CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

It is generally assumed that the initial reaction of the Muslim community to British rule in India was hostile. A number of reasons are advanced to explain the hostility. However, this assumption about the reaction of a whole community to a significant phenomenon like the emergence of the British as the supreme political Power in India goes not seem to have received serious scrutiny in any of the indepth studies carried out so far; for even where the reaction of the Muslims can be said to have been hostile to British rule during the first half of the nineteenth century, it was not uniformly or universally hostile. There were difference both in kind and in degree. The purpose of the present study is to throw light on the nature of the Muslim attitudes towards British rule and to show that side by side with the varying kinds and degrees of hostility there was also a measure of appreciation, however subdued in its articulation, for the values and institutions to which the advent of the British exposed the country.

The nobles and a section of the elite within the Muslim community showed themselves to be susceptible to the changing value and situation from the very inception of British rule. Although they held that British rule was a temporary phenomenon, they recognized that the contact between the different value system and institutions was significant and all embracing and was bound to leave an enduring imprint to Indian (and Muslim) society. Two factors may have contributed to their susceptibility to the changing values. First, they had an open mind as to the new developments in the world’ through the various sources of secular knowledge without being constrained by religious conservatism. And, secondly, mundane and considerations, such as the lure of lucrative careers, over whelmed them and softened their attitude towards the new rules and their culture and persuaded them of the need to change with the times without of course comprising their loyalty and adherence to Islam. Indeed there was genuine appreciation of the British and their values in the different sections of Muslim society. And those who manifested this appreciation in their writings may well regard as the pioneers of the renaissance in Muslim society.
They argued that the values and culture of the West, though apparently new, had their roots in the ancient civilization of the Arabs, the Greeks, the Romans, and others and that the Muslims need not be ashamed of looking upon Western culture as a means to gain access to a commonwealth of culture.

The hostility of the Muslims, which was conspicuous during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in political and religious circles, needs to be explained afresh in the light of the political and religious motives and objectives of the British rulers and the policies they pursued to achieve them. A detailed analysis of their mutual relations and interactions at the national level alone, however, would be meaningless; for the historical and religious antagonism of the Christian rulers of Europe to the Muslim nations had a great bearing upon Anglo-Muslim relations in India. This way why no one suffered so much from British rule in India as the Muslims. The historical and religious interactions between the two communities in Europe during the preceding centuries had undoubtedly generated psychological inhibitions in both the communities. This time, however, the Muslims came under the Western civilization of the Christians. Not that the Christians were free from bias against Islam. In fact their actions, policies, and attitudes reflected it in abundant measure.

It would, therefore, be worth while to understand, at first, the psychological based of the relations between the Muslims of India and the British rulers. The following pages represent a modest attempt to understand the psychology of the Europeans, the Muslims, the Muslim ruling class, the nobility, the ulama, and the elite as also the British policy towards the Muslim of India. Then follows a detailed analysis of the attitudes of the various sections of the Muslim community, which was far from being monolithic.

**Christian attitude towards Islam:**

The Christian mentality and the European attitude towards Muslim in general is rooted in certain wrong assumptions about Islam and its followers. According to the Christian, Islam is responsible for creting fanatical barriers in the way of the progress of humanity. They also hold that the followers of Islam are averse to change the progress. They have therefore, taken upon themselves the role of leaders of humanity
by denouncing Islam, pledging to remove fanaticism from the earth, and urging all the people of the world to accept Westernization as a way of life for the progress of humanity. The Christian countries, by virtue of their rapid economic progress in modern times feel themselves morally bound to lead the people of the world along the path of material welfare the modern progress. They regard Islam, which provides a compromise between materialism and spirituality, as the main obstacle in the progress of Western civilization and human progress. For instance, according to Andre Servier Islam is the “secretion of the Arab brain.” And he has no hesitation to declare that “it is this religion that is the chief obstacle between them (i.e. the Muslim) and ourselves”. He adds, “It is certainly our duty to respect the religious opinion of the natives, but it is mistaken policy for us to appear more Musalman [sic] than they themselves, and to bow down in a mystical spirit before a form of civilization that is very much lower than our own and manifestly backward and retrograde.” 1

The jealousy and rivalry of the Christians is much older than then weapon they have recently discovered, viz., civilization, for reasserting their supposed superiority over their old religious rivals. Till the down of modern civilization, i.e. till the seventeenth or eighteenth century, there was hardly any ground for them to take pride in whatever was progressive in their civilization, for it was by no means a product of their original contributions.2 And yet Christian writers seen to be unwilling to give any credit either to the Arabs or to Islam for the contributions made to human civilization. To cite a passage from the works of one such writer, viz. Servier:

The Arab has borrowed everything from other nations; literature, art, science and even his religious ideas. He has passed it all through the sieve of his own narrow mind; and, being incapable of rising to high philosophic conceptions; he has distorted, mutilated, and desiccated everything. This destructive influence explains the decadence of Musalman [sic] nations and their powerlessness to break away from barbarism; it equally explains the difficulties that confront the European nations in Muslim countries.3

Servier tells the Muslims to “rise out of its (i.e. Islam’s) immobility”. He, however, feels that the Muslims would not attempt it themselves in view of their being well surrounded by the strong defences of Islam. He adds: “No Musalman [sic]
in any part of the world has ever thought of such a thing without horror, Hence Islam...stands in the modern world as a mournful statute of the past.\textsuperscript{44}

The Christian nations undertook “the slow work of breaking the Musalmans [sic] bloc as a basis of their foreign Musalman [sic] policy.” Servier says: “Islam is the enemy, not because it is a religious doctrine differing from our own philosophical conceptions, but because it is an obstacle to all progress, to all evolutions”\textsuperscript{55} This lays bare the mentality and attitude of the Christian towards the Muslims, a mentality and attitude deriving from an inherent religious antagonism.

No wonder, then, that the Christians have made it a principle scrupulously to avoid any policy capable of adding to the power and prestige of those nations which are strict adherents of the doctrine of Islam. Indeed they seem to have supported only those two have received but a light impression of the doctrine and whose faith in free from bigotry.

The Christians believe that Islamized nations which have not succeeded in freeing themselves from Muslim tutelage are stricken with intellectual paralysis and decadence; that they can only escape from this condition of inferiority in proportion as they succeeded in withdrawing themselves from the control of Muslim law; and that this objective could achieved by encouraging regional nationalism, creating a feeling of frustration and antagonism in the subjects against their Muslim rulers and leading them to revolt, and exploiting the dissensions within Muslim society by patronizing he has Islamized sections of the Muslims countries and using them as their instruments for their purposes. They further believe that the Muslim nations have become corrupt in course of time owing to the mixing of the Muslim rulers with the subject nations and that inter-racial marriages have resulted in the deterioration of their war like qualities. They hold the view that despotism, conversion, and discrimination against the people of other religions and cultures have created hatred among the people on the one hand and shattered the economy of the Muslims on the other and that domination of the cultures of the various subject nations over the original culture has broken the unity of the Islamic nations and added to the weakness of the Muslim power. The argue that the power of the Muslims depends merely on force; that the various linguistic and cultural groups appeared united so long as the
Muslim conquerors maintained unity by force; and that, with the removal of that force, they fell apart. Tremendous powers concentrated in one man, temporal as well as spiritual, yielded remarkable results so long as they were exercised by a man of genius; they became instruments of the ruin when wielded by an incapable man. Men of genius are unfortunately rare.\footnote{6}

The Christian nations, therefore, sought to dominate and overawe the less Islamized sections of the Muslim countries so as to use Muslim against Muslim, Servier thus observes:

It is our interest, therefore, to make the best of the Turks (or less Islamized sections) to consolidate our power. There is no other people that could replace them in this role, for it is necessary to be a Muslaman [sic] to be able to moderate their fanatical aspirations. It is true that the strict Musalman [sic] bear their rule with impatience, but they would never admit the rule of a non-Muslaman [sic] people.\footnote{7}

This also explains British policy in India, which was to maintain and support the weak Muslim States, keep them under their influence, and finally encourage Westernization. The British had a genuine fear that if they destroyed the whole Muslim empire militarily, the defeated Muslims would declare a holy war against them. They, therefore, adopted the above-mentioned policy and put it into practice with great caution in India. W.W. Hunter showed his appreciation of this policy when he commended the Government of the English East India Company for letting the Muslim political power die a natural death.\footnote{8}

The British thought that in course of time the less Islamized section of Muslim society would themselves counter Muslim fanaticism and embrace Western civilization. Saws Pasha, an Ottoman Christian and a free thinker, saw the possibility of the Muslims accepting the path or progress if it was made part of their conscience. According to Servier, however, such attempts too resulted in failure.\footnote{9}

Thus the Christians seek to prove that Islam is basically irrational and inflexible and that its followers are fanatics opposed to all progress and civilization. According to them, whatever progress Islamic civilization has achieved has come about as a result of the impact made on it by other nations and other civilizations.
In his book, Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam, the great poet Mohammad Iqbal demonstrates how the stagnation discernible in Islamic civilization is a temporary phase and then proceeds to expose the malicious thinking of the Christians. He asserts the superiority of Islam as a way of life. He emphasizes certain basic principles of Islam like ijtihad and ijma, which the Muslims have used from time to time to adjust to new conditions and make progress. He also throws light on the contribution of Islamic civilization of human progress, and shows how even Christian writers have acknowledged this contribution. He observes, “The Quran is a book which emphasizes deed rather than idea.” He quotes a verse from the Quran which says: “Verily God will not change the condition to men till they change that in themselves”10. He then observes: “The search for rational foundations in Islam may be regarded to have [sic] begun with the Prophet himself.” His constant prayer was: “God! Grant me knowledge of the ultimate values of things.” He admits that Greek philosophy was a “a great cultural force in the history of Islam.” He however, adds: “While Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it on the whole obscured their vision of the Quran. Socrates concentrated his attitude on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of plants, insects, and stars.”11

In his book The Spirit of Islam, Ameer Ali asserts the claim of the Arabs and Islamic civilization to have played a fundamental role in Western progress. He observes:

“The first manifestation of Rationalism in the West occurred in the province most amenable to the power to Muslim civilization, Ecclesiasticism crushed this fair flower with fire and sword, and threw back the progress of the world for centuries. But the principle of free thought so strongly impressed on Islam, had communicated their [i.e. the Muslims’] vitality to Christian Europe. Abelard had felt the power of Averroes’ genus, which was shedding light over the whole Western world. Abelard struck a blow for free thought which led to the eventual emanicipation of Christendom from the bondage of ecclesiasticism. Avenpace and Averroes were the precursors of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke.”12
There is, however, another band of Christian scholars who view Islam differently. The observations made by these scholars in appreciation of some of the basic principles of Islam prove the absurdity of the zealous Christian writers deliberately denouncing Islam. Ninian Smart observes as follows: “But for all its reverence for the Quran and for all the charity with which is attempts to conserve the prophetic message, Islam has shown a considerable degree of internal tolerance.”

He further notes:

Despite the bitterness engendered by the crusades, the culture of Islam had a lasting effect of Christian Europe. How Ibn Arbi contributed to the thought of Dante? More spectacular were the influences on the philosophical and scientific level. Until the fall of Constantinople, which released refugees and Greek manuscripts to the West, the Latin-speaking would of mediaeval Christendom had an imperfect knowledge of the riches of Greek Culture. These now began to flow invia the Arabic translation.

He, further, mentions Averroes (Ibn Rushd), whose commentaries on Aristotle were used in the University or Paris.

Modern Muslim philosophers like Mohammad Abdur of Egypt, Sir Saiyyad Ahmad Khan, Ameer Ali and Sir Mohammad Iqbal were not averse to Western knowledge. Abdur felt that “the modern knowledge which Western influence was introducing must be appropriated by Islam.”

Similarly Iqbal feels that:

...In view of the rapid developments in the scientific arena and the growth of intellect in Europe, it is necessary to examine in an independent spirit what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and it necessary reconstruction of theological thought in Islam. Besides this, it is not possible to ignore the generally anti-religious and especially anti-Islam propaganda in Central Asia which was already crossed the Indian frontier.

With the political decay of the Muslims all over the world and the acceptance of the intellectual supremacy of the West, it was assumed that Islam as a religion and
culture would also gradually vanish. Vembery rightly observed that a war had in reality been going to from the very start between the two worlds, which were culturally opposed to each other. He says that the ostensible purpose of the standard-bearers of Western culture and of modern civilization and humanization was a matter of quite secondary importance, an empty shibboleth: “The chief object is an remains the acquisition of colonies...to exalt and increase the power and importance of the mother country”. He then asks:

Can we wonder that the growing hold of Christianity upon the lands of Islam is creating a very marked unrest among the followers of Mohammad? Is it wise and expedient by useless provocations and unnecessary attacks to increase the feeling of animosity to hurry on the struggle between the two worlds, and to nip in the bud the work of modern culture which is now going on in Asia?  

**Attitude of the Muslims**

The Muslims are proud of the popularity of Islam all over the world. No religion has ever maintained so strong a hold over the people of the world as Islam. And, in fact, if understood in the true spirit, it definitely provides a happy compromise between the spiritual and temporal aspects of man’s wife. Of course, at one time, a number of evils crept into the body of Islamic beliefs. The Muslims began to consider themselves a class of superior human beings. This vain pride tended to arouse jealousy and enmity among the followers of other religions, especially the Christians.

It is now a part of the psychology of the Muslims that whenever they fail in other fields of life, they tend to withdraw to their religious defences and justify their failures and stagnation of religious grounds, thereby adding to the unpopularity of Islamic beliefs. Islam spread rapidly within less than half a century after the death of Prophet Muhammad, and there arose under the Caliph an immense empire stretching from Spain to India. This makes the Muslims suppose that the Arabs had attained a high degree of civilization. Andre Servicer observes:

Since the second century of the Hijra the Caliphs have decided, so as to avoid any variation of religious dogma, to lay down exactly he spirit and the letter in the
works of four orthodox doctors. It is forbidden to make any interpretation of the
sacred texts not sanctioned by these works, which have fixed the dogma beyond all
possibility of change, and by the same strike have killed the spirit of imitative and of
intelligent criticism among all Musalman [sic] people, who have thus become, as it
were, mummified to such extent that they have stayed fixed like rocks in the rushing
torrent that is bearing the rest of humanity onwards towards progress.\footnote{19}

In fact, owing to the existence of these four orthodox interpretations of the
Islam, the Muslims rarely if ever use the golden principle of ijtihad-the principle by
which Islam authorizes people to adjust to new conditions and changing
circumstances. It was Shah Waliullah who reminded the Muslims in India of the need
to use the principle of ijtihad. In a dissertation Al-Haj Mohammedullab showed how,
thanks to the principle of ijtihad, Muslim law cold never be rigid, Imam Ali Yusuf
points out how the use of this principle is allowed only to a mujtahid, a Muslim wise,
adult, intelligent by nature, well acquainted with the meaning of Arabic words and
mandatory passages in the Quran, and learned in the traditions of the Prophet.\footnote{20}
Accordingly Shah Waliullah’s successors allowed the Muslims to acquire English
education though with some caution. However, their narrow approach nullified the
utility of the principle.

Thus it is that the Muslims do not accept any truth, of whatever nature, unless
it is Islamized, i.e. unless it is proved to them it supported by one of the sacred
foundations laid by God and the Prophet as interpreted by the found orthodox schools.
It is, therefore, impossible to introduce into the law, and consequently into society,
any modifications made necessary by the evolution of ideas or the progress of science.
Even the less Islamized sections of Muslim society always make it a point to respect
the law of religious solidarity. Secular interests may divide them only for a brief time,
but they can never be a permanent barrier to their union. A Muslim, whoever he may
be submits to the strickt discipline of Islam. He acts always in conformity with the
higher interests of Islam. He would never willingly sacrifice even a fraction of the
Muslim world to a non-Muslim Power.\footnote{21}
Northrop, however, denies that there is any trait of fanaticism or conservatism that is peculiar only to Islam. Fanaticism and conservatism are, according to him, common to all theistic religions. He observes:

Since the ... commandments and behaviour and the traits of...God vary from one theistic religion to another and are in many instances definitely contradictory as in the case of Mohammedanism [sic], Judaism, Christianity, and Shintoism, it is not a mystery that in history these religions have had difficulty not merely in getting on with each other but also in responding graciously and with mutual enrichment to the open mindedness of the Far Eastern...non-theistic religions.22

However, to the zealous Christians Islam appears as a doctrine of death inasmuch as the spiritual is not separated from the temporal, and every aspect of activity, being subject to dogmatic law, formally forbids any change, evolution, and progress. They feel that Islam “condemns” all believers to live, to think, and to act as the Muslims lived, thought, and acted in the second century of the Hegira, when the law of Islam and its interpretation were definitely crystallized. Attempts have been made in certain Muslim countries to rationalize the principles of Islam, but these are confined only to microscopic section. The masses are even today strict adherents of the traditional beliefs.23

In contrast with the Western nations, thus, the Muslims have remained stationary and have made no effort to adapt themselves and their institutions to the requirements of modern times. Secure in their intransigent faith, they have not allowed any outside influence to affect them. On the contrary their hostility towards the infidels is more bitter than ever. The semi-education they have received in the European schools has only served to strengthen their hatred by leading them to imagine that they can do without foreign guidance. It is due to this feeling that there is Muslim nationalist party in every land governed or protected by a European Power. The aim of this party is to set the true believer against the infidel, to re-establish Islamic power, and to expel the foreigner.24
In India, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Muslims did bear bitter feeling against the Europeans. Farquhar observes:

The European had so unceremoniously helped himself to the empire of their (i.e. the Muslims') fathers. The old education and culture rapidly declined, and for many decades the Muhammadans [sic] failed to take advantage of the new education planted by the conqueror.25

This, however, does not mean that the Muslims had no urge for change the progress. In fact they welcomed, admired, and adopted the European techniques of war during the eighteenth century. But this tendency for the post part operated unperceived. And it did not go far enough in view of the antagonistic policies of the British rulers.

Attitude of the Muslim ruling class

In this political venture, the Muslim is guided by the directions of the Holy Book: “Make war on those who do not profess the true religion until they, in their humiliation, shall pay the tribute with their own hands.” At the same time Islam permits him to bow for the time being before a superior force. It does not impose upon him an attitude which might expose him to danger or reprisal. In extreme refit even a transgression of the dogmas is permissible.26

The Muslim may, therefore, bend to foreign authority when he is not strong enough to resist. He may even make terms with it and accepts titles and favours. However, as soon as he feels himself in a position to revolt, he should immediately do so. It is his imperative duty. This is what happened during 1857 in India. The Government, like others, is a religious institution. The Muslim may only be ruled by an Imam (Caliph) having the right and authority to watch over the observance of the precepts of Islam and to ensure that the legal penalties are properly enforced in order to defend the frontiers, raise armies, levy fiscal tithes, suppress rebels and brigands, celebrate public prayers, admit judicial proofs in contested cases, and finally, proceed with the division of lawful body.27

In this origin the Caliphate was not a despotic Government. The Caliph had to consult before acting. However, this practice caused when the Arabs in the course of extending their conquests found themselves in the midst of peoples accustomed to
despotic rule. The doctors of the faith who drew up the legislative text intended to reserve to themselves a share in the Government by specifying that the prince could not decide upon any matter without first consulting them. However, as they were at the mercy of his will and pleasure, it was he who in reality exercised power without control.28 This happened in India too. The despotic Muslim rulers influenced the opinion of the doctors of the faith. When in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the rulers grew weak, the doctors of the faith felt that the time was opportune for efforts to restore Islamic beliefs and practices. But then it was too late, the power itself had passed from Muslims hands.

**Attitude of the nobility and the Ulama:**

The vizier takes the sovereign’s place in the administration of affairs, the command or the army, and the supervision of officials. His office is a dangerous one since the incumbent serves as a buffer between the prince and the people. He must submit to the caprices of the one and expose himself to the hatred of the other; but the position is so lucrative, and admits of so great abuse of actual power, that candidates have never been wanting. Hence, the attitude of a vizier of his counterpart is determined by the patron, who is the real source of his power. He is loyal and obeys the prince; for it is on the prince that his inscriptive career depends. This naturally leads to a degeneration of the character of the incumbent. Administrative divisions are looked after by a divan, or a council of State, composed of high personages; but, being concerned chiefly to curry favour with the prince of with his vizier, the councillors turn out to be servile creatures ready for any compromise.29 This explains why the Mughal nobility so readily kowtowed to the British rulers as the power of the Muslim rulers declined.

The ulama, or doctors of theology and jurisprudence, form a special body whose duty is to watch over the observance of the fundamental laws and to register as religious dogmas the decrees issued by the council of State. The Ulama depend upon the goodwill and pleasure of the sovereign. They are, in addition, charger with the dispensation of justice. Their supreme head is the Shaikhul Islam, who must be consulted before a law is proclaimed, a tax imposed, or a war undertaken. It is under his order that the qadis dispense justice without appeal.30 Strong-willed rulers have
always sought to undermine the independence of the ulama. In India in the eighteenth century, as the political power of the rulers declined, the nobles and the ulama gained the upper hand in the affairs of State. The former sought to further their political and material ends, and the latter set about the task of religious restoration and purification of Muslim society. The ulama has hardly begun their efforts in this direction when they were confronted by a new but more formidable challenge. Since they had often criticized even their own Governments for adopting what they regarded as un-Islamic ways, they could not easily accept the decrees of the foreign rulers without judging them with reference to the basic principles of Islam. They were especially careful in dealing with the decrees of the foreign rulers because they were aware that these rulers’, being Christians, were imbued with religious antagonism aimed at discrediting Islam and its civilization.

**Attitude of the Muslim Elite:**

According to the ulama, human knowledge is derived from two principal sources, viz. reason and faith. The sciences are also of two kinds, viz. the rational (aqlia) and the positive (naglia). The rational sciences are those which man can acquire by his own reason, without the help of revelation, and include geography, mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, etc. The Muslim had contributed to the development of these sciences even before the dawn of the European Renaissance. In fact it is admitted that Muslim civilization made no mean contribution even to the European Renaissance, which carried European civilization to the heights. Of course, the Christians deny this, and say that what the Muslim philosophers and scientists taught was all borrowed from Greek and Latin and that they did not contribute anything original. However, in course of time the study of the rational sciences among the Muslims was relegated to a secondary place and was made to yield the palm to the science of revelation. We find the same phenomenon in India during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A section of Muslims felt the need to evolve a formula so that the rational sciences could be given their due importance in the curricula without prejudice to the study of theology. And in no case was a Muslim to avoid or go without religious education. Ibn-e Khaldun says in his
prolegomena that one of the distinctive marks of Musalman [sic] civilization is the practice of teaching the Quran to young children.\textsuperscript{31}

When the British rulers introduced a system of public instruction, the Muslims shied away from it. Had the Muslims been wise, they would have taken advantage of the new educational system. They felt, however, that it was not proper for the descendants of the ruling class to receive education in institutions which did not care to provide instruction in their religion and culture.\textsuperscript{32}

The Muslim obviously did not realize the extent of ruin suffered by the country in general and by the Muslims in particular. Nor did the ulama in their ignorance of, and indifference to, the consequences of the loss of political authority, give a correct lead to the rest of Muslim population of the country. The absence of a middle class among the Muslims owing to their education further aggravated the problem of Muslim backwardness.\textsuperscript{33}

In fact, the Muslim rulers expected events to take a miraculous turn somehow, and the religious leaders propped up the masses who followed them. The nobility and the elite were susceptible to change because they were much more concerned to ensure their present prosperity than about some future religious revolution. Such Westernization as occurred as this time among the Muslims was confined to those two classes, viz. the nobility and the elite. Even they had to come to terms will well-entrenched religious resistance.

\textbf{British Strategy and the Muslims of India:}

Relations between the British and the Muslims in India are to be studied against this psychological and historical background and in the light of the inherent, mutually antagonistic attitudes of the two. Yusuf Ali observes:

In considering the interaction of the civilizations of India and the West, especially on the religious side, it should be borne in mind that the Indian Muslims stand on a somewhat different footing from their Hindu fellow citizens. The differences are due partly to historical causes, partly to the sociological structure of the Muslim community, and partly to a difference in the nature of their religious ideals.\textsuperscript{34}
Islam is a world religion, and the historical causes as they affect Islam generally are, therefore, of world wide significance.

From its origin it has been in intimate contact with Christianity and Judaism ...in politics, in commerce, in navigation, and in war-like enterprises of the crusades, there were intercourse and interactions, conflicts and borrowings, which left their marks deep on the history both of Islam and of Europe...Even on the soil of India itself the Muslims were not as isolated as the Hindus from the rest of the world.35

The Muslim have been particularly susceptible to outside influence on account of their social structure. However great the pull exerted by local factors, they have, on the whole, resisted the tendency to racialism. The absence of the feeling of racialism prepared the Muslim mind freely to receive impressions and influences from outside. “Seek knowledge, said the Prober, “even though [it may have to be caught] as far as China.”36 This principle has gone a long way towards promotion of the religious ideals of Islam, which have always tended towards cosmopolitanism. It was with this spirit that the Mughal rulers adopted a secular policy and welcomed the Europeans. But the Europeans had different plans in mind from the very beginning.

In 1661 the English East India Company received a new charter which authorized it “to wage war or make peace with non-Christian powers, and to send warships, men, and arms” to protect its factories in India.37

There is no doubt that the Europeans entered India basically with commercial motives in mind. The Mughal rulers welcomed them as they felt that commercial relationship would be advantageous to both parties. When, however, they settled down in India and found political conditions in a chaotic state, the Europeans soon revised their aims and began to aspire at first to replace the Muslim power and then to remove the main obstacle, viz., Islam and its culture, from the way of progress of Western civilization. However, we may freely admit that as compared with the other European nations, the English adopted a policy of restraint and patience. What they aimed at was gradual and systematic extinction of the Muslim power and culture. Hence, according to S.R.Sharma, “the history of the English in India is the story of the
transformation of a company of traders into rulers of this paradise of commerce.”38 In fact, it is more than that: it is a history of a part of the great struggle of the Christians to eliminate Islam and its culture from less Islamized India. The Muslim rulers of India belonged to such countries as Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, etc.; they had embraced Islam but without giving up their cultures. They continued with their un-Islamic traditions. The British knew this well.39 The tolerant Mughal rulers allowed the Christians even to carry on missionary activity. S.R.Sharma observes: “The extent of patronage shown to the missionaries under the Emperors of the house of Babar was extraordinary. They were the honoured guests of the Emperors; they enjoyed privileges which were the cause of envy of the Mughal nobility.”40 Bernier, a French traveller who toured India from 1659 to 1667, held a salaried post as a physician at the court of the Emperor Aurangzeb.41 Christian effigies and religious symbols were received within the Imperial places, princes of the Imperial house were allowed to be baptized; churches were built at Agra and Lahore and in other Imperial cities; preaching and proselytizing were freely permitted; and the gospel was translated into Persian under Imperial auspices. Jesuit fathers like Maurique and Xavier even served as tutors to the princes. The careers of Mirza Zilqarnain and Donna Juliana show the extent the Christian influence. Even instances of reconversion of Christian fugitives from Islam are not wanting. Of course, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb did take some steps to check the rebelliousness manifested by some Europeans. Sir Thomas Roe warned the English Eat India Company against diverting energies into wasteful channels as the Portuguese had done. On the other hand Englishmen like Sir Josiah Child believed in the possibilities of establishing fasting English dominion in India. Though the attempts of that generation failed on account of the competence of the Mughal rulers, the ultimate achievement of the English testify of the essential soundness of that dream.42 The symptoms of weakness were already manifest by the end of Aurangzeb’s reign. Indeed, as Munucci observed, “some 30,000 Europeans could easily destroy the authority of the Mughal”.43

That the English cherished political aims in the early eighteenth century is proved from the observation of Bolt. They had fully realized the political weakness of the Muslim rulers:
The Mughal Empire is overflowing with gold and silver, it has always been feeble and defenceless. It is a miracle that no European prince with a maritime power has ever attempted the conquest of Bengal. By a single stroke infinite wealth might be acquired, which would counter-balance the mines of Brazil and Peru. The policy of the Mughal is bad; their army is worse; they are without a navy. The Empire is exposed to perpetual revolts. Their ports and rivers and open to foreigners. The country might be conquered, or laid under contribution, as easily as the Spaniards overwhelmed the naked Indians of America.44

Appointment of Europeans to the higher military posts became a common practice of the successor States of the Mughal Empire during the period of Mughal decline in the early eighteenth century and on the eve of the beginnings of the territorial empire of the English East India Company. This was an acknowledgement as much of the technical superiority of the Europeans in the manufacture and use of the instruments of artillery as of the higher sophistication of the European techniques and strategy of war.45

Irvine asserts the superiority of the European armies over the Indian, and observes. “In the middle of the 18th century the French and the English had demonstrated the vast superiority of disciplined infantry when compared with the Indian solider, who was little more than a night-watchman and a guardian over baggage.”46

Hence the use of force against rivals soon turned into use of force for expansion, and this ultimately led to assertion of sovereignty by a trading company which gradually assumed political power. Of Clive’s character Horace treachery and injustice than they have taught them of our discipline.” Nagendra Singh rightly disputes this statement, and says: “It was quite the reserve since the conqueror is always in a much better position to reach and impart his virtues and vices to the conquered than the latter can ever do to the former.”47 It may be asserted without doubt that the company made political use of force in the battles of Plassey and Buxar in order to gain power and influence, not in order to uphold justice of respect recognized rights. Indeed the Company’s presence in Bengal was de facio, not de jure, till the Third Mysore War in 1789-93, when the Company decided to annex a portion
of the Mysore Kingdom, acquired a piece of territory for the first time in its history purely by right of conquest, and stood forth as the direct liege lord of some Indian subjects. It was the first instances of de jure assertion of political power in India by the Company. Wellesley’s Subsidiary Alliances, which obligated the princes to accept the protection of the English away the pay for its expenses, were a kind of modern version of Ashvamedhayajna. After establishing their political hegemony, the English began to destroy the economy of the Muslim. The various measures adopted by the Company from the Permanent Settlement of 1793 under Cornwallis to the resumption of the Land Act under William Bentinck badly hit the economy of the Muslim artsocracy. Many of the finer and more skilled industrial arts of India were in the hands of the Muslims, and they were ruined by the fiscal policy of the East India Company. The army, the administration, and the learned professions were fields of employment for most of the Muslims. The upper middle classes were reduced to beggary. B.B.Mishra observes: “Those who lost heavily with the establishment of British rule, for example in Bengal, were for the most part Muslims.”

Ameer Ali observes:

It is no exaggeration to say that English officials generally are at this day as far from understanding the real feelings of the Indian Mohammedans [sic] as they were half a century ago. Want of sufficient interest on one side and absence of qualified exponents on the other explain the imperfect knowledge possessed by the official world of India with regard to the Musalmans [sic]. The changes introduced in 1793 affected the Muslims indirectly, but their general tendency was to deprive them of their influence and status. Up to this time higher offices, fiscal as well as judicial, were filled by Musalmans [sic]. But now the higher executive appointments were reserved exclusively for Europeans.

After the award of Divani, for about half a century, the Muslims were scrupulously maintained in their positions. And then silently, secretly, and insidiously,
as the Muslims allege, the thunderbolt was forged which was to overwhelm them and deprive them of their status, power and privileges.

The English deprived the Muslim Jagirdars of their power to collect Government revenue on the pretext of corruption and appointed their own men-Collectors-in their place. This was the first blow dealt at the political position of the Muslims. This was a usurpation of a most servious character. It was in direct conflict with the spirit of the treaty concluded between Shah Alam and Clive. Was if necessary to run the Muslim by taking their lands? What it necessary to deprive them of their influence and wealth and impoverish them?52

It was under William Bentinck that the Muslim suffered most. In 1828 the Company Government called for an examination of the title deeds of the aindars and the lakhirajdars. At the most the rulers were entitled only the claim their revenue, but they used their power to oust all those who failed to establish, to the technical conviction of a legal court, their full title under writer grants from the Mughal Emperors. The resumption proceedings, through intended to apply equally to Hindus and Muslims, fell more heavily on the latter.53 The Friends of India on 10 and 12 August 1837 condemned the measures of the Government which reduced a number of respectable men to beggary.54 In 1837 the rulers replaced Persian in the courts with English or the vernaculars. This resulted in the ouster of a considerable body of Muslim subordinate officers who were totally dependent for their subsistence on the remuneration they had been received from the Government. The change of language served as a constant reminder the Muslims of the fact that they were now among the subject races of mankind.55 Hafeez Malik, therefore, rightly remarks: “Their strategy was to oust the Muslims from the professions and positions of economic and administrative control. This policy ultimately pauperized them.”56

The English started placing reliance on the good will and co-operation of the Hindus rather than of Muslims. This was an obvious course for them to follow.57 Inspite of these deliberate attempts by the British to disrupt Hindu-Muslim unity, friendship between the two communities remained undisturbed until after 1857.

In the beginning the English adopted apparently a policy of non-intervention. They also mixed freely with the Muslims. Later, as the new century advanced, things
grew worse; so much so that at the time of Bentinck, in contrast with their attitude to the feasts of Hastings’s days, the Muslims started feeling that to dine with the Europeans was degrading. In the beginning the Company Government was strict in its avoidance of interference in the social and religious affairs of the people. It knew of the bitter experience of the Portuguese. Peace and political stability after 1818, however, enabled Company officials to inaugurally an era of Westernization. They gave up the policy of non-interference in social and religious affairs. The English, who used to claim boastfully to be the patrons and protectors of the religious and cultures of India, now considered them to be utterly backward and deserving to be replaced by those of the West. The first open attack on the policy of non-interference by the Government was the one made by the Christian missionaries in India. Missionary called pegs came to India in 1821 for missionary work, but was totally wreaked in health. He, therefore, returned to England in 1826 and tried his best to draw the attention of the Government at home as well as of the English public to the passive religious policy of the Company Government in India. His cry, it would seem, was taken up by other missionary bodies and ultimately by the Christian officers of the Company Government. With this began the final attempt to remove the great obstacle, viz. Islam, from the way of progress of Western civilization. The attack upon the Muslim religion and culture was not as open as the attack upon the Hindu religion and culture; it was indirect. It was, however clear that the idea was to denounce Islam and its impact through the less Islamized sections of the people. Thus, right from 1765 onwards, the English carried out intelligently and imperceptibly their policy of removing the obstacle that was Islam and eliminating its impact on society in order to impose their own “progressive” civilization. This is confirmed by the following observation by W.W.Hunter:

The truth is that had we hastened by a single decade our formal assumption of sovereignty, we should have been landed in a Mohammadan [sic] rising infinitely more serious than the mutinies of 1857. The admirable moderation of the East India Company’s government, and their determination to let Mohammadan [sic] power expire by slow, natural decay, without hustling its
death by a single moment, averted this danger. India passed from a country of Islam into a country of the enemy, by absolutely imperceptible gradations.\textsuperscript{60}

The following excerpts from the Friends of India would show how the Christian missionaries and the Company Government engaged in a conspiracy to replace Islam and its culture with Christianity and Western civilization: “India, China, Japan, Central Asia must be evangelized by native teaches. To prepare for such an instrumentality ought to be, next to the translation of the scripture, the great aim and business of our missionary.”\textsuperscript{61}

The Company Government, though interested in the translation of the Construction scripture, avoided direct interference. At the same time it allowed the missionaries to go ahead with their aims and objectives. The following excerpt from the Friends of India would vouch for this truth: “Considering our position as Englishmen in this country we hold that it is the duty of the Government to be strictly impartial in these matters and to leave the task of conversion to the missionaries.”\textsuperscript{62}

Sleeman observes: “The Mohammedans [sic] in India sigh for [the] restoration of the Mohammedans [sic] regime as it would give them all the offices in a country where office is everything.” He added:

Perhaps there are few communities in the world among whom education is more generally diffused than among [the] Mohammedans [sic] in India. He who holds an office with twenty rupees a month commonly gives his son an education equal to that of a Prima Minister. They learn through the medium of the Arabic and Persian languages what young men in our colleges learn through those of Greek and Latin. He will talk as fluently about Socrates and Aristotle, Plato and Hippocrates, Galen and Avicenna... He, therefore, things himself well fitted to fill the high officers which are now filled exclusively by [the] Europeans and naturally enough wishes the establishment of that power which would open the door to them. Beside this factor they pray every night for the Emperor and his family because their forefathers ate of the salt of this forefathers.\textsuperscript{63}
In spite of the onslaught of Western culture, the intellectual triumph of Europe, and the deliberate attempt to denounce Islam and its culture and establish the supposed superiority of Christendom, Islam as a religion and culture and as a way of life survived all the vicissitudes. It embraced gradually Western knowledge and at the same time preserved its purity.

For Islam’s importance lies partly in the stress it lays on the social dimensions. It has preserved the ideal which the Prophet set before himself of a people united in sensible and sober brotherhood in which the Quran’s law will promote cohesion and justice. His entire dependence on Allah and strick adherence to the scripture have been both a source of weakness and strength in relation to the future of Islam.64

Lichlenstadter observes: “The concept of change and evolution had been a basic function within Islam itself in its early, formative period.” According to him, the concept of Jihad and democracy are very near to Western ideas. He, therefore, visualizes the possibility of change and notices among the Muslims a willingness to learn from the West.65 Smart comments: “Though the West was intellectually triumphant, it was passing through a strange crisis in respect of morality and social cohesion. These qualities were what Islam could give.”66 The attitude of the Company Government offered a remarkable contrast to the attitude of the Muslim rulers towards their Christian guests. The Muslim rulers had not only tolerated the Christians but also allowed them to flourish and disseminate their religious teachings and culture. In contract, the Christian rulers sought to uproof their Muslim patrons. They were not satisfied merely with establishing their political over India by disguising themselves as vassals of the Mughals. They had a plan to accomplish the total impoverishment of the Muslims. They also wished to establish their religion and their civilization as superior to Islam and Islamic civilization.

Hence, the Muslim, who were less susceptible than the Hindus to change, lagged behind partly because of their own drawbacks but largely because of the antagonistic attitude adopted by the British rulers. The policy of discrimination tended the Muslims to array themselves in a hostile camp against the British. Observes Abu Hayat: “the Muslim mind entertained the deepest distrust of the British and Western culture.” 67 The Muslims as usual felt back on their religious defences
in view of their political failure. The sought to restore the purity of Islamic beliefs and practices, which had drifted towards heresy on account of the policy of religious tolerance of the Mughal rulers. The time they spent on these efforts widened the gulf.

On the other hand the English, who aimed at demolishing Islamic civilization, chose the less Islamized sections in Indian society as their instruments. They easily won over the noble, the elite, and the Shiahs. Subsequently, however, not only the Muslims, but the Hindus also realized that material progress was necessary but not at the cost of their religion and culture. There was no possibility of a one-way traffic as the English believed. There should always be a compromise between materialism and religiousness, between traditionalism and progress.

The above psychological analysis is useful in understanding the contradictions and disparities in the attitudes of the various Muslim classes and sections towards the British rulers and their culture. In the pages that follow, the political part deals at length with the attitudes of the Muslim rulers and sections of the Muslim community.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. Ibid., p 76

5. Ibid., p 262


7. Ibid., p 267


11. Iqbal, pp v and 3.


15. Ibid.


17. Vemberry, pp 657-66

18. Ibid.


21. Servier, pp 269-70


23. Iqbal, p 3.


26. Servier, p 204.
27. Ibid., pp. 204-5 and 245-6. See also, Ameer Ali, pp 124, 125 and 278
29. Servier, p 206.
31. Servier, p 167 and 201-3.
40. Sharma, p 731 see also, Amer Ali, on the issue of toleration of dhimms in Islam.
41. O’Malley, m 34, p 390. It was a Muslim who introduced Vasco-Da-Gamas to the Zamorin’s court’ Danishmand, a Mughal courtier, learnt from Bernier about Harvey’s theory of circulation of blood. See also, Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London, 1967), p 5; and Mohammad Majid, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), p 513; Begam Samru, a lady from a respectable Muslim family, married a European. Haratunnisa, Begum of Banaras, married as Englishman.
42. Sharma n 38, pp 730-2.
43. Quoted to Nagenra Singh *The Theory of Force and Organization of Defence in India* (Bombay, 1969), p 172
44. Sharma, n 38. p 732
45. Aziz Ahmad, n 41. p 4.
46. Quoted in Singh, n 43 p 173.
47. Ibid. p.197.
48. Ibid., p 204.
49. O’Malley, n 34 p 392.
53. Ameer Ali, n 51 p 197; and Malik, n 32, pp 145-47; and also Mallick, n 33, p 51
54. *Friends of India*, 10 August 1837.
56. Malik, n 32, p 145. See also *Dilli Urdu Akhbar*, 28 June 1840, p 69; and *Friends of India*, 8 March 1838.
57. Mallick, n 33, p 64.
58. Aziz Ahmad, m 41, pp 5-6.
59. Ibid., p 17 and see also Romesh Chandra Banarjee, “State Patronage to the Hindu and Muslim Religions during the East India Company’s Rules”, *Bangal Post and Present* (Culcutta), Vol.56, January-June-1939, p 23
60. Hunter, n 8 p 108
61. *Friends of India*, 3 April 1838
62. Ibid.
63. Sleeman, n 52.
64. Smart, n 13 pp 421-3.