

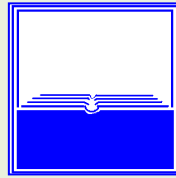
COMMUNAL INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN HISTORY

A REVIEW

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Let me begin this paper with a positive remark of Rabindranath Tagore. Back in history “The cleavage between Hindus and Muslims was hardly pronounced as now. We were so mingled together that we did not perceive our differences, not because they were none”. These differences became marked and sharpened in modern times. Serious scholars of Indian history agree without reservation that the kind of communalism in Modern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh has no such example in medieval or ancient history of the sub-continent.

Among many factors teaching/learning/writing of history, particularly of medieval and ancient periods, has been a potent instrument in the hands of the communalists of any kind in the expansion and perpetuating communalism in politics and society. Communal historians use history in several ways with one central theme that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot/did not live together in peace under one judicial, political and social system. If placed together they operate like water and fire. The fire evaporates the water or the water extinguishes the fire. Choice of words is different but both, the Hindu and Muslim communalists, speak the same language also and some Europeans, whom many of us call imperialist school, are not different. In politics too all the three sets were most agreeable.

The communal historians had a hostile attitude towards Indian National Congress. Some Muslim leaders thought that the Congress was ‘bent upon setting up caste Hindu Raj in India’¹ and wanted, even during the British rule, to dominate over the Muslims. The Hindu communal leaders also projected an anti-Hindu image of the Congress. Rai Bahadur Lal Chand, the founder of Punjab Hindu Sabha (1909) charged the Congress as “self inflicted misfortune” of Hindus and “veritable source of weakness for purely Hindu interests”. He had the same opinion about the Congress as the Hindu communalists have about it today that the party appeased Muslims and refused to protect ‘the Hindu interests’.²

Veer Savarkar thought that the leaders of the Congress (1937) “betray Hindu interest at every turn but keep dancing attendance on the Muslim League”. He thought that the Congress was “anti-Hindu and anti-national organization”.³ This kind of politics produced two kinds of historians, the imperialist and the Hindu-Muslim communalists on the one side and the nationalist on the other. One group felt that “the advent of Islam constituted the first great rift in the solidarity of Indian community..... Henceforth there were two communities in India—Hindu and Muslim—who formed two entirely separate entities”.⁴ Jadunath Sarkar regarded a Muslim as “an intellectual exotic” who thought that he was in India without being an Indian.⁵ R.C. Mazumdar asserted “the two communities although they lived side by side, each moved into its own orbit”.⁶ Even K.M. Panikkar who found elements of nationalism during Akbar’s reign regarded the medieval period as a period of constant struggle between Hindus and Muslims. For him Shivaji and Rana

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Pratap championed “the Hindu resistance” and were symbols of the ‘rebirth of Hindu India’. He thought that Islam “split the Indian society into two sections, top to bottom and what now has come to be known in the phraseology of today as two separate nations, came into being from the very beginning. The parallel societies were established on the same soil. At all stages they were different and hardly any communication or intermingling of life existed between them”.⁷ Many Muslim historians had the same opinion about the past of Indian people who still live together in spite of the creation of Pakistan and turning the two nation theory into three by the creation of Bangladesh. Muslim historians totally agree with their Hindu counterparts. S.M. Ikram, a well known Pakistani historian regards the above quoted Panikkar’s *A Survey of Indian History* as ‘brilliant’⁸. Another outstanding Pakistani historian says that “the history of medieval and modern India is to a very considerable extent a history of Hindu-Muslim religio-cultural tension.... Islam in India continued to retain throughout the centuries, its foreign character”.⁹ Percival Spear,¹⁰ W.W. Hunter,¹¹ Murry Titus¹² and F.W. Thomas¹³ and other western historians were also on the same wave length.

The history of a ‘divided people’ is a product of divide and rule policy of the British Government which still continues among historians as a hangover. The exponents of the two nations were ardent supporters of the British Raj. Jinnah regarded his support to the British as a political game.¹⁴ Bhai Parmanand confessed that his urge to support the British was to beat down the Muslim alliance with the British.¹⁵ The trio, referred to above, the British Government, the League led by Jinnah and Hindu Mahasabha led by leaders like Bhai Parmanand did not go unchallenged. The Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi organized a mass movement against the British empire and did its best to bring about unity of Hindus and Muslims. A host of Hindu and Muslim scholars challenged the two nation’s theory and stressed the basic unity that existed among the various communities in medieval India. Thus the historians of the Indian sub-continent can broadly be divided into following four groups:

1. The western/Imperialist;
2. Muslim communal historians;
3. Hindu communal historians;
4. The nationalist historians.

There is now a fifth group of new historians who do not regard a religious community as a monolithic unit without internal tensions. Their community consideration is based on occupation/profession and not on the religion. A fuller discussion on all these forms of historiography is not possible in a paper of this size. I shall, therefore, restrict myself to a brief critique to some fundamental observations of the communal historiography.

Bipan Chandra has thoroughly examined the historical context of communal historiography¹⁶ which in my opinion is an excellent analysis of the ideology, which was also fed by the nationalist historiography. Communal and national writings while fed by respective historiography also encouraged a similar production. Poison or nectar, whatever you may choose to call, worked both ways. The nationalist historians too used the same method and form to reach different results by careful discrimination in the selection of facts. The impact of communal historiography was so complete that nationalist leaders including the mass leader Gandhiji recognized the presence of separate communities also in historical times and stressed upon the working unity among them as they had done in medieval times. Nationalist

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historians projected Akbar's *Sulbkul* while the communalist Hindus and Muslims chose Aurangzeb to project their point of view. Although political considerations in medieval times, truly speaking, were never based on religious or ethnic lines, they were mainly opportunistic. There were horizontal and vertical divisions in each community as they are today.

The Britishers, through their historians like Elliot, wanted the Hindus to feel that the whitemen had liberated them from the 'cruel, burdensome and agonizing slavery', which was inflicted upon them by the 'barbarians and savages' – the Muslims.¹⁷ The nationalist and the Marxist scholars have extensively quoted from Elliot's Preface to establish that the communal historiography was planted by the British, fertilized by the communalist writers and harvested by the interested economic interests at the cost of the poor people of both the communities. I need not repeat them.

India has a history, its development to its present socio-economic level has not been smooth or uneventful. No period of Indian history has been free from conflict of one kind or the other but such tussle or struggle were more on socio-economic or political matters rather than on religion. Generally, people were indifferent or respectful to neighbour's religion and belief and tolerated him even if his religion was antagonistic. Such tolerance was universal in nature. The intolerance of a king or bigotry of a religious chief occasionally created extremely unhappy situations but such occasions were exceptions. They did not materially change the course of socio-economic development in ancient or medieval times. Outstanding scholars like Bipan Chandra, Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, A.J. Syed, Satish Chandra and many others have written excellent works on communal historiography either specifically or in their general works.¹⁸ They have exposed weakness of communal and imperial historiography but I feel there is still need for reviewing thoroughly all such books like the ones produced by Bharati Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, so that the public in general and students in particular know that the demolition of a temple in Somnath by Mahmood of Ghazna and powdering the statues of gods by Harsha of Kashmir or the killing of the Jains by a Hindu king in the South and the slaughter of Hindus by Muslim kings in the North were as real as the invention of fire or the discovery of iron, but all facts do not constitute history. Invention of fire or the discovery of iron revolutionized human civilization and changed the quality of life. But the earlier stated facts did not change the course of history. There are several myths in Indian history propounded and cherished by the communal historians, some of which, I propose to discuss.

Hindu communal and nationalist historians drew great inspiration equally from the greatness of India's ancient past with one difference, the communalists were inspired by the ancient period and the Hindu kings and chieftains of medieval period like Rana Pratap and Shivaji whereas the nationalists were as much proud of Akbar as they were proud of Ashoka. The Hindu communal historiography has some characteristic features:

1. The ancient period of Indian History was most glorious. Even the negative elements are either praised or ignored.
2. Like an arithmetical formula they have made Indian culture equal to ancient Indian culture and the latter equal to Gupta culture which is "golden age" of Indian history.

3. Medieval period is full of political and religious persecutions, whereas there was total tolerance and peace in ancient times.

G. D. Birla, founder of the great Birla industrial and commercial empire, through his rich 'charitable' Krishanpan Trust with full blessing of the then powerful central minister, K. M. Munshi and intellectual participation of the deadly communal historian, R. C. Mazumdar, assisted the publication of several volumes, called *History and Culture of Indian People* which is popularly known as Vidya Bhavan series. It is a typical model of communal historiography. K. M. Munshi, the President of the Bharati Vidya Bhavan and R. C. Mazumdar, general editor of the series who dismissed with contempt the nomenclature of the "so-called Muslim period" forgot to remember that their own names, Munshi and Mazumdar, are derived from Arabic. Surnames like Inamdar, Jagirdar, Phadnavis and many other professional or caste names like Patil, Patel and Chaudhari are living symbols of the inter-action and intermingling of various religious, linguistic and ethnic communities in medieval India.

Ancient Indian period is a long period of Indian history. The period covered by modern Indian history is shorter than the Rig Vedic times and the so-called 'Muslim period' is not much longer than the age of Vedas. Through a spell of magic the Indian historians like R. C. Mazumdar have identified, in terms of culture, the whole period with the Gupta culture, of course, without forsaking the 'divinely inspired' Rig Vedas whose gods the Indians, including the Aryans had forgotten centuries ago. There are over one thousand hymns in Rig Vedas. Two hundred and fifty of these hymns, almost a quarter of them, are in praise of mighty Indira. Other important gods are Varuna, the ruler of skies, Rudra, the god of storm, Agni, the pious fire, and above all soma, the intoxicating juice for gods. Soma alone had one hundred and twenty hymns to its credit and the rest are shared by other gods. All these gods have lost greatness in the Hindu religion and rituals, they have only a place of no significance in mythology. They had no room even in the religion of an ordinary Hindu in the "Golden Age". They were either the worshiper of Vishnu or Shiva or common mother goddesses. The Aryan without a caste, later with a rigid caste system; the cattle breeding egalitarian Aryans; later the agriculturist Aryans with semi-slave *dasyas*, and feudal Aryan could never be grouped in one culture. But they have done it. It would not be out of place to reproduce a portion of D.D. Kosambi's review of Vidya Bhavan I, II, III volumes.¹⁹

The European history writing "is scientifically correct, as based upon careful analysis of documents, collation with archaeological remains, inscriptions, and coins. The modern Indian historians have tried precisely this, with a quite superficial difference of bias. This is not the ludicrous "Indian History" that is still being written, with the Puranas as gospel, dating the Vedas back several million years, crediting mythical sages with every modern scientific discovery down to the electron and the bactriophage..."²⁰

The Harappans, the Vedic, the Guptas, the Rajputs represented different formations with different cultures. Which of them is Indian culture? Gupta!

The Gupta period is famous for the revival of Brahmanical religion, highly ornate and developed Sanskrit literature and advancement in social and physical sciences. Such a development was possible on account of the advanced material basis in the preceding Kushana period. India was in a higher state of economy under the Kushanas. In fact, the period of decline began in Gupta period itself. Yet the Gupta period is called the

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'Golden Age' of Indian history. The Kushanas who ruled over a rich, prosperous and a mighty country are hardly ever remembered with the same kind of sentiments of respect and love which is showered in plentiful on the imperial Guptas. The indifference towards the Buddhist Kushanas and respect for Hindu Guptas is also communal approach to history.

As the centuries passed the valuable trade of Kushana-Satavahana era had gone down in spite of immense accumulation of gold and silver in the lockers of the rulers and temples. The seeds of the decline were set in during the so-called 'Golden Age'. Professor R.S. Sharma on the occasion of reading his General Presidential (Indian History Congress) Address said: "A few words can be said on the flourish and decline of towns. If we leave out the Harappan phase, archaeology makes it evident that Kushana India saw the brightest peak of urbanization. Excavations at Sonkh (Mathura) have revealed seven levels of Kushana structure, and only one level of Gupta structure. The poverty of Gupta layer structure, in comparison with those of Kushana layers, however, shocking to the golden agers, is an archaeological fact in Northern India".²¹ Kosambi also agrees. He writes, "Gupta gold coinage is impressive, but hardly useful for normal transactions. Their silver coinage is notoriously inferior to say, pre-Mauryan punchmarked coins and rather rare in hoards of Harsha, only one coinage is known, and even that rather doubtful, in silver. The Chinese travellers Fa-Hien and Hsuan Tsang are emphatic in their assertion that most of the transactions were barter, and that cowry shells were also used, but very little currency. The accumulations of temples, monasteries and barons did nothing for the circulation of wealth or commodity". D.D. Kosambi agrees that in the early Gupta period "expanding village settlement brought in new wealth to a powerful central government.... Trade was also in increase" but "commodity production per head and cash trade was low". In spite of plentiful gold, silver and jewels, locked in underground cellars, populated cities, formerly engaged in "large scale commodity production declined...once magnificent cities like Patna, no longer necessary for production, had dwindled to villages containing ruins which people could regard only as the work of super human beings".²²

Another important feature of Hindu communal historiography is that the Indian culture of the upper class is completely identified with Hinduism even in the account of other countries. Referring to the interaction of Chinese and Indian civilizations, the author of the Bharati Vidya Bhavan series Vol. V says that China came under the influence of 'Hindu culture' and that 'Hindu colonization' took place in Siam".²³ The author, without a word of apology for writing Hindu in place of Buddhist or Indian, narrates the spread of Buddhism in China and South East Asia. Moreover, L. Gopal (*Economic Life of Northern India 700 -1200*) regarded the beginning of poverty in India with the coming of 'Muslims' likewise this series also indicate the decline of high level of culture in S.E. Asia also at the same time as "the source of the stream that fed up the civilization of the (Indian) colonies in distant regions was gradually being dried up". Without directly linking it to the 'Muslim' conquest of Northern India, the author claims that there was no more inspiration from India. I do not know what the historians of the former Indo-China countries feel about the rise of their own national art and culture but the author of this series asserts that the growth of indigenous art and language 'led to the rapid degradation of culture' of those countries after Indian civilization "dried up". There is no denying that Indian culture, tradition and mythology, including Buddhism, greatly influenced the greater part of South and South East Asia, East and Central Asia but the nature of the influence was not uniform at all places. Local traditions and culture had far more powerful role to play. Unlike Indian Buddhists' rituals and practices they worshipped thousands of gods and even

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their monks ate fish and meat and lovingly offered them to Buddha in their temples. Further, author's blind pride in Sanskrit makes him ignore Pali, the 'language of sacred texts'. While acknowledging Pali a language of the priests he laments that 'indigenous languages replaced Sanskrit'.²⁴

Sanskrit did not originate in India. The Aryans came with a developed language. In course of time it became richer and more advanced with extremely beautiful literature. Nevertheless, it only remained the language of the elite, the ruling class and the priests. The great hymns of Rig Vedas were never more than nursery rhymes for the people who could hardly be called educated but, no doubt, a source of inspiration for a learned few. The Upanishads and other religious literature in Sanskrit were for scholars and would be scholars and priests. Very soon the priests were conducting prayers and performing rituals of birth, marriage and death in an unfamiliar language.

Like Persian and English, Sanskrit, "the language of gods", too was the language of the invaders. The number of Sanskrit speaking Aryans who made India their home might be larger than the Persian speaking Central Asians who too made India their home but certainly their language never became people's language. Yet many Indian authors speak differently for each language. Vidya Bhavan series are a typical case. While European scholars write with pride the giving up of Latin and the growth of modern European languages but an Indian author laments the "replacement of Sanskrit" by "indigenous languages" in far off South East Asia. He writes about the rise of vernacular languages as "rapid degradation".²⁵ Similarly such scholars take no note of Tamil words in Greek and East Asian languages which obviously indicate Tamil influence in distant lands. Sanskrit was certainly revived in "Golden period" but even then the rustic poor spoke their mother tongue. Kali Das wrote his plays in Sanskrit but his characters Shudra and women and others belonging to the 'lower' strata of the society spoke Prakrit.

Pre-independence communal historiography was half baked history but the post-independence historiography including the secular one is fully mature and evenly baked. Lot of research work has been done in all sides. In the following paragraphs I propose to examine the question of tolerance which had earlier been examined by Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra. For purpose of continuity some points are likely to be repeated. As stated earlier, examples of persecution and intolerance were exceptions rather than a rule in a largely rural society and toleration was universal except in circumstances when the source of livelihood of a group/caste/class suffered. Millions of people lived miles away from the city and far away from the political headquarters. There were little chances of their even knowing as to who was the head of the political realm. Whoever may be the ruler the Shudra remained a Shudra, the slave a slave. Whatever was the religion of a peasant he had to surrender greater part of his produce to a government official/*zamindar* or a *mahajan*. Social conflicts existed even in the *Ramarajya*, some time they were purely economic but more often appeared in the garb of race or religion. The invasions of Mahmood of Ghazna which still hurt the feeling of Indians were after all invasions. He destroyed and plundered anything and everything which came his way. Other attackers were no different. While depressed over the invasions of Arabs and Turks the communalists are indifferent to the invasions of the Sakas, Huns and Greeks but the invasions of the Aryans which were like a flood following one after the other, may be far more than the seventeen times, delight them. The Aryan invasions were a source of pride because they ushered in a "divine social order" in India, made it "a sacred land of *dharmā*"; opened "the high road to heaven and to salvation"; protected "the *chatur varnya*, the divinely ordained four fold order of society" and

brought “Sanskrit the language of the gods” to this country. A highly developed urban society existed in India at the time of Aryan invasion. Their cities had temples whose traces can be located in the Harappan ruins. School’s text books and other books too do not explain what kind of devastation did the Aryans bring upon our motherland. How many cities along with their temples did they destroy? Who were the “*Dasas*”, how were they treated? There is no source material for such a study except archaeology and all times famous Rig Vedas, ‘the divine book’. D.D. Kosambi collected the information from the Rig Vedas and summarized it in one sentence. “The Aryans destroyed the (Indian) culture down to its foundation; the Rig Vedas sings of Indira having destroyed the cities, shattered dams of *Dasyus* or *Dasas* but never of building either, or digging canals for agriculture”.²⁶

Several Muslim dynasties ruled over various regions of the Indian sub-continent. Some of the rulers were surely bigoted. Sometimes Hindus, of course, were killed and their temples destroyed but the same ‘bigoted’ Muslim rulers had no hesitation in killing the Muslims too. Some Muslims have made Aurangzeb a living saint while some Hindu writers paint him in the form of a ruthless and intolerant devil. However, it may be recollected that the “living saint” sat in glory on the worth millions ‘Peacock Throne’ in the Red Fort of Shahjahanabad (Delhi), his aged father, the builder of Fort and the Throne lived in humiliation as a prisoner of his own son in the Akbarabad fort and above all, Aurangzeb’s own son, the eldest and the brightest, too lived also in an equally humiliating condition in the prison fort of Gwalior. Aurangzeb’s greed for money was so great that he persistently demanded the return of the diamonds and precious jewels which were till then in the possession of Shahjahan. In later half of his reign Aurangzeb, no doubt, enforced discriminatory regulations against the Hindus but he had another face too. He gave liberal grants to Hindu temples and employed larger number of Hindu officers at all levels, far more than those in more famous Akbar the Great’s reign. His concern for the sentiments of people, friend or foe, was proverbial. It even extended to his hated prisoner, Shahu, the grandson of Shivaji who fell into Aurangzeb’s hands. He threw him in prison but saw to it that the strictest Hindu social and food taboos were observed in housing and feeding him for years.²⁷

The ‘orthodox, intolerant *kattar* Sunni Musalaman’ rulers were equally intolerant towards the Muslims. Firoz Shah and Aurangzeb executed even the ‘pious sufi saints’. Aurangzeb’s policy of the demolition of some temples and huge grants for the upkeep of many others is so contradictory that it cannot be explained in terms of ‘intolerance’ used by communal historians or ‘tolerance’ used by ‘nationalist’ scholars. Aurangzeb was so enchanted by the beauty and grandeur of the cave temple of Ellora (Kailash) that he exclaimed it to be a creation of God (*Nemat-e-Sanna-e-Haqiqi*). I am not an apologist of Aurangzeb but I am against what the communal writers of the both sides write about him. Jadu Nath Sarkar, his biographer of great distinction, has written about his demolition of temples in the body of the book while his reference for Kailash temple at Ellora finds a place only in a footnote (Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. 1). Muslim communal writers have only the opposite to say.

Slaughtering in battles was normal by an invading army but the invaders or the invaded, the combating sides were not exclusively Hindus or Muslims nor was the killing in battles one sided. There were numerous deaths in the victorious camp too. The population of the cities and the composition of the armies were generally mixed. Even the first battle between Hindu-Muslim commanders, Mohammad Bin Qasim and Raja Dahir were fought between two mixed armies. Dahir had Muslims and Qasim had Hindus

in their armies. I use the word Hindus with an apology. They did not call themselves as Hindus. The 'others' called them with this name. The 'others' grouped them Hindus. Nevertheless, the armies on both sides were mixed. Under such circumstances it is not proper, as has been done in Vidya Bhavan series that in these battles "the Hindus were killed and enslaved", "cities demolished" and "temples destroyed". We have no evidence that while killing or enslaving the commanders or the fighters made any (even if it was possible) scrutiny on the ground of religion. Killing and enslavement were quite common in India before the 'Muslim conquest' and among peoples almost wholly Muslim the practices of war and battle were alike.

Ambition was inherent in kingship. Their greed for power, money and expansion of kingdom was infinite. It was for these reasons that all kings ruled alike. They used religion if suited, otherwise ignored it and sometimes opposed it, if it was necessary for the execution of their policies. Hindu and Muslim rulers when needed money plundered the temples because they had immense wealth. Mosques, on the other hand, had nothing except the brick or stone walls and therefore a mosque never attracted the attention of invaders except when it housed the enemies. For that matter even *Kaaba*, the GRAND HOUSE OF GOD, was not spared. It was damaged within half a century of the prophet's death by the Umayyads, a family related to the founder of Islam. Even the most holy Black Stone of *Kaaba*, kissed by millions of Muslims every year, was broken into pieces in that attack. The bigoted Muslims may have destroyed a few temples on account of bigotry too. Such were exceptions. The plunder of the holy Black Stone, the only stone the Muslims worship was also an exception. Once it was taken away to a distant land by hostile and powerful Carmathians (Muslims) and millions of Muslims performed their hajj pilgrimage with intense grief for more than two decades without performing the holy ritual of kissing the GIFT OF GOD ON EARTH. If a Muslim invader could attack and damage *Kaaba*, he could do so to any place on the earth, if it suited him.

The medieval or ancient Indian rulers were not liberal, democratic, secular or any other credit quality of modern times. They ruled by values of their own times. They were autocratic. Theocracy which limited their authority was against their interests. Power was their religion, all politics was tussle for power. They could be tolerant, intolerant or even indifferent to religious issues. Sectarian operation was not fruitful for a prosperous and stable empire and therefore it was not practiced. But, if required the king did not hesitate to oppress his own community, racial or religious. The "intolerance, oppression, devastation and cruelty" of Muslim monarchs and specially their "intolerance and violence" towards "their Hindu subjects" were so extensively and passionately propagated that Golwalkar had no hesitation in calling the whole Muslim community including the artisans, workers and peasants as "murdering hordes", "murderous bands", "despoilers", "free booters", "the enemy", "the force of destruction", "old invaders and foes", "our old and bitter enemies". Such vulgar abuses are common. This consciousness developed because of correct but half truth history. It is true that the House of Chittor resisted the Mughal authority. It is correct that Rana Sangram Singh opposed Babur and gave him a battle, his son Udai Singh did not surrender to Akbar and his grandson Rana Pratap fought all his life against Akbar. This truth becomes false if you say as Panikkar and others have done that they were 'the champions of Hindu resistance'. The fact becomes half truth and false history if you ignore the fact that almost half of Sangram's army consisted of Muslims under the leadership of Mahmud Lodi and Hasan Khan Mewati. In the case of the siege of Chittor Todar Mal and Bhagwant Das were on the side of Akbar and Ismail Khan, the chief of artillery, was on Udai Singh's side. In the famous battle of Haldighati, Hakim Sur fought for Rana Pratap and Man Singh and

many others for Akbar. The same may be said about Delhi's battle between Khusro Shah and Ghayasuddin Tughlaq. On both sides the armies were mixed.

Hindu communalists agree that politics was politics but fanaticism and cruelty was not on account of personal values but on account of their religion. They say:

“The Muslim religion exalts and hero worships an assassin. This religion encourages its followers to kill men of other religions. According to the tenets of Islam the killing of *Kafir* or belonging to the fold of any other religion raises the murderer or assassin in the estimation of his fellow-men or community; nay it makes him a *shabeed* and facilitates to his transport to heaven”.²⁸

While writing the above lines communalists forget that even the Hindu god, Krishna asked his followers to fight for him and assured that “if slain, you gain heaven (*shabeed*), if victorious (*ghazy*), the earth”.²⁹ History cannot be explained by dogmatic beliefs and religious laws. There is not a single law of *Dharm Shastra* which was not violated in the stories of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and no aspect of *Shariat* which went unchallenged in the so-called Islamic world. If there was intolerance in medieval India during the “Muslim rule” the case of ancient India under the ‘Hindu rule’ would be no different but it was, as said earlier, exceptional. ‘Tolerance in ancient’ and ‘intolerance in medieval India’ is communal historiography. We have been the victims of this kind of historiography. It is, therefore, necessary to highlight the occasional intolerance during the ancient period.

Tolerance was the spirit of Ashoka's state policy which he followed almost till the end of his life. However, towards the end of his reign he pursued a pro-Buddhist policy to the extent that Ajivikas and Jains who, thitherto, enjoyed patronage and freedom were harassed. Finally Ashoka started suppressing dissenting Buddhist monks and nuns by withdrawing state support and expelling them from *Sangha*.³⁰ Narendra Gupta, one of the last kings of Gupta dynasty raided Magadh and cut down the much respected (Buddhist) Bodhi tree at Gaya and wrecked Buddhist foundations wherever he could.³¹

According to Tamil Puranas, the Saiva religion was firmly established by the cruel torture inflicted upon the Jains. 800 Jains were impaled on the stakes. Even the great saint and scholar, Ramanuj was persecuted by the Cholas.³²

Jaya Singh (1128–1155), contemporary of Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, who ruled the beautiful valley of Kashmir, broke down statues and burnt *vihara* at Arigon near Srinagar.³³ Earlier also breaking of images and violation of temple property for money and not for religion was common. This happened in Kashmir in the 8th century under Jayapida. Even *agrahara*, the lands in the possession of priests, were taken away by the king. Another king, Samkaravarman (883–902) “took from temples the profits, arising from the sale of the incense, sandal wood, and other” (articles of worship—Kalhana). He plundered sixtyfour temples and resumed villages which belonged to temples.³⁴ “The most thorough-going iconoclast in Indian history” writes D.D Kosambi, was “Harsha (1089–1111) who broke up all images in Kashmir, except four that were spared. This was done systematically under a regular cabinet minister Deotpartana Nataka”.³⁵ Harsha, adds Kosambi, “began by a fortuitous confiscation of treasures belonging to the deserted Bhimakesava temple founded (near Hartanda) by Bhima Sahi. Thereafter the king, Harsha resorted to direct action against the other temples”. Kosambi has followed Kalhana in his account of Kashmir.

Kalhana says that ‘the greedy minded (king) plundered from all temples their wonderful treasures which former kings had bestowed there. In order to get hold of the statues of gods, too, when the treasures have been carried off, he appointed Udayaraja (perfect for the overthrow of divine images...). In order to defile the statues of gods, he had excrement and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away’. Kalhana further confirms that “there was not one temple in a village, town or a city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turuska, king Harsha”.

Religious intolerance was rare but patronage of a particular religion was quite common in ancient and medieval times. Jaloka of Mauryan dynasty persecuted Buddhists and propagated Saivism; Ashoka made gifts to Buddhist monks; Ajivikas received gifts immediately after Dasratha’s coronation; Salisuka favoured Jainism; Kautilya advocated use of power of the state to check the wandering ascetics and Bhojakas of Berar dishonoured Jains.³⁶

The examples of intolerance and temple destructions in ancient Indian history were few because such cases of intolerance as seen in Harsha’s reign in Kashmir were exceptional. In medieval Indian history such cases of intolerance are claimed to be far more. It was likely that they were far more in medieval India. However, there is one point of great significance that our knowledge of ancient Indian history is based on only one genuine historical work, *Rajtarangini*, whereas there are several works on each king of the medieval period. The historians must ponder if there were far less cases of intolerance and temple destruction in ancient India or we are not aware of such cases because of the absence of source material. Whatever be the truth the difference is not in the nature but in degree, not in the quality but in the quantity. In general, intolerance and communal frenzy which we witness today were not there in ancient or medieval India.

Intolerance did not exist among religious communities because vote-gathering parties did not exist in those days but there, certainly, were social conflicts. The Shudra and other lower classes constituted the majority in India. They lived in perpetual subjugation with infrequent upward social mobility. In medieval or ancient period they lived in perpetual poverty and humiliation. The four castes division, Krishna claims, is created by him.³⁷ He calls the women, Vaishyas and Shudras ‘sinful breeds’. Satapathi Brahmana considers the peasants as the food of the warrior class.³⁸ Such were the beliefs propagated by the ruling class. Much has been written on the ruthless exploitation of the lower classes in ancient India, a subject avoided by the communal historians and sociologists. I shall, therefore, conclude this section by a quotation from the writings of Swami Vivekananda who thought that the history of this country existed in the effort of the ruling classes in maintaining their superiority over the working masses whose sweat made their life happy, pleasant and luxurious.

“Whenever the Brahmins have written manuscripts, they have snatched away the freedom of expression of others. Vayas (the author of *Mahabharata*) has mis-interpreted the Vedas to cheat the poor and the Shudras of their rights..... And where are those whose back breaking manual labour alone had made possible the moral status of the Brahmins, the martial power of the Kshatriyas and the wealth of the Vaishyas? Where is the history of that section of the humanity born in lower castes which is the mainstay of the Indian society and yet which does not find any mention in any period of country’s life? Whenever the Shudras

have made even the slightest attempt to demand their share from the upper castes who have a monopoly over knowledge, they have only had their tongues slit and their bodies whipped".³⁹

Communal historiography works both ways. It is both, a product and also the generator of communalism. Unity of thought among Hindu and Muslim communal historians along with British imperialist school did not end up with the creation of Pakistan, they still practice communal historiography. A set of historians would claim that Islam spread in India on account of the blood thrust sword of the Arabs and the Turks, the other would challenge such a claim and would assert that Islam brought peace in this country. The Muslim sufis held the victims of war by their love and pious living and thus became a source for the spread of Islam. Both the sets forget to recollect that all major centres of military, political and sufi activities remained predominantly 'Hindu'. Imperial capitals, Delhi, Agra, Aurangabad and the capitals of regional kingdoms or provinces like Ahmedabad, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur; Hyderabad, Allahabad, Lucknow, Patna etc. and along with the above, other sufi centres like Ajmer, Kalendar, Gwalior and Fatehpur Sikri are living examples to indicate that conversion from one religion to another was neither the concern of the rulers nor a mission of the sufis. It, on the other hand, reveals that the Hindus and Muslims were not 'opposites'. They have not only lived together but are still living together in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in spite of communal riots. Moreover, the riots are not always 'communal', there have been other kind of riots like among 'Muslims' in a Muslim State between *Mobajirs* and *Pathans* and among 'Hindus' in a secular State between Dalits and non-Dalits. Societies have never been free from tension, but religion alone has never been its sole motivating factor.⁴⁰

The essence of Hindu communal historiography is that it attempts to establish that there was peace and tolerance in the Hindu period and destruction, devastation and religious persecution during the "Muslim rule".⁴¹ It completely identifies the Muslims with the Muslim monarchs. However, the people engaged in the production of enormous wealth which attracted invaders and travellers to this country are ignored. Swami Vivekanand's bitter criticism of the upper castes has been stated earlier. Bulk of Hindu masses, the Shudras, the Vaishyas and the non-caste people lived in poverty and degradation in both the "Hindu period" and the "Muslim period". The bulk of the Indian Muslims who also rose from the same class of people were in no way differently treated in the "Muslim period". Poor Muslims too lived in poverty and degradation.

Many among the 'torch bearer of Islam' in India were not kind to the Muslims of 'low birth'. Ziauddin Barani, an *Alim* of 14th century insisted that they should be completely deprived of any chance of receiving education. In the Advice-XI, on the establishment of truth at the centre, Barani says "teachers of every kind are to be seriously ordered not to thrust precious stones down the throat of dogs or to put collars of gold round the neck of pigs and bears, that is, to the mean, the ignoble and the worthless, to shop-keepers and to the low-born; they are to teach nothing more than the rules about prayer, fasting, the religious charity and the Hajj pilgrimage alone with some chapters of the Quran and some doctrines of faith, without which their religion cannot be correct and valid prayers are not possible. But they are to be taught nothing else, least it brings honour to their mean souls. They are not to be taught reading and writing, for plenty of disorders arise owing to the skill of the low-born, who have become skilled. For, on account of their skill, they become governors (*Wali*), revenue-collectors (*amil*), auditors (*mutasarrij*), officers (*farman-deh*) and rulers (*farmanrawa*). If teachers are disobedient, and it is discovered at the time of investigation that

they have imparted knowledge or taught letters or writing to the low-born, inevitably the punishment for their disobedience will be meted out to them". The ulema of Mughal period though milder had the same spirit.⁴² Saiyed Ahmad Khan was, of course, a modern reformer. He was keen to provide western education even to Muslims of 'low birth' so that they could compete with other Indians in securing British jobs. But jobs were the highest limit an ordinary Muslim, with best education and quality of mind could reach. Position of power and decision making could not be assigned to them according to Saiyed Ahmad Khan. That was the privilege of only the *Ashraf*, the high-born.⁴³ Obviously leaders from Ziauddin Barani to Saiyed Ahmad Khan, the principal guides and philosophers to a set of historians, were representing Muslim elites and not the Muslim majority—the Muslim masses. And thus the Muslim communal historiography too represents the interest of a Muslim minority and not the Muslim masses.

The division of Pakistan, the creation of Bangladesh, the ethnic riots in Karachi, Shia-Sunni differences all over Pakistan and a host of non-religious issues in India and Pakistan require a searching investigation by scholars of both the countries into our glorious past.

Such conscious and careful investigations are all the more important because secular writers of India and Pakistan, the Marxist writers of the former Soviet Union and liberal writers of the West are directly or indirectly encouraging communalism in the sub-continent. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, New York publication of 1958, is a typical example of the subjection of western liberal historiography to communal historiography, a methodology in which Indian and Soviet liberal writers did not lag behind. In the American work, Barani, Badaoni, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Ali Hamadani 'the heroes' of Muslim and 'devils' of Hindu historiography find ample space while Abul Fazl and Dara Shikoh, the representatives of the unity of India are given a small place and Abdur Rahim Khan Khana, Amir Khusrau, Malik Mohammad Jaisi and Nooruddin Rishi, model poets of composite culture are ignored altogether.⁴⁴ Other authors too are encouraging communal historiography.

Prestigious publishing houses are also publishing poisonous communal histories, not because they have joined any active anti-Muslim gang, but to make money. Unfortunately there is a large market for anti-Muslim, anti-Islamic publications. These books are sold, reviewed and lauded. Oxford University Press published James Laine's *Shivaji : Hindu King in Islamic India*. The author had a communal agenda. It is a mischievous and deadly poisonous treatise. Shivaji is a hero in Maharashtra as great as Rabindranath Tagore is in Bengal or Rana Pratap in Rajasthan. Works on these heroes have markets round the world. The very title of the book *Shivaji: Hindu King in Islamic India*, I repeat *Hindu King in Islamic India* smells foul. This book contains worst kind of antagonism between Hindus and Muslims and also Hinduism and Islam. There is a lot of Marathi literature of this kind but there is also far more literature in Marathi on Hindu-Muslim unity. The author has chosen Hindu Marathi authors to project his mission to display Hindu prejudices and hatred against Muslims and Islam. Shivaji, according to the author perpetuated Hindu-Muslim conflict. Dr. Rafiq Zakaria points out that the author has carefully concealed positive activities of Shivaji to strengthen his argument of Hindu-Muslim conflict. The following positive actions displaying his trust in Muslims and Muslims' loyalty towards him find no mention in his book:⁴⁵

1. Shivaji took personal care that Muslim women were not molested and Quran was not dishonored during or after a battle.

2. The officers and soldiers in Shivaji's army belonged to every religion. His army fighting a Hindu or a Muslim enemy was mixed.
3. Siddi Sanhal, a Muslim, was supreme commander in Shivaji's navy.
4. Haider Khan Kohari, a Muslim, was Shivaji's trusted General.
5. Shivaji's escape from Mughal prison at Agra was organized by a Muslim officer, Madari Mehtar.
6. Shivaji's mother's security guards were Muslims.
7. Khafi Khan, the author of *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, recorded that Shivaji provided protection to mosques and *Dargahs*.
8. Jadunath Sarkar and G.S. Sardesai observed that Shivaji was secular in statecraft. He built a temple and a mosque in front of his palace in his capital, Raigarh.
9. It may also be added that the family of Shivaji had great respect for all religions. His grandfather sought blessings from a Muslim saint, Shah Noor for the birth of sons. In respect of Shah Noor he called Shivaji's father as Shahji and the other son as Nooraji.

I have discussed three books on history, one from USA, the other from former USSR (Appendix C) and the third from UK. The first two refer to Muslim politics and society and the last one to a Hindu king. All the three authors support the two nation theory. They were not satisfied with the partitions of the sub-continent in 1947 and 1971. They hope further divisions in India and Pakistan with the help of radical groups who are available in plenty.

Indian Influence on Unani Medicine

Communal historiography has many forms. It can be communal without being communal. Muslims do recognize that a Jew Hasdai Shaprut, the vazir of great patron of education and learning, Abdur Rahman III of Spain played a positive role in building up Spain as a great centre of learning. They also acknowledge the contribution of the Barmakids, whose forefathers were Buddhist priests, in making Baghdad a global centre of learning. But in table-talk or general discussions they ignore the fact that the participation of non-Muslims, was no less than those of the Muslims in the development of science and technology. Abu Dawood Sulaiman Ibn Hassan Um Juljul (942-994) of Cardoba, a contemporary of Qasim al-Zahrawi writes in his *Tabaqatul Atibba wal Hukama* that in post-Islamic period there were twenty one great Muslim scholars in the Islamic world of Asia, Africa and Europe. In the same period there were sixteen non-Muslim great scholars too in that part of the world. Moreover, there were non-Arabs too among the Muslim scholars.

The Arabs had an open window. They searched heaven and earth for knowledge. India too was a part of their research. India's contribution to *Unani* medicine is placed before the learned audience as an example.

Unani medicine was influenced by Indian medical literature much before it was translated into Arabic during the Abbasid caliphate. *Caraka Sambita*, one of the most famous classic dealing with medical science, was translated into *Pahlavi* in 2nd century, not longer after it was written.

After the Arab conquest of Iran and Central Asia a potent and vigorous civilization, called Arab or Muslim, developed. It was created by many peoples who were included in the caliphate as partners. The civilization was universal which absorbed achievements of Hellenistic, Indian and Chinese peoples. This was achieved through translating their scientific work into Arabic. A great role in the organization of translating Indian works in Arabic was played by Yahiya ibn Khalid, a vazir of Abbasid caliph. He belonged to the ancient kin of Barmakids whose ancestors were Father Superior in main Buddhist monastery of Balkh, it was through Balkh that Indian culture and religions reached Bukhara and Samarqand. It was this vazir who sent experts to India to collect herbs.

Pre-Abbasid period provided Indian roots in Central Asia which later spread to Iran and the Arabic speaking Islamic world.

The penetration of Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia played great role in spreading Indian culture and science. The Buddhist monks, besides being teachers of religion, were as well reputed scholars of humanities, science and medicine. The Soviet archaeologists discovered that the famous Buddhist temple, Adjina-Thappas excavations revealed that within Buddhism the ideas of Indian astronomy and medicine also penetrated into Central and Middle Asia. Indian medical treatises were translated into Sogdian, Uigor and other Central Asian languages which ultimately reached the Arab world through a historical process.

Like al-Biruni many physicians and scientists of Afghanistan and Central Asia came to India before the establishment of Delhi Sultanate. They studied in India and went back to their homes. They wrote several works whose Indian content was very high.

Abu Mansur Muwaffaque Ali Harwani was the author of *Kitab-ul Abniya-wa-Haqaiq-al-Adviyah* (the true main features of drugs). It was written in 997 A.D. Its language was Dari. He visited India. His work is of global nature. The names of drugs are given in Latin, Arabic, Persian, Tajik, Sanskrit and Greek. Obviously his treatises were not for Persian speaking people alone. The author described 584 drugs among which nearly 80% (463) are herbs. He emphasized the importance of Indian medicine and drugs in the following words:

“India has many drugs which are more active and their possibility to advance is greater. Many drugs could not be seen in other parts of the world”.

The other works with a lot of Indian content in Persian are¹–Abu Bakar Rabi Ahmad Ahwaini Al-Bukhari, *Kitab Hedayah al-Mutallemin fit-Tibb* (guidance to learning in medicine). It was written sometime during 961-981.² Hakim Maisara (10th century) wrote *Danish Nama* (the book of knowledge).³ Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Tabari, d.858, an expert in Indian medicine wrote *Firdaus al-Hikmah* which had a special section on Indian medicine.

The Persian, Dari and Tajik works on *Unani* medicine were not running parallel to Arabic works. They were complementary. Their works were global in nature. Certainly they reached the Arabic authors. Ibn Sina's *Al-Qanoon* is a typical example. Ibn Sina fully describes 30 Indian drugs and he quotes several times the Indian author Caraka. Zahrawi is referred to in Latin works and Caraka is referred to in Arabic works. Ibn Sina took full advantage of Indian medicine in his chapters on food and diet.

Transmission of knowledge was not one way traffic. Floods of learning were opened up for India after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate. Even earlier the traffic was both ways. Opium was widely used in Indian medicine but not as an anesthesia till 10th century. The process came to India from Arabs to use it as an anesthesia during surgery.⁴⁶ Thanks, study of intellectual inter-action is on the increase.

Positive History

A positive interpretation of history is needed to project the positive role of Indian Muslims in the history of country. For example Azam Khan, a Samajwadi Party leader speaking at a public meeting during the election of 2014 said that the Muslims alone brought victory to India at Kargil. This, in fact, played a negative role because it was not true. Indian army was mixed. The writer of this paper, a member of the Institute of Objective Studies, too used the Kargil episode to project Muslim image. On April 4, 2004 he wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpai on his excited and overbearing exclamation of India's victory at Kargil. He wrote, "as a proud scholar of Indian History, I want to place on record that the victory of Indian forces at Kargil during your Prime Ministership is an event of great pride and honour for the people of India, which should be passed on to the collective memory of our future generations in a way that could inspire them for greater victories.

"There have been several moments of triumph in the glorious past of India. The epic story of one event is engraved on the historic Siri Fort wall. The stones of this wall vividly remember how the Mongols came to India, wave after wave for about a century carrying out terrifying, murderous and barbaric invasions and how the Mongols were repulsed at the historical Siri Fort by the brave army which was defending it. The Mongols who had conquered more than half of Asia, the great Empire of China, half of Europe, Middle East, and Central Asia were pushed back at Siri Fort. The Fort wall upheld the honour of India.

"The great wall of Siri Fort should be as important to us as the Great Wall of China is for the Chinese. Let me go a little further and emphasize that the Siri Fort wall is more important because this is the only place in whole of Asia and Europe where Mongols were actually defeated and their armies turned back in total humiliation. Their final defeat was at Siri, the capital of Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316), at the precise location of Siri Fort."

The effort of the writer was not fruitless. The letter was forwarded to Jag Mohan, the Minister of Urban Development. The walls of the Siri Fort were repaired and restored to its original grandeur.

Concealing Facts

The communal writers conceal or ignore facts of history which do not suit their agenda. This paper presents both the sides, more on what has not been taken into account by communal historians. They described in details, truth or untruth the demolition of the temple of Somnath but the breaking of statues of gods by Hindu king of Kashmir, Harsha did not ring a bell in their ears. They wrote about the killing of Hindus by Muslim kings of North India but were silent on the killing of Jainas by Hindu kings of the south. They wrote angrily on the invasions of Turks and Arabs because they were Muslim but the repeated invasions of Shakas, Huns and Greeks are treated differently. Moreover, the invasions of Aryans, one after another, certainly more than seventeen times, delighted them. These invasions had been a source of pride to them because they ushered in a 'divine social order' in India and made this country "a sacred land of Dharma". They wrote so without mentioning that the Aryans also destroyed temples. The temple destruction by Harsha of Kashmir or Mahmood of Ghazna—killing of Hindus or Jainas by Muslims and Hindu kings, no doubt are facts of history but they are not the facts which make history. They are exception. The fact of history is Indian's deep rooted belief in unity in diversity, the back bone of Indian civilization. This is on account of the strength of the back bone that all kind of communities, including Hindus and Muslims, have been living together in spite of conflicts for several centuries.

Coming straight to modern period there is a lot of literature which is aggressive, vulgar and offensive against the Muslim community on the issue of the partition of Bengal, 1905. The Bengali intelligentsia mainly from the land owning class disliked the creation of a Muslim majority province of East Bengal. Nirad C. Chaudhari⁴⁷ rightly observed in his 'Autobiography of an Unknown Indian' "it was from the end of 1906 that we became conscious of a new kind of hatred for the Muslims". This observation find support in a novel *'Home and world'* (Ghare Baire) of Rabindranath Tagore. The views of both, Chaudhari and Tagore are ignored by communal historians.

M. A. Jinnah and the Muslim League are accused of blaming the Congress ministries in several provinces in 1937-39 for misrule. Those who blamed the League alone ignored the disappointment of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru on the misdeeds of Congress ministries. Gandhiji addressing Gandhi Seva Sangh workers said:

"I would go to the length of giving the whole Congress organization a decent burial, rather than put up with the corruption that is rampant".⁴⁸

Again in *Harijan* he writes:

"If the Congress is not purged of illegalities and irregularities, it will cease to be power it is today and would fail to fulfill expectations when real struggle faces the country".⁴⁹

Jawaharlal Nehru was equally unhappy with the Congress. On April 28, 1938, he wrote a letter to Gandhiji.

"I feel strongly that the Congress ministries are working inefficiently and not doing much that they could do. They are adapting themselves far too much to the old order (British) and trying to justify. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position

that we have built up with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the level of ordinary politicians who have no principles to stand by".⁵⁰

Please note that the criticism of the Congress ministries of 1937-39 by Gandhiji and Nehru were harsher than that to M. A. Jinnah and much harsher than the comments of the leader of Aam Admi Party, Arvind Kejriwal, on the UPA government.

Muslims are blamed for the partition of the country and the creation of Pakistan. Gandhiji thought otherwise, which again is outside the consideration of communal writers. Within twenty four hours of Mountbatten's declaration of the partition on June 4, 1947 Gandhiji openly confessed that Hindus and Sikhs were responsible for the partition of India.⁵¹

Hindus alone are not responsible for ignoring facts. Dr. Shan Mohammad has several books on freedom movement to his credit, including *The Indian Muslims*. Rafiq Zakaria laments that the author had ignored the contribution of Indian national Muslims. Muslim separatists or nationalists all of them were integral part of the national struggle. The foundation of All India Muslim League at Dhaka is in every body's mind but no one, including Shan Mohammad, recalls that about the same time Indian Musalman Association was founded at Kolkata by Jinnah "to look after the interests of Muslims in collaboration with Hindus". Zakaria complained that Shan Mohammad had not included any document or resolution of the Association whereas even minor documents of the Muslim League are included. Muslim separatism had been in his mind. Robinson Francis might have been his source of inspiration. Shan Mohammad took no notice of the Congress resolutions and speeches pertaining to Hindu-Muslim question or even the presidential addresses of the Muslim Presidents of the Congress.⁵²

The object of this paper is not to accuse or blame Hindus for communal disharmony and social conflict but to project 'Indian social ethos primarily based on centuries old composite culture and civilization providing room to all the sections of the society'. Prof. Z.M. Khan⁵³ has examined the social processes through the ages on the principle of unity in diversity. The plural society found sustenance on account of Indian values of mutual respect for each other, both in terms of individuals, or communities. The social values sustained stability in the plural society but the pressures of Hindutva today are far stronger and resourceful than those in earlier times. The opposition to the plural society is not local or regional but national. It has the media to its support and national and regional political parties as its cadre.

Far more potent is the Hindutva muscle and money power which it exercises shamelessly in a big way in suppressing objective and secular history. Wendy Danger authored *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. It was published by Penguin Books India. The RSS which operates through various agencies launched an attack on this work. Under RSS pressure the publisher destroyed the whole stock of the work.

The violent agitation against the book was led by Dinanath Batra of Shiksha Bachao Andolan Samiti. SBAS had set up 20 core committees in Ahmadabad, Delhi, Amritsar, Jabalpur and other cities "to discuss strategies how to bring to book literature which was perceived by it to be not in line with the cultural and spiritual heritage" of India "wherever it is found to disrespect the sentiments or distort facts, we will agitate at the state level and pursue legal action".⁵⁴

RSS has been successful at both the ends--the public pressure or the courts. Through public pressure Penguin pulped *The Hindus: An Alternative History* and got 75 portions of the history books of NCERT removed by High Court order.

Communal history generates communalism and communalism encourages communal history, both provide sustenance to each other. Challenges to secular forces are greater. Stronger will is needed to meet them. Secular and objective history can help us.

Maulana Azad an 'Accidental' President of Congress

Concealing facts related to a particular community or its leaders, consciously or unconsciously, both fall in the vortex of communal historiography. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was among the top leaders of the Congress. He was the President of the Indian National Congress for two terms at a time when the future of the country was debated from many angles and decisions, bearing far reaching consequences, were taken. His biographers make him far greater than he really was. This is not without a communal agenda. This move was/is to promote the secular image of Indian National Congress which is doubted by some scholars, not without any reason. Belittling Azad too can also be within the vortex of communalism. My object in this paper is not to make an assessment of the place and position of Azad but to point out some facts of importance which remained un-noticed by the biographers of Azad. The period of the two terms of the Presidentship of the Congress was most crucial in the freedom struggle and also in the political career of Maulana Azad. According to Sanjay Barua the two terms of Man Mohan Singh could only be called the governance of the Accidental Prime Minister. This can as well be compared with the Accidental Presidentship of the Congress of Maulana Azad who was a President without a sizable following in or outside the Congress. I want to place on record some facts ignored by historians where the President of the Party was ignored, rebuffed or insulted by Gandhi, Nehru and other colleagues.

Azad had his own views on Hindu-Muslim question in the context of the future political structure of the country. As President he thought it proper let Gandhiji know his views. On 2 August, 1945 he wrote to Gandhiji that he had a scheme for a political solution of the Hindu-Muslim issue. A federal India, joint electorate with reservation of seats and Hindu-Muslim parity at the centre was his vision of free India. Gandhiji, in his reply on 16 August, 1945, asked Azad "to keep quiet" in strongly worded letter. The President of the Party was rebuked and warned that he would not open his mouth on Hindu-Muslim question without consulting him or the Working Committee.⁵⁵ This was how the President of the Congress was treated by Gandhiji. Congress carried on negotiations with the Cabinet Mission when Azad was the President, on the future political structure of India. Nehru was quite respectful to Azad but he did not give his due to the President in the negotiations with the Mission in June 1946. Knowing fully well the views of the Congress President Nehru took upon himself the role of Congress spokesperson, told the Mission in Azad's presence that "The Congress was going to work for a strong centre and to break the group system and they would succeed. They did not think that Mr. Jinnah had any real place in the country".⁵⁶ As President of the Congress Azad had every right to meet the Mission with or without his colleagues. He approached the Mission⁵⁷ twice, 27 April and 23 June, 1946 without any person with him. This was resented by Gandhiji although he and Sardar Patel had several private parleys with the Mission.

Gandhi was ruthless. His relationship with his colleagues was more like *guru-shishya* bond. Azad was a compromising politician which he did with Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad but within a *Lakshman Rekha* which he himself had drawn. Azad became a member of the Working Committee of the Congress in 1937. Gandhiji was unhappy with his elevation. He wrote to Sardar Patel on 15th July, 1937 that “we already know about his dilatory ways”.⁵⁸ This is how Gandhiji and Sardar Patel shared views all their lives.

Gandhi’s anger against Azad was very strong which is evident from his letter to Prime Minister, Nehru, only three weeks before independence, on 24 July, 1947. He wanted Nehru to remove Azad from his cabinet (of free India) because Sardar Patel was decidedly against his membership in the cabinet”.⁵⁹

There are several biographies on Maulana Azad in English. Two of them are from well-known Muslim authors, Syeda Saiyedain and Prof. Rizwan Qaisar.⁶⁰ Both of them are unbiased writers but the above information about Azad escaped their attention. Azad himself a leading player in the great drama of pre-independence tussle between the right and the left within the Congress, but he too preferred to ignore them because Nehru was on his side and he was not ‘Accidental’ Prime Minister. Man Mohan Singh, the Prime Minister of UPA could not ignore the Congress President, Sonia Gandhi but Nehru did not take notice of the advice of the Father of the Nation and kept Azad in his cabinet till he died in 1958. The *Guru-Shishya* relationship of Gandhi with other leading Congressmen came to an end with the end of the British Raj. Gandhiji could have lived longer if this relationship lasted longer. Gandhiji was aware that his days of absolute leadership were over. His *shishyas* were no longer struggling patriots but rulers of this country. This situation is illustrated by a dialogue between a Congress worker and Gandhiji. After the last meeting of the Working Committee of the National Congress in British India (14 June, 1947) a member told Gandhiji.

Bapu, is it not wonderful that our non-violent army has finally thrown out the mighty British?

Gandhiji replied: Yes, it also threw out the General.

Alas! the General was not only thrown out but killed by a Hindu fanatic shortly after the independence.

Gandhiji was himself partly or indirectly responsible for the rise of Hindu fanaticism in India. The early twenties of the 20th century, the period of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements was the most glorious period of Hindu-Muslim unity. At that time Mahatma Gandhi said, “The Musalman as a rule is bully and the Hindu as a rule a coward”.⁶¹ It might have been a challenge to some proud Hindus. Veer Savarkar brought some ‘cowered’ Hindus together. He and the successors turned them into bullies within a quarter century. The Hindutva turned militant and put the Mahatma to death.

Rama Janambhumi

There is no archaeological evidence of human settlement at Ayodhya before 8th century B.C. The archaeological remains do not indicate palaces or forts or any other symbols of royalty or divinity

(temples). This, certainly, was not the town indicated in Ramayana of Valmiki. Persons or places in Valmiki's poetry may be or may not be real. Historical fact is that there was no Ayodhya of Valmiki's description of Rama's times, several thousand years back in the Treta Yuga. There are no historical references to Ayodhya in epigraphic evidences. Very few references do exist but they refer to Ayodhya located on the banks of Ganges. The Ayodhya in question is on the banks of river Saryu. The reference to Ayodhya became more often after a Gupta king 're-discovered' it to project religious entity to Saket by identifying it with Ayodhya. The people of India did not buy Gupta's effort to give it an ancient sacred lineage. The present day Ayodhya was known as Saket before fifth century. This identification of Rama Janambhumi was not even a matter of faith in medieval times. It was never a place of sacred pilgrimage. Did Prithivi Raj Chauhan, Rana Sanga, Rana Partap, Raja Man Singh, Raja Todar Mal or Shivaji Maharaj visit Ayodhya for pilgrimage. We have no evidence. Most likely not.

But certainly it was a Buddhist and Jain place of sacred pilgrimage. There are several inscriptions from fifth century onwards on the people of Ayodhya but none refers to Rama. Marginal presence of Rama worshipers is seen in the fifth century in this area but Shivaism remained a dominant cult. It was in eighteenth century that Ramnandi sadhus started settling there on a large scale and later built Rama temples and *akharas*.

It is also true that so far no historical proof has been placed to support that Babari Masjid was built on a land of a temple destroyed by the Mughals.⁶² See Appendix E....

Conclusion

In many works communalism and creation of Pakistan have been completely identified with Muslims. Communalism and separatism according to them begins with Saiyed Ahmad Khan and comes up to Muhammad Ali Jinnah.⁶³ Medieval Indian history is studied in terms of religion in a Soviet text book⁶⁴ and the modern Indian history particularly the post 1857 period too suffers the same way.⁶⁵

With the rise of B.J.P. to power in some states of India, the history of India is being made to dance to the tune of Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other such organizations, almost in the same way as some Pakistani historians do to the history of the subcontinent. The Two Nation theory is being projected in Pakistan in the minds of young students through government and private school text books.⁶⁶ With the growth and rise of religious political parties in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh history is being ruthlessly subjected to distortion and misrepresentation. A conscious and collective effort is needed to make history free from communal interpretation at many levels not directly connected with history, like media, particularly the films. Even the television serials like Akbar-Jodha are misinforming the people. The Rajput wives of Akbar and Jahangir had accepted Islam. They were buried like Muslims but they are projected as worshipers of Krishna and Rama.

The distortion of history by communal historians, of any kind including the scholars of the West is a challenge to objective and positive understanding of History. The Institute of Objective Studies is conscious of this challenge. Mr. Punj blamed the Muslims for their non-participation in the national struggle for freedom. Rafiq Zakaria expressed shock when Punj wrote that except during the revolt of

1857, Indian Muslims hardly played any part in India's struggle for freedom. He accused the Muslims that in spite of being 29% of pre-partition India, they did not produce even 3% of the freedom fighters. Zakaria was shocked. Institute of Objective Studies was not shocked nor did it lament. It produced a well researched document on the sacrifices of the Muslims in all regions and at each part of the national struggle, which were far more than the demographic proportion. Please see the Preface of IOS publication "The Role of Muslims in Indian Freedom Struggle, 1857-1947" and the appendices of Vols. I, II, III of this series. See Appendix E.

Many questions related to the freedom struggle and the partition of the country are still un-answered. M. A. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League (conversation with Stafford Cripps, 25 April, 1946) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President of the Indian National Congress (Azad's letters to Gandhiji, 2 August, 1945) had, at one stage or the other, rejected the proposal of the creation of Pakistan and opted for a Federal Indian Union but the struggle ended up in the partition of the country. India was divided but South Africa which fought a greater battle remained united. In India neither the people nor the leaders were united like Africa. The Indian National Congress met the British Cabinet Mission not as a unit. Gandhi, Gandhi and Patel; Nehru, Nehru and Azad or Azad alone met the Mission. Such negotiations had to fail and they did.

Opening up of the archival records of the freedom struggle will enable secular historians to come up with truthful accounts of the role of the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, particularly of Gandhiji. Because of caste divisions Gandhiji thought that the Hindus were 'hopeless minority' whereas the Muslims were a 'well-knit community'. Indirectly accusing the Muslims of an armed people he laments that the "armed Rajputs are not yet nationalists as a class. The Brahmins and Banias are still untrained in the use of arms. Their supremacy where it exists is purely moral. The Sudras count, I am sorry, more as scheduled caste than anything else".⁶⁷

Gandhiji, on the eve of the Freedom, wanted to convince Mountbatten that the Hindus were not a threat to the Muslims. Twenty five years earlier he had said that Hindus were coward. HOW WRONG WAS THE FATHER OF THE NATION! A 'coward' Hindu killed the Mahatma in 1948 and the 'caste-ridden' Hindus were united in the killing of the Muslims in 2002 in Gujarat.

On communal riots compare Nehru's role at Patna and Gandhiji's role at Noakhali.⁶⁸

Sir Saiyed Sowed Seeds of Partition

In an account running to nearly 300-pages by a great scholar and an elder statesman, the reader may expect an analysis of the deeper causes of the partition of India, but Maulana Azad contents himself with dwelling on particular incidents and apportioning blame. We are asked to believe that so cataclysmic an event as the division of India was caused by Jawaharlal Nehru's refusal to concede two seats to the Muslim League in the Congress ministry in U.P. in 1937, or by his "intemperate" comments on the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1946, or by Vallabh Bhai Patel's insistence on retaining the Home portfolio in the interim government.

The fact is that the roots of Muslim separatism, of which the partition of the country was the culmination, did not lie in the decade covered by the Maulana's book; they are to be traced back to the "Shimla Deputation", the demand for separate electorates, and the foundation of the Muslim League in 1906, and indeed even earlier, to the days of Sir Saiyed Ahmad Khan, who threw his powerful influence in favour of the isolation of his community from the national movement when this movement started on its career. Sir Saiyed raised the great question-mark which was to shadow Indian politics for the next 60 years; what would be the position of the Muslim community in a free India? If British autocracy were to be replaced by an Indian democracy, would it give a permanent advantage to Hindus who heavily out-numbered the Muslims?

Anti-British Feeling

In the years immediately preceding the First World War, the Balkan wars and the travails of Turkey aroused much anti-British feeling among Indian Muslims, and for a few years the Muslim League came to be controlled by a Lucknow-based faction with nationalist proclivities. Hindu-Muslim rapprochement received a boost after the war, when Gandhiji lent his support to the Indian Muslims' demand for preserving the territorial integrity of Turkey and the presuriminal controversy raged like a hurricane in the next decade when Muslim separatism dominated and distorted the course of Indian politics, the central figure in this drama during the next decade was Mr. Jinnah.

As we have already seen, Jinnah had met with an electoral disaster of the first magnitude in 1937. Not only did the Muslim electorate fail to vote his party to office in the Muslim-majority provinces, but even in the Muslim minority provinces his party was routed. He was, however, not the man to let history pass over.

He set out to achieve through a propaganda blast what the ballot box had denied him. He decided to use the dynamite of religious emotion to acquire political influence and power.

The Congress ministries had not been in office even for a few weeks, when he began to charge them with tyrannizing over Muslims. His charges were, as the Maulana Azad says, "Absolutely unfounded", but they wrought untold mischief. The cry of Islam in danger, the reiteration of Congress tyranny and the specter of "Hindu Raj" created the climate in which Jinnah could propound his two-nation theory and the proposal for the partition of India.

The vision of a sovereign Muslim state in Indian subcontinent was reminiscent of the past glories of Muslim rule; it was too fascinating a prospect not to catch popular imagination. The Muslim middle class, which, for historical reasons, had been left behind in the race for the plums of government service, trade and industry in certain areas, was attracted by the idea of a Muslim state. Muslim landlords in Bengal and Punjab saw the prospect of deliverance from 'progressive politicians' like Jawaharlal Nehru, who indulged in dangerous talk of abolishing Zamindari. Muslim officials were glad of the new vistas which were expected to open to them in a few states, without the Hindu competition. In 1919-20 Hindu-Muslim unity reached its high watermark.

It was however, not the nationalist movement, but the concern for Turkey and the holy places of Islam which provided the main impulse for this concordat between the two communities. Deep and sincere as this religious emotion may have been, it was harnessed to a frantic cause, which was brought to an inglorious end by the Turks themselves when they abolished the institution of Sultan-Caliph. Thus the one successful experiment in bringing the Muslim community into the heart of the nationalist movement failed to break its psychological isolation, and indeed confirmed its tendency to view political problems from a religious angle.

The fabric of Hindu-Muslim unity, at which Gandhi had laboured so hard, went to pieces after the decline of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements, his voice, once so powerful, was drowned in a din of communal recrimination by bigots on both sides. A favourite recipe for harmony in 1920s between the communities was a communal pact through an all parties' conference. Leaders of a number of political parties and religious organizations tried to allocate jobs under the government and seats in the legislatures--the spoils of swaraj, as it were--but found it difficult to reconcile their antagonistic claims.

Petty Politics

Gandhi disliked this petty-fogging politics; he would have liked to disarm Muslim fears by generosity on the part of Hindus. His offer of a "blank cheque" to Muslims was ridiculed by them, and resented by Hindus. Unfortunately Hindu politicians were as incapable of generosity, as Muslim politicians were of trust.

The same futile pattern of the unity conference was repeated at the Round Table Conference in London. In 1932 the British government imposed a solution in the form of the communal award, which laid down the quantum and mode of representation in legislatures. The perpetuation of separate electorates in the communal award was repugnant to the Congress; but it decided not to reject it until an alternative solution, acceptable to all the communities, could emerge.

Even though the communal award conceded almost all the political demands of the Muslim League vis-à-vis the Hindus, Muslim politics continued to run in the old grooves. Muslim traders and industrialists began to cherish visions of free fields for prosperous ventures without the intrusion of Hindu competitors.

Separatist Ideology

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The outbreak of the World War in 1939 helped the propagation of the separatist ideology, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and his advisers, anticipating a show-down with the Congress, were in search of friends. It was during the war years that Jinnah strengthened his position. He was careful not to embroil himself with the British and he outwitted and outmaneuvered such seasoned provincial politicians as Sikander Hyat Khan and Fazl-ul-Haq. When the Congress went into the political wilderness with the Quit India movement in 1942, Jinnah, with the help of the British governors, succeeded in installing Muslim League ministries in Assam, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Bengal. From every attempt at a solution of the constitutional deadlock between 1939 and 1946, he extracted political gains for himself and his party. The Cripps Missions in 1942 mattered to him only insofar as the provision for the non-accession of provinces signified an indirect endorsement of the principle of partition. The ill-fated Bhulabhai-Liaquat Ali Pact was repudiated by him, but it introduced the idea of parity between the Congress and the League in an interim government. The Gandhi-Jinnah links in 1944 were useful to the League leader only insofar as they raised his prestige with his own following. It was his veto which made the Shimla Conference in 1945 a futile exercise.

It is not surprising that in their long-drawn-out struggle with the Indian National Congress, the British came to have a soft corner for the Muslim League. They were glad to use Muslim separatism--just as they used the princely order--to spike the nationalist guns. As a British historian, Peter Hardy, points out in his scholarly study of Muslim politics in India, "to expect them (the British) to encourage the ideals and the growth of non-communal nationalism and thus to hasten their own British political and economic position in the world, was to expect a degree not merely of altruism, but also of prophetic insight out of the world of the history of governments.

B R Nanda
The Times of India 23.11.1988

Appendix 'B'

Department of History and Culture, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi.

M.A. (Previous/Final) Syllabus w.e.f. 1982-83

Paper VIII(C)

Communalism in Indian Politics 1857-1947

1. Muslim community in India: distribution of population (1921); social structure; system of education; impact of British rule on the Muslims and their responses, Faraizi and Barelvi Movements; Dar al-ulum at Deoband, the Ahmadiya and the Aligarh Movements.
2. Foundation of the Muslim League and the emergence of communal politics; the role of the British; nature and character of the Indian National Movement; Congress's association with Hindu revivalist movements.

3. Impact of World War-I and the growth of Hindu-Muslim unity; Lucknow Pact; Home Rule Movement; Rowlatt Satyagraha.
4. Pan-Islamic Movements; its historical antecedents; importance of mass mobilization--role of the press, Khilafat Committees, Sufi shrines; Ulema in Indian politics with special reference to their role in the Khilafat Movement; Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements; role of Mohamed Ali.
5. Growth of communal antagonism; breakdown of Congress- Khilafat alliance; revival of communal bodies--Shuddhi Sangathan, Tabligh, Tanzim; communal violence with special reference to riots in Bengal, Punjab and the United Provinces.
6. Congress-Muslim League negotiations (1922-1930), Unity Conferences; Delhi proposals; Nehru Report; Round Table Conferences.
7. The rise of the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan; study of the Muslim League leadership, class composition of the party.... Its policies and influences; responses of various Muslim groups to the demand of Pakistan; critical evaluation of the two-nation theory.
8. British policies and initiatives in resolving the Congress-Muslim League impasse--Simla Conference, Cripps proposals and Cabinet Mission plan.
9. Perspectives on the communal phenomenon--socio-economic factors; role of religious ideology and the British in heightening communal consciousness.
10. Critical evaluation of the approaches to the study of the communal problem; review of secondary literature; alternative approaches.

Reading List

Peter Hardy	<i>The Muslims of British India.</i>
W.C. Smith	<i>Modern Islam in India.</i>
Mushirul Hasan	<i>Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-1928.</i>
-do-	<i>Mohamed Ali: Ideology and Politics.</i>
-do- (ed.)	<i>Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India.</i>
F. Robinson	<i>Separatism among Indian Muslims.</i>
R. Ahmad	<i>The Bengal Muslims, 1871-1906. A Quest for Identity.</i>
P. Brass	<i>Language, Religion and Politics in North India.</i>
D. Lelyveld	<i>Aligarh's First Generation.</i>
C.W. Troll	<i>Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim theology.</i>
S.R. Wasti	<i>Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905-1910.</i>
Gail Minault	<i>Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics, 1885-1906.</i>
R. Zakaria	<i>Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India.</i>
G.R. Thursby	<i>The Khilafat Movement.</i>

- H.V. Hodson *The Great Divide.*
P. Moon *Muslims and Indian Nationalism: the Emergence of the Demand for India's Partition, 1928-1940.*
P. Moon *Divide and Quit.*
Z.H. Farooqi *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan.*
I.H. Qureshi *Ulema in Politics, 1556-1947.*

Articles

- N.G. Barrier 'Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 1810-1890' *The Punjab Past and Present*, April, 1971.
Bipan Chandra 'Indian National Movement and the Communal Problem' in *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India.*
Aparna Basu Articles in B. R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History.*
Partha Chatterji 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1925-1935' in R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I.*
R.A. Gordan 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926', *Modern Asian Studies*, July, 1973.
M. Hasan 'The Delhi Proposals: A Study in Communal Politics, *IESHR*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1981.

General

- M. Mujeeb *The Indian Muslims.*
M. T. Titus *Indian Islam: The Religious Quest of India.*
J. H. Farquhar *Modern Religious Movements in India.*
A. Ahmad *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964*

An Analysis- Communal Perspective

1. <u>Total number of books on Reading list:</u>	19
Books on communalism (general).	06
Muslim religious-political movements; leaders.	13
Hindu religious-political movements; leaders.	Nil
<hr/>	
2. <u>Total number of books in General:</u>	04
Books on communalism (general)	01
Muslim religious-political movements; leaders.	03
Hindu religious-political movements; leaders.	Nil
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(28)

<u>3. Total number of articles:</u>	06
Articles on communalism (general).	04
Muslim religious-political movements; leaders.	01
Hindu religious-political movements; leaders.	01
<hr/>	
4. Total number of books and articles in Reading List and General reading	29
On communalism (general)	11
On Muslim religious-political leaders and movements.	17
On Hindu religious-political leaders and movements.	01

The above analysis indicates that the students are advised to study either the general books or books on Muslim leaders and Muslim movements. Non-Muslims, frankly Hindus are outside the focus. There is only one article (not a book) on Hindu Mahasabha. This kind of teaching for the last hundred years has caused a deep rooted conviction in the minds of scholars, Hindus and Muslims, Indians and foreigners that the Muslims alone were responsible for fomenting communal politics resulting in the partition of India.

Appendix 'C'

A Soviet Historian on Medieval India

Find below a selection of observations and comments made by a Soviet scholar which express communal characteristics where religion is given an important place in political analysis. The book under study is a text book type, quite in use by the "left students" at the B.A. (Pass) level. Its medieval portion is authored by K. Antonova, published by Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979 under the title, *A History of India*, Vol. 1.

The Turkish Conquest of Northern India is identified with religion while earlier invasions are associated either with country or with race by the author of the ancient period.

"Invasion of the Hun tribe"; "the Greek army advanced into eastern India"; "Iranian tribes of the Shakas made their way into North West India from Central Asia"; "the Mongol forces", pp. 115, 116, 203, 204.

"Attacks by Moslem conqueror of Turk origin"; "gradually in north of India, a large state, ruled over by Moslem conquerors was established... it was drawn into the sphere of the so-called Moslem world". "The Mongol threat served to rally the Moslem nobility round the throne even after Chinggis Khan left India". "During Iltutmish's reign Moslem commanders came to dominate Northern India". "Sunnite Islam was

adopted as the state religion while Hindus were regarded by them as infidels' zimmis". "No chronicles written in India before the Moslem conquest". pp. 202-203, 227.

The author suggests that Muslim theocratic state was established and the Hindus lived in subjugation. Such observation is made on the ground of above sentences and the following ones:

"Under Alauddin Hindus were forbidden to wear arms, dress in rich clothing, or ride horseback. These measures were designed to satisfy the more zealous among the Moslems". Alauddin's "harassment of Hindus (etc.) gave rise to widespread discontent; a number of privileges were granted to Moslem military commanders, but it only served to fan their separatist leaning". Firoz subjected "Hindus and Shia Moslems to persecution. During campaigns against Hindu princedoms he made slaves of local population". pp. 206-208.

It is to be noted that the author accused Alauddin of discrimination and intolerance. Similarly in the case of Firoz's attack on some rulers the author writes "Hindu princedoms" but such identification is not made in the case of the victims of Shivaji's attack.

Even in economic history the author frequently used Hindus and Muslims. The land is also termed Hindu. Find below sentences which are self explanatory.

"Throughout the whole of Sultanate period the lands belonging to Hindus remained intact..... Alauddin's reforms which included extremely high taxation on population and additional taxation on Hindu feudal lords". (p. 211)

"Captives driven south from Central Asia and Persia were sold and the inhabitants of Hindu states against which a jihad or Holy War had been declared, were also made slaves".

This sentence is a typical reflection of Indian communal historians. Slaves from predominantly Muslim countries are named Persians and Central Asians whereas Indian slaves are named "inhabitants of Hindu states".

The Bahmani nobles' factional tussle among the *desis* and *bidesis* – locals and foreigners--is considered as hostility among the Shias and Sunnis. Moreover, Bahmani's conflict with "Muslim" Malwa is treated as a conflict between two kingdoms but kingdoms which were ruled by Hindu rajas are treated differently. See below.

Bahmani king 'achieved victory over Malwa and many Hindu princes of Konkan". (p. 215)

In the case of the five Deccan kingdoms the author writes, "Although the rulers of these states were zealous Moslems, who persecuted the Hindu population in the conquered territories, the wars were fought on political issues.... When the states of this period are designated as Moslem, this is with reference to the state religion that was foisted on the people and upheld by the rulers and the nobility".... The author accuses other 'Moslem' kingdoms of intolerance and discrimination by writing that "Hindus living in

Golconda were not as a rule subjected to the same kind of persecution they met with in other Moslem states of the Deccan". pp. 216-217.

The author has followed the communal line exactly on the pattern of R.C. Mazumdar and Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, perhaps slightly more communal.

"In the Delhi Sultanate Islam was made the state religion that was foisted upon the local population by force. Various sections of Hindu population adopted the new religion, a small part under force and others because of privilege to which it gave them access, since only Moslems were able to hold prominent posts.... Moslems constituted the ruling class in most parts of the country..... As a rule the peasants also remained Hindus". (p. 224)

It is doubtful if Islam was a state religion. Among the Muslims there were rich and poor, masters and slaves. Moreover, Hindus would never change their religion for 'prominent posts' because such positions were very few. The *zamindars* who were mainly Rajputs controlled the rural Sultanate and the Hindu merchants were perhaps richer. Among peasants there were both Hindus and Muslims. In Sind and Bengal the Muslim peasants would have been substantial.

"There was rise to hostile resistance from the Sunnite at court because Bairam Khan was a Shia who "allocated high ranks and grants to those who shared his beliefs". (p. 232)

"This shift in Rajput allegiance to the side of Moslem ruler led to protest in orthodox Rajput circles, where it was held that Hindus brought dishonour upon themselves by being at court..... They all (Moslem nobles) opposed Akbar's admission to court of various Rajput Hindu princes". (pp. 232-233)

"Akbar's subsequent measures were aimed at consolidating the rule of his dynasty and the domination of Moslem feudal lords in India. At the same time he sought to secure the support of Hindu population by reducing the religious oppression to which they were subjected. This policy gave rise to resistance on the part of Moslem jagirdars and Shaikhs. (Pilgrim tax and jizia were reintroduced under the influence of Moslem jagirdars but abolished once more at the beginning of 1580s)". (pp. 240-241)

"Jahangir's accession marked a certain departure from the policy of religious tolerance that Akbar had proclaimed. This led to discontent among the majority of Hindu jagirdars and some sections of Moslems". (p. 244)

The author presumes that there was religious persecution and Akbar only reduced it. In case the Muslims were enslaved the author would not identify religion but in all cases where the victim was a Hindu his religion was expressed. Thus a normal historical process--slavery in medieval times is projected as communal persecution under the 'Muslim rulers' in India. This kind of interpretation coming from a Marxist historian is highly disturbing.

"Aurangzeb's accession to the throne meant that the more reactionary circles of jagirdars now enjoyed decisive influence at court. This cold, calculating politician was a fanatical Moslem... signified a policy

which stripped Hindus over their rights, and of a drive to persecute Shia Moslems. In order to bring life of the country in accordance with *Shariat*, the playing of music, dancing, the sowing of the drug bhang, etc. were prohibited. Between 1665 and 1669, he gave orders for Hindu temples to be destroyed and for mosques to be erected from their debris. Hindus were not allowed to wear any mark of honour, to ride elephants". (p. 255)

The author has taken up only such matters which suit the imperialist historians who worked for divide and rule and the Hindu communalists. The uncritical acceptance of Maratha record has made the author write that "Bijapur's commander Afzal Khan wanted to kill Shivaji deceitfully and the entry of Shivaji in Surat and his plunder of that prosperous city had some kind of justification. Further, in the succeeding account the author persistently follow a 'Hindu' communal line. Soviet historians are not communal but communal historiography had made such a deep imprint on Indian historiography that only a conscious and careful writer could escape its impact. Another work of Soviet scholar follows the same line. See Kalara Z. Ashrafyan's 'The Historical Significance of the Turkish Conquest of Northern India' in Horst Kruger (ed.), *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, Delhi, 1969. (pp. 67-83)

Appendix D

Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Preface in “*THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE 1857-1947*, Vol. 1, pp. iii-xi.

The contribution of Muslims to the freedom struggle is second to none. As a matter of fact, in some respects and at various places, it was brightest and highest but a particular school of historians in India is leaving no stone unturned to minimize their role in the freedom struggle. Concerted attempts are being made to identify the entire community with Muslim League of pre-partition days and to brand them as communalist and separatists. The positive role of Muslims in all major events in all regions of India where they were in majority or in minority is either being ignored or diluted.

Muslims had played a significant role in the formation and establishment of various national forums and parties in undivided India for the freedom of the country like Indian National Congress, peasants’ and workers’ unions and cultural and literary groups. They also founded their own organizations for the same purpose. Important among them with an all-India base was Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, founded in 1919. Others being Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam (1929), Anjuman-i-Watan-i-Baluchistan (1932), All India Momin Conference (1925), Praja Karshak-Bengal (1934), Khudai Khidmatgar, NWFP (1924), Muslim Majlis (1940) and Jamiat-ul-Ansar (1909). Many others like Muslim Independent Party (Bihar), National Conference (Kashmir), Shia Political Conference, and Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka’ba also emerged in the early decades of the 20th century.

Indian struggle for freedom was a part of the fight against the world colonialism. Its operation therefore was all over the world. Several Indians had settled abroad or migrated to other countries for the cause of freedom. In this endeavour for freedom Muslims were equal partners. Lala Hardyal founded a Ghadar Party which led a violent campaign against British colonialism in USA and other countries in the West and Asia. Dr. Barkatullah Bhopali, a scholar and journalist first published an anti-British paper in Japan and later migrated to USA and joined Lala Hardyal. He published an anti-British paper on 1.11.1913. The Ghadar Party organized anti-colonial secret organizations in USA, Canada, Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, Egypt, Germany, Turkey and Afghanistan with the support of the states of Germany and Turkey. Muslim participation in these organizations was significant. Among journalists besides Barkatullah Bhopali, there was a Punjabi Muslim, Abu Saeed who edited the Urdu section of a paper, *Jaban-i-Islam* from Constantinople. This anti-British paper, *Jaban-i-Islam*, which started its publication in 1914 was published in English, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. An organization, Anjuman-i-Inqilab-i-Hind was founded in 1905 at Berlin by Muslims to attract foreign support to India’s struggle for freedom. Though academic in the beginning it, like many other organizations led by Indians, became a secret quasi-military set-up to supply arms and money to Indian militants in 1915 as a part of German offensive against the Allied forces. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were equally active in all such secret organizations. Important Muslim members of Anjuman-i-Inqilab-i-Hind were Syed Mujtaba Husain, Ali Ahmad Siddiqi, Hakim Fahm Ali and Hasan Khan.

Participation of Indians in anti-colonial activities in foreign countries was not less hazardous than those of Indians at home, particularly for those who were in the defence services posted abroad. Thousands of

them, many of them Muslims, were hanged or killed by firing squads during the First and Second World Wars. In the First World War the Indian soldiers were inspired by Ghadar Party and in the Second World War by Indian National Army led by Subhash Chandra Bose. Contribution of Muslim soldiers against the British forces outside India was singular. For example, the Indian officers and men in the 5th Light Infantry, Singapore, under the guidance of the Ghadar Party, revolted in 1915. All of them were Muslims. As many as 43 of the Muslim rebels were killed by firing squad and 62 were imprisoned for life. The number of Muslims in other battalions and brigades who suffered punishment for revolts was substantial. As a matter of fact, national opposition to the British, violent or non-violent, which began in Meerut in 1857, continued uninterrupted till Royal Navy revolt in 1946, and in each revolt or protest the Muslim participation was outstanding.

Muslims never reconciled to the British rule in India. They had opposed them before the first War of Independence, 1857-58. Led by ulema, they carried on the opposition in various ways, including militancy. The freedom loving, life-sacrificing Muslim patriots were both civilians and sepoys. They took up arms against the British and many of them died in encounters or suffered death as punishment. The armed resistance, which continued till 1947, is only one side of the story of Muslim sacrifices in the freedom movement. They were also motivated by Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885. They were actively engaged in the activities of the Congress. The ulema, led by Maulana Qasim Nanautavi of Deoband, supported the Congress. Muslim leaders like Badruddin Tayyabji, Rahmatullah Mohammad Sayani, Nuruddin Wakil, Maulana Abu Syed, Maulavi Mansoor Ali Khan, Hamid Ali Khan, Mir Musharraf Husain and Syed Abdul Aziz had joined the Congress in the very beginning. As early as 1888, Hindus numbering 965 attended the annual session of the Congress whereas the number of Muslims was also quite large, 221. The Muslims attended the Congress sessions in spite of the opposition of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He could not stop delegates from attending the Congress sessions even from Aligarh where he had settled. Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress cannot be termed as Muslim opposition to this organization.

The ulema of Deoband and Farangi Mahl and other leaders like Shaukat Ali, Mohammad Ali and Abul Kalam Azad stood as one block against the British rule and joined other Indians in the struggle for freedom, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, with the help of Raja Mahendra Pratap, set up a Provisional Government of Free India in Exile in Afghanistan in 1915. Quite a large number of Muslims participated in the Swadeshi Movement to signal their support to the opposition of the partition of Bengal, 1905. Politically, Abdul Rasul, President Barisal Conference (April 1906) and culturally, the poet Syed Abu Mohammad became moving spirits to all kind of nationalists. In Delhi, the Swadeshi Movement was led by Syed Haider Raza. Other prominent Muslim leaders who opposed partition were Abul Qasim, Mujeeb-ur-Rahman, Liaqat Husain. A representative body of Muslims of Bengal, the Central Mohammedan Association also opposed the partition.

Muslims also supported the national movement outside India as far as South Africa. Gandhiji had a large Muslim following in Africa. They aided Gandhiji's 'Tolstoy Ashram' there. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Muslim League also contributed money to the Ashram.

The massive participation of Muslims in the Non-Cooperation Movement, and maintenance of communal harmony was in itself no mean an achievement. There is hardly any doubt that Muslims' enthusiastic involvement gave it a truly mass character. In many areas, and at some places, two-third of those arrested were Muslims. Large number of Muslim volunteers picketed shops and set foreign cloth on fire. The

number of young and enthusiastic Muslim volunteers was very large. It gave a strong base to the future leadership of the Muslims.

After the successful Russian Revolution of 1917 the communists and the socialists led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose formed a powerful wing within the Congress and several other mass organizations. Muslims were in the forefront of such organizations. Muzaffar Ahmad was one of the founders of the Communist Party of India. Qutbuddin Ahmad, Mohammad Abdul Ali were senior communist leaders. In the early thirties of the twentieth century many young communist activists like K.M. Ashraf, Z.A. Ahmad, Begum Hajra, Sajjad Zaheer, Miyan Iftikharuddin and Faridul Haq Ansari gave a revolutionary spirit to the national movement. They got enthusiastic support by large number of Muslim writers and poets like Ghulam Quddus, Ali Sardar Jafri, Kaifi Azami, Shorish Kashmiri and Makhdum Mohiuddin. Poets and writers were working on popular fronts through literary and cultural organizations. Muslim leaders were equally involved in peasants' and workers' unions. Important among them were Liaquat Husain, Shaukat Usmani, Syed Shaheedulla, Syed Habibullah, Abdul Momin and Shamsul Huda. Among the young Muslim students, Ansar Harwani and Abdul Haque worked for the freedom of the country through All India Students Federation. We have the record for three generations of Muslim activists who struggled for the freedom from both, the political and cultural forums.

Muslim patriots were equally involved with revolutionary movements. The freedom-loving terrorists took care that no innocent civilian was killed. The white imperialists and their brown supporters were their targets. For killing or for an attempt to kill British officers several Muslims were hanged. Some of them were: (1) Ashfaqullah Khan (19.12.1927), (2) Abdul Ghani (28.10.1928), (3) Habib Nur (22.2.1931), (4) Abdul Rashid (1.9.1932). There were many more cases of Muslim participation in the revolutionary movements which were not necessarily non-violent in Punjab, U.P., Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (Jabalpur) and other states. The struggle was particularly widespread in Bengal where the Muslims as a community supported the revolutionary leader, Surya Sen. The Revolutionary Provisional Government in 1930 survived for three years because of Muslim support.

One reason for massive participation by Muslims in the Non-Cooperation Movement was its integration with Khilafat Movement, which to some historians was exclusively a Muslim issue. However, no such external considerations could be associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement, and yet the Muslim participation was substantial in it, which was extraordinarily high in North West Frontier Province, practically a Muslim province. It had a population of only three million but could account for 5,557 convictions whereas in the larger province, Punjab with a mixed population, five times higher (1932), the convictions were only 1,620. Muslim participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930, in the British Indian Empire was also higher than their proportional population. Ninety thousand Indians defied law and courted arrest, and 29,000 among them were Muslims. Presence of Muslims was noticed everywhere throughout India, including the native kingdoms. They were active in north, central and south India. In the east, Muslims of middle class participated in a big way in Senhatta, Tripura, Gaibanda, Bagura and Noakhali. In Dhaka, Muslims belonging to the marginalized communities joined the movement. Muslim women from the middle and upper classes also participated. Weavers and the families associated with them were actively involved in the national struggle. Their participation in Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements in U.P., Bihar and Maharashtra was enthusiastic. Many Muslims thought that facing bullets and meeting death was better than a life in slavery. The British opened fire on unarmed

Pathans in Peshawar. They refused to budge and heroically faced the bullets. Dozens of them died till the Hindu soldiers of Garhwal Regiment refused to fire on the innocent unarmed civilians. According to one estimate fifty four civilian Muslims lost their lives in 1931-32. Ashfaqullah Khan of the famous Kakori case, while being hanged requested the jailor to put a handful of soil of his homeland into his coffin for which he staked his life. No wonder, because of this patriotic sentiment the series of killing of Muslims, which began in 1857 continued till 1947.

The struggle for freedom was a continuous process. Muslims' enthusiastic involvement in the whole process remained unabated till 1947. They were also passionately involved in the Individual Satyagrah and Quit India Movement as much as they were in the Non-Cooperation or Civil Disobedience movements, with one difference. Earlier movements were absolutely non-violent, but in the Quit India Movement violence had crept in and at a few places the satyagrahis overpowered the police and established governing councils for the region under their control for a few days. Muslims were a party to both, the violent and the non-violent struggle. Naturally, the British reaction was equally severe. All the Congress leaders, including the Muslims were arrested, the organisation was banned and severe punishments were inflicted upon the satyagrahis. More than thirty Muslims belonging to Allahabad, Darbhanga, Azamgarh, Wardha, Champaran, Nagpur, Munger and many other places laid their lives and several thousand suffered imprisonment. Aggressive and forceful people's mobilisation was on against the British all over the country. For example, in Delhi the people, especially the Muslims, were strongly involved in it. They had taken Gandhiji's call 'Do or Die' to their heart. On a single day, 11 August, 1942, the satyagrahis organised hartals all over Delhi. Muslims, as compared to other communities, were larger in number among those who were convicted for burning the post office in Sadr Bazar, destruction of A.R.P. office, attack on Ganesh Floor Mill, killing of a sub-inspector of police and burning and destruction of Income Tax Office. The satyagrahis belonged to all sections of Muslim society. They were washermen, fruit and vegetable sellers, gardeners and professionals like mechanics (watch repair), tongawalas and painters. Sacrificing life for the country had become a tradition for the Muslims. They had lost many lives in demonstrations against Rowlatt Act, 1919, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements. The number of Muslims killed at Jallianwala Bagh, 1919, was fairly high. Muslims were equally involved in the struggle for political rights in native states whose rulers had been supporting the British. In Kashmir alone more than a hundred Muslim demonstrators were killed and many hundred wounded and imprisoned by the maharaja's police. This happened during the non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement in India. Similarly, Muslim freedom fighters lost their lives in the princely states of Mysore and Hyderabad. The Muslim tradition of sacrifice of life for a just cause continued till India got its independence and, even thereafter, in the struggle for the freedom of Goa. Several thousand Muslim officers and men in the British Indian army had joined the Indian National Army under the command of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose. Quite a large number of Muslim officers worked in commanding positions in the Indian Government in Exile at Singapore. They fought against the British army. More than 150 Muslim fighters lost their lives in the eastern campaigns 1943-45. In 1946, there was a revolt in the Royal Indian Navy. Muslims were partners in the revolt and also in the punishment they suffered. The naval revolt had no political support of the Indian National Congress, but got widespread popular urban support from all communities. The civilian support was mercilessly suppressed. In Kolkata, 36 civilians were killed. In Mumbai, 228 civilians were killed and 1046 wounded. The number of Muslims killed or wounded was very high.

The sacrifices of Indian Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and other communities did not go in vain. India won its freedom on 15 August, 1947 and the ruthless exploiters and brutal suppressors, the British imperialists, left India unharmed with honour and dignity, leaving behind a divided country and a divided people in a state of bloody civil war. The brutal killings, rape and plunder on both sides of the border after independence was far greater than during the British rule in India. AICC in its meeting on 14 June, 1947 accepted the partition plan to solve the deadly crisis. One member of the Committee, Maulana Hifzur Rahman, warned that the partition of the country would inflict far greater misery than it would solve. Nobody listened to him, because they believed, including Maulana Azad, that there was no other alternative but to accept the partition.

Who was responsible for the great divide? Not the British alone. The hangover of pre-partition hatred among communities continues even today. That Muslims were solely responsible for the partition is an accusation. None alone—community or individual—was responsible for it. Maulana Azad expressed his unhappiness on the attitude of both the major communities. He thought that it was foolish on the part of Muslims to demand security provisions for themselves in the future political set-up, and it was a greater folly on the part of the Hindus to deny the same. Gandhiji also thought that the Muslims alone were not responsible for it. The day after the declaration of Mountbatten Plan, 3 June, 1947, formally giving a shape to Pakistan, Gandhiji said in his prayer meeting on 4 June, 1947 that the demand (for Pakistan) “has been granted because you asked for it. Congress never asked for it...But the Congress can feel the pulse of the people. It realised that the Khalsa as also the Hindus desired it”.

The Political Abuse of History

Behind the present Babari Masjid-Rama Janambhumi controversy lie issues of faith, power and politics. Each individual has a right to his or her belief and faith. But when belief claims the legitimacy of history, then the historian has to attempt a demarcation between the limits of belief and historical evidence. When communal forces make claims to “historical evidence” for the purpose of communal politics, then the historian has to intervene.

Historical evidence is presented here not as a polemic or as a solution to the Rama Janambhumi-Babari Masjid conflict, for this conflict is not a matter of historical records alone. The conflict emerges from the widespread communalization of Indian politics. Nevertheless it is necessary to review the historical evidences to the extent it is brought into play in the communalization of society.

I

Is Ayodhya the birth-place of Rama? This question raises a related one: Is present day Ayodhya the Ayodhya of Ramayana?

The event of the story of Rama, originally told in the Rama-Katha which is no longer available to us, were rewritten in the form of a long epic poem, the Ramayana, by Valmiki. Since this is a poem and much of it could have been fictional, including characters and places, historians cannot accept the personalities, the events or the locations as historically authentic unless there are other supporting evidences from sources recorded as more reliable by historians. Very often historical evidence contradicts popular beliefs.

According to Valmiki Ramayana, Rama, the King of Ayodhya, was born in the Treta Yuga that is thousands of years before the Kali Yuga which is supposed to begin in 3102 B.C.

1. There is no archaeological evidence to show that at this time the region around present day Ayodhya was inhabited. The earliest possible date for settlements at the site is of about the eighth century B.C. The archaeological remains indicate a fairly simple material life, more primitive than what is described in the Valmiki Ramayana.
2. In the Ramayana, there are frequent references to places and buildings on a large scale in an urban setting. Such descriptions of an urban complex are not sustained by the archaeological evidence of the eighth century B.C.
3. There is also a controversy over the location of Ayodhya. Early Buddhist texts refer to Sharavasti and Saketa, not Ayodhya, as the major cities of Koshala. Jaina texts also refer to Saketa as the capital of Koshala. There are very few references to Ayodhya, but this is said to be located on the Ganges, not on river Saryu which is the site of present day Ayodhya.

4. The town of Saketa was renamed Ayodhya by a Gupta king Skanda Gupta in the late fifth century A.D., moved his residence to Saketa and called it Ayodhya. He assumed the title Vikramaditya, which he used in his gold coins. Thus what may have been the fictional Ayodhya of the epic poem was identified with Saketa quite late. This does not necessarily suggest that the Gupta king was a bhakta of Rama. In bestowing the name of Ayodhya on Saketa he was trying to gain prestige for himself by drawing on the tradition of the Suryavanshi kings, a line to which Rama is said to have belonged.
5. After the seventh century, textual references to Ayodhya are categorical. The Puranas, dating to the first millennium A.D. and the early second millennium A.D. follow the Ramayana and refer to Ayodhya as the capital of Koshala (Vishnudharmottara Mahapurana, 1,240.2)
6. In a way the local tradition of Ayodhya recognizes the ambiguous history of its origin. The story is that Ayodhya was lost after the Treta Yuga and was rediscovered by Vikramaditya. While searching for the lost Ayodhya Vikramaditya met Prayaga, the king of tirthas, who knew about Ayodhya and showed him where it was. Vikramaditya marked the place but could not find it later. Then he met a yogi who told him that he should let a cow and a calf roam. When the calf came across the Janambhumi milk would flow its udders. The king followed the yogi's advice. When at a certain point the calf's udders began to flow the king decided that this was the site of the ancient Ayodhya.

The myth of 're-discovery' of Ayodhya: This claim to an ancient sacred lineage, is an effort to impart to a city a specific religious sanctity which it lacked. But even in the myths the process of identification of the sites appears uncertain and arbitrary.

If present day Ayodhya is known as Saketa before the fifth century, then the Ayodhya of Valmiki's Ramayana was fictional. If so, the identification of Rama Janambhumi in Ayodhya today becomes a matter of faith, not of historical evidence.

The historical uncertainty regarding the possible location of the Rama Janambhumi contrasts with the historical certainty of the birth-place of Buddha. Two centuries after the death of the Buddha, Ashoka Maurya put up an inscription at the village of Lumbani to commemorate it as the Buddha's birth-place. However, even in this case, the inscription merely refers to the village near which he was born and does not even attempt to indicate the precise birth-place.

II

Ayodhya has been a sacred centre of many religions, not of the Rama cult alone. Its rise as a major centre of Rama worship is, in fact relatively recent.

1. Inscriptions from the fifth to eighth century A.D. and even later refer to people from Ayodhya but none of them refer to its being a place associated with the worship of Rama. (Epigraphic India, 10. p.72; 15. p.143, 1. p.14)
2. Hsuan Tsang writes of Ayodhya as a major centre of Buddhism with many monasteries and stupas. For Buddhists Ayodhya is a sacred place where Buddha is believed to have stayed for some time.
3. Ayodhya has been an important centre of Jain pilgrimage. To the Jains it is birth-place of the first and fourth Jain Tirthankaras. An interesting archaeological find of the 4th-3rd century B.C. is a Jaina figure in grey terracotta, being amongst the earliest Jaina figures found so far.
4. The text of the eleventh century A.D. refer to the Gopatarutirtha at Ayodhya, but not to any links with the Janambhumi of Rama.
5. The cult of Rama seems to have become popular from the thirteenth century. It gains ground with the gradual rise of the Ramanadi sect and the composition of the Rama story in Hindi.

Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Ramanandis had not settled in Ayodhya on a significant scale. *Shainism* is more important than the cult of Rama. Only from the eighteenth century do we find the Ramanandi sadhus settling on a large scale. It was in the subsequent centuries that they built most of their temples in Ayodhya.

III

So far no historical evidence has been unearthed to support the claim that the Babri mosque has been constructed on the land that had been earlier occupied by a temple.

1. Except for the verses in Persian inscribed on the two side of the mosque door, there is no other primary evidence to suggest that a mosque had been erected there on Babur's behalf. Mrs. Beveridge, who was first to translate *Babur Nama*, gives the text and the translation of these above verses in an Appendix to the memoirs. The crucial passage reads as follows: "By the command of Emperor Babur, whose Justice is an edifice reaching up to the very high of the heavens; the good hearted Mir Baqi built the alighting place of angels. *Bavad (Buwad)* khair baqi (may this goodness last forever)". (*Babur Nama*, translated by Mrs. A.F. Beveridge, 1922, II, p. LXXVII ff).

This inscription only claims that one Mir Baqi, a noble of Babur, had erected the mosque. Nowhere does either of the inscriptions mention that the mosque had been erected on the site of a temple. Nor is there any reference in Babur's memoirs to the destruction of any temple in Ayodhya.

2. The *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to Ayodhya as “the residence of Rama Chandra who in the Treta age combined in his own person both spiritual supremacy and kingly office”. But nowhere is there any mention of the erection of the mosque by the grandfather of the author’s patron on the site of the temple of Rama.
3. It is interesting that Tulsidas , the great devotee of Rama, a contemporary of Akbar and an inhabitant of the region, is upset at the rise of the *mleccha* but makes no mention of the demolition of a temple at the site of Rama Janambhumi.
4. It is in nineteenth century that the story circulates and enters official records. These records were then cited by others as valid historical evidence on the issue.

This story of the destruction of the temple is narrated, without any investigation into the historical veracity, in British records of the region. (See P. Carnegy, Historical Sketch of Tehsil Faizabad, Zillah Faizabad, Lucknow, 1870; H.R. Nevill, Faizabad District Gazetteer, Allahabad, 1905).

Mrs. Beveridge in a footnote to the translated passage quoted above affirms her faith in the story. She suggests that Babur being a Muslim, and “impressed by the dignity and sanctity of the ancient Hindu shrine” would have displaced “at least in part” the temple to erect the mosque. Her logic is simple; “like the obedient follower of Mohammad he was intolerant of another faith, (thus he) would regard the substitution of a temple by a mosque as dutiful and worthy”. This is a very questionable inference deduced from a generalized presumption about the nature and inevitable behaviour of a person professing a particular faith,

Mrs. Beveridge produces no historical evidence to support her assertion that the mosque was built at the site of a temple. Indeed the general tenor of Babur’s state policy towards places of worships of other religions hardly justifies Mrs. Beveridge’s inference.

The British officials who saw India as a land of mutually hostile religious communities, such story may appear self-validating, historians, however, have to carefully consider the authenticity of each historical statement and the records on which they are based.

While there is no evidence about the Babari mosque having been built on the site of a temple, the mosque according to the medieval sources, was not of much religious and cultural significance for the Muslims.

The assumption that Muslim rulers were invariably and naturally opposed to the sacred places of Hindus is not always borne out by historical evidence.

1. The patronage of the Muslim Nawabs was crucial for the expansion of Ayodhya as a Hindu Pilgrimage centre. Recent researches have shown that Nawabi rule depended on the collaboration of Kayasthas and their military force were dominated by Shivaite Nagas. Gift to temples and patronage of Hindu sacred centres was an integral part of the Nawabi mode of exercise of power. The dewan of Nawab Safdarjung built and repaired several temples in Ayodhya. Safdarjung gave

land to the Nirwan Akhara to build a temple on Hanuman hill in Ayodhya. Asaf-ud-Daula's dewan contributed to the building of the temple fortress in Hanuman hill in the city. Panda records show that Muslim officials of the Nawabi court gave several gifts for rituals performed by Hindu priests.

2. In moment of conflict between Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim rulers did not invariably support Muslims. When a dispute between the Sunni Muslims and the Naga sadhus over a Hanumangarhi temple in Ayodhya broke out in 1855, Wajid Ali Shah took firm and decisive action. He appointed a tripartite investigative committee consisting of the district official Agha Ali Khan, the leading Hindu land holder, Raja Man Singh, and the British officer in charge of the Company's forces. When the negotiated settlement failed to control the buildup of communal forces, Wajid Ali Shah mobilized the support of Muslim leaders to bring the situation under control, confiscated the property of Maulvi Amir Ali, the leader of the Muslim communal forces, and finally called upon the army to crush the Sunni Muslim group led by Amir Ali. An estimated three to four hundred Muslims were killed.

This is not to suggest that there were no conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, but in neither case were they homogenous communities. There was hostility between factions and groups within a community, as there was amity across communities.

The above review of historical evidences suggests that the claims made by Hindus and Muslim communal groups can find no sanction from history. As a sacred centre the character of Ayodhya has been changing over the centuries. It has been linked to the history of many religions. Different communities have vested it with their own sacred meaning. The city cannot be claimed by any one community as its exclusive sacred preserve.

The appropriation of history is a continual process in any society. But in a multi-religious society like ours, appropriation which draw exclusively on communal identities engender endless communal conflicts. And attempts to undo the past can only have dangerous consequences.

It is appropriate, therefore, that a political solution is urgently found: "Rama Janambhumi-Babari Masjid" area be demarcated and declared a national monument.

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Hindu communalists described the rule of Muslim kings as foreign and Muslims as an alien element in Indian society. Both the Hindu and Muslim communal writers thought that in medieval India the Muslims were rulers and the Hindus were subject race or slaves. They considered that all sections/classes of Muslims including the rustic poor were rulers and the Hindu *Rajas*, *Zamindars* and the nobles were the ruled. Some Muslim leaders went to the extent that India could not belong to Hindus because they had been suppressed for a thousand years.

Hindus and Muslims were two social entities who could never merge, they thought. The Muslims held that both were distinct nations (two nation's theory). They accepted the Hindus as a nation. Communal Hindus, on the other hand, were not even prepared to give the Muslims a similar status. They believed that Indians/Hindus were only one nation and the Muslims, living in India like Englishmen, were foreigners. The religion of the rulers determined the religious status of their subject states. If the ruler or chieftain was a Hindu his kingdom was a Hindu State and in the case of a Muslim or a Sikh a Muslim or a Sikh State. In short the upper caste/class culture of Hindus or Muslims became Hindu or Muslim culture.

Hindu civilization according to Hindu communalists reached the pinnacle under the imperial Guptas. During the 'Muslim rule' it fell into continuous decay. Inspired by the civilizing mission of European colonists or Arab empire builders the Hindus thought that they were the earliest people who developed a high level of civilization and disseminated it to the various parts of this earth. For further details see Indira Prakash, *A Review of the History and Work on the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement*, New Delhi.

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In 1849 almost a decade before the Mutiny of 1857, Elliot wrote in his Preface of *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, that these volumes contained the account of the "Hindus slain, of general prohibition against procession, worship and ablutions, and of other intolerant measures, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders and massacres, and of the sensuality and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoyed them".

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26. A. J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 82.
27. For Shahu, see H. N. Sinha, *Rise of Peshwa*, pp. 12, 13; also Bipan Chandra, op. cit., p. 199.
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29. *Geeta*, kk, 37; Kosambi quotes from 'the divine scripture' "Kill your brother if duty calls, without passion", See for details A.J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 173.
30. Kantonava, G. Bongard-Levin and G. Kotovsky, *History of India*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1979, see chapter on Ashoka.

31. A.J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 179. Kosambi remarked “The thing to mark is that the Indian character was not always so tolerant”. There were periods when people came to blows on doctrine, ritual and worship.
 32. R.C. Mazumdar, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 404. The examples of religious intolerance in South between Shivites and Vishnoites are many. It is not to be told that Aryans in the early stage did not build temples. Buddhists, however, built and worshiped in temples. Where are those Buddhist temples?
 33. R. C. Mazumdar, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 149.
 34. A. J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 124.
 35. *Ibid*, p. 179. Kalhana 5. 168-70; 7. 1089, 1090-1092; p. 631-633, 638-39, 1080-1098. R. S. Sharma, *Qadeem Hindustan* (Urdu), NCERT, New Delhi, p. 124. Examples of the kings outraging the women of all castes in ancient period are also too many. A king Chakravarman molested a Brahman’s wife, A.J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 118.
 36. K.A. Nilakantra and G. Srinivasachari, *Advanced History of India*, Bombay, 1970, pp.106-109.
 37. *Geeta*, 2. 37; 4. 13.
 38. A. J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 83.
 39. Binoy Kumar Roy, Socio-Economic Thoughts of Swami Vivekanand, vide *The Sunday Observer*, December 6, 1987. See also D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*; V. Khandekar, *Agarkar, His Personality and Thought*; Dhananjay Keer, *Collected Works of Mahatma Phule*. Reviewing the first, second and third volumes of Vidya Bhavan series (R. C. Mazumdar, op. cit.), D. D. Kosambi says, “The specific feature of Indian history, progressive exploitation of the workers under the dual burden of caste and class, cannot long remain buried under such vain glorious praise of Indian ‘culture’ and philosophy”. A. J. Syed, Kosambi, op. cit., p. 71.
 40. D. D. Kosambi attributes the post Kushana-Satavahana religious tensions to the decline of economy. He writes:

“There was no longer enough for all; one of the other groups had to be driven to the wall. One such instance is the combined Hari-Hara cult (with an image half Shiva, half Vishnu) which had its brief day but could not remain in fashion much beyond the 11th century. The followers of Hari-Hara found their interests too widely separated, and we have the Smarta Vaishnava struggle instead. With Mughal prosperity at its height, Akbar could dream of a synthetic din-e-ilahi; Aurangzeb could only try to augment his falling revenue by increased religious persecution and the Jizia tax on unbelievers”.
- A. J. Syed, Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

41. Lallanji Gopal believes that India became poor after the establishment of Muslim power. The new rulers, in contrast to Rajputs, perpetrated plunder and massacre on a frightful scale and thereby reduced the prosperous country to misery. Among other sources Gopal has used Nikitin (*A 15th Century European Traveller*) for his views. Nikitin states:

“The land (Bahmani Kingdom) is overstocked with people, but those in the country are miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury”. R.H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, London, 1857, p. 14.

To establish poverty in the ‘Muslim period’ Gopal ignores Nikitin’s evidence that “the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury” but emphasizes that “the land is overstocked with people, but those in the country are miserable”. Gopal derives great pleasure in stating Nikitin’s comment in projecting poverty and misery in the Sultanate period while for a similar situation in the ‘Hindu period’ the word ‘prosperous’ is used. He writes, “India still remained prosperous, but the prosperity was monopolized by the rulers, including the feudal chiefs, the merchants and temples. The common villager of our period (Rajput) was often in miserable condition”. *Economic Life of Northern India, 700-1200*, p. 257. What is ‘prosperous’ in ‘Hindu period’ becomes ‘miserable’ in ‘Muslim period’ or otherwise is communal historiography. Similarly K.S. Lal believes that the ‘Muslim rule’ symbolizes depopulation but he ignores Nikitin’s “the land is overstocked”. For detailed discussion on depopulation and poverty in the Sultanate period, see Irfan Habib, *Economic History of Delhi Sultanate, An Essay in Interpretation*, *Indian Historical Review*, 1980.

42. Mohd. Habib’s *Political Theory of Delhi Sultanate*, p. 49, Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat-ul- Balighah*, Vol. 1, p. 225. Vide Irfan Habib, *Political Role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah*, *Proceedings, Indian History Congress*, 1959, pp. 210-211. See also *Maktubate Imam Rabbani*, Vol. I, pp.79, 90-195, 201-2003.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, however, allowed education but religious studies alone but Shah Waliullah was not even prepared to impart certain religious education to common Muslims. He declared that the authority “should rigorously enforce the prescribed practices and not to indicate their purpose, nor give them a choice in following any regulation of *Shariat*. Let him (king/leader/authority) keep the knowledge of the secrets of *Shariat* that are the source of detailed regulations a secret from the masses..... Otherwise the sphere of their reflection will become large and they will sink into controversy”.

43. Opposing democracy Saiyed Ahmad Khan pleaded:

It is very necessary that for the Viceroy’s Council the members should be of high social position. I ask you: Would our aristocracy like that a man of low caste or insignificant origin, though he may be a B.A. or M.A., and has the requisite ability, should be in a position of authority above them and has power in making the laws that effects their lives and property? Never: Nobody would like it. A seat in the Council of Viceroy is a position of great honour and prestige. None but a man of good breeding can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainment at which he may have to dine with Dukes and Earls.

Saiyed Ahmad Khan, edited by Shan Mohd., *Writings and Speeches*, Bombay, 1972, p. 204.

44. See Mohibbul Hasan, 'Lacunae in the Study of Medieval Indian History' in Horst Kruger, *Kunwar Mohammad Asbraf*, Delhi, 1969, pp.119-120.
45. Rafiq Zakaria, *Indian Muslims: Where they have gone wrong?* Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai, 2004, p. 312.
46. B. V. Subayyarappa (ed.), *Scientific and Technological Exchange Between India and Soviet Central Asia*, New Delhi, 1981, the above paper is based upon the above work. Articles of Yu N. Anureriev, M.S. Astmov, Chaturvedi, G.N. and others are utilized. See pages 18, 19, 20, 97, 107.
47. William Pflaff, *Wrath of Nations*.
48. *Gandhi, Collected Works*, Vol. 69, p. 210.
49. *Gandhi, Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 8, p. 125.
50. *Nehru, Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 388.
51. *Gandhi, Collected Works*, Vol. 88, p. 75.
52. Rafiq Zakaria, op. cit., p. 77.
53. Z.M. Khan, *Political Empowerment of Muslims in India*, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 132-138.
54. *Frontline*, 20.4.2014, pp. 100-103.
55. A.G. Noorani, Crescent Over Tri Colour, *Statesman*, 24 August, 1998.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Syeda Sayedain, *Islamic Seal on India's Independence, Abul Kalam Azad*. Rizwan Qaisar, *Resisting Colonialism and Communal Politics, Maulana Azad and Making of Indian Nation*, New Delhi, 2011.
61. S.C. Biswas (ed.), *Gandhi: Theory and Practice*, Simla, 1969, p. 138.
62. *The Political Abuse of History*, a leaflet issued by Centre of Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

63. B. R. Nanda, *Times of India*, November 23, 1988. Appendix A.
M. A. Final course on 'Communalism in Modern India 1857-1947' in the Department of History, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. 1982-83, pp. 56-58. For details see Appendix B.
64. K. A. Antanova and others, *History of India*, Moscow. See Appendix C.
65. See N.G. Barrier (ed.), *Roots of Communal Politics*, New Delhi, 1976; 'Report of the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee, 1931', and Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, 1984, p. 11, No. 10; p. 209.
66. Mubarak Ali Akbar, Pakistani Text books; an unpublished paper, presented in a seminar, *AKBAR AND HIS AGE*, Oct. 15-17, 1992, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.
67. Sucheta Mahajan, *Towards Freedom: Documents on the Movement for Independence in India*, 1947, Part 1, Oxford University Press; A.G. Noorani, *Frontline*, May 2, 2014.
68. *Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works*, Second Series, Vol. I, Page 65- Letter to Padmaja Naidu, dated 5 November, 1946; S.C. Biswas (ed.), *Gandhi: Theory and Practice*. Nehru at Patna—wrote to Ms. Padmaja Naidu that there was Muslim genocide in Bihar. There was mass killings of Muslims. Police and allied forces could not be trusted except the Madras Regiment. Army could be the last choice. For pre and post 1947 dynamics of communal politics see analytical papers and book-reviews of A.G. Noorani.