extricate India from the Nehruvian socialist grip to leave his lasting legacy as the 'Achitect of Economic Reforms'. But that was not before socialism wrecked Indian industry, stunted its enterprise, and ruined its economy so much so that, for servicing its national debt, the country had to pledge its gold for some sterling pounds.

But before that, as if the religious leeway provided by Ambedkar & Co. to the *Musalmans* and the Christians to upset the demography of India's diminished geography, Indira Gandhi, during her infamous emergency, unconstitutionally amended the constitution to further stymie the Hindu majority though with the laudable 'Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill, 1976 (Bill No. 91 of 1976)' that was enacted as The Constitution Forty-second Amendment Act, 1976, which avers that –

“A Constitution to be living must be growing. If the impediments to the growth of the Constitution are not removed, the Constitution will suffer a virtual atrophy. The question of amending the Constitution for removing the difficulties which have arisen in achieving the objective of socio-economic revolution, which would end poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity, has been engaging the active attention of Government and the public for some years now.”

Be that as it may, without specifying “the difficulties which have arisen in achieving the objective of socio-economic revolution” in the said bill it was stated that –

“It is, therefore, proposed to amend the Constitution to spell out expressly the high ideals of socialism, secularism and the integrity of the nation, ...” based on which the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1976 had sought to remodel India as “Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic.”

Whatever, as neither the said bill nor the specified act defined what constitutes a secular republic; we may turn to the COD that defines the hallowed but much abused word thus:

1. concerned with the affairs of this world; not spiritual or sacred.
2. (of education etc.) not concerned with religion or religious belief
3. a. not ecclesiastical or monastic.
b. (of clergy) not bound by a religious rule.

Hence, with regard to the above –

1. Is not the spirit of our secular republic against the State subsidy of the *Haj* (which the Supreme Court had to order to be given up in a phased manner) as that amounts to its showing concern with the spiritual matters of the Muslims?
2. Is not the penchant of the *Musalmans* for the *madrassa* education for their children that stresses upon Islamic separatist dogma against the spirit of our secular republic?
3. Is not the assertion of the *mullahs* that they are bound by the *sharia*, the rule book of Islam, tantamount to the negation of the secular ethos of our remodeled republic?

Be that as it may, in spite of Indira's unholy amendment, as Indian constitution remained a holy cow, Narasimha Rao had to let it go, besides, he happened to be a congressman and had to run a minority government at that.

Nevertheless, the article of the 'Original' Indian Constitution with regard to "Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion" exhorts thus:

1. Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.
2. Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law-
 - (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;
 - (b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus."

Agreed, the right of the citizen for the profession and practice of one's religion is unexceptionable for it constitutes the birthright. But, why an ordinary Indian citizen should be concerned about the propagation of his faith for the constitution to grant it to him? Besides, where does the right of an Indian citizen for propagation of his faith leave his fellow citizen's cultural need for preservation of his own order, *sanātana dharma* in case of the Hindus? After all, the right of propagation is but the right to spread one's religion, and one cannot do that without coming into direct conflict with another's religious faith or *dharma*, as the case may be, can any?

It's thus, as one citizen's right to propagate his faith vitiates the right of another to profess and practice his religion, India's Constitution by granting the right for propagation of one's religion per se, willy-nilly takes away another's implied right for the preservation of his own faith. Besides, to what avail is the right to propagate one's religion for the citizen rather than to fuel the zeal of the religious zealots for converting?

And what about the 'FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation' that the constitution provides for! What of the *individual dignity* of those Hindus whom the evangelists try to lure into the Christian fold, for them to embrace the Son of an alien God! Thus, is not the creed of the Church to propagate its faith that causes the poor of the land to lose their dignity is at odds with our constitutional spirit itself? Besides, as the *raison d'être* of religious propagation is conversion, wouldn't that individual right prove inimical to *the unity and integrity of the Nation*?

However, going by the hell raised by the missionaries, the *mullahs*, their political cohorts and the co-opted media, at any move by the State to disfavor fraudulent conversions, the popular belief is that the right for propagation is without any constitutional or moral strings attached to it! Only when the clamor for the future partitions of India on religious lines picks up, would a Western historian be able to spot the constitutional blind spots that gave rise to the development! Yes, it needs Western intellectuals even to see it all in the hindsight even, for India's left-leaning political analysts and Islamapologic liberals are notoriously blind to the realities of the Indian life and times.

Whatever, what's the rationale of religious propagation based on which the framers of the constitution granted that to its citizens? Though Hinduism and Judaism, the world's oldest surviving religions, are content with their constituencies, it is the Christianity and Islam, the new brands in the religious marketplace that hanker for conversions, of course, having come into being through propagation. Indeed, their religious spread worldwide is owing to their creed as enshrined in their Scriptures per se. If not all, most Christian missionaries and every *Musalman mullah* entertain the dream of seeing the world turn all Christian or all Islamic as the case may be; after all, that's what their scriptures ordain and their religious creed obliges them to do so, and in

the Indian context one has to contend with the *jihadi* penchant to transform Hindustan into *Ghazwa-e-Hind*.

It thus defies logic as to how our constitution makers, who went about the exercise in the immediate wake of the country's partition on religious lines, thought it fit to endorse the propagation of one's faith, read the Christian and the Islamic, in the Hindu midst! Well, it's the illusionism of Gandhi that became the idealism of the Congress which influenced the Constituent Assembly of the just-partitioned India. And that shows. How strange then, that the constitution exhibits a singular lack of application of mind of its framers to secure India's integrity as a constituent country for all times to come. Sadly thus, the wise-heads of that time, not to speak of the foresight, lacked the hindsight even. God forbid, they seemed to have unwittingly laid the seeds of a future partition of the Hindustan, whose wings Jinnah had already truncated. But, would this religious 'constitutional' error ever be erased from our statute before history gets repeated! Doubtful though.

If all this were Ambedkar's idea of a religious safety valve for the disenchanting *dalits*, the then *harijans*, yet it would be a betrayal of India's cause. However, the true *dalit* emancipation lies in bringing about the Hindu reformation from within and not in their opting out of the faith, and surely that wouldn't have been beyond Ambedkar's robust intellectual grasp. More significant is his own understanding of the Islamic credo that he articulated thus:

"Hinduism is said to divide people and in contrast, Islam is said to bind people together. This is only a half truth. For Islam divides as inexorably as it binds. Islam is a close corporation and the distinction that it makes between Muslims and non-Muslims is a very real, very positive and very alienating distinction. The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is the brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity. The second defect of Islam is that it is a system of social self-government and is incompatible with local self-government because the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. To the Muslim *ibi bene ibi patria* is unthinkable. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin. That is probably the reason why Maulana Mahomed Ali, a great Indian but a true Muslim, preferred to be buried in Jerusalem rather than in India."

Thus, he would not have been oblivious to the inimical consequences of affording a free religious leash to the *moulvis* to lead the *Musalman*s on a separatist course in the partitioned Hindu majority India, but yet that's what precisely he did! Surely, one can understand Babasaheb's hurt that made him vow not to die a Hindu, and, indeed, he did keep his word by embracing Buddhism before his death, but whether he wished the comeuppance of the Hindus at the hands of the *Musalman*s, one might never know.

Now, over to the "Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions" that the constitution stipulates.

- (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.
- (2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or

trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.

(3) No person attending any educational institution recognized by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.”

The sum and substance of the freedom of religious instruction is that the State, in true secular spirit, is expected to keep itself away from it (religious instruction) in the physical sense, and no more. However, the catch here is that the religious education is fine so long as the government does not fund it for that allows the State to retain its secular pretence by keeping itself overtly out of religion. Even otherwise, one would expect the constitutional makers to address the content of the religious education to serve the needs of the communities concerned, without compromising the general public order and good, but they failed ‘India that is Bharat’ in that respect as well.

Well, every community needs some amongst them to undergo religious education to meet its spiritual and social needs in accordance with the tenets of its faith and feelings. That should at once be the scope as well as the limitation of the religious education, isn’t it? So as to cater to these legitimate needs of a given religious group, the required religious education with or without the government funding forms a fundamental communal right of the members of that group. Right, but what if in the name of freedom of religious instruction, the dogmas of such faiths, given to deride the religious beliefs of fellow citizens, are sought to be inculcated in an unwieldy number of members of that community? Won’t such a move hamper the secular character of the country besides inculcating religious bigotry in the mind-set of any given community?

Obviously, the framers of the constitution, but for Ambedkar, arguably Islamic naive, couldn’t delve deep enough into the vexatious subject of religious intolerance of the practicing faiths in the country. What is worse, this supposed constitutional religious goodness came in handy for the ugly politician to turn it into an exploitative mask for the minorities’ votes in the election seasons. It is one thing to espouse the cause of the minorities and another to abet the bigotry of the *Musalman*s and the prejudices of the Christians. Sadly, for the minorities, moreso for the *Musalman*s our politicians tend to be on the right side of their wrong issues to the benefit of none, save themselves.

Yet, it has become fashionable in the Indian politico-social discourse to juxtapose secularism and communalism that is with a matching ignorance about the latter for communalism is “a principle of political organization based on federated communes.” No wonder that even seventy-one years after its independence, as India is still groping for its political direction in an ideological darkness, thanks to the Semitic promiscuity that Indian constitution grants, for the human rights activists, the *Musalman*s and the Christians holding on to their scriptural dogmas is kosher, but the right of the Hindus to articulate their religious sentiments or cultural concerns, and/ or both is sheer religious intolerance, and that’s perplexing.

In the light of the above may be seen the hollowness of the fundamental duties Indira’s infamous amendment imposes upon the citizens that are rarely, if ever, fulfilled by the rulers themselves.

1. While it is incumbent upon the citizenry “to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women” -

- the political ethos has been to cynically reap electoral dividends by exacerbating social dissensions based on region, religion, caste et al.

2. While it is the fundamental right of the citizen “to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform” –

a) The State had failed its Hindus to rein in the caste *panchāyats* that tend to lynch the inter-caste couples and

b) The politicians, who treat the *Musalman*s as a vote-bank had neither encouraged them to inculcate the spirit of inquiry nor provided them an environment conducive for reform.

Whatever, owing to the vacuity of verbiage in the over the 100k word-long Indian Constitution, a rabid Islamic obscurantist and a dyed-in-the-wool Hindu nationalist have been able to pin their juxtaposing positions, with equal aplomb, and that’s ironical. However, while the Hindu secular habit of left-lib brainwash would like to equivocate the *Jai Sriram* chants with the *Musalman* rant of *Allah hu Akbar*, one needs to understand the latter in the context of *azan*, the *muezzins*’ five-time a day call to the faithful for Islamic prayers, which reads thus:

*“Allah is the Greatest,
I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah,
I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,
Come to Prayer,
Come to success.
Allah is the Greatest
There is none worthy of worship except Allah.”*

It is thus, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs et al of India, and of the world, have to endure the *azan*, blaring from the loudspeakers of their neighborhood *mosques* five times day, which, besides offending their own belief-system is bound to hurt their religious sentiments. But no one is seemingly caring, not even the evolved Christian West.

That is not all, wonder how the inimical *quranic* tirades of the *Musalman*s against *kafirs* in *mosques*, *madrasas* and *mohallas* reconcile with their FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES as Indian citizens that are stipulated below is anybody’s guess -

PART IVA , 51A. It shall be the duty of every citizen of India

“ (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.”

Also, the Christian proselytizers as Indian citizenry fare no better in their constitutional compliance for besides branding Hindus as heathens, they label their deities as false.

Needless to say, the copy (from other constitutions) and paste (in the Indian Constitution) work of the so-called framers of our constitution, comprising of the Semitic-naïve caste Hindus and a well-informed, though embittered *dalit*, as argued above, needs a pragmatic overhaul, for which the level of Hindu awareness about the Abrahamic outrage against their *sanātana dharma* has to raise to self-respecting heights of Himalayan proportions, hopefully.

So, it is time for WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, over seventy years after our fathers, or be it grandfathers, had adopted the constitution, to factor the new realities into a more equitable document? After all, isn’t the level playing field the theme song of the modern world order? And the Hindu emotional grievance is that they are denied just that in the religious plane in the country that their forbears made their own before all others.

Chapter 26

The Stymied State

The Indian State with its dominant Muslim minority and its short-sighted constitution was destined to be politically stymied to the hurt of its Hindu majority. And the minority-centric politics of the country as it evolved over the years – *stretched to incredulous lengths by Prime Minister Minoan Singh in averring that its minorities have the first right on national resources* – has been increasingly compounding the Hindu emotional misery. Why blame Singh, as Muslim Appeasement, owing to the woolly Nehru has been the policy of the Indian State, to start with.

Thus, though it was but natural that Bunkum Chandra's *vande mātaram*, the theme song of the Indian freedom movement, should have logically become the Indian national anthem, yet it was not to be for the *Musalms* had an Islamic allergy to it as it eulogizes *Bharat Māta*. So, Rabindranath Tagore's *janagana mana* was brought to the fore and *vande mātaram* was relegated to the backbench as a national song, whatever it means. Just imagine how the U.S. politicians would have handled if, say its Hispanics and Latinos took exception to the 'America is Great' salutation to the newfound land on the specious ground that it hurts their sentiment for the older lands of their forebears.

This about sums up the religio-political dynamics of post-colonial India – its Muslim remnants are accorded the privilege to exercise their veto in formulating the State policy - that is after they had forced its partition to create a separate homeland for its *Musalms* in Pakistan! And it makes a sad commentary on the Nehru-led leadership of the 'independent' India that it neither had the gall nor the gumption to tell its *Musalms* that having forced the country's partition on religious grounds, they had no moral right to impose their Islamic whims upon what is essentially the Hindu portion of the divided land.

However, it's nobody's case though that those *Musalms* who chose to stay back in India had no right to do so but surely the Hindu India had a legitimate right to ask them to think and behave like Indians as at any rate it's not the case with its *sanātana dharma* to interfere with the value systems of the other faiths. But instead, and in spite of Ambedkar's words of caution that - *the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs* - Nehru so directed the State policy as to nurse the *Musalms*' '*social self-government that is incompatible with local self-government*'. So, it was not long before the lure for the minorities' votes tempted India's self-serving politicians to make the Hindu emotions subservient not only to the Islamic whims of the *Musalms* but also to the proselytizing fancies of the Christians.

That is not all; though it's in the nature of history to grant the captors to tilt it against the captives, but once freed, it permits the latter to turn the bend, ironically, in independent India's case, Nehru, who was thrust upon its head by Gandhi, coerced it to bend backwards, so to say by two turns, to resurrect its slavish ethos of its Islamic times in its textbooks. So, he chose as its education minister, out of all his cabinet colleagues, the one who had all along voiced his opposition to India's partition, not for any holistic reasons, but as that would diminish the dominance of those *Musalms*, who would be left behind in its Hindu-dominated part! That too he was a Saudi born Islamic theologian, with the tongue twisting name of Maulana Sayyid Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin Ahmed bin Khairuddin Al-Hussaini Azad, shortened to Abul Kalam Azad for the Indian ears! It's only to be expected that the *Maulana* would grab the Islamic opportunity in Hindu India to hit the 'partitioned' ground running, and that's what he did. So as to bolster the morale of the reduced-in-size Indian *umma*, and moreso to forestall that of the Hindus, just freed from thousand years of slavery, he devised an

appropriate 'educational' mechanism, and that was the proverbial last straw on the Indian history's back, which happenstance is seldom appreciated.

As post-colonial India's educational in-charge, for nearly ten years that is, he evolved its school curriculum, replete with the life and times of Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and Sha Jahan, not to forget his Taj Mahal, touted as the eighth wonder of the world, so as to enable the Hindu kids to feel good about their glorious Islamic past. Besides, to drive home their martial inadequacies as well, lest they should entertain any valorous ideas for their 'independent' future, he ensured they were made privy to the furies of Ghazni, Ghuri, Taimur, Aurangzeb et al that their progenitors had to face that is without raising their hackles.

Moreover, so as not to give raise to any doubts about the glorious Islamic order of Hindustan in the impressionable minds, he saw to it that the Indian history did not venture much into the south of the Vindhya to peep at the Vijayanagara Empire in the Mogul period itself. It's thus; he could drive the notion into the heads of the Hindu kids that India owes its glories to its Islamic rule, thereby perpetuating the Muslim dominance in the Hindu consciousness. Well, it is a testimony to his evil genius that he devised it all in such way, aided in no small measure by the similarly afflicted body of schoolteachers, that it never occurred to the Hindu kids in the secular schools, the author included, that something was odd in all that. Having been so conditioned, most Hindus spend the rest of their lives without ever brooding over their hurtful past.

Needless to say, the wily *Maulana* wouldn't have been able to pursue his nefarious agenda without the blessings of the woolly *Pandit* (Nehru), who abhorred Hindu nationalism. Thus in a peculiar congruence of Azad's communal bias and Nehru's personal prejudice, in the former's line of 'educating' the Hindu kids to India's detriment, the latter saw an effective means to nip the resurgence of Hindu nationalism in its bud. Nevertheless, the paeans sung in *madrasas* for the Mogul rule that perpetuate the false sense of superiority in Muslim minds to the hurt of India's unity, was fine for the *Maulana*, and Nehru, who couldn't have been unaware that all that furthers Islamic obscurantism, didn't care if it were to keep the Hindu nationalism under check. Well, all this suited his daughter Indira no less, and put together, as they ruled India for around 32 years, the wily *Maulana* was allowed to indoctrinate the Hindu kids from his grave as well, and that shows to this day. How?

It's to be expected that the alien yoke besides robbing the Hindus of their self-esteem would have suppressed their self-interest. So, as India became free, while its political atmosphere turned conducive for Hindus to acquire their self-interest with vigour, as the Nehru-Azad combine constrained their intellectual sphere, they failed to retrieve their self-esteem of yore in any measure. It was thus, fifty years after India gained its independence, they still allowed themselves to be bossed over by Sonia Maino, the Italian daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi, as the dynastic head of the politically dominant Congress party for over two decades. That's not all, when she so ill-treated the mortal remains of PV Narasimha Rao, the architect of India's economic reforms, as an Indian equivalent of Achilles' abuse of Hector's, unlike the Trojans who avenged the insult to their valiant prince, the Hindus, bereft of any self-esteem whatsoever endured it all without a demur. More than this nothing illustrates the success of Azad's insidious Islamist strategy to 'demean Hindus in their own minds', and that they, to this day, haven't recognized the Goebblisian role he played to their enervation is something that their progeny should ponder over, and moreso, rejuvenate themselves.

Moreover, the way Hindus went about using and abusing their hard-earned freedom makes no rosy reading either. In what was left as the 'secular' India, the princes of democracy have come to rule the land as per the age-old Hindu political credo - unto

each his own province. The Westminster model of governance that the Union of India adopted and its political devolution that the regional aspirations demanded, brought Bharat into the domain of a *Samrāt* in *Nayi Dilli*, the Indraprastha of yore, *Sultans* of its linguistic States and the *Sarpanchs* in its *panchāyats*, of course in tow with their hangers on, vying for its politico-economic pie. Besides, the democracy brought into the positions of power the *jāgirdārs* of the National Parliament and the *thānedārs* of the State Assemblies with their attendant minions for a like calling.

And lest the favoured-lot of the powers that be should miss out to savor the cream of the world's most populous democratic cake, there are the councils of ministers, chairmen politicians for assorted boards and numerous bodies; and not to leave out the lordships of its judicial wing, there are tribunals galore for the retired judges to head. Thus, even as the minor deities of the Indian politics are well propitiated, the edifices of Bharat's democratic temples are being ruined by its political parties, barring exceptions, are but family-owned hereditary setups. That being the case, isn't it stupid even to murmur that we are a democracy, leave alone proclaim that ours is the biggest, or is it the largest, democracy on earth?

Though, thanks to the British, Hindustan got rid of the Islamist misrule, it is as if the politicians of free India retained the governing ethos of the *Musalmans* as *sarkāri* legacy for posterity. After all, now as ever, it's the personal interest of the regional political masters that prevails over the national interest, and what is worse, in the Indian democratic domain, the high ideal of 'nursing the constituency', though marketed in ugly packages of parochialism, is considered even a virtue! And coming to the public morality, we have it from Alberuni and others that Hindustan, in times gone by, was, by and large, populated by honest people, but then how come it had long metamorphosed itself into a nation of cheats!

As there is recorded history as such to facilitate any research, we are left to speculate about cause(s) of the abominable fall of a race as a whole. The millennia alien rule – first that of the Islamic invaders and then of the British colonizers – needless to say, would have been a cause of resentment for the Hindu natives, which inexorably could have developed into an enduring grudge against them. It's a psychological possibility in that the impotent Hindu rage would have manifested itself into cheating the imposters of their royal monies through corrupt means so as to derive a vicarious pleasure for themselves, which over the centuries, insensibly became a norm that invariably tattered India's moral fabric.

Maybe, the presidential form of democracy on the American lines would have served India better but then that would have made so many sundry politicians irrelevant, a scary prospect for the political class, which turned politics into the best business that there is. Thus, for that very reason, the founders of the nation State could have chosen the survival route that every generation of politicians would find it expedient not to deviate from. So, one can expect the political satraps to keep the legislative circuses on, for everyone knows whose interest in the end prevails in the mobocracy of India. After all, in the land of Bharat, the privileged class had always been apart, and that came to be a part of its socio-political ethos, and since the Brahmans are, anyway out, let the politicians be in, so seems the rationale of the Indian democratic process.

Yet this faulty political model lifted the morale of the depleted stock of the Indian *Musalmans* in an unexpectedly way! Since their vote mattered in numerous constituencies, the politicians grasped the electoral merit in playing the Islamic fundamentalist footsie with the *mullahs* and the *moulvis*, *umma's* vote traders that is besides being the conscience keepers. However, to start with, the Congress political lenience towards the Islamic religious sentiment, conceived by the Nehruvian mischief, charitably approached, could have been well-intended to reach out to the masses of the

Indian *Musalmans*, orphaned by the exodus of their classes to Pakistan. It was as though Nehru wanted to be a Jinnah to the *Musalmans* of Bharat, oblivious to the fact that the Hindus too were sorely in need of a leader to address their hurt at the loss of a fourth of their ancient land to Pakistan.

Though for centuries, the gods, who paid a deaf ear to the Hindu prayers to get them rid of the Muslim rule, granted them their 'man for the moment' in Sardar Patel but they had to contend with Gandhi the autocrat, who by then was deified by them as the Mahatma of the time. Well, Gandhi had cleaned the public toilets alright but did he not force his reluctant wife to do the same against her will, and in embracing celibacy prematurely, had he not deprived Kasturba the warmth of his marital embrace. Won't that make food for thought?

Whatever, Patel, who filled the Hindu emotional space like a colossus, should have made it to the *Dilli gaddi*, but Gandhi's 'peculiar' weakness for Nehru, bordering on physical love, ensured that it didn't happen. That was, in spite of the overwhelming support the Sardar received from the congressmen and women of that era, from all over India. That's about Gandhi's democratic ethos, and fondness for the favoured, not discounting his prejudice towards Ambedkar, Subhas Chandra Bose, Prakasam et al, who tended to be independent of him. Wonder how in the Gandhi-thrall, the world glosses over the fact that while his steely resolve helped India to get rid of the British yoke, yet his naivety of Hindu-Muslim amity had imposed many an Islamic constraint on 'free' India.

While Nehru's foolhardy in taking the Kashmir issue all the way to the United Nations and his credulity in taking a plebiscite pledge therein, it was Patel, who had coerced the recalcitrant Nizam and other vacillating Rajas, into the Union of India. It is another 'foolhardy' matter though that Nehru relinquished the offer of the powers that be to India to take a permanent seat in the all-powerful Security Council of the same world body, insisting that it was China's due, as if to highlight his *Hindi Chini bhai bhai* myth! Whatever, in trying to be a world leader, while Nehru sacrificed his country's interests, China that sits in the Security Council by default is ever at blocking India's entry into it in its national interest; and that's some contribution by the one whom Gandhi thrust upon India as its 'wooly' head of state! While the Sardar was not destined to live long enough to see *Bharat Māta* bear the fruits of his sagacity, Nehru had survived long enough to witness the divisive affects of his plebiscite folly in the Kashmiri valley that gave Pakistan a potent stick to beat India with at every international fora that was till his daughter Indira forced Bhutto to revise the rules of the ongoing game at Shimla. Thus, while Nehru deservedly earned the disregard of the Indian nation, Patel became a living legend of its nationalist sentiment.

If Jinnah couldn't consolidate the gains for Islam in Pakistan, Nehru failed to formulate a socio-political code in India that took into account the Hindu sensitivities and the Muslim interests in the same nationalistic vein. And to add insult to the Hindu injury, the Nehruvian foreign policy was fashioned to address the fundamentalist ethos of the Muslim minority rather than to serve the national interests of the new India. Thus at best, Nehru was a sophist in shaping the foreign policy that understandably became the political Bible for the Congress party, and at worst, it can be said that he eyed for a secular slot in the pan-Islamic history, but to no avail. However, in spite of his innumerable flaws, his place in the Indian history should be secure as the founding father of its democracy, though he could have become the Caesar, and what is more, besides diligently nursing it in its infancy, he meticulously guided it into its adulthood; if Gandhi got freedom to India then Nehru mothered it into a democracy, which later his daughter Indira had set on a dynastic course.

When Nehru died broken-hearted, after the demise of his pet *panchshēl* in the ignominy of a defeat at the Chinese hands in the Himalayas, the Indian democracy had had its first triumph as the humble Lal Bahadur Shastri made it to the premier post. After his brief rein though, the Congress and India came into the dynastic clutches of Nehru's devious daughter, delivered to her on a platter by the petty Syndicate to deny Morarji Desai his political due. Predictably, Indira stretched her father's Muslim leanings to ludicrous lengths in claiming the membership for India in the Organization of Islamic Countries on the premise that it was the home for a large body of *umma* in the world! Naturally, the Rabbat snub, engineered by Pakistan, rubbed salt into the wounded Hindu pride, which the Congress party didn't mind to amend.

Whatever, Indira exhibited both courage and conviction at times, and became the apple of the Hindu eye and the solace of the Hindu hurt for the way she exploited the brewing Bangladesh crisis to dismember Pakistan. And that 'allegedly' made Vajpayee deify her as Durga that he denied, even as the media dubbed her as the Empress of India. But her maternal weakness for her roguish younger son Sanjay, in time, afflicted her personal character and affected her political judgment, pushing Mother India into the political abyss of her Emergency Rule. That was before Sanjay's death, and it was only a matter of time before the 'political *devi*' became the 'devil's advocate of graft' by infamously stating that corruption was a global phenomenon.

Nevertheless, her death was as poignant as her life itself, which had put the thoughts of the East and the West on the same philosophical page. While it was her destiny of a violent death that could have earlier made her nurture the Frankenstein Monster of a Sant Bhindranwale to politically browbeat the *Akali Dal*, proves the *karma sidhānta* – governs destiny one's nature -, her insistence on retaining her 'religiously agitated' Sikh bodyguards in the aftermath of the 'Operation Blue Star', to set an example of secular conviction and personal courage, would prove the Western philosophy true in that – one's nature dictates his fate.

However, the Nehru dynasty's real disservice to India lay in denying the due political space for the leadership of the backward classes in the Congress arena, and that hurt the Indian democracy, rather, grievously at that. The independence that saw the beginning of the end of the Brahmanical order, and with it the advent of the universal literacy, in time, raised the abilities as well as aspirations of the teeming millions of the backward classes and the other backward castes. If only their legitimate aspirations of political ascendancy were allowed to come to fruition under the Congress banner, the politics of the day would not have degenerated into caste combinations and communal permutations. While the dynastic order blocked the top slots for the emerging leaders of the backward castes, what is worse, it blotted the lower rungs of the party with the sycophantic upper caste men and women.

It was thus, the aspirants from these classes began to see beyond the Congress, and it was not long before two wily Yadavs - Mulayam Singh of U.P and Lalu Prasad of Bihar - floated their own political outfits by tailoring their own caste suits with Muslim Apparel for better affect, and that altered the old electoral order in the strategic cow belt in the Hindi heartland, seemingly forever. After all, it doesn't require the brains of an Einstein to realize that an electoral alliance between the *Musalman*s and the Yadavs (M-Y in political parlance) in these two States would ensure political dividends in many a constituency. What with these two Yadavs successfully calling the minority bluff of the Congress at the hustings, the secret was out; that it is the 15% or so Muslim vote of the Indian democracy, which is vital to the Hindu politicians to enter into the portals of power. That the Mayawatis and the Nitish Kumars too have come to master the winning formula and what is worse; down the Vindhyas too as the politicians are not taking

chances any more with even the inconsiderable Muslim vote that is there, tells the ugly story of the Indian democracy.

That the cynical Hindu politicians have made the time-tested tactic – give the poor *Musalman*s more of Islam that keeps them calm – of the Muhammadan despots their own, they have come to hurt the *umma*'s economic well-being, that is besides debilitating India's democratic vitality, hampering its social integration, and degrading its intellectual integrity. What might even be worse for the country is that as calamities follow the follies of man, more and more of India's political future could be mortgaged in the Muslim Vote-Banks. So, when the minority vote swells up to a healthy 25% or more, as it may be sooner than later, that is if the *umma* is not compelled to procreate less, this 'power at all costs' electoral pursuit of the short-sighted politicians, Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal being the worst example to date, is bound to boomerang on them not to speak of the Indian nation. Why vote for a Hindu when we have the numbers to elect our own, so could be the logic of the Indian *Musalman*s at some point of time in the years to come. Who cares about that, anyway, as the Hindu wisdom was never known to factor the Islamic expansionist credo into the Indian *realpolitik*.

So, the majority community's cynical 'minority politics' is bound to facilitate the growth of Muslim separatism, which in turn would bring about the inevitable disorder of the Indian political order. And nearer to our times, we might as well see the spectacle of the de facto merger of the six districts of Assam namely Angoon, Dhobi, Catcher, Barletta, Sniper, and Karuk with Bangladesh, which to build the Muslim vote-bank, the Congress allowed them to be infested with the illegal Muslim intruders. And ditto with West Bengal's districts bordering Bangladesh, but with a difference in that it was the Communists, who paid a blind eye to the illegal Muslim influx into it that added to their vote bank. No wonder that Mamata Banerjee, who upturned them in time, in turn holds on to the 27% Muslim votes as one would his lifeline, without pretence at that. That being the case, one would expect that the future travails of Bharat should be scaring the Hindus, but then they are a different kind of an 'indifferent' people.

But then how does India fare on the intellectual front in this regard? Why the left-liberal spearheads of the Hindu 'intellectualism' of the day, are no less constrained by their ignorance of Islam and Christianity as 'spreading' cults. These gullible guys bite the 'Islam is a religion of peace' 'n 'terrorism has no religion' bullet and end up being Islamapologists to join the Islamist chorus that it's all the fault of 'the others', the Hindu fundamentalists included. No wonder all these tend to ignore the religious urge of the *Musalman*s to procreate in plentiful and the evangelical zeal of the Christians to proselytize more and more to the Hindu hurt. That being the case in this information age, why blame the Brahmans of yore for messing up things on the socio-political front to turn it into a fertile ground for the Islamic spread in Hindustan? They too were human after all.

Chapter 27

The Wages of God

The WE-THEY obsession of the Islamic ethos debilitates the *Musalman*s with troubled minds. While the *ayats* of Quran spell out who THEY are - the Jews, the Christians and the idolaters (read Hindus, in later centuries) – the Islamic theology defines who THEY are, the Sunnis, the Shias and the Sufis *et al.* And the political divide too is clear as to who THEY are - the Iranians and the Iraqis, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis, Saudis and Yemenis all *Musalman*s though.

Well, for those perceived as WE, Islam is all green but it turns blood-red when it comes to those who are seen as THEY. This is the moral code of Islam, which in Arabic means peace, and also surrender. While Muhammad taught his medieval flocks to

surrender to Allah to serve his cause, insensibly the *umma* got stuck in the obsolete Islamic era of servitude, not only to 'the God' but also to His messenger. Well Allah's covenant for the 'hereafter' might be eternal for the *Musalmans* but sadly for them, or so it seems, the way of life 'here' is forever altering for them to comprehend it. What with Muhammad having convinced them, once and for all, that the succor of 'the hereafter' is the solace of the *Musalmans*, they tend to disregard life 'here', which makes them oblivious to the realities of the ever-changing world.

This as was seen is owing to the Decommissioned Adult, the Parent-contaminated Adult and the Child-contaminated Adult, prevalent, by and large, amongst the *Musalmans*, in some degree or the other. While the Muhammadan Decommissioned Adult is incapable of analyzing the current realities, his Parent-contaminated Adult harps on the past glories of the *Musalmans*, and the Child-contaminated Adult lives in delusions of a rosy future for Islam. Moreso, when it comes to the Jews, their estranged religious cousins, it is as if the *Musalmans* have got stuck in the time zone when their life and limb, not to speak of their faith, depended on the whims and fancies of Muhammad.

However, before Muhammad came up with the Quran, the progeny of Isaac, having been driven out from their Promised Land, lived in peace and prosperity amidst the posterity of Ishmael by the oases of Arabia. But as the Straight Path of Islam came to be laid by Muhammad, the Jews got a bumpy ride on it even though the Quran endorsed their Moses as a Prophet of yore. The enduring hatred of the Jews that Muhammad had inculcated in the followers of his cult would forever stymie the psyche of the Arabs towards their cousins in Israel, and understandably the *umma* at large, so it seems.

It was thus, the boasts of Gamal Abdel Nasser that he would push the Israelis into the Red Sea sounded like music to the ears the *Musalmans* the world over for Allah's faithful then, and Nasser seemed like the Pharaoh of Islam, about to enslave the hateful Jews all again. But the unmitigated Arab disaster that was the Six-Day War left the shell-shocked *umma* clueless about the Islamic calamity, and though the Yom Kippur war that followed, which had initially raised the tempo of the *Musalmans*, yet left them sullen in the end, well, owing to the brilliance of the Jewish military prowess.

But the Muhammadan Decommissioned Adult of the *hadith* vintage wouldn't realize that the world had changed beyond recognition since the time of Muhammad and his Caliphs, who conquered much of their neighboring lands and forced their peoples into the Islamic fold. If only the *Musalmans* could deviate a little from their believing course of the 'Angles of War' that Muhammad had charted for them, they would realize that those were the days of mortal combat, when the Islamic creed of *huris* for the *shahid* and a fair share of the 'spoils of war' for the survivors that gave the cutting edge to the Muslim swords.

Well in those battles of yore, the *jihadis* vied with each other to die for the joys of the 'Hereafter' that Muhammad had promised them, which earned laurels for the Muslim coat of arms, but sadly for the coats of Muslim mail, the modern warfare is as much about machines as men behind them that THEY have come to master on both counts. So, in battle after battle, and war after war, in the modern era, whenever the *Musalmans* itched for a fight, the patriotic sense of THEY, alien to the Muslim ethos, had been proving to be much more potent than the religious zeal of the faithful to die for Islam.

Besides, in the modern warfare, of what avail is the famed Arabian horse, the swiftest breed on earth that served the *Musalman* marauders so admirably in their plunders of yore in the Islamic folklore? In contrast, the heaps of shoes that Nasser's soldiers rid themselves of so as to run faster to safety in the Sinai desert give an

unerring account of the martial decay of the once dreaded Muhammadan Armageddon. What with the battles of the day being fought on the borderlands that dampen their spirits for the 'spoils of war', the material incentive 'here' for them, it is as if the *fauzis* of Islam have lost interest in making it to the 'Hereafter' that Muhammad said was laid for the martyrs amongst them.

Thus as the Decommissioned Adult of the Muhammadan wouldn't be able to grasp even the apparent military might of the non-Islamic world of the day, so the *Musalmans* are ever prone to wait in perpetuity for a Saladin to appear on the Islamic horizon that has only been turning gloomier by the day. However, the *umma* mistook the bravado of Saddam Hussein, in leading up to the fiasco of the 'Mother of All Battles', for the bravery of Saladin at the Horns of Hattin; '*dekhiye, O Saddam hai, Saddam* – 'Look he's Saddam but Saddam' - many a *Musلمان* in India proudly proclaimed thus with a boding sense of an impending doom to the U.S. the Great Satan to the *umma*. Thus, as the anticlimax of a swift Saddam surrender became a shocking reality to the *Musalmans* the world over, the *umma* was crestfallen once again, and began to sulk all the more. It seems as though the psyche of the *Musalmans* is that of the front-benchers at the cinemas, who visualize the unreal on the reel as the real in life to relieve themselves of the drudgery of the reality, though momentarily.

Nonetheless, Anwar Sadat, Nasser's successor, who made peace with Israel to get back their Sinai, would have been Mustafa Kemal Atatürk of Egypt, if only its *Musalmans* were less hostile towards their own visionary. But as the unbound hatred towards 'the others' rules the demented minds of the *Musalmans*, they made him pay with his life for their blind prejudice towards the Jews. It's as though the *jihadi* Arabs wouldn't mind Israel keeping their land so long as they have a cause to hate the Jews and hope to annihilate them in the end, let it be just before the end of the world! In what could be the greatest irony of their faith, the Arabs eye the promised land that their own God gave the Jews, not prepared even to share it with them. It's as if Allah, aided by the followers of his Messenger seeks to evict Jews, His chosen people from the promised land into which He, in His Jehovah avatar enabled his Prophet to lead them into, but to no avail. Strange are the changing moods of the Semitic God!

Well, having failed to have their way with the Jews with their warmongering, the Palestinians could have pored over the *hadith* for an alternate strategy to hurt the enemy. And find they did that lies in the following episode from Muhammad's life sketched by Martin Lings.

"About the same time news came of the danger of another projected raid from further south; but in this instance the Prophet divined that the hostility against Islam was all concentrated in one remarkably evil man, the chief of the Lihyanite branch of Hudhayl. If they could be rid of him, the danger from that quarter would become negligible; so he sent 'Abd Allah ibn Unays, a man of Khazraj, with instructions to kill him. "O Messenger of God," said 'Abd Allah, "describe him to me that I may know him." "When thou seest him," said the Prophet, "he will remind thee of Satan. The certain sign for thee that he is indeed the man will be that when thou seest him thou wilt shudder at him." It was as he had said; and, having killed the man, 'Abd Allah escaped with his life."

So to the chagrin of the Israelis, Yasser Arafat resurrected the ghost of 'Abd Allah ibn Unays in the form of Al Fatah to infuse his *jihadi* in the disgruntled minds of the Palestinians. Well, the Israelis did find ways and means to counter the Islamic terror tactics in due course, for after all, hasn't history proved that while the *Musalmans* turn desperate in defeat, the Jews steel themselves in adversity? Thus pushed to the wall, Arafat, by fusing the Quranic diktats and the Muslim hurt with *hadith* as the catalyst, developed the deadly *fidayeen* in the Islamic laboratory of the Palestine. Confronted

with the martyr missiles being thrown at them by the Islamic desperados, the Jews responded by decimating their dwellings and deporting their families.

Maybe, the Israeli hope was that the potential martyr might give up, realizing that his loved ones in this world would have it tough even as he's having a heck of a time in 'the hereafter'. But right 'here', the Israelis had to face the barrage of protests from human rights activists, morons all, who fail to grasp the rights of legitimate offensive and the wrongs of a misguided aggression. What is worse, in support of the extremist causes, they second fiddle from a safe distance, either owing to their naivety or vested interests, and /or both, and thus end up being insensitive to the sufferings of the victims of the so-called armed struggles they espouse.

Whatever the Israeli calculation, the *hadithian* response on the ground was a mixed one. While it might have brought sanity into many a Palestinian home, there were enough shelters in the refugee camps for the Hamas to rope in the *fidayēn* in numbers. After all, isn't martyrdom too tempting a proposition for the *shahid* what with the promised company of all those black-eyed virgins? Lest there should be any doubt in the minds of the prospective martyrs about the capacity of man to enjoy so many women, lo, the Quran had clarified that their own virility increaseth a hundred fold to be able to have them all! Oh, Muhammad! The uniqueness of the Muhammadan cult is that belief enables the believer to endure the hassles of the Islamic dogma 'here' for the rewards of the 'Hereafter' guaranteed for the martyrs.

Given the Israeli ascent, maybe vexed with Palestinian excesses, 'the God' had tilted the Divine Scales towards the Jews, His originally Chosen People, all again, at the cost of the *Musalmans* as He warned them thus in the Quran:

"O Ye who believe! Whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him, humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which he giveth unto whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Chapter 28

Delusions of Grandeur

Peace being the 'supposed' message of Islam, the religion that the Palestinians and the Pakistanis together profess, strife seems alike to be their political fate. While it is apparent that the Arab hostility towards Israel is steeped in the legality of tenancy, it can be seen that the Kashmir quagmire is rooted in Pakistan's delusions of Islamic-grandeur. Whatever, it is the paradox of the Muhammadan creed in that that it provides a common ground for the Palestinian need, and the Pakistani greed, for 'land' that leads them on their self-destructive course.

Even before the ink was dry on the British deed of Hindustan's partition, Pakistan surreptitiously pressed its tribal Muslim hordes into the Kashmiri flux to annex the Paradise on Earth to its Land of the Pure. What with Raja Hari Singh, the 'vacillating' Hindu King, having had no army to name, the *mujahideen*, armed to the teeth by Pakistan, could overrun a large chunk of his land, but owing to their *jihadi* habit to plunder, and the acquired vice of rape, these marauders had senselessly antagonized even the Kashmiri *Musalmans*, who came under their sway. Nevertheless, before the *mujahideen* could turn the fabled valley into a Pakistani trophy, Hari Singh's Hindu sentiment and Sheikh Abdullah's patriotic fervor saved the day for Kashmir as the former, acquiesced by the latter, inalienably aligned the State with the Union of India. Though the Indian forces entered the scene and stalled Pakistan's progress through its proxy rogues into the heart of the valley, yet, stymied by the cease-fire call of the comity

of nations, the wooly Nehru's own making, the Indian State couldn't reclaim all of Kashmir to itself. If anything, the geo-political game of the Western nations in those cold war days enabled Pakistan, which teamed up with them against the Soviet Union, to usurp the thirteen-thousand-odd km square area, which it ironically calls 'Azad Kashmir'.

Thus lying divided in the laps of the adversaries, Kashmir became an arena of strife with many sub-continental twists and turns. Whatever may be the Pakistani brief over all of Kashmir; it cannot harp on the legality of its accession to India for after all, Raja Hari Singh derived the power to accede his kingdom, the way he willed it, from the same document that created Pakistan! So be it, but to which group the Pakistani blood that its 'jugular vein' carries belongs to? Is it Rh+ for Kashmiri Muslims or the Rh- for Kashmir Valley?

Well for the right answer, the question is better addressed to *mohajirs*, the Muslim migrants from the Gangetic plains into the Pakistani Sind. Why didn't Pakistan fail them by not letting them feel at home in the homeland of the *Musalman*s of Hindustan that it was supposed to be? So also, the Bihari *Musalman*s, though they were cohorts with the Punjabi Muslims in the massacre of the Bengali believers in the then East Pakistan, yet fail to get the entry visas into what was left as Pakistan.

Won't it then serve the secession-mongers of the Kashmir valley to ponder over why the Pakistanis, unwilling to suffer the presence of those faithful in their midst, are so fond of the Kashmiri *Musalman*s living beyond their borders? Unless they had turned morons by the Islamic death wish to sink with the failed state of Pakistan, it should be apparent to them that unlike the Bihari believers, they have a fabled valley to add to the map of Pakistan. And that is about the Pakistani land greed camouflaged with the religious solidarity to seduce the Kashmiri Muslims into its inimical fold.

Be that as it may, way back in the 16th Century, had not the Portuguese wrested Goa from Islam and ousted its believers, Pakistan would have an irrefutable claim on it in the partitioned Hindustan, but that again is history! Whatever, the urge of the *Musalman*s has always been to expand the Islamic territory on the global terrain, and thus Pakistan's Decommissioned-Adult-Muhammadans fail to take India's Kashmiri perspective into account, much less analyze it to see if any course correction is needed in their India outlook.

The two-nation theory by which the ancient land of *Arya Varta* was partitioned was an illusion of the Indian *Musalman*s that was not subscribed by the Hindus of India, and had they wanted a country for them only, wouldn't they have ceded some more land to Pakistanis, if that were needed, as a quid pro quo for ridding the Islamist presence from their Indian midst. But, rightly or wrongly, that was not the way Hindustan was partitioned, and if so, what's the rationale for those millions of *Musalman*s to stay back in Hindustan even after Pakistan came into being?

So, any Pakistani argument for wanting Kashmir, citing its Muslim majority would be untenable to any reasonable mind, and likewise, the urge of those Kashmiri *Musalman*s to merge the valley with the Islamic Pakistan wouldn't sync with the spirit of partition. If not, won't it make a case for the Indian *Musalman*s to seek the merger of those areas with Pakistan, wherever they happen to form the majority, and let their brethren, wherever they are in minority, to continue living in India that is until they cross the half-way mark! Thus, when push comes to shove, the moral right of the Indian *Musalman*s to live in India would become questionable, and if Pakistanis, in the spirit of their pan-Islamic credo, wish the Indian *umma* well, then they should become wiser to their 'hate India' campaign, which only exacerbates the Hindu-Muslim apathy in India.

The same applies to the Bangladeshi believers, likewise afflicted with the Decommissioned Adult syndrome of their erstwhile Pakistani masters. Why at the dawn

of the 'original partition', even before the Bengali Muslim celebrations for having seen the back of the hated Hindu were over, the ugly reality of the Punjabi *Musalman*s stared them in their Islamic face! It's as if the Muhammadan creed of equality before Allah was of no avail to the Bengali Muslims in the Pakistani version of the Islamic democracy, and so, in the hour of the Bengali glory, Bhutto's political greed and the Punjabi *fauzis'* prejudice to their dark skin, upstaged their right to have their man, Mujibur Rahaman, to head the Islamic Pakistan. Well their agitation for their democratic right to see Rahaman as the Prime Minister of Pakistan made the Bengali *Musalman*s appear like idolaters to the Islamic Generals of Pakistan, and they treated them likewise – massacring the men and raping their women. This about speaks for the hypocrisy of the Muslim Brotherhood, not to speak the way the *Musalman* expatriates from Pakistani and India are treated in the land of their Messenger.

Where did the hapless Bengali Muslims flee to escape from the repression of their fellow *Musalman*s than to Hindustan! It is another matter though that all this was 'the godsend' to India to grind its own Pakistani axe by helping the freedom struggle of rebellious Bengali faithful. It's thus, in what was a unique instance in the Islamic saga, so as to oust their Punjabi brethren; the Bengali *Musalman*s welcomed the Hindu *kafirs* into their *dar al-Islam*! Well, India did oblige them, and Bangladesh came into being, and this one gesture could have been sufficient for the Bangladeshi *Musalman*s to shed their old Hindu hatred and hold the hand of eternal friendship to the Indians. Why not? In the ever changing world, that is what the 'nations at odds once' are doing now, and that's what the Bangladeshis would have done in the normal course. But then, for them there is the Islam to contend with.

Before long, the initial euphoria of the Hindu-Muslim *bhai-bhai*, occasioned by their Bengali sense of gratitude, gave way to India-animosity brought to the fore by their Islamic upbringing on the staple diet of *kafir* hatred, which goaded them to murder their own savior, Mujibur, perceived to be India friendly, and to wipe out his kith and kin in cold blood to boot. That's not all for they began persecuting the Hindu minority in every possible way to force their exit from their Islamic midst. That Sheik Hasina his daughter providentially survived that heinous massacre and in later years brought some sanity into the bigoted Bengali Muslim polity is the saving grace of Bangladesh's bloody history.

Why, it can be reasonably assumed that but for their inculcated Islamic bigotry, Bengali *Musalman*s, as a people per se, would have appropriately responded to the Indian goodwill gesture, as any other people of the world would have. It's thus, in what could be termed as the great human tragedy, Muhammad succeeded in cementing the bigoted Islamic cult in the Arabian soil, which his zealot followers religiously planted in other lands to their hurt of their people, but for which the Bangladeshis would not have been what they have come to be. So, it's one of the ironies of Islam in that it gives with one hand and takes away with the other, and thus it is the destiny of the *Musalman*s to suffer on that score, even as they make 'the others' to suffer as well.

As for the truncated Pakistan, obsessed as it was with its idea of a strategic depth against India, when the time came, it thought it was jolly well holy to foster terrorists on its Islamic soil to play the American cold war game in the Soviet occupied Afghanistan. What with the eventual Russian withdrawal under the Islamic duress, and the Taliban coronation that followed, Pakistan had reassigned the *mujahideen* to serve its Kashmiri cause. And by then, Osama bin Laden too had set up the international terror network of Al Qaeda for Muhammad Atta and others to exhibit the Islamic derangement on 9/11/2001 for the world audience.

When came the American pressure on Pakistan in its wake, its Generals have chosen to hunt with the hounds and run with the hares in their terrorist badlands but wouldn't

Washington know that the *jihadis* of Pakistan meant for Srinagar might go astray and attack New York all again? After Iraq, wouldn't it be Pakistan's turn to face the American music after its Al-Qaeda ghost is exorcized? Even otherwise, till recently, one would have thought that the fate of the Islamic militancy would be decided in the Promised Land but meanwhile, it is as if the Sunnis are at the Shia-throats in Iraq and Pakistan to snatch the terrorist standard of Islam from the Hamas.

Meanwhile, the un-Islamic world is unable to counter these loose cannon of a *fidayēn* but would it forever like to remain a hostage to the Islamic terrorism? How long would 'the others' bear with the unpleasant task of clearing the human debris that the Islamic terrorists would be leaving behind in their midst? Won't the world lose its patience with the *Musalmans* at some point of time?

Why, going by its ruthless campaign against all things Islamic, the formidable China has already lost, so to say, its bearing even. Would the *umma* be able to take on the rest of the world, if and when it chooses to crack the whip, without their Angels of War, which, anyway, never returned to aid the *Musalmans* after their brief appearance in the Battle of Bardr to rescue Muhammad? Why, in this 'neutron bomb era', Islam seems to be really in danger for once, and the *fidayēn* of the Baghdadi's ISIS-School might be bringing the Mohammedan D-Day closer to our times.

Chapter 29

Ways of the Bigots

The obscurantist self-destruct of the Muhammadans is a weird phenomenon as Islam has the compelling character of infusing in its believers a frenzied madness of religious insanity. Hadn't the Wahabis once dug up Muhammad's grave to make Islam purer! But, now, what of the growing trend of the Islamic car-bombings even in the holy land, not to speak of the conquered ones, aimed at fellow *Musalmans*, not to speak of *kafirs*? It's as if the Quranic terrorism, willy-nilly nursed by the *umma*, like the Frankenstein Monster, has begun to devour the Islamic Hypocrites of *dar al-Islam*.

Well, as one cannot farm in the desert sands, obscurantism wouldn't have become the second nature of the *Musalmans* without the *masjid-madrassa* cultivation of it, and so it helps the *umma* to realize that the Satan, who misguides the believers, comes in the guise of Muhammadan child psychology. Well, won't the *umma* willy-nilly ensure that the inimical tenets of Islam are injected into their toddlers in adult dosage to habituate them to adhere to the supposedly straight path that the Quran laid for them, which Muhammad had cemented for the *umma* to tread on into the eternity?

However, as the Upanishads aver, the Satan but resides in one's mind and the way to control him is through self-awareness, but, unfortunately, the *Musalmans* sow wild psychic seeds in the minds of their kids, which in time grow into fundamentalist trees of obscurantist species as has been observed in this exercise. Thus, the noble but naïve desire of the *umma* to inculcate the Islamic faith in its kids with the Quranic drill in the precincts of the *masjid-madrassa-mohalla* combine comes to grief, as if by Satanic Design! Why, as Islam that prohibits drink to the believers 'here', inebriates them with a heady mix of religious indoctrination, how the Muhammadan Decommissioned Adult would know that while the alcoholic inebriation brings the drunken back to senses, sooner than later, the Islamic elixir would keep the believers inebriated forever!

But dawns not reason on the bigoted minds; *Inshah Allah*, if the child were to pick up the Islamic threads and religiously grows up into a believing *Musalman*, still he would have developed a prejudiced psyche that stymies his awareness in our age of openness. But God forbid, if the child turns out to be a Hypocrite, as his tedious religious drill would have implanted the Quranic guilt feeling in his troubled consciousness, where the

pious Muslim parents would have left, the disgruntled Islamic fanatics would take over. While the prejudiced psyche of the *Musalmans* could be cultivated into *Islamic zeal* against the *kafirs* by the misguided *mullahs*, the guilt feeling of the Hypocrites could be re-engineered as martyr missiles in the *Jihadi* workshops of Al Qaeda and Hamas, not to speak of the terrorist camps at the Af-Pak border, and, of late, in the rogue lands of ISIS.

It is a psychological possibility to work on the subconscious guilt of those youth, who have strayed from the Straight Path, to induce a conscious desire for martyrdom to atone for their past sins as the ideologues of Al-Qaeda had first demonstrated; didn't Osama's plane loads that struck the 'Satanic Towers' on 9/11, as the world watched in awe, came from this deceptive source? If anything the way the Islamic converts from the white-lands that have flocked to the Deadly Caliphate of ISIS to kill and get killed has demonstrated the irrationality of it all.

It's thus, Islam proves the point; a religion that brainwashes its faithful into believing that life for them begins only in 'the hereafter' is bound to be at odds with the possibilities of life 'here'. Well, this is the theological method of the *mullahs* in converting the Western jailbirds into Islam, which can be galvanized into the *jihadi* zeal pictured in *The New York Times*, which M.J. Akbar cited in his book *The Shade of Swords*.

[Little in the manner of Ijaz Khan Hussein betrays the miseries he saw as a volunteer in the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Khan, a college-trained pharmacist, joined the jihad, or holy war, like thousands of other Pakistanis who crossed into Afghanistan. He worked as a medical orderly near Kabul, shuttling to the front lines and picking up bodies and parts of bodies. Of 43 men who boarded a truck to travel with him to Afghanistan in October, he said, 41 were killed. Now with the Taliban and Al Qaida routed, have Mr. Khan and other militants finished with jihad?

Mr. Khan, at least, said he had not.

'We went to the jihad filled with joy, and I would go again tomorrow,' he said. 'If Allah had chosen me to die, I would have been in Paradise, eating honey and watermelons and grapes, and resting with beautiful virgins, just as it is promised in the Quran. Instead, my fate was to remain amid the unhappiness here on earth.']

Khan Hussein's fanatic account should have gladdened Muhammad's heart no end, peace be upon him, but it would have grieved the parents of those 41, unless they too were psychic characters, believing that black-eyed virgins, besides rivers of flowing wine, lay in wait for their offspring in the 'Hereafter'. It would be an idea to know how the parents of all those children whom Ayatollah Khomeini, in his fight against Saddam Hussein, consigned to martyrdom by promising Paradise; and as a cynical example of the clerics' exploitation of the Islamic belief system, he equipped the hapless kids with plastic keys, made by infidels of Japan, to open its gates! Can irony get any better, cynically speaking that is?

Maybe, at the influx of Khomeini's boy-martyrs into the Islamic 'Hereafter', it was the pity even Muhammad might have felt for the Iranian youth at that time, which could have prompted him, as depicted in a Danish Cartoon, to pronounce "Stop stop we ran out of virgins."

But instead of divining the irony of the Islamic martyrdom that the cartoon highlighted, the *umma* the world over reacted in a way that validates the Persian adage:

*Ba Khuda diwāna basho, / Were it about 'the God', rant as thou want,
Ba Muhammad hoshia. / Weigh thy words if it comes to Muhammad.*

And it is this insane obeisance of the cult to Muhammad that enables its *ulema* to turn Islam into an offensive weapon to defend its Messenger's manner and protect his honor against any perceived slight, maybe inadvertent though unintended. But then, the Ayatollah only followed the example set by his God's Messenger, though as an exception, as the following episode on the eve of the battle of Bard illustrates, into a rule.

"At the first half, which was still in the oasis, the Prophet's cousin Sad of Zahra noticed his fifteen-year-old brother 'Unary looking troubled and furtive and he asked him what was the matter. "I am afraid," said 'Unary, that the Messenger of God will see me and say I am too young and send me back. And I long to go forth. It might be that God would grant me martyrdom." As he feared, the Prophet noticed him when he lined up the troops and said he was too young and told him to go home. But 'Unary wept and the Prophet let him stay and take part in the expedition. "He was so young." said Sad, "that I had to fasten the straps of his sword-belt for him."

While those *Musalmans* nourished on the diet of Meccan *ayats* could be averse to the suicide missions for they were brought up to believe that it was a sin in Islam, nonetheless their prejudice could come in handy to rouse them to *jihad* in the cause of Islam with Paradise as the destination. After all, whatever 'the others' might say about his conduct, Ayatollah Khomeini had his *hadith* right, didn't he? Whatever, it would be interesting to see as to why Allah Ta-'ala seems to have deserted His faithful, in spite of their undiluted faith in Him.

"And this is a blessed Scripture, which we have revealed, confirming that which (was revealed) before it, that thou mayst warn the Mother of Villages and those around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe herein, and they are careful of their worship."

"And if thy Lord had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing."

Thus, while Quran willed that Allah's Message should be spread in Mecca and its environs, the disciples of Muhammad, against his Will had plundered the lands and ravaged the world in the name of Islam, besides imposing their manners on the converted peoples. But then, why blame them as Allah himself modified his covenant, many a time, and thus, there is no way for the *umma* to know in which order he changed his mood as his *ayats* weren't arranged in chronological order in the Quran. Whatever, in the current glut the *Musalmans* are in everywhere, they are prone to reminisce about the past glories of the Islamic architecture and science.

Then, if by 'Islamic', they mean Arabic, we may note that the *umma* of Arabia, by and large, including Muhammad, were illiterate and mostly lived in tents for the best part. And the mosque-cum-private quarters that Muhammad built for him and his wives in Medina was not an architectural wonder by any stretch of imagination. Indeed, the so-called Islamic achievements were the contributions of the conquered peoples of those nations with advanced cultures such as Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt that Islam had appropriated for itself. It is another matter that with their socio-religious intolerance, the Muhammadans, in time, had reduced all of them into mediocrity by destroying the indigenous cultures, including, as observed by V. S. Naipaul, the Southeast Asian nations.

Well amidst all this Islamic chaos, the Indian *Musalmans* have reason to thank their forefathers for their foresight or lethargy, and / or both, in not moving over to Pakistan. But, how to convince the *umma* that the only way to save Islam for the coming generations is for the current believers to be less believing! It would help the *umma* to

ponder over Sigmund Freud's observation that '*when a man is freed of religion, he has a better chance to live normal and wholesome life*'.

As the Islamic straight path, arguably the crookedest one ever on earth, which Muhammad made his gullible believers into believing was drawn for them by Allah Ta'ala the All Knowing, is in reality leading the *umma* to the precipice, it may be an idea for the *Musalmans* to take the Freudian Road of Wholesome Life. Surely, the religious environment in the Islamic countries 'won't let man live for himself but for his God', but who is stopping the faithful in the secular nations from embarking upon such a course. It goes without saying that owing to the long-term implications for the *umma*, the right-thinking *Musalmans*, though few and far between, might apply themselves to the task of eliminating the *jihadi* mind-set amongst their young men and women, which requires the cleaning up of the *masjid-madrassa* mess before it is too late for their faith.

But the falsity of the 'intellectual' *Musalmans* lies in berating the poor *moulvis* 'n *mullahs*, so as to make them the fall guys of Islam without uttering a word against their Messenger or point out an incongruity or two in the Quran itself, the real sources of *umma*'s plight, though there are enough and more of them live in free-thinking societies of secular nations. It's thus, even if a handful of Indian *Musalmans* can show the Quranic aberrations to their fellow folks that could be the new Islamic dawn; but can they be able to do that! And it pays them to realize that it was the reforms from within the Christian, Jewish, and Hindu folds that progressively enabled the followers therein to give up the untenable precepts and practices of their scriptures, or their cultures as the case may be, so as to synch their lives with life 'here' to try to achieve its possibilities.

Chapter 30

The Rift Within

Based on the finding of its opinion poll, *The India Today* (August 26, 2002) had averred that – "In the past six months communalism and Pakistan-sponsored terrorism have grabbed the national headlines. On these issues there is a definite Hindu-Muslim rift. Take the on-again-off-again Ayodhya dispute. On this issue, there seems to be a hardening of stand in favour of building a Ram temple immediately - 43 per cent were in favour six months ago, today it is 47 per cent. Even among Congress voters, 43 per cent want the temple now. Predictably, this is not a solution favoured by Muslims. Equally, support for the temple isn't as enthusiastic in the South and East as in the North and West.

Likewise, while 70 per cent of Hindus regard Pakistan as an enemy - a rare expression of national unity - only 37 per cent of Muslims do so. Indeed, 49 per cent of Muslims have a rather charitable view of Pakistan as an estranged brother, a friend and a future ally. What complicates matters is that among Muslims who are aware, Mohammed Ali Jinnah is regarded as a hero, along with Mahmud of Ghazni and Aurangzeb. The weight of Hindu opinion treats these historical figures as villains.

These are worrying signs and pointers to the emotional gulf between the majority community and the most significant minority. Nor is this rift a persisting relic. The poll indicates that it is the youth (18 to 24-year-olds) that is more aware and belligerent than their elders. This raw, untapped energy is yet to find focus. A positive outlet may take India to new heights; in the wrong hands, it could plunge the country in civil strife. A divided India can swing either way."

But, this schism, the product of the Muslim religious expansionist credo that the All Knowing, the All Wise, Allah wished to avert by ordaining in the Quran thus:

“And we never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them. The Allah sendeth whom He will astray, and guideth whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (4.9)

But the will of Allah was ignored by his faithful and forced his message in Arabic on the peoples of other tongues, thereby creating the conflict of interest that ‘the God’ had foreseen, and seemingly wanted to avoid. So, the penchant of the Indian *Musalmans* to glorify those as heroes of Islam, who had been inimical to the Hindus or had undermined the Hindustan, is un-Islamic for it was not the will of Allah but the making of those disregarding ‘believers’. So, during the ‘unauthorized’ Muhammadan expansion down the Quranic journey, the Islamic straight, but narrow, path began to lead the *umma* onto the narrower bylanes of bigotry. Hence, it’s for the Indian *Musalmans* of the day to ponder over this *ayat* that made their alien God’s intent clear, and try to pave the ‘right path’ in the Indian setting, albeit with the Islamic tar.

Whatever, when the U.S tasted the madness that is the Islamic fundamentalism on 9/11/2001, one Western social scientist wondered what it might take the Jews and the Hindus to live in the Muslim surroundings! Why it is for the Indian *Musalmans* to think whether that image is fine with them; they might as well ask themselves the valid question - instead of leading a harmonious life in the Indian society, how come they provoke the disinterested, if not docile, Hindu majority into a retaliatory mode?

Well, the *Musalmans*, obsessed as they are with growing beards and wearing skull-caps so as to accentuate their Islamic identity that is besides wrapping up their female ‘objects’ in unwieldy burkas from public ‘male’ view, don’t seem to care two hoots for what the ‘others’ think about their separatist as well as obscurantist mindset. But they might realize that their emotional attachment to everything Muhammadan makes them fish in the Islamic waters that wouldn’t survive on the lands of reality. Why, their inability to vibe with the cultures in which they live as minorities makes them blind to the beatitude of life out there right ‘here’, and if only they could see beyond their Quranic noses, they would realize that Islam is the only religion where the agenda of the founder and the aspirations of his followers were mutually exclusive.

Though the Muslims take pride in Muhammad, what they fail to see is that he was not all that great as he was made out to be, and contrary to the myths in the *umma*, he was as fallible as any other man. But the Islamic hitch is that the *Musalmans* get conditioned to see his frailties as the ideals and he the ideal man worthy of emulation. Thus it can be said that *Musalman* is a product of a faulty prototype, and it is there for all to see save the consumers in the *umma*!

In this regard it pays the Indian *umma* to analyze the phenomenon of Sathya Sai Baba, whom millions of his devotees, the world over, revere as an avatar of God, and experience his ‘presence’ wherever they are; a *la affair Musalmans*! Lo, that too without a scripture of his own, the swords of his faithful and the lure of the ‘spoils of war’ to spread his creed, the Baba attracts peoples of all faiths in today’s world, with the expectable exception of the *Musalmans*! Moreover, without any promise of an exclusive ‘thereafter’ to his devotees, he inspires them to indulge in self-less service ‘here’ to the humanity at large. Of course, like Muhammad, he too was reviled and faced calumnies, in spite of it all, and thus, it’s for the *Musalmans* to review their Messenger’s questionable achievements in the light of Baba’s monumental contributions.

Yet another Muslim fallacy is that none but them feel the like faith in ‘the God’, and it is for them to realise that as an overindulgent sweet tooth could be nauseating, so also their Quranic overdose would be debilitating. And making it a triple jeopardy for the *umma* is its penchant to gloat over the prowess of the Islamic warriors of yore, who subdued much of the old world, coupled with their delusory wait in these adverse times

for the advent of their Savior-in-Chief, who would paint the globe with the Islamic green! No wonder that the desperate *Musalmans* mistake a desperado Osama bin Laden or a demented Baghdadi as the upholders of Islam and the suicide vests of the deluded *fidayēn* as the Coats of Muslim Mail.

Maybe a slight brushing up of the world history by the *Musalmans*, not just the Islamic victories of yore, unceasingly parroted in the Muslim *mohallas* – their cocoons of bitterness in the wilderness of dogma - might enable them to see the falsity of it all, which they insensibly made their article of faith. Better they come to know that the Christians of Abyssinia sheltered the early Muhammadans troubled by the Quraysh and the Hindu's too didn't chase away the *Musalmans* when they came to Malabar for trade.

When it comes to their misplaced notions about Hinduism, who were to tell them that the idols Muhammad was hell-bent upon breaking were those supposedly polluting the *Kabah*, and not the deities that inspire millions of devout Hindus in *Bharat Varsha*? Even after living for a thousand years in Hindustan, if the Indian *Musalmans* were to believe, as Mahmud Ghazni did, that the Hindus are idolaters, it speaks for their lack of awareness about the culture of their own forbears, well their pre-conversion ones. Oh, how these bigots ever shy away from accepting a Hindu *prasādam* from an acquaintance, so as not to pollute their Islamic palates being dreadful of deviating from the Quranic credo that is:

“O ye who believe! Take not for intimates others than your folk, who would spare no pains to ruin you: they love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of) their mouths, but which their breasts hide is greater. We have made plain for you the revelations if ye will understand.”

“Wed not idolatresses till they believe; for lo! a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress though she please you; and give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe, for lo! a believing slave is better than an idolater though he please you. These invite unto the Fire, and Allah inviteth unto the Garden and unto forgiveness by His grace, and expoundeth thus His revelations to mankind that haply they may remember.”

The Indian *Musalmans* might realize that these and many such Quranic injunctions exhorting them not to mix with the Jews, the Christians and the idolaters (poor guys who are denied even a capital 'I' in Islam) are but contextual for they were meant to address Muhammad's compulsion to keep his meager flock together against their being poached by 'the others' in the formative years of his cult! Now that the faith got more than cemented in the minds of the *Musalmans* for so long now, and the *umma* too grew into the billion-believer size, would these Quranic exhortations still be valid? Certainly not for any but for the bookish bigots of the Xians included.

It is as well the Indian *Musalmans* realize that Islam is more than safe in Hindustan, in spite of its Quranic partition, and thus they might as well venture out of their '*mohallas* of faith' into the nationalistic mainstream, as Hindus have no agenda for reconverting them into Hinduism. Maybe, it's the problem of the political heads of India's volatile democracy to herd their flocks into posh retreats, away from their poaching political opponents, and not of the *mullahs* of the numerous *umma* to keep the Indian *Musalmans* in the dark Quranic alleys.

That apart, when his believers were far and few between, it was imperative for Muhammad's Islamic cause not to lose its 'productive' fair sex to the cupids of 'the other' faiths. But would it be valid still, when Islam is the fastest growing religion 'here'; moreover, it is not as if the Hindu men are itching to seduce Muslim women into Hindu motherhood. So, when an odd Hindu fancies a Muslim female, what for the *Musalmans*

still treat it as a case of 'Islam in danger', and attack the hapless couple! Well, if the Quran erects Islamic barriers for interfaith love matches, the Hindu prejudice places hurdles to inter-caste marriages, and it is high time too that the *caste panchāyats* that kill the transgressing lovers are wound up with Godspeed, once and for all.

The way the *Musalmans* of the day feel about them is the replica of what Alberuni noted of the Hindus of yore gloating about them; they feel Islam is the most glorious faith, their conquests are the greatest ever, their culture is the best on earth, their architecture is the marvel of the world, so on and so forth. Maybe it is time that the *Musalmans* have a balanced view of their victories and defeats over the centuries, but in their desperation for the advent of a Saladin to subdue the hated infidels, they have reduced themselves into gloating over the Osamas, the Nasrallahs, and the Baghdadis as the modern-day Omars. Oh, what a fall! Though their methods are reminiscent of Muhammad's *realpolitik* of 'ends justifying the means', it pays for the *Musalmans* to know that he was a pragmatist with a singular mission, while their new heroes are but bigots chasing un-achievable goals. After all, one must be a moron to aim at making the world a *dar al-Islam* now or ever, which Omar and Saladin, not to speak of Muhammad himself, failed to do so! Well, *umma* may yet aver that but for Maria's charming distraction; Muhammad surely would have conquered the whole world on his own steam.

But the moot point is that the *Musalmans* even in these modern times tend to be out of sync with the changed realities of the life 'here', and that begs for answers. True, that *quran*, *hadith* 'n *sunna* inculcate a sense of alienation in the faithful towards the *kafirs* but then how many Indian *Musalmans* would have read their translations even in Urdu, their very own tongue, leave alone the Arabic originals; hardly any. However, *umma*'s kids, mostly from its deprived quarters, would be made to imbibe its separatist credo in innumerable *madrasas*, and, in turn, they as grownups spread those biases from the *masjids*, *madrasas* 'n *mohallas* that insensibly becomes the creed of the *Musalmans*.

If anything, the history of the Muslim marauds of Hindustan, pictured as Islamic conquests and the perceived glories of Mogul Empire, with exaggerated spread over it that gets the word of mouth in the *mohallas*. Besides accentuating the Islamic sense of separateness, all this inevitably inculcates a false sense of pride in the *umma* about the divinity of its faith and the valour of the faithful. Not only that, this vainglory manifests itself, like in the false bravado of the Pakistan Army - one Muslim is equal to ten Hindu soldiers - nevermind it was mauled every time it ventured to take on the Indian Armed Forces. As if on cue, the hotheaded among India's *Musalmans*, like Akbaruddin Owaisi, the younger brother Asaduddin Owaisi, a Muslim foulmouth politician from Hyderabad, boast likewise - "25 crore Muslims would need just 15 minutes without the police to show 100 crore Hindus who is more powerful".

Moreover, the undying Muslim nostalgia for the Islamic heydays of yore in an otherwise gloomy scenario of the modern era of the *Musalmans* is evident, say, when it comes to choosing a foreign language as part of college curriculum; Muslim boys and girls invariably tend to choose Persian; and once when asked in a media survey, why it was so, the unwavering answer was, because it is *hukumat ki jabān* - the ruling tongue; well, Persian was the court language of the Moguls. It's thus, far removed from the current realities of the world; *Musalmans* remain as fossils of royal frogs in the shallow Islamic wells of the past in their impoverished *mohallas*.

Thanks to the Quranic brainwash, poverty is not something that weighs the *Musalmans* down, as generally is the case with the rest of mankind, since for them life 'here' is but a 'pastime' of an enabling time to reach the 'Hereafter'.

“Naught is the life of the world save a pastime and a sport. Better far is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Have ye then no sense?”

“Those who love the life of the world more than the Hereafter, and debar (men) from the way of Allah and would have it crooked: such are far astray.”

Not only that, even when they venture out into the *kafir* arena, they wear their false sense of superiority on their sleeves notwithstanding their social or economic condition, and / or both. Nevermind their illiteracy, not to be mistaken with Islamic awareness, even their women tend to be overbearing with *kafirs*, which is exemplified in the way they evict ‘the other’ men from the reserved seats for women in the city buses, moreso in the Muslim dominant areas, for which trespass their well-educated Hindu sisters, for most part, would have remained mute spectators.

But the Hindu left-libs, who vouch for the *Musalmans* though there’s nothing of a left ideology in Islam and what’s worse, it suppresses every liberal outlook whatsoever is there. Nevertheless, as all these espy things Muslim through the myopic prism built with their Islamapologic glasses, so naturally they get the Indian Islamic scenario all wrong. Well, even though they harp on the Muslim backwardness, yet they desist from advocating secular education for the *Musalmans*; they shed secular crocodile tears over *umma*’s economic plight but dare not advise the faithful to trim the unsustainable size of their families; they subscribe to the alleged discrimination by Hindus against the *Musalmans* but shy away from reminding them about their Islamic hostility towards ‘the others’; they condemn, rightly so, any stray case of a Hindu roughshod over a *Musalman* or two Hindu, but whenever the boot is on the wrong Muslim leg, which is more often than not, they close their eyes and shut their mouth; they endorse the fact that India belongs to Hindus as much as it to its *Musalmans* but fail to condemn the latter’s averment that ‘Islam is above India’ and ‘*sharia* is over its constitution’, and this hypocritical exercise in Islamapologic chicanery goes on and on, and that has come to sicken the Hindus.

But what with the double squeeze from within by the *mullahs* and without by Islamapologists, needless to say, the *umma* stays as is where, and what is worse, some of them want it to be taken farther back to its medieval past. This about sums up the Islamic paradox for in these days even as ‘the others’ want to go forward, the *umma* has begun to crave to move backwards to its medieval origins of barbaric purity.

Chapter 31

The Way Around

While the wise use their abilities as the building blocks of life, the bigots turn their dogmas into its stumbling blocks, and same applies to nation building or causing its ruination, Pakistan being a living example of the latter. However, in what is left of *Arya Varta*, it is a socio-political reality that even as the Hindus cannot wish away the preponderant Muslim presence in it, there is no way the *Musalmans* can turn it into a *dar al-Islam* either. So, as the Union of India, Allah Ta’ala willing, would forever remain a place of Hindu-Muslim conglomeration, it is only wise for both to realise that their future is firmly rooted in this common communal ground.

Sadly for the Indian *umma*, the gullible Arabs of yore catapulted their ‘cult of Muhammad’ onto the altar of faith as the ‘religion of Islam’, which deludes the deprived ‘here’ by dangling the doles in ‘the hereafter’, and that takes the *umma*’s poor neither here nor there in the modern ‘world of opportunities’; and as Martin Lings noted, Muhammad had encouraged his followers to imbibe this anti-progress ethos thus:

“All took part in the work, (the construction of a mosque in Medina) including the Prophet himself, and as they worked they chanted two verses which one of them had made up for the occasion:

*O god, no good is but the good h
So help the Helpers and the Emigrants.*

And sometimes they chanted,

*No life there is but life of the Here
Mercy, O God, on Emigrants and Helpers.”*

Well, the source of this inspiration, as seen in the preceding chapter, is none other than the Quran that extols poverty. Besides, what else Muhammad had to offer his handful of followers then than the solace of poverty, as the booty to share with them was not on the table as yet then. However, it is this inculcated disregard for life ‘here’ in his followers that enabled him to psyche them later to the myth of martyrdom with *huries* and all in the ‘Hereafter’ that stood him in good stead to settle scores with his detractors that is apart from laying his hands on the Spoils of War, which is nothing but the God-sanctified booty.

Besides, it is proved beyond doubt that the Muslim educational backwardness is sourced in *umma*’s abominable fear of exposing its kids to non-Islamic education lest they should lose their faith in the outdated ideas that Islam represents. Surely, their fears are not unfounded for the Islamic edifice of faith was built on Quranic pillars of artificial belief, and once the latter are weakened the former would collapse like a house of cards. So it can be said ‘artificial’ belief is at once the strength and weakness of Islam and who knows that better than its *moulvis*, and that’s what makes it a cult but not a religion.

That’s why, the Saudi ruling family, the guardian of the *Kabah* has always been alive to the threat the modern education poses to the set of Islamist beliefs that are the pillars of their House of Saud. So, the curriculum of the secondary schools, set aside the primary stuff, is Islamic all the way, of course with Muhammad’s life and times thrown in between; the *madrasa* academic drill comprises of Islam, the Quran, the *hadith*, the *sunna* with mathematics for a change. It’s thus, to the *umma*-moulded *Musalman* mind-set, anything that is non-Islamic is akin to un-Islamic.

No wonder thus, the Indian *Musalmans*, for most part, who imitate the Sunni Saudis, are worse off educationally and economically than even the once oppressed Hindus, their erstwhile caste cousins, since they tend to lead a ghetto-like life in isolated pockets in abominable conditions, compared even to the substandard amenities available in the Hindu localities. And compounding their misery is their penchant to rear more children than their means would will, and that either forces them to reduce their progeny into child labor or consign them to the *madrasa* education, which only cultivates in them the fundamentalist impulses that are inimical to their economic wellbeing.

It is seldom appreciated that as sex is more in the human mind than in its libido, the occupation of man has a bearing on his sexual impulse, which in turn determines the frequency of conception by his mate(s). While it’s in the nature of the white collar jobs and intellectual pursuits to put cerebral demands on the minds of men, and women, thereby distracting their minds away from sexual focus, the manual jobs or petty trades won’t constrain those engaged in them in a like manner, whereby letting their libido to have a free reign on their minds. In case of the *Musalmans*, even as their ‘believing’ Islamic minds are spared of intellectual strain, their mundane pursuits of the latter category free them from cerebral engagement, whereby affording them more frequent coition. Needless to say, such a cohabitation sans family planning, which is conveniently

touted as un-Islamic, would be more conducive for unbridled procreation; though same is the case with the similarly placed Hindus, yet there's a growing tendency among them to adopt the two-child family norm.

So, it is imperative for the *ulema* of the *umma* to realise that the penchant of the *Musalmans* for reckless procreation, besides keeping them poor and illiterate - pitying them, by now, the All-Merciful Allah Ta'ala would have certainly changed his mind but for the lack of communication means, is unable to convey the same to them - has been raising the demographic hackles of the Hindus. But for that they have to get rid of their *Ghazwa-e-Hind* illusion and *dar al-Islam* world delusion, at least after the Chinese treatment of their Uyghur brethren. Whatever, the depravities and the disparities of the Indian *Musalmans* 'here' are for real but they don't seem to mind as long as Islam is not in danger, and egging on them to remain that way are the Islamapologists in their pseudo-secular garbs, who routinely shed crocodile tears to score Brownie 'secular' points; if the *Musalmans* were to imbibe liberal attitudes, of what relevance could be the Islamapologic platitudes of the media savvy Satan's?

Just the same, the real indicator of the Indian *Musalmans*' backwardness is their collective inability to address their socio-economic plight. Why should they, when their Quran dissuades them against all that. That being the case, would ever the Muslim masses question the conventional wisdom of their community in investing their children's future in Islam through the *madrasa* modules? After all, they should realise that their economic wellbeing would forever remain a mirage on the Islamic straight path as the *madrasas* lead their children onto the misery 'here' though with a promise of joys in the 'hereafter'.

Sadly for the *umma*'s poor, *madrasas* are no more than the wells of Islamic dogma with *moulvis* being their resident frogs, at best helping their pupils memorize the Quran and at worst making bigots out of them with additional inputs from *hadith* 'n *sunna*. So, what are the *madrasas* if not the Quranic pillars of the *masjids* to keep the faith going the way it was from Muhammad's time; even otherwise, of what avail is the secular education to them; the sight of the few middle-class Muslim girls going to the Indian secular temples of higher learning all wrapped up in burkas only proves that no course material can make the Indian *Musalmans*' Arabian outlook acquire a new look.

It's another matter though that this Islamic mess into which they habitually allow themselves to get into would only enable 'the others', whom they, any way, keep at an arm's length, to become even more apathetic towards them. Well, there seems to be no end to the psychic dichotomy of the *Musalmans*, and Kemal Ataturks and Anwar Sadats, in their scores, are to be born in every *galli* of each Muslim *mohalla* to make it right for them. That, perhaps, is too much to hope for, anyway. But for now, the *Musalmans* are ever on the lookout for the ways and means to assert their Islamic separateness, which, for the muse of a poet would seem: *Oh, goddamn faith, how thou divide 'the God' from the gods and Musalmans from the other men!*

Well, if only the *maulanas*, for a solution to their separatist constraints, approach Muhammad's life and times, not in thrall but with insight, for that there are pointers aplenty, penned by Martin Lings. They would then realize that Muhammad's ability to strike strategic compromises made him what he was, and enabled him to take his faith to the *kabah*. The social compromise devised by Muhammad for the Muslim-Jewish amity and his concessions to the theological demands of the Quraysh, cited below, could guide the Indian *Musalmans* in fashioning a Hindu - Muslim compromise.

"It was to be hoped that these two parties would be strengthened by a third, and the Prophet now made a covenant of mutual obligation between his followers and the Jews of the oasis, forming them into a single community of believers but allowing for the

differences between the two religions. Muslims and Jews were to have equal status. If a Jew were wronged, then he must be helped to his rights by both Muslim and Jew, and so also if a Muslim were wronged. In case of war against the polytheists they must fight as one people, and neither Jews nor Muslims were to make a separate peace, but peace was to be indivisible. In case of differences of opinion or dispute or controversy, the matter was to be referred to God through His Messenger. There was, however, no express stipulation that the Jews should formally recognize Muhammad as the Messenger and Prophet of God, though he was referred to as such throughout the document."

Of course, this gesture by Muhammad was in his early Yathrib, nay Medina days, which was much before the Quran poured venom on the neighborhood Jews (besides the Christians and idolaters) and he gave vent to his wrath on them. Leaving that aside, the all-important religious concession of Muhammad as recorded by Martin Lings makes an interesting reading.

"Quraysh now sent Suhayl to conclude a treaty (*with Muhammad*), and with him were his two clansmen Mikraz and Hwaytib. They conferred with the Prophet, and the Companions heard their voices rise and fall according to whether the point in question was hard to agree upon or easy. When they had finally reached an agreement the Prophet told 'Ali to write down the terms, beginning with the revealed words of consecration *Bismi Llahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim, in the Name of God, the Good, the Merciful*, but Suhayl objected. "As to *Rahman*," he said, "I know not what he is. But write *Bismik Allahumma*, in Thy Name, O God, as thou wert wont to write."

Some of the Companions cried out "By God, we will write naught but *Bismi Lalhi r-Rahmani r-Rahim*," but the Prophet ignored them and said "Write *Bismik Allahumma*," and he went on dictating: "these are the terms of the truce between Muhammad the Messenger of God and Suhayl the son of 'Amr"; but again Suhayl protested. "If we knew thee to be the Messenger of God," he said, "we would not have barred thee from the House, neither would we have fought thee; but write Muhammad the son of 'Abd Allah."

'Ali had already written "The Messenger of God," and the Prophet told him to strike out those words, but he said he could not. So the Prophet told him to point with his finger to the words in question, and he himself stuck them out*. Then he told him to write in their place "the son of 'Abd Allah," which he did.

The document continued: "They have agreed to lay down the burden of war for ten years, in which times men shall be safe and not lay violent hands the one upon the other; on condition that whoso cometh unto Muhammad of Quraysh without the leave of his guardian, Muhammad shall return him unto them; but whoso cometh unto Quraysh of those who are with Muhammad, they shall not be returned. They shall be no subterfuge and no treachery. And who so wisheth to enter into the bond and pact of Muhammad may do so; and who so wisheth to enter into the bond and pact of Quraysh may do so."

Well, every *Musalman* could be privy to this episode but few, if any, would have delved deep into it to question the unquestionable; what does this protest by Suhayl mean?

"If we knew thee to be the Messenger of God, we would not have barred thee from the House, neither would we have fought thee."

Won't it go without saying that none in the Arabia then heard Allah announce that he had sent Muhammad as his messenger to them, but it was Muhammad who had proclaimed himself as the Messenger of 'the God' for them? If not, Suhayl and others

would not have said what they said to Muhammad about his divine claim without a mundane witness to name.

Even beyond the boundaries of belief, it is the penchant of the faithful, not just the *Musalmans*, to assert that all that is there to know can be found in between the covers of their religious scriptures. While nothing can be farther from the truth, the Quran portrays many a divine contradictions, one of which is refreshingly welcome in that as against its averment all through that it carries for man the final message of the God, it states that, *"Such of Our revelations as we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest though not that Allah is able to do all things."*

Moreso, underscoring the need for a periodic Islamic update, Muhammad had also said, *"Islam began as a stranger and will become once more as a stranger,"* and promised to his flock that *'the God' would not abandon them,*

"God will send to this community, at the head of every hundred years, one who will renew for it its religion."

That being the case, wonder the way the *umma* shuns the reformist *Musalmans*, few and far in between anyway, and what's worse, its *ulema* brands such as apostates and condemns them to death. Maybe in that sense, in that sense alone, Bernard Shaw is right in opining that Islam is the best religion with the worst followers.

Above all, Quran also affirms that:

"If all the trees in the end were pens, and if the sea eked out by seven seas more were ink, the Words of God, could not be written out into their end."

Thus, isn't it ironical that Allah Ta'ala should have exhorted his faithful to unquestioningly believe what he supposedly revealed to his Messenger in the Quran? It's as if what the God gave the *Musalmans* with his right hand, he took it back from them with his left hand thereby leaving them stranded on the 'straight path' he paved for them. Hence, what sense doth it make for the *Musalmans* to believe that the *quran-hadith-sunna* trio is the 'be all and end all' of the divine guidance; well it is for them to think.

Be that as it may, it is imperative for the *Musalmans* of the day to understand that a review of Islam is overdue, which, their prophet himself felt that it would need from time to time. Why not the *maulanas* of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (no mistaking it as an elected body of Indian *Musalmans*) take the lead in not only reviewing the 'out of tune' features of their faith but also in seeking honourable compromises with the Hindus on all contentious issues as Muhammad had done with the Quraysh? Well, a little give and take shouldn't upset them as Muhammad himself had said,

"Verily ye are in an age when whoso omitteth one tenth of the law shall be doomed. But there will come an age when whoso fulfilleth one tenth of the law shall be saved."

That being the case, wonder why the *mullahs* should be so paranoid as what is Islamic and what is un-Islamic for the *umma* in these modern times!

So be it but the *moulvi-mullah* combine's apathy for modernity and the appeasement of these obscurants by the Hindu pseudo-secularists for their political gain, together subject the *Musalmans* to a double squeeze. Moreover, the Islamapologic media, controlled by those that are either naïve about or indifferent to the Islamic dogma, in its eagerness to be on the right side of secularism, runs a tirade against the Hindu nationalist forces, only ends up in helping the perpetuation of Muslim obscurantism. What is worse, as if to light up every minority household with its naïve Hindu torch, it

infuses in the Indian *umma* a sense of neglect by the Indian State itself. Why, in a routine exercise, its glamour boys 'n gals attribute *umma*'s economic backwardness to the Hindu biases rather than exposing the age-old Muslim apathy for secular education. Wonder how these fail to see the children of Hindu maids and Christian coolies everywhere walking up in their scores to Covent schools in their secular uniforms.

What about the Indian *umma*'s apathy towards the native cultural connotations in spite of the fact that some of their ilk had showed how to fuse the Indian ethos with their Islamic souls. Won't it be an idea for them to overcome their fixation over the bigoted Aurangzeb and revisit his great-grandfather, their Akbar the Great, and dust his *Din- i Ilāhī*? Why eulogize the anti-Hindu despot Tipu Sultan when they have Dara Shukoh, the 'enlightened paragon of the harmonious coexistence of Hindustan's heterodox traditions', whom Aurangzeb, his brother put to death?

Well, coming to the current times, why can't they take a leaf out of the life of the music maestro of Maihar *gharana*, Allauddin Khan, the incomparable saint of the Hindu - Muslim synthesis. He was an outstanding exponent of the Hindustani classical music who, being a devout *Musalman*, and in spite of the Quranic injunctions against idol worship, in the hill temple at Maihar, he was wont to sing in ecstasy before the deity of *Sārada Māta*, the goddess of learning. Though his religious dogma would have him not to bow but to Allah, his theological wisdom enabled him to grasp the truth that the Omnipresent Allah would be present in the Hindu Deities as well; and so he had seen the falsity of the Muslim fallacy in making the Almighty a captive of Islam. Moreover, neither did he suffer any Quranic qualms in naming his daughter as Annapurna nor had he undergone any Islamic pangs in giving her hand in marriage to Pandit Ravi Shankar, his disciple, much before he became illustrious.

Besides, there was the mesmerizing Bismillah Khan, whose recorded *shehnai* exposition was adjudged, in 1960s, as the best among all varieties of instrumental music in the world, and he too suffered no Quranic qualms in enthralling the audiences in Hindu precincts. Why hadn't Naushād Ali, Shakēl Badayuni, and Mohammad Rafi proved to the Indian *Musalmans* that while reveling in the Hindu devotional music, yet they could be practicing *Musalmans*? Won't every Hindu soul forever be moved by their combined effort in the *Baiju Bawra* song - *man tarpat hari darshan ko āj* - that impelled a *sādhū* of Rishikesh to rush to Mumbai, the then Bombay, for the *darshan* of the lyricist! Well, exemplifying a 'reverse prejudice', the Hindu ascetic, who expected the adorable persona with a flowing beard in saffron robes, wouldn't believe that the suited-booted Shakēl could have indeed imbibed the Hindu spirituality to compose that hymn-like song. That's not all, one Yusuf Khan Sarwar Khan as Dilip Kumar, the peerless thespian of the Indian silver screen, could fervently pray before assorted Hindu deities on the celluloid and yet remain a *Musalman* by heart and soul!

Moreover, hadn't President Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam prove that a *Musalman* could draw as much spiritual solace from the Quran as well as from the Bhagvad-Gita? What about KK Muhammed, the geologist, who stood by his professional integrity and personal conviction to affirm that indeed the disputed Babri Masjid was built on the ruins of a grand Hindu structure that is in spite the orchestrated propaganda unleashed by his fellow-*Musalman* Irfan Habib, in cohorts with the left-lib Hindu renegades to the contrary? Above all are the Muslim *fauzis* of the Indian Armed Forces, who fight against their co-religionist army of Pakistan regardless, and if need be sacrifice their lives for their country.

As for the Hindus, don't they love the continuance of the Indo-Islamic culture, exemplified by the Hindustani music made mellifluous by Bismillah Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Begum Akhtar et al in their scores? What a void the Indian romantic hearts would have been sans those *ghazals*, *qawālis*, and *mujrās* that ooze so much eroticism?

Don't they toast the Abdul Hamids who sacrificed their lives for them fighting against Pakistan, and the Abdul Kalams who design missiles to deter it from attacking *Bharat Mā ta*?

Needless to say, the Hindu-Muslim amity depends on the Muslim willingness to address the Hindu national concerns and the Hindu understanding of the Muslim religious fears. And, as the communal peace is a two-way lane, one would wish that the Muslim genius, at last, might come up with new alignments for their straight path in the Hindu setting for a smooth ride 'here' on their way to the 'Hereafter'. Wish in the coming years, India would be blessed with an Anwar Sadat to dare defy the bigotry of the *mullahs*, and /or a Kemal Atatürk to cross swords with the Islamic fundamentalists to make a lasting difference to the Hindu-Muslim coexistence.

For their part, the Hindus should not misconstrue the soft centre the Indian *Musalman*s tend to nurse for Pakistan in their hearts as a synonym of their anti-Indian ethos for their minds are conditioned by the *umma*'s Quranic paranoia. So, they get habituated at seeing things from the pan-Islamic prism, which stymies their Indian vision besides sully their national image, and sadly for them, there would be incessant alerts of 'Islam in danger' from around the world, which keep their psyche forever stressed by their *kafir* enigma. But as a two-way street keeps the traffic smooth, Hindus and Muslims should together build one for which the latter must be more religiously open than they are.

Surely, Islam in the original form has outlived its utility to the poor believers, and if only the stilted media gets its act right to drive home this point into the minority minds, the interests of the Indian *umma* would be well-served that its Islamapologia is fouling. But meanwhile, would the *Musalman* bigots and the Hindu sophists, who aid and abet them in feeding their folks with a religious diet, apply their minds to bridge the Hindu-Muslim economic divide?

Chapter 32

The Hindu Rebound

The Hindu fundamentalism is a misnomer, coined by the cunning and subscribed by the naïve, which comes in handy to the Semitic proselytizers to undermine the Indian nationalism. Why, it should be apparent to the discerning that while Brahmanism is orthodox, the *sanātana dharma*, delineated by *swadharma*, is amorphous, and in them lay the social diversity of the Hindu spiritual ethos.

By the time Bharat gained independence, what with the *gurukuls* having given way to the missionary schools for long, the Brahmans, by and large, were an unemployed lot, and in spite of their depleted landholding, yet their exalted position in the polity precluded them from engaging in their non-traditional activities. What with the deprived social patronage adding to their economic woes, they became moribund to end up being the parasites, and it is probable that the prejudices that bedevil the Hindu spirituality might have been the products of the idle minds in those lazy Brahman bodies.

However, after the trauma of the partition was lived down, the Brahman exodus to the urban conglomerates started in earnest, which though eroded their village presence and with it their social influence as well. Just the same, settling in the urban settings, they, as McCauley's *chelas* (what a fall for the Hindu gurus of yore) began bracing themselves to take up the clerical spaces that were up for grabs in the British administrative corridors in India. Consequently, the weakened Brahman hold on the village grassroots began to dent the power of the *manu dharma* on the Hindu polity for its guardians had begun to desert their *swadharma*. But eventually the ebb of *sanātana dharma* accompanied the Brahman economic tide brought about by their overwhelming

absorption into Nehru's public sector undertakings, the supposed pillars of independent India's Soviet modeled socialist economy.

Exposed to the liberal ideas that held sway all over the world during the sixties of the last century, the Brahmins in urban dwellings began distancing themselves from the orthodox ways and the social mores of their forebears in increasing numbers. That was the beginning of the modern Hindu middle class phenomenon shaped by them that set the trend for the great Indian social upsurge of the later days. However, the Gangetic plains have been slow in catching up with the changing times, maybe because the Brahmins, in numbers, held on to their village lands and their old values alike to retain their socio-religious hold on the cow belt.

Whatever, with the easing of the Brahmin social-yoke, even though the backward castes have come to breathe easier, yet they had to bear the brunt of the centuries-old neglect of India's economy that was till the advent of the Green Revolution, which had put more money into more pockets of theirs for most of them to think in terms of educating their children. Moreover, even as the modern economy occasioned a fusion of the four *varnas* enabled the segregated Hindu society to shed a part of its past caste biases, it was Gandhi's crusade for the upliftment of the downtrodden and finally the untouchable *harijans*, nay *dalits*, which eventually pushed all under the shade of the Hindu urban socio-religious umbrella.

Yet, it was the pragmatic policy of positive discrimination, adopted by the polity to lend *dalits* a helping hand with reservations in education and employment, which enabled them to emerge on the Indian economic scene as well. That's about the leveling of Mother India's lopsided socio-economic ground for making it a level playing field for its hitherto vulnerable offspring. However, the opposition plants sprouted by these backward caste-seeds couldn't survive for long under the banyan tree of a political party that the Congress had been that was till the regional satraps began to have their electoral sway outside the Hindi-heartland.

Finally, the *dalit* resentment against the caste Hindus in the cow belt found its expression in the Kanshi Ram-Mayawati combine with the electoral slogan,

*tilak tarāju aur talwār, / Brahmins, Banias 'n Thākurs,
sabko māro jōte chār. / Bash them all with no respite.*

Why that the old Hindu outcasts could resort to such sloganeering on the soil of *Arya Varta* underscores the changed Indian caste reality; isn't it the payback time of sorts for the caste Hindus for their long suppression of the outcasts? This *dalit* resurgence in the end proved to be the undoing of the stranglehold of the Congress Party on the Indian polity.

Whatever, in India today, the backward classes that form the teeming Hindu multitudes, whose backs the Brahmanism had broken, no longer have to blame their *karma*, and instead they have every reason to thank the Hindu gods for their improved lot, which changed their religious attitude as well. What with the ever-growing middle class component from these castes making the bulk of the devout, in a curious phenomenon, the Hindu society began to unite itself religiously even as it retained its fractured caste quality. That was how the once insular Brahmanism had given way to the open-ended Hinduism with an expanded mass base to maintain its identity and protect its interests.

This newfound religious orientation among the backward classes and the other backward castes brought in, in its wake, the fellowship of Hindutva; it's no longer the India of old where the Brahmins lived in their *agrahārās* and the *kshatriyas* in their forts, both insensitive to the happenings around. These new Hindu breeds have come to

believe that the country is theirs own, and thus are in no mood to concede further demographic ground to India's minorities so it seems.

True, for centuries, the hapless Hindu masses had to share the land of their forefathers with the antagonistic *Musalman*s, to whom their classes had foolhardily conceded it but the new concept of the Indian nation-state occasioned in them an emotional attachment to it that the minorities don't seem to recognize. Why for the new Hindu masses, India is no longer a mere piece of land that they happen to share with the *Musalman*s 'n the Christians but it is a nation of theirs, which they would like to cherish and protect for all times to come. And it is in this mind-set that the Hindus are increasingly becoming sensitive to the omissions and commissions of the Indian *Musalman*s; more so, their excuses for family planning, which have begun making them wary of the Muslim intentions.

Hindus have come to believe that the *Musalman*s are out to multiply themselves with a long-term demographic goal, and the latter, for their part, began to accentuate the former's fears not only by nearly doubling themselves in seven decades but by openly voicing their desire to turn India into *Ghazwa-e-Hind*, possible or otherwise. Moreover, the apathy of the *Musalman*s for a planned family betrays their insensitivity towards their own women; won't their persistent refusal to adopt the family planning methods that avert the health-hampering carriages and miscarriages render their fair sex into despondency? Oh how the *Musalman*s burden their women with a child in the lap and another in the womb till they can bear no longer, and as the *moulvis* aver they have a duty to procreate for the sake of Islam regardless that is. Yet, the women don't seem to be complaining either, well if they don't comply, how they could ever be believers?

Though the *moulvi* imposed religious obligation to numerically strengthen Islam is at odds with the welfare of the *umma* itself, for the religiously blinded *Musalman*s, the deprivation that large families bring to their members is not something to lose sleep about! After all, for the believing souls, the life 'here' is of no avail and the purpose of being born a *Musalman* is to hope for the 'hereafter'. Thus, as the religious bigotry of the Indian *Musalman*s, besides hurting their standard of living is upsetting the Indian demographic order, the Hindu patience with the Muslim obstinacy is seemingly running out as can be seen from Narendra Modi's, *ham pānch, hamārā pachīs – We're five, ours twenty-five* – taunt as Gujarat Chief Minister. Nevertheless, in his later secular outreach, in the Prime Ministerial avatar, to the unforgiving *Musalman*s would exemplify his maturing as a statesman of stature.

What's worse, the Islamic demographic design demonically suits the short-term vote bank politics of India's self, or family serving political dispensations! What baffles them is that if checking the country's population growth is in the national interest, how come the Congress-led band shies away from encouraging the *umma* to exercise restraint on the procreative front? Moreover, the obduracy of the Indian *umma* in adhering to their personal laws, abandoned even in the Islamic countries, in the Indian secular setting has been increasingly earning them the Hindu ill-will in good measure.

Maybe, the ideology of M.S. Golwalkar, the Brahman nationalist with a Muhammadan bias has begun to appeal to more and more Hindus owing to this Muslim indifference to matters of national interest. It was at this juncture of increasing Hindu misgivings about the Muslim intentions that Rajiv Gandhi so naively surrendered Shah Bano to the Islamic obscurantists, and the *Sangh Parivar*, of Golwalkar's creed, sensed the outraged Hindu mood and went for the Congress kill. As if fortuitously, the decrepit *Babri Masjid* in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Sri Rama, which was neither a functional *masjid* nor a structured *mandir*, came in handy for them to bring it onto the national agenda as *Ram Janma Bhōmi* movement.

Yet it might not have made any impact on the Hindu minds, long reconciled to the demolitions of their temples of yore, had not the appeasement brigade, who saw electoral dividends in this local dispute, egged on the *umma* not to yield an inch of the land to the Hindu sentiment. But for the ensuing Muslim objection to the *Sangh Parivar*'s floater, the *Ram Janma Bhōmi* issue could have never snowballed into a Hindu national movement that it turned out to be. And as if to direct the Hindu resentment in his tracks into the ballot boxes, Lal Krishna Advani, a *la Bhagirath*, flagged off his *Rath Yathra* from Somnath, the temple town once ransacked by Mahmud Ghazni, but rebuilt by the independent Hindustan that is under the aegis of Sardar Patel. Needless to say, this master move was meant to remind the Hindus, just in case they forgot about the age-old *Musalman* habit of pulling down the Hindu temples, nay the derogatory *buth-khānās*.

Not surprisingly, the opinion poll of 'The India Today', cited earlier, revealed the Muslim aversion for building the *Ram Mandir* at the disputed site; what is more, 21% of them, who are aware of the India history, consider Mahmud a hero, notwithstanding his vandalism at the venerated Hindu temples of that time. And yet, the *Musalmans* think that the Hindus, who pulled down the dilapidated *masjid* on 6th December 1992, are the villains, never mind the *mandir* demolition creed of Islam, and so have come to religiously observe that day as a Black Day! That itself speaks for the twisted sense of the Muslim logic and proves that they think with their Islamic heart but not with the Indian mind.

It's time the Indian *Musalmans* contemplate whether they could hero-worship the marauders of the Hindu *mandirs* (Aurangzeb, the despoiler of the Kashi Vishwanāth temple, the next most revered after Somnath, has a Muslim approval rating of 39%) and in the same vein condemn those that pulled down the decrepit *Babri masjid*! Well, all this won't be amusing to the Hindus; the mind-set of double standards is troublesome even in the majority community but it would be eminently unwise for the minorities to develop the proclivity of reading the Indian history from the Pakistani text books.

When the *jihadi* driven amongst the Indian *Musalmans*, in lieu of the *Babri debris*, turned some of Bombay's buildings into rubble, the equally bigoted *Shiv Sainiks* rioted to pay them back with Islamic body bags. Be that as it may, one wonders whether it was the Hindu apologia, the Muslim hypocrisy, or the Indian intellectual naivety that was on display in the media in the wake of the communal riots! One of the reasons why the communal riots raise their ugly head at intervals in India is the tendency of the intellectuals, from both the communities, to push the issue of the Hindu-Muslim divide under the secular carpet lest their honest views should be misconstrued as the anti-other. Whatever, the Decommissioned Adult of the fanatic Muhammadan, for his part, wouldn't appreciate that the Hindu-Muslim disputes tend to be subjected to the Moses' Law Square - two eyes for an eye, two teeth for one and two slain for one killed.

However, after a relatively long lull on the communal front, a bunch of fanatical, thus stupid, Indian *Musalman* zealots targeted some *Ram Sevaks*, returning from a rally at Ayodhya, for the cause of the Ram temple, which lost its momentum by then that was before its eventual dissipation. Reminiscent of their Naokhali barbarity, the *Musalman* mob torched a railway coach at Godhra in which 58 Hindus, 40 of whom were women and children, had perished; it's as if these bigots had for inspiration Mahmud's butchery of the Hindus at Somnath in the same province.

But unlike in the times gone by, led by the *Sangh Parivar*, the Gujarati Hindu retaliation that followed accounted for 790 *Musalmans* dead (amplified by the Congress eco system through the idiot boxes to 2000-odd to politically hurt the irrepressible Narendra Modi) in which rioting 254 Hindus too perished, most of them in police firing, which fact was equally glossed over by the pseudo-secular Islamapologic media. Yet in a

weird way, some of the body bags had revealed the changed face of the Hindutva; that the backward *dalits*, ever averse to the Hindutva cause, and more so, the tribal poor, hitherto lukewarm to the same, too participated in the carnage against the *Musalmans* had put the Hindu consolidation on display for all to see.

Why, didn't Ashok Singhal of the *Vishva Hindu Parishad*, echo all this by blowing the *Sangh Parivar's panchajanya* thus:

"It was for the first time in thousand years the Hindus got united and gave a befitting reply to those who attacked them in Godhra."

He further thundered that the Gujarat incident was just the beginning and sounded ominous when he declared,

"the valour showed by the Hindus in Gujarat is unprecedented. If they are attacked again they will stand in self-defence. This will not end here. The VHP will take this message across the country through its Ram Naam Jap and other programs."

History has its own ironies, so it seems, for Gujarat, where Mahmud Ghazni started it all for the *Musalmans*, became the first retreat of the Indian *Musalmans*.

However, *Ram Lalla* (Ram as Child), sheltered under a *shāmiana* over the *Babri debris*, was made to wait for the Indian judicial verdict to grant or deny him a *bhavya mandir* (magnificent temple) in Ayodhya that the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* was itching to build. What if the Supreme Lordships fail to construe that which all three Allahabad High Court Judges felt was incontrovertible evidence in *Ram Lalla's* cause; then should not the established Muslim guilt of demolishing many a Hindu *mandir* make a compelling case for *Sri Rama's* entitlement to 'the benefit of doubt', so thought Hindus. But then, after a decade-long secular dithering that too in the times of its judicial activism, a five judge constitution bench of India's Supreme Court, which included a *Muselman* for secular affect, had delivered its unanimous judgment on 9th November 2019 in *Ram Lalla's* favour. It goes to the credit of the *umma* that it accepted the verdict with grace though the same cannot be said about some of its community leaders, religious as well as political. But when Hindus were all set to begin the construction of a *bhavya mandir* for *Ram Lalla*, ironically the national lockdown forced by the novel corona virus to put it in the pause mode.

Chapter33

Italian Interregnum

When fate wedded an Italian, Antonia Maino, to Rajiv Gandhi, and ensconced her as Sonia Gandhi in his mother's 1, Safdarjung Road bungalow, Lutyens' Delhi, as *badi bahu*, it's as if history woke up to the amusing fact that even though it granted the tiny Portugal a 'Goan' foothold in India under the British Raj, when it came to enslaving its ancient people, by oversight, it overlooked the mighty medieval Italy. So, it set things in motion, so it seems.

BY then, however, Indira had her dynastic grip on the democratic India firmly clasped by the Congress party; to achieve which, she castrated the party men into enervation as family eunuchs. So when she anointed Sanjay Gandhi, her second son, as her heir apparent, albeit bypassing Rajiv the elder, for lack of aptitude, it's no wonder that congressmen to one man began prostrating before him. But fate, seemingly at history's behest, dragged the reckless ruffian to death in a plane crash, thereby paving the way for his pilot brother to step into his princely shoes.

It's thus, when upon her assassination, as the credulous Rajiv, whom her sycophantic party men, was thrust upon the nation, a la Gandhi, as its 'credulous' head, he only tried

to copy from her political text book, which by then became the Congress Bible. So, naivety following the Islamapologic sermons enshrined therein, he allowed himself to be caught between two emotive stools - that of Shah Bano's *sharia* and Ayodhya's *Ram Lalla* – which heralded his political downfall. That's not all, as if to follow the Italian script of 'history' he ventured into the vicious web of the Tamil Elam in the neighbouring Sri Lanka on the 'to its own hurt and grows wings' line. It was thus his IPKF misadventure, meant to tame the ruthless Velupillai Prabhakaran, the overlord of the Tamil Tigers, which eventually exploded in his face at Sriperumbudur.

Even though 'history' beckoned Sonia to take the reins of the Congress mantle, thereby the prime ministerial handle, her decency as just widowed made her pass on the scepter into the skilful hands of PV Narasimha Rao. So, as 'history' was made to wait, the intellectuality of that veteran polyglot began scripting his own history to be remembered as the 'architect of economic reforms'. Having seen the imperative need for reforming the style and structure of the Indian economy that Nehru thought it fit to mould in the socialistic pattern, he started breaking its *Licence-Permit* model with his de-licence hammer. But, as the *Sangh Parivar's*, *Ram Janma Bhōmi Mandir Āndolan* with '*saugandh rām ki khāte hai, mandir wahi banāyenge*' (swear by Ram to build it there) chants and the Babri Masjid Action Committee's '*banāne nahi daenge*' (won't let that happen) counter were diverting the national political focus and the public attention from his 'reforms agenda', he might have wished that Allah Ta'ala would somehow shift the dilapidated *masjid* to Pakistan for renovation. However, his wish to see the back of the vexatious issue to fulfill his destiny was fulfilled, not by divine means but by the temporal tools of the *Kar Sevaks*, who pulled down the contentious structure that 6th December 1992.

Whatever, he not only removed many a Nehruvian hurdle in India's policy track that put its economy on a galloping course, from which it never looked back, but also managed to run his minority government with finesse for a full five-year term. Equally significantly, having seen the democratic need to free the grand old party of India from its constraining dynastic clutches, once and for all, he, slowly but steadily, began working in that direction to Sonia's chagrin that she eventually vented in an abominable manner that deservedly earned her an eternal infamy. What is more, he sought to usher in a new political culture by not protecting his party men accused of graft in those *Jain Hawala Dairies* that contained the names of 'who's who' of Indian politics.

However, all that was of no avail as instead of giving him a second term to further fillip the economy and rid the Congress party of its baneful Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, and thereby India, its ignoramus masses, egged on by the antique socialists and caste crusaders, ousted the 'architect of change' from the *gaddi*, rather unceremoniously. What's worse as his 'cleansing' move earned him enemies across the political spectrum, not excluding within his party, he was embroiled in corruption cases indicating that his end was near the end. Maybe underscoring the Hindu adage *satyameva jayate* (truth triumphs), he was exonerated of every charge by the country's judiciary enabling him to die clean though sad. However, as poetic justice would have it, that catapulted Deve Gowda, somebody, with the backing of the regional satraps like Chandra Babu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, into the *Dilli Kursi*.

But then India had soon to contend with Sonia the new player in its political arena. While upon the untimely death of her bother-in-law, the dynastic compulsions of her mother-in-law put the party's reins in her husband's hands, the brutal killing of the old despot by her own bodyguards afforded her man the reign of the land; and that brought her closer to the seat of political power than ever before. As if it is her twisted destiny to get ever closer to power over the dead of her family, tragically, she lost her husband in the midst of an election that, anyway, was about to undo his Congress. Though the

sentimental turnaround at the hustings put the Congress back into the reckoning, her decency as a widow kept her away from the *kursi* that was hers for taking, but only till decency demanded.

But, as time is the great healer of grief for the living and as the dead too wouldn't be taking away with them the proclivities of their dears, the 'Italian child of Indian destiny' seemingly found the purpose of her life to usurp, in a palace coup, the reins of the Congress party from the ungrateful hands of Sitaram Kesari, who by then had backstabbed Narasimha Rao his mentor. At the hustings thereafter, though she led her party to defeat, yet, abetted by the anti-BJP elements beguiled by the age-old Indian *realpolitik* of settling the native scores with alien hands, she staked her claim to become India's Prime Minister after the short-lived AB Vajpayee's *mili juli sarkar* (coalition government)! However, in the end, it was the principled opposition from a handful of otherwise self-serving Congressmen, led by Sharad Pawar, Purno Sangma and Tariq Anwar not to have a 'foreign' person as India's political head that put paid to her eagerness to ascend the *Dilli gaddi*.

At long last, vexed with the Congress-created political mess that followed, the nation entrusted its political reins once again to AB Vajpayee's BJP-led NDA, that served it as best as it could in its full term. However, it is worth noting AB's reasoning for letting Sonia off the Bofors' hook in his long second innings, ostensibly as barter for her good behaviour towards his *mili juli sarkar* – so long as a Roman Catholic heads the Congress, he prophesied, BJP would remain in the seat of power in *Dilli*. And, for his part, he did make 'India Shine' with brand new highways and made it self-assured with *Pokhran-2* nuclear explosion, which eventually opened the vistas for India's nuclear trade through the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. All the same, having taken the Hindus for granted, he sought to buttress his secular image, post-Godhra, with an *adharmic* advice to Narendra Modi on *Raj Dharma*, which was rightly retorted by the latter that he was following 'just that'.

So, when Vajpayee the 'infrastructure builder' sought his re-election in 2004, Indian voters were not impressed, as they were indifferent to Narasimha Rao the 'economic reformer' before. Moreover, as the *Sangh Parivar* too turned its back on him for his omissions and commissions on the Hindu nationalistic front, it turned out to be a near stalemate of an election (Sonia's UPA - 145 'n Vajpayee's NDA -138). It's another matter though in the ensuing scramble for power even as the anti-BJP forces ganged up to let Sonia Gandhi usurp *Dilli gaddi*, the media hailed her for leading her party to historic victory! So, when it seemed Sonia was second time lucky, the public outcry at her impending coronation or the troubled conscience of APJ Abdul Kalam, the country's President, and / or both, made her retreat, albeit, in the artificial halo of 'sacrifice', prompted by her 'inner voice', that is even as the morons in the media and the sycophants of her party vied with each other to picture her as a saint. Thus, going by her twice aborted attempts at taking over the reins of the nation, it would appear that the Hindu EQ at last scored over the media IQ as well as the Congress SQ, i.e. the Sycophancy Quotient.

But, hypothetically approached, would have the Hindu majority, recovering from the humiliation of a thousand years of alien rule like to suffer an Italian taking the capital seat of Hindustan? The Congressmen as hostages to fortune seem not to mind, unmindful of the perils of having a person of foreign origin as India's Prime Minister! Wouldn't every nation be a hostage to its own history that lends itself to colour its citizens' thinking towards the other countries and their peoples? That being the case, if it comes to that, could an Israelite origin Prime Minister be objective in India's ties with the Palestine? What about India's relations with the Western world under the premiership of some naturalized Iranian or an Iraqi? Wouldn't an Indian political head of Bangladeshi origin, nursing a grouse of his sister's molestation by some Punjabi *fauzis*

during the crisis in his parent country be tempted to settle scores with Pakistan with India's military might? Why, could any such one be what he or she should be as India's *mukhiya*? Without a native Indian at the helm of affairs, won't its detractors exploit the handicaps of a foreign origin *numero uno* to jeopardize its national interests?

More ominously, what about war and peace that national leaders may be called upon to decide, especially in India, which had fought many a war in its short independent history? Isn't that a Capital decision with emotive element and tactical content attached to it? Wasn't India at a warlike situation with Pakistan in the wake of the terrorist attack on its parliament on 13th December 2001? Would have a foreign origin Prime Minister served India's interests judiciously? Why, wasn't the overwhelming public opinion to take the plunge; what if Sonia Gandhi on the *gaddi* went with the popular mood for fear of being perceived as unpatriotic for inaction? If attacking a hostile country seems to serve the long-term Indian national interests, can a foreign origin Premier, unsure about the outcome of the adventure, have the nerve to act? Didn't Lal Bahadur Shastri, even as Pakistan crossed the Line of Control in Kashmir in 1965 war, order the Indian troops to breach the International border near Lahore, which none thought India ever would; and what fuss the Great Britain and other Western powers made of that Indian strategic military move?

Nevertheless, her 'destiny of power' overpowered the will of the nation as she ruled the nation through her proxy, Manmohan Singh, whom many derisively call 'Servile Singh'. Well the caste factor of the Hindu franchise, the communal color of the *Musalman* vote and the political compulsions of the regional parties played their part in putting the wheels of the democratic omnibus of India into her backseat driving hands. Thus acquiesced by the colluding partners to share the spoils of power, she as if to validate William Congreve's "*Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned / Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned*" made *Bharat Māta* pay the price for that 'indigestible' political slight by her Hindu offspring.

Oh, how she had wrecked her vengeance on the motherland of the Hindus by taking its political morality to new lows by corrupting everyone and everything in her sight that is whatever her mother-in-law left uncorrupted in India's systemic vitals, needless to say by looting its wealth in the process, like the invading *Musalmans* and the colonizing Englishmen did before. Not the one to rest at that, the depraved woman set out to stigmatize the pristine soul of *sanātana dharma* with a fake *saffron terror* label, aided by the Hindu hirelings in Servile Singh's cabinet of her underlings, of course, with the connivance of the obliging bureaucrats and others in India's corrupted administrative structure. That some *Musalmans* were arraigned as suspects in the then ongoing investigation of *Samjhauta* and *Malegaon* bomb blasts - Pakistan's LeT cadres in case of the former and SIMI's Indian operatives in case of the latter - seemed as an opportunity to her conspiratorial mind to kill two birds with one shot – free the *Musalmans* to win the goodwill of the Congress vote-bank and implicate the *Sangh Parivar* outfits to invent Hindu *saffron terror* - as an equivocation to the raging Islamic terror that's bugging the *umma*.

Why Rahul Gandhi, Sonia's below-par brat, even told the American Ambassador in *Dilli* that he sees the Hindu *saffron terror* as far more dangerous than the Islamic terror! Well, Some Abrahamic soft corner here for the brat was indeed christened Raul Vinci but assumes the Hindu name of Rahul for political dividend in the Hindu India. But then, the thus far indifferent Hindus have at last woken up to the reality of the anti-Hindu credo of the Italian family that usurped their grand old party, and that's the check 'n mate. It is another matter though that in due course the fabricated cases against the 'fixed' Hindus fell apart in the court halls and with that the bogie of the *saffron terror* too was buried, seemingly for all time to come.

However, in the next round, it was Manmohan Sing's 'clean image' (the skeletons in his cabinet were yet to tumble out) that fetched the Congress alone 206 seats, enabling her to continue her *rākshas regime* for five more years, at the end of which though the Nehru-Gandhis had lost their invincible sheen and the Congress its pan-Indian winning ways. Besides, what with the coming of age of the educated voters from the forward castes, they began to abhor its dynastic odour, and so the Congress started losing its electoral grip on the Indian political stage.

Nonetheless, nothing exemplifies Sonia's overconfidence in her and her dynasty's infallibility in the Indian political power play than her illegal transfer of the astounding assets of Nehru's defunct *National Herald* newspaper to self and son 'on record' that eventually became her Achilles' heel to entangle them both in the legal tangle, though enlarged on bail. All the same, given the inexorably slow but unerringly just Indian legal mechanism, the writing on the wall for the *ma-beta* duo is seemingly clear. As and when the moment of reckoning arrives, it would be interesting to see whether the enervated congressmen would be able to look beyond her daughter Priyanka, whom they liken to her grandmother Indira, for someone to take on the reins on their downhill party.

However, what with Advani's BJP too losing some of its own nationalistic sheen in the Manmohan's economic aura, the 'Hindu Rebound' all but seemed a 'political thud' that was before the coming of age of Narendra Modi, the 'action man' from Gujarat, the land of Sardar Patel the 'iron man' just in time to take up its cudgels in the 2014 parliamentary contest. Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, his fellow Gujarati, whose 'inclusive ideology' degenerated into the Indian political expedient of Muslim appeasement, Modi's redefinition of 'secular ideology' as 'India first' has greatly appealed to the nationalist ethos of the Hindu middle-class. But then, the fate of the Indian politics is but the votes of its masses, and by positioning himself as one of them with his *chāiwāla* boyhood, he could successfully woo them.

What is more, with his formidable oratorical skills embellished with an inimitable rhetoric, he managed to foment public aversion against Sonia for her proxy regime's 'grafted' ways, which by then became the talk of the town; in short, it appeared that in an electrifying campaign, he seemingly captured the Indian nation's imagination. Nevertheless, he had to contend with the undying hostility of the *umma* towards him, courtesy the falsity of 2002 Gujarat riots legacy sans Godhra prefix, and an unedifying allergy of Lutyens' media that saw in his potential rise its inevitable fall in the corridors of power. Even as his *sab ka sāth, sab ka vikās*, [(I'm) one with all, to further all,] fell on the deaf ears of the jaundiced *umma*, the inimical media pitched its Modi misgivings to feverish pitch in its idiot boxes. So, all his admirers, moreso his detractors, kept their fingers crossed as the ballots were being tallied on that fateful 16 May 2014, and by the end of the day, as he scored 282 on his own steam, one more than VVS Laxman's celebrated cricket score against Australia thirteen years before, India seemed to have turned a new bend. As with Laxman, so with Modi, it was a case of making history.

Yet there was a flip side to that momentous election. Sonia, who was obsessed to see her son ensconced in 7, Race Course Road, in short 7 RCR, the official residence of India's Prime Minister (rechristened by Modi as 7, Look Kalyan Marg) and thought that the moment was finally at hand, was at a loss at the magnitude of her party's defeat - 44 seats, down from 206. In the televised press meet to 'accept people's verdict', while she looked crestfallen and her daughter Piranha appeared gloomy, the real 'loser' Rahall seemed unconcerned. But still, even as he took the mike after his mother has done with it, she not only peremptorily stopped him from speaking but also pulled him by his hand signaling their exit. While the entire nation saw the mawkish 44 year-old meekly submitting to his haughty mother, none, as Sherlock Holmes would have put it, had 'observed' the abnormality of his personality.

It may be appreciated that when Sonia lost her man to Dhanu the suicide bomber, she was barely 44, her son was nearing 22, and her daughter crossed 19. What with her own flock back in Italy and not a friend to name in her in-law's family, not to speak of detractors aplenty and leeches no less, in an alien country, where her political ambition made her stay put, she had to fend for herself and her children. So, as any widow would do in such a situation, she too succumbed to the urge of clinging to her son, at once providing support to him, and getting it in return from him, in the psychological sense that is. While that naturally made him a mama's boy that his genes or fate and / or both rendered half-witted, only made it worse for him in his growing up. But that's not all as there's more to his apparent 'personality disorder'.

While his mother's faith ensured that he was christened as Raul Vinci and privately reared as a Christian, his grandmother's political compulsions labeled him as Rahul Gandhi. No denying the craven media was overindulgent to the family in not exposing this cynical reality to this day – in contrast with western media's penchant to turn every Hindu fault line into an anti-Christian chasm - but it would be beyond any kid, least of all a dim-witted one like him, to change his religious cap to a political titfer and vice versa, at the drop of a hat, that too for years on, without disturbing his head. Surely, that did affect as is evident from his confused (Raul–Rahul) thought-process that runs on a course of contradictions - his words tend to be incoherent and his acts would be seemingly disjointed. Added to that is his confused demeanour, awkward behaviour and intelligible expression, and that leads to the supposition that Sonia willy-nilly enabled her unfortunate son to imbibe Dr. Dud 'n Mr. Fraud split personality.

Added to his psychic dichotomy was the inimical influence of his mom's moral turpitude, first brought to light by *Bofors Kickbacks*, and his exposure to the assorted skeletons in the family cupboard. It's thus; his grow up afflicted his mental makeup and stunted his personality development; and so, in whatever he does or does not; his 'personality disorder' manifests itself in all its awkwardness, earning him derisive sobriquets such as *Pappu* 'n *Buddhu*. If anything, his vain attempts to portray himself as a *janeudhāri* Hindu to varnish his and his party's, anti-Hindu image for political marketing, made him seem a buffoon to boot.

Thus, on the Hindu political ground, slowly but surely, the Congress party that began catering to the Islamic whims of the Indian *umma* in the guise of secularism had started losing its electoral hold. Meanwhile, the backward classes with a pie in every sphere of the national activity began foraying into the nationalistic political arena owned by BJP; though their elders habitually defaced the Congress symbol on their now defunct ballot papers, some irony in that.

While it was Annie Besant, the English woman, who helped the Congress form, Antonio Maino, the Dame de Italian, could cause its eventual liquidation. If not the maturity of the Indian electorate, at least the public allergy for the Congress' insensitivity to the national ethos that she infused into her party apparatus could ensure that, and as and when that happens, it could be one of the many ironies of the chequered history of Hindustan. And for her part, even though Sonia has been unwittingly carrying on her man's 'work in progress' of making the congress coffin for years, but yet, seemingly, it is their uninspiring son, who is probably destined to finish the job and put the final nail in it as well.

Let it be, but what about the man, who had unashamedly served Sonia's devilish cause as her proxy premier for a decade?

In his belated address to the nation, as its Prime Minister, while dealing with the populist measures ushered in by him, ostensibly ordained by Sonia to pave the prime

way for her son, he had no qualms in appropriating to himself the 1991 economic reforms that were indeed fathered by his mentor PV Narasimha Rao.

If anything, that was true to his character.

But for Rao, who fostered him, by now he would have been a forgotten ex-governor of the Reserve Bank of India, one amongst many before him, not to speak of those who succeeded him. What a decent man's morality would demand when his patron saint falls on bad times? Maybe, to leave the sinking boat is fine for a careerist politician but desertion wouldn't be the in thing for any decent guy in his position, and that's human morality is all about.

But what did the wily Sardarji do? With his mentor in dumps, he visualized greener pastures for himself in the shade of Sonia's Bofors-tainted *pallu*. Well, it calls for no genius to foresee that the political dispensations of NDA 'n UPA would have alternate reigns on the musical chair of the *Dillii kursi* and that when the latter's turn comes; Sonia's '*foreign origin*' handicap would force her to concede the prized seat to someone else from her party ranks.

So what did the great survival artist do?

Not only did he distance himself from his lost out mentor but he unreservedly played the second fiddle to Sonia. Having privately ingratiated himself to her in every conceivable manner; he publicly declared that he's not a '*prime ministerial material*' in an idiot box interview, not once, but twice that was in case her ears fail to pick that up in the first instance. By the same token, Pranab Mukherjee paid the price for throwing his hat into the prime ministerial ring, presumably owned by the pseudo-Gandhis, not once but twice.

But then, what to make out of all that?

If he was secretly coveting the *gaddi* while publicly averring that he was not up to the mark, then he was cunningly self-serving. And if he genuinely believed that he was not a '*prime ministerial material*' and still grabbed the job, then he was morally dishonest. Either way, he's not a man of intellectual integrity or someone with moral conviction and /or both for which India has paid the price for having had him as its spine-less head for two decades. Maybe, he wouldn't have coveted money for himself but all the same he served Sonia's covetous causes and shamed the position of the Prime Minister, of the largest democracy on earth. That what made Modi famously characterize him as the one blessed with the art of bathing with a raincoat on him!

That's not all; besides being servile to Sonia, the way he clung to his powerful seat, rendered powerless by her, disregarded by his own bureaucrats, disobeyed by his cabinet members, and humiliated by Rahul, he has ensured a premier place for himself in the Indian Hall of Infamy. But as he never seemed to have minded about his self-inflicted fate; he only should have known to what avail.

And to cap it all, when his mentor's mortal remains were being abused by the vengeful Sonia, who never forgave Rao for daring to cut her dynasty to size, he turned his shameless head the other way. Such was the personal character, political ethos, and the morality of mind of this cunning man, who had conned India as the benign face of Sonia's *rākshas regime*.

Hence, Sanjaya Baru should have known better not to name his book on his times with him as *The Accidental Prime Minister*, which title befits only PV Narasimha Rao, for when the call came from the just-widowed Sonia, he had already packed his bag and baggage to move into his political *vanaprastha*, and not his ex-deputy, who had been cunningly paving his servile path to 7 RCR.

Chapter 34

Rama Rajya

When the euphoria of Modi's *saffron triumph* had subsided, the Hindu nationalists turned skeptical that it could be a flash in the Indian political pan, but not an enduring Hindu Rebound to bind Bharat's caste-divisive electoral ground. But Modi, who apparently came to believe in his destiny as the chosen one to retrieve *Bharat Māta* from the abyss the *rākshasa regimes* pushed her into, had set a much higher and nobler goal - of Hindu renaissance - for himself, and what is more, began working in a mission mode to achieve that in a time-bound manner like a man possessed.

Just the same, he was no novice not to have realized the task on hand for the immoral mess that India became, which was best described by Rajiv Gandhi, its third generation dynast, in a famous speech at the Congress Centenary Session in 1985:

"Most of us, in our daily lives, do not think of ourselves as Indians? We see ourselves as Hindus, Muslims or Christians, or Malyalees, Maharashtrians, Bengalis. Worse, we think of ourselves as Brahmins, Thakurs, Jats, Yadavas and so on and so forth. And we shed blood to uphold our narrow and selfish denominations. We are imprisoned by the narrow, domestic walls of religion, language, caste, and region, blocking out the clear view of a resurgent nation. Political parties, State Governments and social organisations promote policies, programmes and ideologies which divide brother from brother and sister from sister."

"The trader's instinct for quick profits prevails.... They flourish on sick industries. They feel little concern of the creation of national wealth, only for a larger and larger share in it. Nothing is considered illegitimate if one marches under the right flag. Power without responsibility, rights without duties (have) has come to be their prerogative"

"Teachers seldom teach and students seldom learn. Strikes, mass copying, agitations are more attractive alternatives. ...Where there should be independence and integrity, there is the heavy hand of politics, caste and corruption.... Millions are illiterate. Millions of children have never been inside a school."

"We have Government servants who do not serve but oppress the poor and the helpless, police who do not uphold the law but shield the guilty, tax collectors who do not collect taxes but connive with those who cheat the State and whole legions whose only concern is their private welfare at the cost of society. They have no work, ethic, no feeling for the public cause, no involvement in the future of the nation, no comprehension of national goals, no commitment to the values of modern India. They have only a grasping, mercenary outlook, devoid of competence, integrity and commitment."

"Our administrative machinery is cumbersome, archaic and alien to the needs and aspirations of the people. It has successfully resisted the imperative of change."

But more tellingly, as 'brokers of power and influence' have come to ride on the backs of congressmen, in Rajiv's own words elsewhere, '*out of one rupee spent by the government for welfare of the downtrodden, only 15 paise thereof actually reaches those persons for whom it is meant*'. Nevertheless, while he had neither the will nor the ability to clean the Augean stables, his corrupt widow, in her decade-long proxy rule through her minions had made it stinkier.

Neither India was faring any better in its intellectual sphere owing to the Hindu cerebral laziness to grasp the antagonistic religiosity of the minorities - the Christian disdain for them as heathens and the Islamic dismissal of them as *kafirs* - whereby the debilitating phenomenon has been conveniently pushed under national secular carpet for Bharat's bane. Besides, maybe fearful of being branded as Islamaphobes, Hindu left-

libs became Islamapologists thereby tending to be indulgent with the craving of the *Musalmans* to carve out exclusive Islamic enclaves in India, be it in Kashmir, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala or wherever they are in considerable numbers. Besides, the Indian State too has come to look the other way as the minorities were deliberately working to expand their demographic domain – the *Musalmans* through an unbridled procreation as well as illegal infiltration from Bangladesh and Christians by way of calculative conversions - without let or hindrance. Moreover, sadly though, even its constitution, besides thrusting a multi-faith feather on the Hindu egalitarian cap, has been enabling the *Musalmans* and the Christians to wear their exuberant religious colors on their sleeves.

But yet, the *Musalmans* have come to cry hoarse over the Hindu resentment over their apparent demographic designs by preaching them the virtues of religious tolerance, read secular values, a constitutional obligation at that! Lo, it's akin to the devil quoting the scriptures that is the good ones for there are many a devilish one therein in the Quran. So is the case with the Christian evangelicals, if anything as an intimidating tactic, albeit with a helping hand from the Indian left-liberals and their backers in the west, go to town over the 'reprehensible' religious intolerance of the Hindus. Though the mutually exclusive Christian and Islamic dispensations are antagonistic to each other, yet their protagonists worldwide have apparently ganged up in the spirit of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' against the vulnerable Hindus, perceived by both as their enemies.

It is in that setting Modi has started to set things right, and to start with, he has put the 'last man' first in his party ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's *antyodaya* vision with the ingenious *Jan-Dhan Yojana*, whereby the poorest of the poor are made integral to the country's banking system through an individual 'nil balance' bank account linked to his or her *Aadhar Card*. Thus when *Modi sarkār* began to put the 'money meant for the poor' into these accounts through the 'direct benefit transfer' route, the downtrodden got their due. And being a dyed in the wool *sanghi*, Modi would have been well aware that the laudable measure alone would hardly make his regime the *Rama Rajya* of our era, the cherished goal of Hindutva, which Sage Vālmiki had chronicled in *Ramayana* for posterity thus:

Took care Ram of his subjects
No poor cousin was ever ignored.
In his reign all lived full life
None was ruined by Acts of God.
Died no infant in his reign
Lived no dacoit to name one.
Reigned well dharma in his time
Gone were faction fights of yore.
None was barren in his land
In scores bore women there children.
Took his name all day and night
Revered him all worlds to one man.
Climes all then put their best foot
Dared not drought to visit his land.
Lived all making best of life
Shown was door to greed by all.
Sense of fairness ruled as minds
Were there no mean in his reign.

So as to near Rama's role model, Modi, in his *sab ka sāth, sab ka vikās* spirit, had put in numerous public welfare schemes (*yojanās*) to ensure that the 'last man' amongst the poorest rank, of every caste and creed, has his own home with electricity, water, a toilet, and a cooking gas cylinder. Well, intended or otherwise, his idea to be sworn in as Bharat's ruler, paraphrased as *pradhān sevak* by him, in the August presence of the heads of SAARC nations had the trappings of Rama's Coronation, as described by Vālmiki thus:

Led by Vasisht high priest then
Ram 'n Seetha reached high throne.

One by one then twelve Vasus
And those grand seers eight of them
Perfused both of them with scents.

Then those elders let Brahmans
Virgins, nobles and Generals
Likewise perfuse them on throne.

Soon after were invited
Angels all to perfuse Ram
Seetha too with heavenly scents.

The above are excerpted from the author's Sundara Kānda - Hanuman's Odyssey

Whatever, even as he focused on things mundane, he hasn't lost sight of his divine mission to usher in the Hindu renaissance. That is besides setting out to retrieve the 'languishing' India from under the Islamic shadow into which Nehru-Azad nexus had willy-nilly pushed it by nipping its Hindu nationalistic impulses in the bud, perceiving them as offensive to the religious sentiments and detrimental to the political interests of the Indian *umma*.

So as to facilitate both, Modi proclaimed loud 'n clear to the world at large that India has been an unbroken civilization for over five millennia, spiritually nurtured by its *rishis* 'n *yogis*, and is not something that was born just in 1947 as the clock struck 12. Even as he took *yoga* onto the UN stage, he enabled the hitherto sidelined ancient Hindu monuments, along with the towering Statue of Unity, built by him for Sardar Patel, to share the Indian tourist stage with the Mogul era Taj Mahal. So as to instill in the Hindus - slighted by the proponents of Abrahamic Order, who happened to lord over them in their own land - the pride of being Hindus, he afforded resonance to Swami Vivekananda's clarion call - *garv se kaho hum hindu hai* (proudly affirm that we are Hindus) - in the public domain in a way like none else before him did.

Whereas it has become fashionable for the politicians, of all hues and cries, to lace their parliamentary debates with incomprehensible Urdu couplets, Modi began espousing the egalitarian Hindu philosophical thoughts, enshrined in the Sanskrit *ślokas* of the Vedas, Upanishads et al and also in the treasure troves in its native tongues. And to cap it all, come India's Independence Day, he made it a point to ascend the ramparts of Dilli's Red Fort to deliver the customary address to the nation as its head, in a flowing turban, in the style of the Maharajas of yore, which symbolism, even as it gladden the Hindu hearts, has become an eyesore to the *Musalmans*. It is rarely realized that the hostility of India's *Musalmans* towards BJP stems not from their feigned fear of its Hindutva moorings but owes itself to their – the ruling class for long - allergy to be governed by an unapologetic Hindu nationalistic dispensation.

It is this mindset of the *umma* that impels them to hate Modi, the spearhead of Hindu nationalism, nevermind he had economically uplifted the whole lot of their poor brethren in Gujarat as its head, and as India's *mukhiya* has been striving to improve their economic lot, nationwide that is, like none else before him did in real terms. Thus,

it's no wonder that his well-meaning initiative to block Muslim males' easy divorce route through the obnoxious *triple talak* to emancipate *umma*'s other half was perceived by the former as his interference in matters of their faith. If anything, his aggressive military posturing against Pakistan's evil design of bleeding India with thousand cuts with Islamic terrorism, exemplified by the Indian Army's across-the-border surgical strike, and moreso, the Indian Air Force's Balakot bombing deep inside its territory, both against terrorist camps, were not taken kindly by India's *Musalman*s, owing needless to say, their pan-Islamic affinity to India's enemy besides the blow it dealt to the Muslim martial pride.

Juxtaposing the sulking of the *Musalman*s, Modi's military outreach into the Pakistani terrain enabled the limping Hindu nationalists to walk with a spring in their step, and as it was in that setting the 2019 parliamentary polls were held, the rejuvenated Hindu nationalist sentiment ensured him a second term in office. What's more, as if goading him to complete Hindustan's unfinished agendas, India's Hindus gave him 302 additional hands in the *Lok Sabha*. Needless to say, Indian *umma* tried its best to spoil the Hindu party by resorting to 'tactical voting' against the BJP, which might have prompted him to add *sab ka vishwās* (trust of all) to his earlier *sab ka sāth*, *sab ka vikās* political *mantra*. Even this reconciliatory gesture, that too from a position of strength, while having had no impact on India's bigoted *umma*, it only managed to ruffle the hardcore Hindu feathers; some falling between two stools. Why, the 'secular' media that plays no mean a part in alienating the *umma* from the BJP yet ticks it off for not giving its party ticket even to a single *Musalman* in the elections. It's as if the *Musalman*s are exempt from life's 'give and take' norm, and that's what the Islamapologists believe.

Be that as it may, aided by Amit Shah, his capable and committed second in command, Modi cajoled India's Parliament to resort to doing the unthinkable – abolish the obnoxious *triple talak* besides abrogating the 'temporary' Art 370 of the Indian Constitution, which enabled Kashmir's *Musalman*s to plough their separatist furrow, apparently made 'permanent' by India's Muslim appeasement politics. While the Hindus saw in this their moment of reckoning, for India's *Musalman*s, who have gained in numbers (demographically doubled in percentage terms and aiming at 60cr figure in the next 30yrs as articulated by some of their guiding heads) and whence in confidence to dictate political terms to the Hindus, it was nothing short of a double whammy. Even before they could gather their religio-political wits, India's Supreme Court ruled in favour of their hated Hindu litigants in the vexed *Ram Janmabhōmi–Babri Masjid* land dispute, and it didn't stop at that.

Well, India's Apex Court thought it's time it entered the Islamic 'No Go' zone to take a closer constitutional look at the demeaning practice of *nikah halala*, and the *moulvis* are awaiting the outcome with fingers crossed in an impotent rage that is. That divorced Muslim couples, even the likes of the celluloid giants, Kamal Amrohi and Meena Kumari, choose to endure the humiliation of *nikah halala*, which is nothing but the involved woman's one-night stand with a male stranger, possibly a *mullah*, for their reunion, even in this age and time, speaks volumes about the power of *moulvis* derived from *umma*'s blind belief in the *sharia*. If not, what prevents such couples from approaching a marriage registrar, instead of going to a *kazi*, for the facilitation of their blissful 'civil' reunion that is after their fateful separation? But what's the idea of the *nikah halala* in the Muhammadan law? Approached logically, it's but a mundane measure meant to restrain hasty divorces in the *umma* rather than a divine diktat, made out as such for better effect, but then thinking is a four-letter word in the Islamic thesaurus.

Whatever, when Amit Shah got the parliament enact the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 too to redress the predicaments of the persecuted Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Janis, Christians and Parsis, of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who had fled earlier to

India, while the *umma* thought enough was enough, the 'secular' politicians 'on the retreat' saw the natural omission of *Musalmans* in the list as Allah's unnatural blessing upon them. Raising the bogey of a Hindu theocratic state 'in the making', thereby threatening the very idea of secular India, as envisioned by the founding fathers, whatever that may mean, the Muslim appeasing parties vied with each other in egging the *umma* to create mayhem across the length and breadth of the country against the 'discriminatory act'.

Apparently, this cynical recourse taken by the 'secular' parties, dubbed 'sickular' by the nationalists, was primarily borne out of their compulsive competition for the 'determining' Muslim votes in their respective areas of influence. Beside, as a corollary, this divisive strategy was clearly a ploy to destabilize the Hindu voter-tilt towards the BJP by alarming the status quoist Hindus to the frightful consequences of rubbing the sensitive *umma* on its wrong side. The media, still smarting from their failure, in spite of its all-out efforts, to stop the Modi juggernaut in reaching the portals of power, not once, but twice, saw in the unwarranted Muslim rage the warrant to vent out its accumulated frustrations. And it is only to be expected that Rajiv's 'brokers of power and influence', who have been at gaming the system all along, but felt cheated by Modi for he made his ministers and bureaucrats alike not to touch them with a barge pole, would pitch in to up the ante, and naturally they did with gusto.

Needless to say, this turn of events only suited the ideologically driven left-liberals and Islamapologists, who have been disdainful of India's governance by the so-called Hindu 'fundamentalists'. If anything, the rise of the Islamic radicalism in the theocratic Muslim countries that became the breeding grounds for terrorism has come in handy for them to make a red-herring out of Hindu nationalism. So went their argument that any revival of the Hindu fundamentalism, as if there was one in *Arya Varta's* long history, would likewise pave the way for a Pakistani India, with like consequences. Why should the Christian-funded NGOs that mushroomed in India, under Sonia's watch and ward, whose evangelical reach Modi had curbed by clipping their illegal economic wings lag behind? Joining the anti-Modi bandwagon, while they lamented in the Indian media that secular India has become a *Hindu Rāshtra*; their godfathers in the west used their clout with the western religious watchdogs as well as its media to go one step further to damn Modi's Hindu theocratic state.

It's thus all these, who kept mum over the unceasing ant-national rants by some Indian *Musalmans* such as *Bharat tere tukde honge*, *Insha Allah Insha Allah* (May Allah break up India) and pro-terrorist slogans like *terā kātil zindā hai*, *Afzal ham sharmindā hai* -

We're ashamed Afzal (the hanged mastermind of 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament) that your killers (read India's Supreme Court Judges) are still alive -

readily took umbrage when the Hindu anger vented itself in counter sloganeering, *desh ke gad'aron ko, goli māro sālonko* (kill the quislings).

Surely, all seem to be grudging the Hindus for having stopped following Mahatma Gandhi's advice given to them in that prayer meeting on April 6, 1947, New Delhi, cited in the *Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 94, Sl. 243, pages 248/249.

"We should dispassionately think where we are drifting. Hindus should not harbour anger in their hearts against Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. Even if the Muslims want to kill us all we should face death bravely. If they established their rule after killing Hindus we would be ushering in a new world by sacrificing our lives. None should fear death. Birth and death are inevitable for every human being. Why should we then rejoice or grieve? If we die with a smile we shall enter into a new life, we

shall be ushering in a new India. The Concluding verses of the second chapter of the Gita describe how a godfearing man should live. I would exhort you to read and understand those verses and ponder over their meaning. You will then realize what our ideal is and how far short of it we are today. Our independence is at our threshold and it is our duty to ask ourselves whether we are fit to have it and sustain it.”

While all this sounds music to the *umma*, surely Hindus must realize that Gandhi was as much a *Moodhatma* as a Mahatma and the political *bhajan* to him is better downplayed. By the way, the concluding verses of the *Gita* as stated by Gandhi describe how a man, not necessarily god-fearing one, should live, and not how to die ‘bravely’ when killed by the *Musalmans*. And to put Gandhi’s twisted record straight, here are some relevant verses of the *Gita*’s second chapter.

1

Thus spoke Sanjaya:
In pity Krishna
Addressed Arjuna,
Bogged in sorrow
With tears profuse.

2

Thus spoke the Lord:
Oh, what affliction
At this juncture!
Wholly un-Aryan
Unholy as well!!

3

Mind-set impotent that unnerves
Strengthen thou for fight on hand.

31

Being a warrior dharma thine
That thee fight with all thy might.

32

For martyrs of unsought wars
Ever open are heavenly gates.

33

If thee back out from duty
Imperil thou thy own dharma
And that earns thee infamy.

34

What for lead a dishonored life
Why leave legend dubious behind!

35

Amiss be taken thine intent
Treat thee coward thy friends 'n foes.

36

Count on thou thy detractors
Besmirch they thy character,
Damned be thine obituary
By their campaign of slander.

37

If slain, heaven; alive, it's reign
Resolve to fight with right intent.

38

Shed thy sentiment, guilt unhinge
Eye not gain as wage thou war.

39

It's this knowledge that liberates
And helps thee act, with no restraint.

The above verses are excerpted from the author's free ebook, Bhagvad-Gita: Treatise of self-help, sans 110 verses interpolated in the version in vogue.

Well, well, Gandhi, Krishna in *Gita* taught man how to live in equanimity and how to face death with dignity but not how to die 'bravely' when killed by the *Musalmans*. Maybe the Lord would have left that to Gandhi, and anyway Muhammad was yet to be born then.

That earlier in 2015, the western media, based on a 'sole' but sad lynching of Mohammed Akhlaq by Hindu cow vigilantes, had dubbed India as *Lynchistan* betrays its Christian disdain for Hinduism, nevermind its intellectual breadth and philosophical depth. And ironically, the Christian Islamapologists, who don't shy away from exhibiting their Hindu allergy, fail to see that *Musalmans* from the Islamic nations, once colonized by them, have begun to Islamize their own countries now! Given the pace at which the 'fastest growing religion' is growing in Europe and in the Americas, it may not be long before their progeny would be cursing their forebears for failing to Christianize their erstwhile *Musalman* colonies. That would also be when the much maligned Hindus gleefully watch the bikinis on the beaches giving way to burkas, even as the 'believing' beards grow longer and longer in the Christian lands. But more to the point, as Islam nips the inquiring mind in the bud, in time, the superiority of the western thought would be a thing of the past, as is the case with the once advanced cultures of Egypt, Persia and Mesopotamia.

But the irony of it all is that the Western media that sees no oddity in the Christian democracies in the areas of their dominance and looks the other way as the murderous *dar al-Islams* of the Muslim world persecute their minorities, Xians not excluded, cannot countenance even a single *Hindu Rāshtra* on this vast planet though Nepal has long since ceased to be a Hindu kingdom. But the Hindu intelligentsias, who fail to see though this Christian hypocrisy, lend voice to their anti-Hindu tunes to the irritating ears of the Indian nationalists. The so-called human rights commissions that take the public floggings, amputations, stoning to death and beheadings in the *dar al-Islams* in true *sharia* spirit cry hoarse when it comes to India's measures to curb the Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in its Kashmir valley. That the current Head of the UN-HRC hails from Saudi Arabia that treats its fair sex as some subhuman species speaks for the farce that is human rights.

What about China that is nonchalantly contemptuous of human rights? Though Napoleon Bonaparte stated that it's a 'sleeping giant not to be woken up', the U.S. in pursuit of cheap labour for higher profits did just that by shifting its manufacturing base to its shores only to transform it into an economic powerhouse in double-quick time. Hence, it's not long before China has begun flexing its economic muscles and flaunting its military ware with a hegemonistic air to cock a snook at the world to its discomfort. Thus, when China, fed up with the spiraling separatist tendencies in its Uyghur *Musalmans*, began de-Islamizing them by means fair and foul, while *umma* plunged into a stunned silence, the world of human rights, Indian sickulars not excluding, didn't even

raise a murmur in protest; and think of the deafening noise they together made over one Akhlaq's lynching!

It's time for the rest of the world to prevail upon the *umma* by stating in no uncertain terms that it pays the *Musalmans* to realise that their hate for the 'others' stems from the inimical Medina *suras* that were solely meant to further their Messenger's political agenda but not to serve their mundane needs and thus are to be treated as 'period' so that the benign Mecca *ayats* could make Islam the religion of peace for universal good. And for their part, the *Musalmans* should realize that their Islamic craziness, sooner than later, is bound to wear the others' patience thin, whereby prompting them to borrow the Chinese Hammer to drive 'good sense' into their bigoted heads. In all this, there is another Chinese lesson for the Hindu nationalists in that as the world regards only the economic clout from which flows the military might, so as to reach the zenith, India has to re-metamorphose itself into the 'land of the upright' from its current state as a 'nation of cheats'.

So be it, but meanwhile a closer look at India would reveal how the fear of the Hindu theocratic state, on the Pakistani model, is unfounded to say the least. True, the Islamic fundamentalism would usher in theocratic states in many Muslim countries owing to the religious fervour of the faithful for the adoption of the oppressive *sharia* and other depressive laws that Islam enjoins them to abide by. But when it comes to Hinduism, there is no exclusivist credo governing its consciousness that holds sway over the Hindu masses to make them crave for that to be made the credo of Hindustan, to its detriment. On the contrary, whatever positivity the Islamic and the Xian presence in Hindustan might have had on its 'composite' culture was offset by the male chauvinism infused by the former and the sexual prudery induced by the latter in the egalitarian Hindu ethos (exemplified in the Upanishads) with a no-nonsense sexual credo (exhibited in its temple architecture). However, Hinduism has traditionally nursed a self-correcting mechanism, which, from time to time, has produced reformative movements to eradicate the social ills that insensibly crept into the day-to-day Hindu life, such as the scourge of untouchability, sati, child marriage, and widow quarantine.

Why the *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes "Hindutva ('Hindu-ness'), as an ideology that sought to define Indian culture in terms of Hindu values" and India's Apex Court had ruled that "Ordinarily, Hindutva is understood as a way of life or a state of mind and is not to be equated with or understood as religious Hindu fundamentalism ...". However, it can be said that their lordships erred in assuming that there is something called Hindu fundamentalism, religious or cultural, for the Concise Oxford Dictionary states that "fundamentalism is strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, esp. Islam." Even those blind to *snātana dharma's* unequivocal inclusive ethos exemplified by,

ekam sad viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti, agnim yamam mātariśvānam āhuh.

Referred by seers as Agni, Yama, and Matarishvan is all but One,

should be able to see the political diversity of the Indian sub-nationalism, rooted in vernacular affiliations, would provide enough hurdles, and more, for the alleged fundamentalists to rally Indians towards the Hindu theocratic state. Moreover, in *Arya Varta's* long history, save Aurangzeb's brief Muslim theocratic interregnum in its Hindustani era that too in parts, which the leftist historians push under their secular carpets, there never was a theocratic state in its bosom. It is as it was, as it is and as it would be, for the very concept of theocracy is alien to the Hindu ethos, steeped in the tradition of liberalism from inception, exemplified by the *Rama Rajya*. Any unbiased analysis of the present day Hindu social structure and its religious practices will point out to the fact that a Hindu theocratic state is incomprehensible even conceptually; leave alone the possibility of it ever becoming an Indian politico-religious reality.

Whatever, when the unabated agitation of India's *Musalmans* against the Citizenship Amendment Act coupled with the media berating has seemingly put Modi-Shah combine on the back foot, the God-mad *Tablighi Jamāt* scored a self-goal into the novel corona virus net, and if anything the abrasive Muslimness in the face of the stupendous crisis shifted the centre of the news. Besides, the Hindu outrage against the Muslim insensitivity has tilted the game of perception against the *umma* for the worse, maybe irrevocably. On the other hand, while Modi's handling of the pandemic in India won him universal applause, his countrymen, at his behest, not only heeded his call for a *janta curfew* but also joined him to clap for the corona warriors with conchs 'n drum beats on one occasion and lit *diyas*, candles 'n torches at another time. That subsequently India bore its prolonged lockdown without a murmur speaks volumes about its trust in Modi that may stand him in good stead in times to come.

However, on the subject of Hindu renaissance, it is imperative that we may recall Veer Savarkar, who first sought to lay the unity bridges across the caste divisions by defining the Hindu as "one who was born of Hindu parents and regarded India as his motherland as well as holy land" and then bring them all together on the Hindutva ground of "common nation, common race, and common culture of their ancient nation". Besides, by proclaiming that "we Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization - our Hindu culture", he sought to integrate them emotionally as well. However, owing to *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (world is one family) being the edifying credo of *sanātana dharma*, he later re-moulded Hindus as "those who consider India to be the land in which their ancestors lived, as well as the land in which their religion originated."

Seemingly, at long last, Hindus got their man to mould India in Sarvarkar's Hindutva crucible, but what about the *Musalmans*?

Chapter 35

Wait for the Savant

While Krishna in the *Bhagvad Gita* sought man to shed his 'fear of death', Muhammad with his Quran made the *Musalmans* fall in love with 'the hereafter'; and for a prophetic paradox, he pursued his passions with gusto even as he trivialized the life 'here' for his flock, which dichotomy but for the Islamic barrier of blind belief should have dismayed his faithful. Whatever, haven't the Quran-bred *jihadi* chickens let loose on Israel come home to hatch the Islamic *fidayēn* in Iran and Iraq not to speak of Afghanistan and Pakistan? However, the Sunni *muftis* and the Shia *ayatollahs* have yet to come up with a *fatwa* to stop the internecine killings on the sacred soils of Islam. Maybe, one cannot really fault them for their grand inaction, notwithstanding the alacrity with which they tend to issue religious decrees on all matters mundane for there is no guidance to be found to stop the divine discord either in the Quran or in the *hadith* or in the *sunna*. So, even though the increasing sectarian slaughters shed so much Muslim blood on the 'straight path' yet the *umma* remains clueless about how to bring that to an end. But, as it came to light in India, on the *fatwa* front, some *Musalmans* do 'mange the *muftis*' for suitable diktats to grind their axes!

If one were to count the maimed Sunnis and the mutilated Shias; the vicious nature of the self-directed Islamic terror would be apparent, but won't the silence of the *maulanas* eloquently expose the hollowness of Islam that is touted by the *umma* as the religion that has everything to know, whatever is there to know? But, try as they might, the *moulvi-mufti* combine would find nothing in the *quran-hadith-sunna* trilogy that remotely can be seen as a clue to the worst challenge Islam had to face more than ever

now; that is, given the penchant of the *Musalmans* to take every illusory in 'the trilogy' for a lamppost on the 'straight path' of life. Whatever, their plight is for the real at the bewildering development about which their political leadership too maintains its studied silence! Why not, for the despots of the Sunni-Arab heartland, who are ever wary of the growing clout of the non-Arab Shia Iran, their *fidayēn* were only stopping the adversary's democratic takeover of Iraq. Let it be the calamitous juncture of Islam, so what, but won't a Sunni retreat on the terrorist front usher in a powerful Shia nation in their neighborhood, an unwelcome development for the Arab hegemony of Islam. What if, some Sunnis too perish in the process, for, after all, won't they all go to the cherished 'hereafter'?

But whither gone the *umma* there; what with the shepherds of the faith thus stymied, the *Musalmans* of the region have no clue either. These very faithful who fear Islam is in danger whenever a Muslim girl weds a *kafir* are seemingly cool to the nemeses knocking at their religious doors. The believers who take a cartoon of their prophet with a 'bomb in the turban' as an affront to their 'religion of peace' don't feel scandalized at all by the suicide bombers of Islam. The fanatical who take to the streets at the death of a faithful at the hands of an infidel are yet to hit the road when the *Musalmans* have been killing the *Musalmans* in the *masjids* of Islam. The bigots who burn the effigies of Uncle Sam fail to come up with one for the Satans of Islam; why this all-round silence, when the Muslim world is burning in its sectarian hatred? Maybe it's possible that the *Musalmans* who have come to jump for joy at the infidels' death in the martyr missions of the faithful had insensibly lost their sensitivity after all.

What of the Asian contingent of Islam; though numerically superior, it's forever condemned to play the Islamic second fiddle to the Arab *umma*, and thus the intellect of these *Musalmans* is not attuned to apply its mind to the affairs of the people whom Allah had chosen to reveal what all he revealed through their own man. Of course, they do compensate for this handicap by being the first to take up the cudgels for Islam against the *kafirs* whenever Muhammad was perceived as being slighted. Well it's all about human psychology for as if to assert his self-worth and show it to the world besides, the inferiority complex of man goads him to adopt aggressive postures! Maybe it is the fate of the Asian *umma* to remain servile to Allah as well as his Arab servants, so it seems.

True that Islam had dwelt all about the *jihad* against the *kafirs* to the last detail, even of splitting the 'spoils of war' among the believers; but then, how even the All-Knowing Allah were to know that the *Musalmans* one day would wage *jihad* against their coreligionists, and that which 'the God' couldn't foresee, how his mere Messenger would have seen! Besides, Muhammad, gloating over the sycophantic antics of his flock, anyway, would have been too overwhelmed to visualize the impending schism for airing an opinion as otherwise that would have surely found its way into the Islamic folklore through the *hadith* or *sunna*. So, bereft of Allah's *ayat* and Muhammad's *hadith*, the *muftis* and the *Musalmans* alike have reached the dead end of the Islamic guidance, or so it seems, for they are unable to find a bend to steer them clear of the Quranic quagmire. After all, the *Musalmans* had long since ceased to apply their minds, that is, in all matters faith as they allowed themselves to believe there is nothing in the life, which is not governed by Islam that anyway had laid out the 'straight path' for them! Sadly, that's the Catch 22 of the *umma* now, as ever.

However, it may be interesting to speculate about the pathological separatist urge that bedevils the Muslim mind-set; in Muhammad's fight against the idolaters, it was his compulsion to co-opt 'the God' of the Jews to gain authenticity for Islam, and so he had averred that 'the God' revealed to him what he had earlier revealed to Moses and other prophets, Jesus included. But then how the adoption of 'the God' of the neighborhood,

save the idolaters, would entail an identity of its own to Islam; so for according a separate identity to the new faith, the ensign of its Messenger was made the standard of Islam. While Muhammad had established the Muslim separateness thus, fearing dilution of their faith in interaction with the Jews and 'the others', the Quran ordained the *umma* to insulate itself from the rest of all. Why, the ethos of the Muslim separateness fitted Muhammad's interests like a glove and served the cause of Islam to the hilt, that was, till the Persians were forced into its fold; seen in the hindsight rather foolishly.

The people of Persia, which became the Iran of Islam, were culturally suave and numerically superior to the tribal *Musalmans* of Arabia, and it was no wonder that they wished to have a separate identity of their own in the alien religion; the ill-fate of their country had forced them into. But by having to share the prophet and the faith with the Arabs they despised, they were in the same boat as Muhammad was once with Islam having a coparcener God with the Jews and the Christians. However, as the Quran had disowned the Jews and the Christians as if to bestow upon the *Musalmans* their Islamic identity, the discord of the faithful over Muhammad's successor could have been the godsend for the Islamic separateness of the Iranians. So they sided with Muhammad's progeny and began to swear by Ali, of course, besides Muhammad for after all it is the essence of being a *Muselman*, and thus the unitary path of Islam that Allah envisaged for the believers came to be forked into the Sunni right and the Shia left with a Quran to boot in Persian.

And yet vouching for the Quran, and revering the Messenger of Allah, they both tend to nurse a sectarian animosity generated in the battlefield of Karbala. It is these conflicting precepts of the religious righteousness of these sects that make each 'the other' to the other. Needles to say, the zealots amongst the Shias and the Sunnis imbibe the dogma of the doctrinarian differences of their respective sects, and it is the fanaticism nurtured by their exclusionist visions that nurtures the sectarian antagonism amongst them. What about the dream of the *Musalmans* to make all humanity embrace Islam if ever comes true; would that bring the inter-religious strife to an end in the all-Islamic world; be sure, the Sunni-Shia intra-faith animosity is bound to spoil the grand Islamic party. What if it were in a bad taste, if not for this Sunni-Shia animosity, wouldn't the *Musalmans*, unified in their hatred towards 'the others of the Quran', have made them the exclusive targets of the unfolding Islamic terror?

Going back into the Islamic history, bereft though they were of the Ariel support from Allah's War Birds, the Muhammedan infantry of yore with the sword in one hand and the Quran in the other conquered much of the old world. Needless to say, while the inspiration to fight came from the Quran, much of the military tactics were but the products of Muhammad's campaigns against the Quraysh and the others. But soon, the spiritual zeal to impose Islam on the infidels gave way to the temporal zest of the *Musalmans* to indulge in the vices of life. Thus, the eventual eclipse of the Islamic power was on account of the socio-intellectual downslide of the *Musalmans* and if anything, during the colonial period, the Muslim world was pushed more onto its back foot than ever.

Given the associated pride of their dominance of yore, the *umma's* hurt at the Islamic decline is understandable, and at the end of the colonialism, the idea of reviving the glory of the Muslim arms first dawned on the Punjabi Generals of the newborn nation of Pakistan. Going by the past history of Muslim conquests in Hindustan that were to portend an easy victory, the Islamic army of Pakistan waged a full-fledged war over Kashmir with gusto. However, as against the hoped for Muslim military cakewalk over the hated Hindu enemy, perceived as non-martial, soon enough, the Pakistanis woke up to find the Indian army at the gates of Lahore, the pride of Punjab, in their land of the

pure, which sent the Pakistani *fauzis* running for cover and that forced Field Marshal Ayub Khan, their despot, to send SOS to the U.N for a cease-fire.

Even before the *umma* could recover from the Hindu shock, the Nasser misadventure that followed in the Middle East, instead of resuscitating the power of the Arab Sword ended in the fiasco of a Six Day War with the hated Jews. Well, after a prolonged Christian humiliation that was the colonization of the Muslim world, what these two military defeats might have done to the Islamic psyche is not hard to imagine. Then the Bangladeshi war in which Pakistan irrevocably lost the eastern wing of its country should have signaled to the *Musalmans* that the Sword of Allah had lost its cutting edge after all. And later, as if the Great Satan's capture of Saddam Hussein from a hole was not the final nail in the coffin of the Muslim valor, the Navy Seals gunned down Osama bin Laden in his Pakistani hideout.

However, nowhere else the *umma* places its Islamic military honour at stake than in the Promised Land of the Jews that it hopes the Palestinians, ousted from there, would somehow recapture for the eternal glory of the *umma*. So fathered by their hatred for the Jews and mothered by the delusions of 'the hereafter', both brought up by the Quran, the child of the Islamic terror was born in the womb of Palestine to the joy of the *Musalmans*. It was as if it appeared to the desperate *umma* that, at last, it could get hold of the stick with which they could beat their hateful infidels, who came to dominate them; why at the apparent success of the terrorist acts, as the *Musalmans* watched in awe, the Jews began collecting their body bags. So the *umma* came invest in Arafat's *Al-Fatah* in right earnest as Leila Khalid, the female face of the Palestine terror then, famously commented to the world media that there were no innocent people as such, for everyone either supports a cause or opposes it, ideologically or otherwise. And the rest is the continuing history of the Islamic terror taken over by Hamas after Arafat's death with each chapter unveiling a new facet of it that was till Israel seemingly brought it to an end with its tough political stand backed by its hard military first.

But, the hypocrisy of the *Musalmans* and the naivety of Islamapologists tend to link the phenomenon of the Islamic terrorism to the vexations of a hurt pride. Granting that the hurt was good enough for the faithful to hurt the infidels, how can one explain their intra-sect slaughters? Given the propensity of the *umma* to blame 'the others' for the debilities of their faith, the *Musalmans* seem to show no intellectual inclination to redress this self-destructive phenomenon that was plaguing Pakistan, to begin with, but spread far and wide into its *dar al-Islams*. Even though the Sunni-Shia- killings, clearly rooted in the sectarian dogma of the Islamic divide, were to be shrouded by some ethnic animosity attached to them, the Sunni slaughter of the sub-continental Shias in Iraq begs for answers. And in them lie the need for the alleviation of the inherent dangers of the separatist dogma that bedevils the mind-set of the *Muselman*.

It is true that either by intellect or by inclination, the tendency of the *umma* is to fashion its faith in the pre-*Hijra* Quranic stream of love and compassion for fellow *Musalmans*. True, the silent majority of their simple living *mullahs*, sailing in the benign boats of Islam, help these *Musalmans* seek succor in their faith, but their grievance that 'the others' dub their 'religion of peace' as the 'doctrine of death' is sham for they too believe in the martyrdom of the *fidayen* that blow up the *kafirs*. If anything, it is this dual mind-set shaped by the Quran that underscore the dilemma of the *Musalmans* and the dichotomy of Islam. However, when the *fidayen* began to target 'the other *Musalmans*', the stunned *umma* started deluding itself that it is the Satanic America and the Zionist Israel that force their youth to don their suicide jackets.

But, where these 'nice *Musalmans*' can hide the 'not so nice' Medina stream of the Quranic diktats that were meant to aid Muhammad's endeavor to establish the Islamic standard over the *Kabah*? At best, they might be turning the pages when they come

across those inflammatory *ayats* in their scores in the Quran, meant to incite the *Musalmans* against 'the others', who do not subscribe to Muhammad's creed. But, how were they to hide the inimical *ayats* that incite hatred towards the infidels from their kids that might put them on the path of fanaticism or worse, martyrdom? At any rate these are taught to them in *madrasas* chapter and verse, and that's like adding fodder to the fuel of Islamic terrorism. Why only the Quran, even the *hadith* and the *sunna*, not to speak of *sharia* seem to play no less a role in shaping the separatist, intolerant and aggressive Islamic ethos of the *Musalmans*. Oh how insignificant would Hamlet's 'to be or not to be' seem when compared to the moral dilemma of the nice Muhammadans burdened by these divisive diktats of their faith? Sadly, the majority of them prefer not to take the 'not to be' route that leads to the hazards of apostasy that could be the gallows, and thus end up being the hypocrites of the 'religion of peace'.

Be that as it may, the *Musalmans* should ponder over as to why the Medina *suras* contain what they contain – religious venom - of what avail is submission and tolerance for embarking upon a conquest as one needs to name the adversaries and inculcate in the followers a sense of separateness so as to stir them into a state of aggression. Logically approached, those Quranic exhortations were primarily to serve Muhammad's agenda, first of subduing the neighborhood Jews and then for avenging himself upon the Meccans by subduing them into his creed that they had earlier spurned; and viewed even from the Islamic angle, it could have been the will of Allah to stir his Messenger into action to gain ground for the faith in the sands of Arabia. That done, and it being truly in place in much of the world, for the faithful to still cling on to those Quranic verses of 'the otherness' betrays a lack of theological as well as rational understanding of Islam.

So the *Muselman* zealots would imbibe those very ideas to take their religious separateness to the frontiers of intolerant exclusivity, and inherent in their psyche is the need to uphold the primacy of their faith above all else. Of course, their upbringing enjoins on them to live and die for the supposedly holy causes of Islam, and attendant to this maxim is the righteousness of aggression against all those perceived as antagonistic to their dogma. Understandably, those anointed as the Islamic religious preachers and teachers, take it upon themselves the onerous task of indoctrinating the faithful to the dogmas of their own upbringing. It is this religious conditioning of the believers that fortifies their animosity towards the deviant, and that comes in handy for the fanatically deluded among the *umma* to set them on suicide missions. Maybe it is for the *moulvis* to consider whether Allah willed for his faithful strife without respite.

When the Sunni's slaughtered three of their Shia cousins on a pilgrimage to Karbala in the strife torn Iraq, it had signaled that the storm of the Islamic terrorism had drawn the Indian *Musalmans* too into its vortex. While that should have woken them up to the perils posed by the double-edged sword of Islamic separateness, going by the talk on the street and the rhetoric in the *maidān*, it didn't seem to be the case. In seeking for the causes of the killings that included eleven Pakistani Shias as well, the Indian *umma* seemed to lack the needed vision to comprehend the problem; after all, it had ever been the theme of the *Musalmans* and the logic of the Islamapologists to couple the Israeli intransigence in Palestine, the U.S indifference to the Muslim sensitivities, and of late the Indian suppression of Kashmiri separatism for the birth and growth of the Islamic extremism. Why that doesn't wash as the *Indian Mujahideen* has raised its ugly head making Manmohan Singh eat his premature words, naively uttered in the wake of 9/11 that the Indian *Musalmans* would never take to terrorism.

Better, the *umma* instead of pushing the *fidayēn* filth under the Islamic carpet should sit up and think as to how to insulate their wards from the perils of the paranoia of Muslim identity, the forerunner of the Islamic intolerance and all that follows. Maybe

they would realize that the Sufi cosmopolitanism, and not the Wahabi fundamentalism, was the motivating factor for the oppressed Hindu castes of yore to have embraced Islam in Hindustan. What with the surging radicalism across the Muslim Brotherhood, there is a real danger of a deluge of the Indian *Musalman*s into the murky stream of the Islamic terrorism. So is it not the time for them to go back to the Sufi roots of Indian Islam before the Sunni-Shia bad blood of Pakistan starts spilling over the border into their separatist *mohallas*? But the moot point is can they make the desired course correction? Of course, not as long as they hold the double-edged religious sword of separateness nearer to their heart; but then, if religion is opium, there is no opium like Islam.

Whatever, the fond hope of Islamic religious collaboration in India expressed by Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, as quoted by Maryam Jameelah in her *Islam and Orientalism* is worth noting:

“The question of political power and social organization, so central to Islam, has in the past always been considered in yes or no terms. Muslims have either had political power or they have not. Never before have they shared it with others. Close to the heart of Islam has been the conviction that its purpose includes the structuring of a social community, the organization of the Muslim group into a closed body obedient to the law. It is this conception that seems finally to be proving itself inept in India. The Muslims in India, in fact, face what is a radically new and profound problem: namely how to live with others as equals. Yet it is a question on which the past expression of Islam offers no immediate guidance. Imperative is the willingness to admit that there are problems waiting to be solved.

This awareness has been rare in recent Islam, which has tended to believe that problems have been solved already. That the answers have somehow, somewhere been given and do not have to be worked out afresh with creative intelligence - this idea had deeply gripped, almost imprisoned the minds and souls of many Muslims. The Quran has been regarded as presenting a perfected pattern to be applied rather than as an imperative to seek perfection. Islamic law and Islamic history have been felt to be a storehouse of solutions to today's difficulties to be ransacked for binding precedent rather than a record of brave dealing with yesterday's difficulties, to be emulated as liberating challenge. Religion has seemed to confine behavior rather than inspire it. The fundamental fallacy of Muslims has been to interpret Islam as a closed system. And that system has been closed not only from outside truth but also from outside people.

The fundamental hopefulness about Indian Muslims, and therefore Indian Islam, is that this community may break through this. It may be forced to have the courage and humility to seek new insights. It may find the humanity to strive for brotherhood with those of other forms of faith. In the past, civilizations have lived in isolation, juxtaposition, or conflict. Today we must learn to live in collaboration. Islam, like the others, must prove creative at this point and perhaps it will learn this in India.”

Never did Islam become such a stranger in this world as of now, and sorely needs a savant, whose advent Muhammad had promised to his believers. Maybe as Cantwell Smith had theorized, hope ‘that one’ would somehow be an Indian *Musalman* to suitably renew Islam and rid it from the clutches of its *fundamentalist-fanatic-fidayen* nexus, and make it a peaceful faith for the faithful and ‘the others’, notwithstanding the hatred that these spread. What else ‘the others’ can do than to wait for the advent of the savant for the well-being of the world, not just the Islamic world that is.

Om Bismillah: Bismillah Om.

PUPPETS OF FAITH

theory of communal strife



Terrorism could be the heading of the running chapter in human history though strife had always been its grand title. Assorted terrorist groups to espouse their parochial causes have come to target their ideological opponents with utter cynicism. At least they have an articulated grievance and identified opponents with defined terror zones that are amenable for containment and redressal and/or both at some stage or the other.

But what of the *jihadi* terrorism! It matters little where we live in this wide world, and one being a *Musalman* is no guarantee either to escape being its victim. Its madness might reduce us to statistics of the dead or injured in tomorrow's newspaper headline in today's *fidayeen* attack. If left unabated it might one day engulf all of us in the Third World War. And thus the significance of any exercise aimed at improving our understanding of the involved issues cannot be overemphasized.

Well the origins of it all could be traced to the religious character of the Semitic faiths on one hand and on the other to the historical hurt of varied hues in the subcontinental society. Based on the scriptural quotes and the historical notes, the wide spectrum of communal strife is captured here for a fascinating view in what is possibly a new genre that is un-put-downable. The theory that is postulated here is bound to impinge upon our ignorance or bias and/or both for an informed approach in analyzing the scourge.

