CHAPTER - IV

ISLAMIC APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

A. THE ROOTS OF ISLAMIC COMMUNALISM

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the roots of Islamic Communalism in India. Islam entered India predominantly as a faith of the ruling class, which had a well-defined worldview, system of values and principles of social re-construction with cultural apprehension of its ethos and identity. In the course of its encounter with Hinduism, which was doctrinally amorphous, socially segmented, politically dispersed, and embedded so deeply for millennia into the cultural traditions of thousands of closed villages, neither could it totally Islamize India nor was it absorbed in Hindu Pantheon. Hence two types of social groups with specific cultural interests with a definite cultural boundary exist in the Indian sub-continent from 9th century onwards. It seems cultural exclusivism is a threat to religious pluralism which is the root cause of communalism in India. In the first Chapter it has been pointed out that the cultural exclusivism emphasizes two claims – the claims for the possession of the finality of Truth and the supreme authority of the way to God or Salvation.

This section discusses how the cultural exclusivism of Islamic vision responds to religious pluralism. Some contemporary Indian Muslim scholars have tried to argue that while the external aspects of culture, such as dress, food and technology are different in different places and times, the values of a given culture are derived from its religion. Since values are any way basic to a culture, if religion is affirmed as the sole source of a culture’s values, it is tantamount to affirming that religion determines the whole culture of a community. This is true
in Islamic culture also. It demands us to search the theological, cultural and emotional standpoints in moulding the Islamic community and its consideration of the Indian Muslim response to Religious Pluralism.

The Rise of Islam

Islam was born within the context of Judaism and Christianity in the Arabian region. Muhammed understood his revelation to be a continuation and fulfilment of the Jewish and Christian Biblical traditions. Muhammad’s respect for the Biblical tradition is exemplified in his teaching that during prayer one should face the direction of Jerusalem. It was only when the Jewish community of Madina refused to accept Muhammed as the leader of the one community of God that the Prophet ordered the direction of prayer be shifted towards Mecca.² Muhammed was convinced that he was appointed as a Rasul (a messenger of God) and that he was asked to give this message to his fellow Meccans. Later he became a warrior, Legislator, judge and ruler in Madina and the believers were constituted as “Umma”, one community.

The history of Islam in India begins with the Arab general Muhammad bin Qasin’s expedition in Sind in 711 AD.³ Now Muslims alone constitute more than twelve percent of the population of India and it is the biggest minority community. Here it is discussed how far the theology of Islam tended to mould a cultural exclusivism in the Islamic community.

1. THEOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

Theology is not just the explication of one’s own faith in the ultimate. It involves also putting that faith alongside others’ faith in the ultimate, and alongside rationality and human values which one shares with others, allowing the
examination of each on it. This section deals with the theological standpoint of Islam in this context. Theological standpoint is the chief criterion by which any religion judges and shares its relation with other religion and values.

(a) **Absolutist Paradigm**

(i) **The Holy Quran**

The word Quran is derived from the Arabic root ‘iqra’ which means read or recite. This is the first word of the first revelation said to have come down to Muhammad (Surah 59:1). Thus the meaning of the Quran is something to be recited. The Quran is considered as the heart and way of Islam. They considered that every word of Quran is literally God’s word. It was written on the “Preserved tablet” (Surah: 85:22) which is called the “Mother of the Book” (Surah 13:39). They believed that during the month of *Ramadan* in the “night of destiny”, the scripture was sent down to the lowest heaven. From there it was revealed in portion to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Hence the Quran is revelation and inspiration and eternal. Since Quran is revealed in the Arabic language they considered Arabic language as divine. The orthodox Muslims believe only in one Book, i.e., the Quran, which they considered as the final word of God. They include every word of the Quran in the category of *Qal Allahu*, ‘Allah has said,’ and consequently they rate the other books (scriptures) much lower because they are not cast entirely in this mould. They also believed that after the revelation of Quran all other scriptures became invalid and Quran is the fulfilment of all other scriptures. Any religion profess, propagate that their own scripture and its language is only divine, final, correct and all others are corrupted,
invalid or irrelevant and not from God, then co-existence of religions is not possible. This absolutistic standpoint is a hindrance to religious harmony.

(ii) The Universality of Quranic Message

There are Muslim scholars like Fazlur Rahman, who recognize “Quranic Messages as universal and identical,” because all prophetic messages come from a single source. Therefore, Rahman says that Muhammad is made to declare in the Quran that not only does he believe in the Torah and the gospel but “I believe in whatever Book God may have revealed.” God’s Truth and guidance are not restricted but are universally available to all. “For every people a guide has been provided.” Hence the word Book is often used in the Quran not to refer any specific revealed book but as a generic term denoting the totality of divine revelations.

According to the Quran (2:213) there was originally a unified humanity, which due to its own rebelliousness became divided. In the Surah 5:48, it is said:

If God so willed, He would have made all of you one community, but [He has not done so] that He may test you in what He has given you; so compete in goodness. To God shall you all return and He will tell you [the truth] about what you have been disputing.

Here it can be seen that the Quran challenges all other religions to a competition in goodness and emphasizes that Islamic goodness is higher than other religions. Harold Coward says though the above verses obviously referred to Jews and Christians, the Quranic logic is that there is the one divine Book of which the prophetic utterness of the various religions are simply different manifestations of that Book. The Quran is of course the complete and full
revelation of the one divine Book, all other being only partial and incomplete presentations.¹³

This position counts that the revelation in the Quran is full and all other manifestations are only partial and subordinate to the Quran. Hence the Quran is the sole criterion by which all other religions are to be evaluated and judged. Therefore, the universalistic message in the Quran reveals an inclusivistic standpoint, which is a hindrance to Religious Pluralism.

(b) Inclusivist Paradigm

In this approach there is openness in acknowledging elements of truth in other religions. But this attitude accepts and rejects other faiths. It accepts them on the ground that other scriptures are simply the manifestations of the ‘divine Book’, but rejects them because later followers corrupted these scriptures.¹⁴ The original truth has been tarnished by the followers of other religions, hence their scriptures are insufficient and inadequate for salvation. Quran is the only way of salvation for humanity.

The acceptance of elements of truth in other religious traditions creates space for exploring the possibility of divine encounter in other religious traditions. But in Islam this openness disappears when it deals with goodness and salvation of humanity. The Quran has become normative and definitive to its adherents by emphasizing that it is the fulfilment of all other scriptures. This attitude destroys the identity and efficacy of other religious. Then it generates hostility and violence. As D.P. Pattanayak says ‘This is the beginning of communalism’.¹⁵
(i) The Uniqueness of God Allah

The first Surah of the Quran Al-Fatiha clearly depicts the uniqueness of Allah and its 4th and 5th verses say, Allah is "the owner of the day of judgement," "Thee (alone) we worship, Thee (alone) we ask for help." The two central dogmas of Islam are (i) Unity of God (Tawhid) (ii) And the Prophetic mission of Muhammad (Risalat). i.e., There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his apostle. The whole Muslim theology is built around these two beliefs which is called by the name Kalima. The oneness of God is expressed very clearly in Sura 112, which says:

He is Allah, the One!
Allah the eternally besought of all!
He begetteth not nor was begotten
And there is none comparable unto Him.16

Tawhid (unity of God) is beyond human words and thinking. The greatest of all sins is associating partners with God, which is called Shirk, and it is unpardonable in Islam. Islam holds strict monotheism. Allah is neither be identified with any other gods nor is superior to all other gods. He is unique to be accepted and worshipped by all. Here Islam negates all other religions and their gods.

Islam maintains a self centred exclusivism emphasizing that one's own religion and god is true and all other gods and modes of worship are false, futile and unpardonable in the sight of Allah. The orthodox Muslims followed a strict monotheism and a theocratic rule.17 Thus the Islamic Theology gives the kind of values and vision to mould the Islamic community in an exclusive cultural way leading to negative consequences in a multi-religious society.
The Absolutistic (inclusivistic and exclusivistic) paradigm promoted by the interpreters of Islam divide the people into two, those "inside" Islam and those "outside". This type of vision or worldview isolates Islam from the agenda of nation building and national integration policy. This unilateral and exclusive vision (ekānta drṣṭi) involves serious theological and secular problems in the society. It teaches human values are inherented only in its teaching and in its community. Therefore searching values and reality in other religions and cultures are not advisable. Moreover cultural exclusivism ruined up with power, economic, political and military lead to tensions, terrorism and conflicts in the society.

This is one of the crucial issues in Asian Continent especially in India today. The partition of the Indian subcontinent was the result of exclusive cultural nationalism, promoted by the kind of religious values injected by the leaders in the society. Hence one is inclined to agree with Erol E Fay's opinion that "Religion is the main instrument for the expression of values. It supplies ethos, prevalent tone and or sentiment of a given culture."18

The above analysis was an attempt to show how the Islamic Scripture and its interpretation (theology) gave rise to Islamic worldview and system of values and moulded the Islamic community (Umma) with social and personal behaviour of cultural exclusion. This cultural exclusion gave momentum to hatred and enmity with other religions by not accepting the cultural identity of other religions, which is one of the root causes of communalism.
2. THE CULTURAL STANDPOINT

In the previous section it is noted that the Islamic theology and its interpretation of the Quranic motifs pave way to the moulding of an exclusive community (Umma) by imparting its system of values, behaviour patterns, symbols, language, rituals and traditions. This section deals with some of the important concepts and Religious duties of Islam which seem to construct an Islamic culture exclusive from other religious traditions and promote religious rivalry and hatred among religions.

(a) Concepts

(i) Jihād (The Holy war)

Islam rose and developed within the context of religious pluralism. Islam considers itself a theo-cracy in which Allah reigns. The ultimate aim of theo-cracy is a religious state. Democracy is often not viable in Islam, since there is only one ruler – Allah. His people are to submit to him unconditionally. Islam in Arabic means submission or surrender, not only voluntary but also by force. Islam is a missionary religion aiming to conquer the whole world for Allah. In the early years of Islam the principle of Jihād was relaxed in the case of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians.

Islamic scholars have identified four kinds of Jihād. (i) Jihād of the ‘heart’ (spiritual striving) (ii) Jihād of the hand (physical striving, work, labour) (iii) Jihād of the tongue (striving in preaching or debate) (iv) Jihād of the sword (striving in war, holy war)
Jihād develops in part as a response to idolatry. Allah is to be accepted and worshiped by all. It seems this concept has its base in the Holy Quran. The Quran, Surah: 8:1, says that the Prophet Muhammad announced an absolution for all fighters in Holy War, to justify and comfort his sorrowful Muslims:

The spoils of war belong to Allah and the messenger, so keep your duty to Allah and adjust the matter of your difference, and obey Allah and His messenger if you are true believers.

This verse clearly shows that the war is sanctioned by Allah.

According to Surah 8:15 says:

When you meet those who disbelieve in battle, turn not your backs to them.

Again in Surah 8:16 says:

Whoso on that day turneth his back to them unless maneuvering for battle or intent to join a company, he truly hath incurred wrath from Allah and his habitation will be hell ...

Again in Surah 8:17 says:

Ye (Muslims) slew them not, but Allah slew them. And thou (Muhammad) threwest not when thou didst throw, but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair test from Him...

With these Quranic verses killing in an Islamic Holy War was justified. Allah appeared as an impassioned God of war and an irresistible murdering Lord. If a Muslim kills an enemy in a Holy war, he is considered innocent, because he has carried out a commendable deed; he has offered himself to Allah and has been an instrument in His hand. The Muslim is not the slayer but Allah is. The revelation of Muhammad in Surah The Cow 2:216-218 legitimised Holy War for all Muslims. (Other verses are Surah: 2:191, 4:89 & 91, 9:29).
ABDAL-MASIH in his interpretation of Quran says, “whenever a Muslim dies in a holy war, he is promised immediate entrance into Paradise. Only when dying for Islam will he be exempt from the Day of Judgement.”

One effect of the concept of *Jihād* of the sword was rapid expansion during the period A.D. 634—732. Within one hundred years Islam had spread to Spain, France, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, India, Africa, further to China, Java and Philippines. Thus it is clear that the expansion of Islam in its earlier period was through compulsion not by voluntary yielding, i.e., *Jihād* of the hand but by *Jihād* of the sword. This militant attitude of the earlier Islam moulded a community with a worldview to negate all other communities that do not submit to Islam. Thus the spirit of *Jihād* was latent in the culture of Islamic community and it reveals this spirit when it encounters other religions.

**Islam in India**

In the pre Mughal and in the Mughal periods there were Islamic invaders, plunders and conquerors who entered India with an aggressive policy totally alienating the sympathy of the Hindus. Muhammad Gazni is widely known as the despoiler of temples and the idol braker. Bevan Jones describes “he resolved to wage a *Jihād* each year against the idolaters of Hindustan. He raided India seventeen times and he captured Somnath in Gujarat 1025—26 A.D. and he has become the champion of Sunni Islam.” Qut-b-ud-din founded the slave dynasty and he was a mighty “fighter of Allah.” Aurangzeb also followed the *Jihād* way and under his rule Hindus faced severe hardships. Many Hindu temples were destroyed and *Jizya* tax imposed for humiliating Hindus. He forcefully converted Hindus into Islam. He followed a policy of Islamization. Hence Al-Biruni, the
Muslim historian, who recorded his impression existed between his people and the Hindus, ‘In all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us ... and as to declare us to be the devils breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper.’ Thus the practice of *jihād* created two communities with exclusive cultures which existed side by side in India with very little love. This gulf between the Muslims and Hindus only widened during the British rule and also that continued even after the partition of India. Hence Margoliouth says:

“Islam was intolerant in the beginning as it is today. Intolerance is part of its very creed. It is a declaration of war, a battle cry against non-Muslims and their God and historically it began so and continuous to be so ....”

Mahatma Gandhi was also inclined to say that ‘the Islamic strength was two fold, its highly attractive doctrine of equality and the power of the sword’

This concept gave way to the opinion that the world is divided into two parts *darul-hārb* (House of war) and *Darul-Islam* (House of Islam.)

(ii) The House of Islam (*Dar-ul-Islam*)

This is another concept, which expresses the basis of relationship between Muslims and the non-Muslims. According to one school of thought since the message of Islam is universal, the call to acceptance of Islam is compulsory. At first Muslims must invite unbelievers to Islam verbally, then it becomes obligation upon the former to fight them until they accept Islam. This school emphasizes it is the duty of the believers, where they can to extend the domain of Islam at the expense of the second. But this did not happen in many countries like India. They could not completely Islamize the nation. Then Majid Khadduri writes:
"The impossibility of universalizing Islam and the failure to set up a world state divided the world in to the world of Islam and the world of war."  
And in another instance Khadduri writes:

The Pax Islamica (the abode of Islam) was in theory in a state of war with the Darul Harb because the ultimate objective of Islam was the world.  
Once more the same contention is brought in to focus in another way:

Islamic law recognizes no other nation than its own since the aim of Islam was the subordination of the whole world to one system of law and religion to be enforced by the supreme authority of the Caliph.

In other words, Islam has to go on fighting until the whole world is conquered and converted. A.H. Abdel Kader refers to it as the bellicose nature of Islam.

R.E. Miller says that both dar-ul-Islam and its opposite dar-ul-harb, represent formidable realities in Indian Muslim history, recalling not only the struggle for Islam, but also the vision of the Islamic statehood. The object and purpose of an Islamic state is to promote Islam, to implement the moral code according to Islamic penal law.

From the above analysis it is evident that the House of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam) is the ultimate goal of Islam and it is the duty of the true believers to extend the domain of Islam. This is to transform the plural society to an exclusive Islamic community with a culture in accordance with Islamic ideology and values. Such an approach does not accept the boundary and identity of other religions and becomes a hindrance to religious pluralism. This is the problem we face in India today.

(b) Religious Duties

Along with the above concepts, there are certain obligatory duties based on definite instructions in Quran, which mould the believer and the community with
an exclusive culture. These religious duties are five in number, and they are called the “five pillars of Islam”

The first one is *Tashahhud* or *Shahadat*. This word comes from a root meaning “testify” and consists of a confession such as this:

“I testify that there is no god but Allah; I testify His unity and that He has no partner. I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger.” This is also called *Kalima*.

Here the emphasis on strict monotheism and associating partner with Allah is sin (shrik)

The second pillar is *Salat* (Worship). A muslim prays to God five times a day. Tradition has fixed the time for prayers.

The third pillar is *Saum* – or fasting (Roza) fasting during the month of *Ramadan* is an obligatory duty. They abstain from food, drink, perfume and conjugal relations, between sunrise and sunset. Young children and idiots are excused. The Sick and journey can postpone it another time.

The fourth one *Zakat*: It is an obligatory duty of every Muslim to give *Zakat*, annually on his savings provided he has enough for his own sustenance. Those liable to pay *Zakat* must fulfill these three conditions.

- i. That a person should be an Islam
- ii. A free man
- iii. Possessor of a fixed amount of property.

*Zakat* is given to the poor and the needy. (Surah: 2: 43, 83, 110)

The fifth pillar of Islam is *Hajj* or Pilgrimage to Mecca. It is an obligatory duty laid down in the Quran. Surah 22: 27,29 and 3: 97. Pilgrimage should be made once in life.
These obligatory religious duties make the Muslim community to feel their oneness everywhere in the world. Five times of prayer, facing towards Mecca, confessing that Allah is the only true God and pilgrimage to Mecca are unique features of Islam.

Muslim theology does not accept any other gods as true gods and associating any god with Allah is unpardonable sin. They also recognize Mecca as their Holy land and fatherland (Punyabhūmi and Pitrubhūmi) where the Kaaba is situated, and it is imperative to make pilgrimage there at least once in their life. Islamic worldview, and system of values imbibed from its religious practices helped Islam to develop a separate cultural identity.

J. Ahmed upholds that it is the culture that has developed from religion, which determines the existence of a nation. He says:

"...Their idea of nationality is not based on identity of race or community of economic interest or attachment to the geographical boundaries of a particular territory; it rests on a definite life - out look and a social poli ty.... Islam is a social policy and a state idea whose purposes cannot be fulfilled except through a corporate and well-ordered society. It is on this basis that the Muslims take their stand as a distinct political and social unit. They are deeply conscious of their separate cultural characteristics, which have developed from their adherence to an all embracing creed and certain moral principles governing all aspects of life. It is these separate cultural characteristics which entitle them to claim for themselves the status of a separate nationality."49

(c) Islamization

This section deals with the Islamic concept of 'Islamization' and its assertion of exclusive culture and identity affecting its relationship with other religious communities and the nationalism of India. Though the scope of this section is
limited to Islamization in the Indian subcontinent, a brief analysis on the historical background is inevitable because the popular account of Islamic resurgence by international media. This attitude of Islam may be a product of the long and uneasy relationship between the Muslims and other religions characterised by fear and contempt.

Resurgence in religions is a universal phenomenon. Mircea Eliade has defined this as “religious nostalgia” and the current resurgence in Islam is also an expression of that nostalgia.\(^{50}\)

The Policy of Islamization can be traced back to even earlier times of the prophet Muhammad itself.\(^{51}\) This policy was also followed during Muslim invasion of India. But when the British rule came the Muslim elites (ulama) perceived a threat on their policy of Islamization because they were under a non-Muslim ruling power. Hence they embarked on a struggle for Islamic resurgence. Moin Shakir says that their slogan in the Indian sub continent was “Islam in danger”.\(^{52}\)

Mainly there were two types of Muslim responses. One group who had gained their education abroad through a new system based on western models wanted to modernize Islam incorporating rationality and Indian culture. This will be discussed in the next section. Another group rejected the western models and advocated a return to the ‘golden age of Islam’ that is to the time of the prophet and his fledging Muslim Community at Medina. i.e., the desire to return to the illud tempus (the primordial situation at the time of its origin).\(^{53}\) These people were called the ulama. They controlled education and practice of religion (shariah) of which they were the sole interpreters. They wielded so much power in society.
The Ulamas felt that the greatest threat that the Muslims faced was that of losing their religion, identity and culture. Seyyed Hussein Nazar sees this threat coming from all sides and affecting every aspect of Muslim existence: law, education, government and administration, architecture, city planning, interior decoration, diet, dress and even religion itself. He says, 'the Islamic world is faced with mortal danger of polytheism or Shirk'. Hence Muslim elites were in a crisis to protect their culture and religion from these threats. Muslim intellectuals like Hasan-al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Iqbal, Mawdudi and others responded to the problem and challenge of plurality by formulating their integrative political ideology based on the idea of one sovereign God-one law. Jama-at-e-Islami is one of the organizations founded in India and Pakistan to respond to this challenge of plurality.

(i) Jama-at-e-Islami: Mawdudi

It was formed in August 1941, and Maulana Syed Abdul Ala Mawdudi was its first president and Chief ideologue. It was an organization of the Muslim elite. Taking religion as the basis of life, the Jama-at-e-Islami advocated the cause of religion. It exhorted the people to shed their narrow conception of religion and practice as it was practiced by the prophets. In a way the message of Jama-at-e-Islami was to go back to the original message of Quran and Sunnah (tradition). The speeches and writings of Mawdudi immensely influenced the shaping of the ideology of Jama-at-e-Islami. This section deals mainly with his ideas of Islamism and Islamization shaping Islamic politics in the Indian sub-continent.

Mawdudi's ideology is based on three principles which are the central ideas of Islamism namely (a) Tawhid (unity of God), i.e., God is one and Sovereign
Prophethood (ris-la,) i.e., An Islamic state must, in all respects be founded upon the law laid down by God through His prophet (c) Vice-gerency (Khil-fa).

The three principles mean that God alone has the right to command and forbid; people are under obligation to obey him only. Mawdudi’s ideology stands as an antithesis to secular democracy, which regards people as sovereign, law makers, (its execution lie in the hands of people). His ideology of polity, the belief that intended man to be the Khilfa (vice-gerent) of God on earth is rooted in the Quranic and hadith accounts. Vice-gerency involves a certain exercise of authority and ruler-ship, and is a “collective right of all those who accept and admit God’s absolute sovereignty over themselves and adopt the divine code, conveyed through the prophet, as the law above all laws.” Vice-gerents are the totality of Muslims believers who submit to the One sovereign and his laws received through the prophet having repudiated all previous national, ethnic or cultural norms. Hence all believers possess the right to be vice-gerents. Mawdudi calls this polity, Islamic democracy. This reveals that the Jama-at-e-Islami advocates a polity of “theo-democracy” which emphasizes both absolutism and inclusivism, negating all national, ethnic and cultural norms other than that consistent with the above three principles. The vice-gerents are the administrators to establish the Islamic state.

Mawdudi criticises nationalism, because it is people’s construction and those people ignore God and revelatory laws of God. He says:

These principles have blighted the sacred ideals for which the messengers of God endeavoured since the earliest of times. These satanic principles have stood as formidable obstacles and powerful adversaries against the moral and spiritual teaching embodied in the heavenly books, and against the law of God.
According to Mawdudi, if nationalism brings people together, it also divides them on the basis of their territorial claims. Whereas Laws of one God bring people of different languages, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds closer together. Nationalism as Mawdudi saw it involved veneration of the state or fatherland instead of one God. Thus he felt that there was a need for the integrative Islamism and finally God will establish a state where there is one God, one law and the unity of His representatives.64

(ii) Islamism as Final Revolution

Mawdudi identifies Islamism as the final dispensation through which God will establish his kingdom. God will soon establish good and constructive elements of life through the final burst of Islamic revolution.65 All will recognize and accept that there is one God and that all human beings need to submit to his laws.

The model for this final success of the universal Islamic revolution comes from the early Islam of Arabia from Muhammad’s own time:

It seems strange that, while during the space of thirteen years, only three hundred persons embraced Islam. In the latter ten years the whole country of Arabia adopted this religion wholesale... The matter is quite plain. So long as life had not been actually planned and organized on the basis of this new ideology people could not understand what this novel type of leader wanted to do...men whose realistic vision could see clearly that the salvation of mankind lay in this new creed. But when a complete system of life was built upon this ideology and people has actual experience of it... it was than that they understood... (and) it became impossible to deny this open reality. Gentleman! This is the method by which Islam seeks to bring about Islamic revolution.66
Here what Mawdudi emphasizes is when Islam gives concrete vision (worldview) with a clear ideology (values) in the society, it leads to many changes bringing about transformation in the life of the people which will subsequently attract others and hence, they imbibe these values in their life within a community fellowship with a cultural identity.

In his final remarks Mawdudi clearly placed his hope of Islamic revolution before the students of Aligarh University:

I am addressing the students Aligarh and placing before them the plan of that movement for bringing about a social revolution of an Islamic nature. I have done my duty and communicated you whatever I had in mind. The responsibility of changing your hearts not lie on me.67

From the above analysis it is clear that Mawdudi’s and Jama-at-e-Islami’s ideology of Islamism and Islamization advocates a theo-democracy and hence an exclusive religious nationalism in the Indian sub continent.

But the situation in India is different from that in other Muslim countries. Here the secular and democratic ideals have already influx among the people irrespective of religion. In India there are two types of Muslims, one group comprises of converts from low castes (ajlafs) and the other considered as the descendent of foreign origin (ashrafs), though a minority, holding themselves as racially superior. The shifting of power from the ashrafs to the British after 1857 AD, made them inward looking and their religious policy became more religiously militant and orthodox.69 They began to see disjunction between them and ajlafs. They considered the ajlafs’ ideological visions as heresies and they were blamed for having caused the wrath of God upon Islam on account of their un-Islamic practices that they had imported into Islam.70
The **ashrafs** undertook a massive programme of Islamization with a view to purging the **ajlafs**' un-Islamic practices and there by creating conditions for the return of Muslim Political power. Among whom Mawdudi was one of the most important figures.\(^7\) Since the British created communal electorate, numerical strength became an important criterion for political participation and power. Thus the policy of Islamization clubbed **ajlaf** and **ashraf** together and statistically Muslim population achieved something significant. This created suspicion among high caste Hindus. Therefore they launched *shuddhi* campaign to re-convert the **ajlafs** in to the Hindu fold. The **ashrafs**' attempt to Islamize **ajlafs** and reform the plurality of religious visions within Islam in the subcontinent promoted the idea of inclusivism on the unitive vision of Islam. This inclusive approach led to a conscious effort among the Muslims to maintain their "cultural identity."\(^7\)

Thus **Jama-at-e-Islami** and Mawdudi advocate a theo-democracy consisting of both exclusivism and inclusivism. Exclusivism in the sense that it rejects and renounces allegiance to the non-Islamic polity, nationalism, democracy and secularism. Inclusivism in the sense that it permits its adherents to maintain their different nationalities as long as they believe in one God and abide by the code of conduct set forth by Islam.\(^7\)

Islam as an identity assumed increasing significance in the socio-political life. The identity gives a sense of security and belonging. This involves political interests and manipulations. Politics of 'Cultural exclusivism' and 'religious nationalism' would generate enmity, vengeance and communal discord among religions.

A.A. Engineer strongly argues that communal phenomenon is political in origin. He notes that communal tensions arose as a result of the skilful
manipulation of the religious sentiment and cultural ethos of a people by its elite group which aimed to realize its political, economic and cultural aspirations by identifying these aspirations as those of the entire community. Hence the concept of Islamization, a political theory of Jama-at-e-Islami is originated by the elite Muslims (ashrafs), skilfully manipulated the religious sentiment and cultural ethos of the ajlafs, aimed at consolidating the whole Islamic people within one fold in which the elite would continue to remain powerful politically. In a multi-religious society like India any religion that does not accept nationalism, democracy and secularism the co-existence of religions will be impossible sub-nationalism will generate cultural war and will destroy the integrity of the country.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

With the decline of the Mughal Empire and the loss of political power to the British, the Hindus and the Muslims started drifting away from each other in India. It seems the Muslims grew apprehensive of Hindu domination because they were the majority in India. This minority - majority psychological ill feeling enhanced aggressive attitude between Hindus and Muslims. This section deals with the psychological depression of the Muslim community responding to the religious pluralism in India.

We have seen that the politics of cultural exclusivism and religious nationalism promoted by some Muslim leaders encouraged the Muslim community to regard the very idea of nationalism as anti-Islamic. Jurgensmayer described this as the greatest evil of the Modern world. They see Muslim nationalism as a short-term goal and looks forward to a Muslim unity beyond the Muslim nation state. This yearning for a single Islamic nation runs deep in Muslim consciousness. This also encourages the growth of Islamic nationalism in
India. In India a large portion of Muslims are from the low caste Hindus converted to Islam and they are economically, socially backward and uneducated. The traditional Muslim bureaucratic elites of Persian origin (*ashrafs*) were only benefited by the British policy of keeping them in the administration as subordinates. These elites (*ashrafs*) became the authoritative leaders of Muslims in the British rule. The British provision of communal electorates was to appear their ambition. And at the same time the British also chivalrously gave hearty patronage and protection to Hindu temples and their priest craft. Swami Dharma Theertha explained ten ways in which Britain encouraged Brahmanism especially through Judicial decisions and administrative classification and even by legal enactment. Historians of Orientalists supported the golden age of early Hinduism and encouraged the Indian historians to revive the Indian spirituality and the culture. Indian historians worked for one nation theory before Muslim League defended two-nation theory. But Utilitarian historians criticized severely Hindu culture and described it as backward and antinational and supported Muslim civilization. Thus British Policy, Oriental and Utilitarian historians’ and Indian Historians’ interpretations of history divided the country in to two communal strands, a sort of Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism which divided the country into two in later.

(a) The Majority-Minority Conflict

Since Muslims were minority in India, even before the partition, it seems many of the India National Congress leaders, the policy of Hindu organizations like Hindu Mahasabha, the *Āryasamāj* in the Punjab strengthened the Muslim suspicion, because of the active members of the Punjab Congress were supplied by the *Āryasamāj*. This was interpreted by the Muslims as foreshadowing the
“virtual establishment of a Hinduraj” once the British relinquished their power. The Hindu organizations like *Suddhi* and *Sanghathan* could only increase their suspicion and insecurity. Then they began to mobilize movements like *Tabligh* and *Tanzim*. The fear psychosis among the Muslim aggravated the drift between Hindus and Muslims.

The minority consciousness of Muslims feared that the idea of democracy included in the draft constitution by the national leaders, would lead to oppression of their community by the majority. According to Jinnah:

... Mussalmans should be made to feel that they are secure and safeguarded against any act of oppression on the part of majority and that they need not feel that during the transitional stage towards the fullest development of National Government the majority would be in a position to oppress and tyrannies the minority as majorities are prone to do in other countries.

Jinnah adds:

Muslim India cannot accept any constitution, which must necessarily result in a Hindu majority government. Hindus and Muslims brought together under a democratic system forced upon the minorities can only mean Hinduraj. Democracy of the kind of which the Congress High Command is enamoured would mean the complete destruction of what is most precious in Islam.

This is the way the Muslim leaders injected fear and insecurity among the Muslims and made it clear that the minority position is in danger compared with the majority of Hindus.

Muslims felt that accepting the proposed federal constitution emphasizing democracy would be for them permanent surrender of their national life and unqualified renunciation of their national future. Hence Muslim League proposed
to divide the country into two. Linlithgow also supported this. He wrote to the King Emperor:

This plan has been adopted by the leaders of the League because it offered the sole means to escape from the dilemma in which the Muslim minority finds itself in face of the introduction of democratic institutions... They refuse to contemplate a future in which they would be in constant subordination to the Hindu majority.85

All this shows the fear, suspicion and prejudice (they) perpetuated by the Muslims through narrow communal outlook, which divided the country into two.

(b) Partition and Aftermath

After the partition also the Indian Muslims Psychological depression increased. None expressed more poignantly the sense of disillusionment than Abul Kalam Azad when he said:

It was now clear to them... that the only result of partition was that their position as a minority was much weaker than before. In addition, they had through their foolish action created anger and resentment in the minds of the Hindus.86

Quaderuddin Ahmed says “They were left a truncated and defenseless minority. How was it possible to grapple positively with religious pluralism in this context?”87 Their leaders, their seats of power and culture, their friends and companions were gone. In addition to all these atrocities, they had to deal with “sympathetic condolences from Pakistan deploping India’s Policy of ‘de-muslisimizing’ those who have remained under the Hindu thumb.”88

The South Asian Muslim world also considered secularism as against Muslim ethos. This influenced the Indian Muslims’ sentiments against secularism.89 According to K. Gauba:
"...the Indian Muslims have wandered shepherdless and almost friendless mis-understood at home and mis-represented abroad.\textsuperscript{109}

These are the Psychological syndromes of the Muslim Community in India. The recent development from the Majority Community especially from the Hindu Organizations intensified their fear and suspicion over the success of the secular state and hence hindrance to the advance of inter-religious relationships. Some of the issues mentioned may be, the threat of common codes of law to Muslim personal law; the elimination of Urdu language, inequities in appointments and employment, fear of the security of Muslims and their Mazjids, pressure on the management of the religious trusts (\textit{waqt}) concern for apparent Hinduization of school texts, inequities to admissions to educational institutions, etc.\textsuperscript{91} Hence the Muslims in India remain a threatened and Psychologically oppressed community. Three recent incidents reveal the Muslim perception that the existence of Islam in India is precarious. An attempt to ban the Quran in 1985 where the writ petitioners argued that since the Quran describes the followers of other religions as \textit{Kafirs}, the Muslim sacred book is dangerous and threatens to exacerbate communal tensions in the country. The Calcutta High Court did not immediately dismiss the petition.\textsuperscript{92} Saying that the petition, infringed upon section 153 of India's criminal Procedure code.

The second one is the Shah Bano Case.\textsuperscript{93} The Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled that Rs.179.20 per month has to be paid as maintenance to divorced Shah Bano by her husband Mohammad Ahamad Khan. Khan took the matter to the Supreme Court claiming that according to Muslim personal law, he was not required to make any ongoing payments to his divorced wife. In 1985 Supreme Court upheld the High Court decision. The Muslim community protested against
this. Saying that it is an attempt to attack on their identity, religious freedom, and Muslim personal law.⁹⁴

The Third and the most burning issue is the Babri—Mazjid Ramajanmabhoomi dispute. Mazjid was erected in 1528 by Babar in Ayodhya. The dispute between Hindus and Muslims about the site date back to 1857. On 22 Dec. 1949, the mosque was illegally occupied and idols of Ram were installed. The legal battle continued. In 1986 Dist. Judge of Faizabad ordered opening of the locks so that the Hindus might offer **Pūjrā** in the disputed site. The Muslim were not given similar rights to offer **Pūajās**. The Hindu based V.H.P. and its allies are determined to construct a temple on the site. On 6 December 1992 the Hindus destroyed the Mosque. What is more disturbing for them is that the Hindus claim more than three hundred other mosques in the country are similarly built upon the ruins of temples and must be restored to their “original glory.”⁹⁵

The above three incidents epitomize the Muslim perception of threat which poses Islam in India today.

In a democracy what is needed is mutual trust between various communities. Many of the Muslim leaders rejected secular laws in favour **Sharia**.⁹⁶ Sangh Parivar and its allies equated Hinduism with nationalism. Both groups were volatile to the spirit of nationalism and secularism. V.D. Savarkar’s idea of **Hindutva** is a bond of common territory, common blood and common civilization.⁹⁷ This ideology attempted to promote an inflated identity-consciousness to the Hindus and placed the non-Hindus under a disturbing cloud of suspicion, hatred and hostility. Thus the mutual trust between the communities is lost in the Indian sub-continent.
According to A.A. Engineer:

Even after the constitution came into forces Muslims' loyalty to the country was questioned and they were accused of being Pro-Pakistan. Such suspicion still persists in some quarters. In many riots, the slogan 'Musalmān' jāo Pakistan or qabarastān (Muslims go to Pakistan or to the cemetery) became quite common.98

The majoritarian attitudes weaken the very foundations of Secularism, Democracy and the logic of modern nation-state. A modern nation-state can run only on the basis of constitution and secular laws.

A modern democracy cannot succeed until the minority feels completely secure. But the crucial problem in India today is that the minority feels they are completely insecure. Hence they are unhappy and dissatisfied because of the treatment and governance of the majority. The insecurity and suspicion among the religious communities are the outcome of the cultural exclusivism coupled with politics. Hence Rasheedudin Khan rightly observes:

Communalism of the minority exhibits itself in the form like 'separatism', 'exclusivism', 'anarchism, and it focuses itself on limited symbols, specific and divisive traditions and on a wide range of differences and dichotomies away from the mainstream communalities.99

If the majority community also follows the same line of Psychological approach of the minorities, then it also exhibits minority traits of separatism, exclusivism 'withdrawal', and anarchism. This, we see in the statement of Ashok Singhal the then president of the V.H.P:

I have a feeling that one-day Islam and Christianity will come under Hinduism. Mosques and Churches might still exist, but under the Hindu fold.100
Thus R.C. Majumdar succinctly expressed on the permanently divided and culturally exclusive communities as:

"...Two distinct but important communities and cultures stood face to face, and India is permanently divided into two powerful units, each with marked individuality of its own, which did not prove amenable to a fusion or even any close permanent co-ordination."

Thus the cultural exclusivism combined with politics and the Psychological depression of the elite Muslim community paved way for the aggressive attitude towards other religions though not with all Muslims.

B. MODERN ISLAMIC HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

INTRODUCTION

The previous section was concentrated on the cultural exclusivism of the Islamic religious traditions perpetuated by the Ashrafs (Muslim elites), which created serious misconceptions of their own religious texts and the ideas they contain. They have been to some extent successful in establishing the idea in the minds of the Indian people that Islam alien to India and that it is absolutely contrary to Indian culture. The historians also made strategies to divide the Indian people. R.S. Sharma says that the nineteenth century colonialist historians and archeologists succeeded in injecting the heavy dose of communalism in Indian historians, which gave impetus to wide the hatred between Hindus and Muslims.

While Utilitarian Historians severely criticized the inimical and anti-rational characteristics of Hindu culture and they eulogized the to Muslim culture, Where as Orientalists projected an ideal Hindu society in ancient period and attributed the ills of India to the coming of Muslims.
We have seen that the Muslim elites advocated a polity of 'theo-democracy' against Secularism, Democracy and Pluralism based on the literal interpretation of Quran and tradition, which emphasizes exclusivism, absolutism negating all national, ethnic cultural norms other than Islam. This type of Islamic revivalism only create antagonism among religions especially multi religious and multi cultural society like India.

But there are instances of communal harmony propagated by Islamic thinkers in pre-colonial, colonial and modern period in the Indian sub-continent. They interpreted Quran and Sunna in a more rational way. One of the most formative influences in the making of the Muslim ethos in India in a way to promote a composite culture has been that of Sufism. This section is divided in to three parts. The early part deals with the characteristics of Sufism and its ways of interpretation of Quran and tradition with a view to provide the key for opening the door to a genuine encounter with other religions by reconciling all the creative values of the community to the Islamic way of life. This Sufistic ways of Islamic Hermeneutical heritage enlightened many personalities irrespective of religion and caste over the centuries. These people tried to bridge the gap between Hinduism and Islam. Among the leaders only two persons Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Abul Kalam Azad are taken. Sir Syed Ahmed is taken because he was the first Muslim leader, under whose leadership the first Muslim Movement – Aligarh Movement started in India. He was also the man who sow the seed of the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College, which was later raised to the Status of a University Known as Aligarh Muslim University. This is the first Muslim University, which is alleged to the platform for the formation of the Muslim League and the intellectual centre for the demand for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{104}
Abul Kalam Azad is taken because Azad represents a bridge figure between theological extension and constructive reflection providing a new paradigm in the Quranic interpretations for inter-religious understanding and unity.

1. **SUFISM – A NEW HERMENEUTICAL PARADIGM**

India is the biggest centre of Sufism in the world. Sufism is a vision and a way of life in Islam. It is also called Islamic mysticism. It was a religious movement in Islam, stressed asceticism and inner experience of the divine. The four well-known *Sufi Sirts* (orders) in India are the Qadiriya, the Chistiya, the Naqshabandiya, and the Suhrawardiya.

While ‘Sharia’ gives emphasize to the external performance of rituals and activities, Sufism stresses of the inner self (soul). It owes its origin chiefly to two factors. The first is an effort to break-away from the unsatisfying idea of a purely transcendent God. The second is an attempt to recover from the failure of the free thinkers to solve certain philosophical difficulties by the side of pure reason. Rasheeduddin Khan says, “Sufism built bridges between the Orthodox and the heterodox, the rich and the poor between groups and communities. They softened the animosity between communities, gave rise to syncretic humanism, promoted spiritual eclecticism and placed man as the expression of the divine in the centre of all activities” Sufism presented a face of piety rather than sword, tried to reconcile Hindus with Muslims and Hinduism with Islam.

This type of most eloquent expression one can see vividly in the entire corpus of Urdu poetry and literature. These literature not only reflect the composite culture of India that has grown out of the fusion of Islam with Hindu polity but also the dominant trend of *Sufi* and *Bhakti* message of eclectic
humanism. These literature refuted narrow Muslim Orthodoxy, showed a scorn towards the Mullah and the Mosque, taunted Allah and the heavens, extolled the virtues of heresy, defiance and love spiritual, universal and personal, treated mosque and temple as variation on the same theme, referred to the beloved as ‘Kafir’ and Sanam (idol), projected the values of compassion and toleration, brought intensity to Patriotism, denigrated rich and the money maker, defended the poor and the down trodden, sang passionate songs of revolt, revolution and of a new world.\textsuperscript{111} Hence these literature tried to wove the design of a composite culture by intertwining the threads of the Bhakati, Vedanta and Sufi mystic traditions. Again Khan says, “Their approach created an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, co-operation rather than confrontation, co-existence rather than mutual annihilation.”\textsuperscript{112}

Some of the important persons who tried to interpret Quran and traditions with a view to uphold a composite culture and nationalism are given.\textsuperscript{113}

(a) \textbf{New Hermeneutics of Sufism}

The Sufism interpreted the Quran not based on the immediate meaning of the text which corresponds more or less the linguistic definition of any given word, but they make use of logical devices as analogy and deduction and at the same time to expand the text so as to meet the newly arising circumstances in the ever dynamic Muslim society.\textsuperscript{114} A large group in Sufis followed a dimension of Pantheistic view in its interpretation. Bayazid, a Persian brought in pantheistic elements and the doctrine of passing away in God (fana) assumed a central position in the structure of Sufi theory.\textsuperscript{115}
Quran Surah 21:25 interprets Abu Yazid that "Glory to me! How great is my majesty; and "verily I am God, there is no God except me, so worship me." A prominent Sufi Mansur al-Hallaj was executed on a cross for heresy by the Orthodox Ulama, for teaching that man may be viewed as very God incarnate. His words, 'I am the truth' were blasphemy enough to bring about his execution.

From Al-Ghazali onwards three principles are recognized interpreting the Quran. They are naql or tradition, aql or reason, and kasf or illumination. Tradition represents the authority of the Quran and the Sunna; 'reason' is the basis of analogical reasoning and philosophical theology; and 'illumination' is the direct revelation made upon the mind of the Sufi.

To the Ittihadiya Sufi, God is everywhere and everything speaks of God for that they take Surah 50:16 and 17:44.

The seven heavens and earth and all that is therein praise Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth His praise; but ye understand not their praise. Surah:50:16 says.

We verily created a man and we know what his soul whispereth to him and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.

Here we see Sufism as a spiritualistic Pantheism

The Sufis invoked the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud or unity of being which was akin to Hindus with their philosophy of the oneness of all life, advaita or non-dualism. Some Sufis preached that God was in everything and in everyone including in Hindus and Hinduism. While in the eyes of other Sufis a Hindu was the same as a Muslim

Shaik Muinuddin Chisti (d. 1236) founder figure of Islamic mysticism reached India before Ghauri whose tomb in Ajmir attracts both Hindus and Muslims.

The Ithamiya group interprets the transcended characteristics of the reality of God.
Hence, Bevan Jones says:

"From the Philosophical point of view God is pure Being, from the mystical and devotional point of view God is Absolute Beauty, of which all earthly beauty, whether it be of form or thought or action is but a dim reflection. Our finite cannot comprehend the Infinite... and the whole universe is the mirror of His Beauty".\textsuperscript{120}

This is very close to the Hindu Philosophy of \textit{advaita} Example: The \textit{Mundaka} Upanishads II. 2.12. Says:

\textit{"Brahmaivedam Visvamidam Varistam"} and the \textit{I.s.UP.I. "Isavasyamidam Sarvam..."} and \textit{The Brihadaranyaka UP.II 4:6},

\textit{"Edam Sarvam Yadayamatma"}

and \textit{M\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}ndukya. UP. II. Says: "Sarvam hyet\textdegree sạchbrahma, Ayam\textdegree tâm brahma..."}

This is also very close to the teachings of Bhakti tradition, especially the teachings of \textit{Vi\textsuperscript{\textdegree}varupa dar\textdegree{s}ana y\textdegree{\textgreek{og}am} of the Bhagavat Git\textdegree{\texta}, 11:20.}

The whole universe is fully pervaded by the exciting and gleaming body of the Bhagavan, which is Absolute Beauty.

Bh.G.11:8 Bhagavan says; to Arjuna

"You cannot see that \textit{Viswarupa} with your own eyes (\textit{Sva Chaksusha}) for that I shall give you divine eyes." (\textit{divyam chaks\textdegree{s}um dad\textdegree{m}i})

This comes very close to the Sufi concept "Our finite cannot comprehend the Infinite...the whole universe is the Mirror of His Beauty."\textsuperscript{121}

Another characteristic of Sufi religious order, is concerning the Mystic Path. Sufism speaks of the advancement in the spiritual life as a journey and the seeker after God as a \textit{Salik} or traveller. Its teaching is intended to guide the traveller\textsuperscript{122} to the attainment of the perfect 'knowledge' (marifat) of God, the only Reality diffused through all things. Subsequently the wandering soul is led onwards by slow "stages" (\textit{Maqamat}) and through the experience of certain stages" (\textit{ah\textdegree{w}al})
along a path (at-tariqat) to the desired goal of union with God called *fana fil-haqiqat*, absorption (lit. "Extinction") in Reality.\(^\text{123}\)

Sufism speaks man as a seeker after truth and at every stage he is advancing towards the Reality, and only at the end of his journey he attains the full knowledge of the Reality. This reveals the knowledge about the Reality to the seeker at its every stage of the path is incomplete, partial, amorphous, vague and not lucid. This means the Reality is a mystery, which cannot be easily comprehensible and can be conceived or fully understand only at the last stage of the journey. Last stage is union with God (*fana fil haqiqat*) or absorption in God. Once the seeker is absorbed in the God, then he cannot convey the real knowledge about the Reality. Hence the Reality always exists as Mystery. This concept also have similarity with Hindu concept, God as mystery and cannot be conceived fully.\(^\text{124}\) This also exhibits that no knowledge about the Reality is final, and all knowledge have some meaning in it, hence cannot be rejected. Moreover the sum total of all knowledge of Reality is not the Supreme Reality.

The emphasis on knowledge and science in the early Islamic tradition derived inspiration from the Quran and the sayings of the prophets resulted in the establishment of several *Bait-ul-Hikma* (House of knowledge) in the many parts of the Muslim world.\(^\text{125}\) The famous Arab translator Yaqub Ibn Ishaq al-Kindi wrote:

"It is fitting them for us (Muslims) not to be ashamed to acknowledge truth and to assimilate it from whatever source it comes to us. For him who scales the truth there is nothing of higher value than truth itself; it never cheapens nor abases him who seeks."\(^\text{126}\)

Here the Islamic thinking and especially the interpretation of Sufism do not show an exclusive, superior or absolutistic approach to the mystery of knowledge.
It accepts knowledge from all sources. Therefore, there is an openness to the pursuit of knowledge provides an ontological basis for tolerance and acceptance. It is beyond cognitive knowledge (tarka), it opens to vision (drṣṭi) and intuition (anubhava) is a positive response to religious pluralism.

It seems this vision (drṣṭi) is not a unilateral or (ekānta drṣṭi), but it accepts visions from all quarters, i.e., it has an anekānta drṣṭi and anubhava (experience) is not only the self intuition but some total of all. It seems this is very near to the teaching of Jaina thinking anekānta drṣṭi in understanding and approaching Reality, which has no quarrel with any system of philosophy.

Sufism also teaches that the full truth or knowledge can be attained only when the soul merge with the divine or union with the divine. Robert C. Lester says, "The realization of Truth is 'seeing God face to face', Mokṣa, which is at the same time self realization." Hence the concept 'merge with the divine' or 'union with the divine' of Islam and 'seeing God face to face', or Mokṣa of Hinduism are beyond describable within the fold of human sense experience. It is mere mystery. As Samartha says, "Mystery lies beyond the theistic/non-theistic debate. Mystery is an ontological status to be accepted not as an epistemological problem to be solved. Without a sense of mystery, Theos cannot remain Theos, nor Sat remain Sat nor can Ultimate Reality remain ultimate." Hence, Sufism's approach to the Reality is positive to religious pluralism. Sufism also emphasizes co-existence of religions for a meaningful search for the worldview and value system in a particular cultural setting. They believed in a pacific and non-violent approach towards the problems of the society. Ahluwalia says, "They attracted the creative social and intellectual energies within the community and became bearer or instrument of a Social and Cultural Revolution." Hence, Sufism propagated a
social and cultural revolution through the new Hermeneutics of Quran and tradition by amalgamating all the meaningful values of the existing community. This new paradigm shift in the hermeneutics provided the key necessary for opening the door to a true encounter with other religions.

Sufi vision provided a new design for a composite culture. The main characteristic of this culture is freedom from caste prejudice; general love of mankind, salvation to everyone irrespective of status and socio-religious upliftment of society with an emphasis on ‘love and renunciation’ is a way to realize God.\textsuperscript{131}

The Sufi interpretation provides Islam with a way of recognizing the truth present within other traditions because it sees divergent paths as the way to the \textit{Kaaba} – the experience of unity with one God. Seyyed Hossein Nasr says:

Though the ways are various, the goal is one. Do you not see that there are many roads to \textit{Kaaba}? ... So if you consider the roads the variety is great and the divergence infinite; but when you consider the goal, they are all of one accord and one.\textsuperscript{132}

Gandhi also believed and affirmed that all religions are essentially identical because:\textsuperscript{133}

(i) It is one Truth/God that inspires all religions.

(ii) All religions are different paths to same God.

(iii) All strive towards a perfection unachieved.

According to Sufi vision sincere believers of other faiths are considered as spiritual neighbours and are helped along their path toward the final goal of the \textit{Kaaba}.\textsuperscript{134} Though this view and interpretation have posed unresolved problems for Orthodox Islamic law and doctrine, this has been very helpful to Muslims in Minority communities in host cultures.
2. MODERN INDIAN ISLAMIC HERMENEUTICS

In the previous section the discussion is centred around the Sufi way of Hermeneutics with a view to create a composite culture by adapting all the creative values of the community. Hence it may be called a Pan-Indo-Muslim hermeneutics. Their aim was to create an egalitarian society with justice and fraternity as its corner stone,135 and love and renunciation as life style. Sufism could profoundly influence the orthodox and heterodox, the rich and the poor, the ajlafs and the ashrafs and particularly many Hindus also. Their strand of syncretic humanism and spiritual eclectism enlightened many personalities over the centuries, like, Baba Farid, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Akbar, Prince Dara Shikuh and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad etc. These people tried to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam and also shown an intelligent understanding of Hinduism and its religious heritage.

Among the Modern leaders, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Maulana Mazhar Ul Haq (1866-1930), Moulana Obaidulla Sindhi (1872-1941), Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1878-1955) Maulana Manazar Ahsan Gilani (d. 1956) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) were eminent Muslims whose enlightened views were conducive to a better understanding of Hinduism. Most of them had high appreciation of Vedantic philosophy.136 They had broad humanistic vision of Islam and worked for inter communal harmony and peace by interpreting the Quran and traditions more appropriate to the Indian circumstances. Among these leaders only the contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Abul Kalam Azad will be discussed in this section.
1. **SIR SYED AHMED KHAN (1817-1898)**

It seems Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in Delhi found a position in the British administration contributed many progress in the Islamic Community in India. The orthodox school of interpretation taught that Muslims in India is *dārul-hārb* (house of war), since it has become a non-Muslim State under British rule. But Syed insisted that India is *dārul-Islam* (house of Islam) since Muslims under British rule were free to practice their religion. He was convinced that the well being of the Muslims in India laid a new attitude towards the British and the scientific influence of the West and its education. He fought against the Muslim prejudice with regard to Western science and advocated social freedom. He started a school in Aligarh later it was raised to the status of College in 1877 as Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College and now Aligarh Muslim University. It promoted Western learning among Muslims, which aroused the Muslims to a sense of their educational backwardness.

He also fostered religious reforms by spreading modern ideas about Islamic religion among Muslims. He told the Muslims not to consider the Christians as "infidels" and "enemies" as many Muslims believe. He also repudiated the view held by some Muslims that Hindus are infidels. He made an emphasize on the proper interpretation of Quran in order to have religious amity among different religions. He stood for social accommodation and co-ordination between Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

Aligarh Movement started by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, shows a secular character in its working principle. He encouraged people to have social dealing, mutual affection, love and sympathy between various religious communities. He said Islam is truly a rationalistic religion, since the founder did not claim any
miraculous powers. He said, "Reason alone is sufficient guide."\textsuperscript{140} Though there were severe criticism against Syed, M.A.O. (Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College) and Aligarh Movement, Syed's approach to other religions, secularism, Nationality and scientific interpretation of scriptures and its study are prime importance in a multi-religious society like India.\textsuperscript{141}

Syed was an advocate of secular state. He wanted religion and politics to be separated. D.R. Bali says:

Sir Syed was a great nationalist... but he preferred to remain away active politics... there is nothing communal in his opposition to Congress. He was not against Hindus in any way, nor he advocated separatism.\textsuperscript{142}

This was a radical approach among the Muslims in the Indian sub continent during that period. This was also a practical and realistic outlook. Syed's approach to the Ultimate Reality and to the interpretation of scriptures seems that he followed the Western hermeneutical methodology with its importance of scientific rationality and the Asian hermeneutical methodology with its paramount importance given to other scriptural validity. Hence his approach to plurality is synthetic, accommodative and adaptable. It is flexible having a wider vision, with a view to foster inter-religious relationship, was a new paradigm shift in the Muslim scholarship.

2. **MOULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (1888-1958)**

Son of a Bengali Sufi, Azad provided fresh Quranic interpretations for inter-religious understanding. Azad represents a bridge figure between theological extension and constructive reflection. In the following inspirational words he clearly indicated his view of the relation of being Muslim and being Indian:
I am a Musalman and am proud of that fact. Islam's splendid traditions of 1300 years are my inheritance. The teaching and history of Islam, the arts and letters and civilization are my wealth and my fortune. It is my duty to protect them.

But in addition to these sentiments, I have others also which the realities and conditions of my life have forced upon me. The spirit of Islam does not come in the way of these sentiments; it guides and helps me forward. I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality.... I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this dream.143

He had firm hope and conviction that developed the common love of nation would be the power that would make religious pluralism work.

His Tarjuman-ul-Quran is a commentary to underline the 'oneness of religion' or faith as different from the divergence of Sharia.144 Azad said divine revelation given to every one without distinction inculcates Universal religion, which is al-din or al-Islam, the one religion that is appropriate to the nature and function of all humanity.145

He said: "Muslims are to maintain a two-fold relation with the members of other religions. On the one hand, it is their duty to remind them of their essential truth and, as it were, to call them back to their first love."146

He says:

The first doctrinal principle of the Quran is to recognise the founders of all religions and endorse their teaching, which at the basis is one and the same, and to conform to the way shown them; as the Quran says: Each one believeth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers.147
He said both Hinduism and Christianity are subject to critique, because they have deviated from the original truth. For example the Christianity added “monotheistic polytheism” and in Hinduism “the beauty of the Indian mind and all its great achievements have been cluttered by superstition and image worship....” Thus Islam asks them “to return to their own religion by first discarding all the aberrations that they have heaped thereon, and strictly adhere to the original faiths....” Since the inner congruence of spirit of these faiths is the same as the spirit of Islam, he asked the Muslims to maintain a warm and cordial relation with the people of other faiths. The outward path (Sharia, Minhaj) may vary according to the circumstances. The differences which exist between one religion and another are not differences in din, the basic provision, but in the manner of giving effect to it. Hence, Azad asked the Muslims to concentrate on this “basic provision” and respond positively for inter-religious relations. For which is summed up in the Quran (2:177) as devotion to one God and righteous living.

... And those who keep their treaty when they make one and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God fearing.

The inner spirit in all religions is same, is a common platform for religious pluralism. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also says in the same line:

‘Amid all the confused ferment of vedic devotion, a certain principle of unity and comprehension was asserting itself. In some hymns the conception of a single central power was actually formulated. The upanishads carry over this tendency. They recognize only one spirit almighty, infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, self-existent, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He is the light, lords and life of the universe, without a second and the sole object of worship and adoration.'
Rasheeduddin Khan says, "No theologian of this stature in India ever attempted to build a religious base for composite nationalism as Azad did. For the composite nationalism he cited the example of Prophet Muhammad and his covenant of Madina in (623 AD). In that document he declared that in religious matters everyone will have his own religion, for Jews their religion and for Muslims their religion." But in categorically stated that all the parties of the covenant have become al-ummat-al-wahida. Moulana Azad explicitly translated al-ummat-al-wahida as one nation. i.e., Umma means nation, and Wahida means one. But other commentaries translated it variously as one people, one community, one congregation etc. Maulana Azad argued from the innovative experiment of the Prophet in building a multi-religious political community, for creating a unified nation in India, by strengthening Hindu-Muslim unity and solidarity. He also strived for a multi-religious harmony for political unification and nation building based on the new interpretation of the religious texts and tradition from religious angle itself.

On this basis, Azad call upon Muslims to create in them the quality of tolerance. In religious matters there will be varieties in points of view, but those must not become the grounds for conflict. For that he paraphrases Quran 10:99 as follows:

Man by disposition likes to follow a way pleasing to him. Just as you think your way is the right way, even so others think theirs is the right way. Create therefore in you the quality of tolerance.

Rasheeduddin Khan comments, "Maulana Azad remains a shining example of the fusion of the rationalist heritage of Islam and the compassionate heritage of India. He coalesced with indigenous creativity of Vedantic vision of the several paths to truth with Islamic doctrine Wahdate-Din (Unity of faith) and Sulhe-kul (Universal
peace). This is almost the echoes of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family)\textsuperscript{156} and the Anekāntavāda of Jainism. Gandhi has taken many of these ideas for moulding a composite culture to combat communalism that will deal in the next Chapter.

**Notes and References:**


9. M.M. Abraham, op.cit., p. 43. The Holy Quran consists 113 chapters (Surah) with 6666 verses


11. Ibid., p. 164, see Surah 42:15
20. Ibid
22. Harold Coward, op.cit., p. 46. Because they were also people of the Biblical Tradition, they were allowed to retain their faith if they submitted to Muslim government and paid a special Tax. Ibid
23. Ibid., p. 46
24. See also Surah 2:190 & 191. These words are not considered to be commands from Muhammad but divine revelations. These verses are sanctioned by Allah. Hence it is a spiritual resistance and way to achieve the theocratic state.

25. ABD AL-MASIH – op.cit., p. 30 – No Muslim except the Martyr has the hope of being justified on the fearful Last Day. Muhammad did not die in Holy War. He lives in Barzakh, an intermediate existence between this life and hereafter. This means Muhammad is not yet saved. Muslims are advised to pray for Muhammad. See also Abul Aula Maududi, Hasanulbanna, Syed Khudub, Jihad, Kozhikodu: Hindustan Publications, pp 11-13.


31. Ibid., p. 166


35. John B. Chettimattom, op.cit., p. 11


39. Ibid


43. Khadduri, op.cit., p. 350 [Professors Gibb and Bowen are of opinion that the world is divided into two parts. “the domain of war and the domain of Islam].

44. A.H. Abdel Kader, op.cit., p. 97.


47. L. Bevan Jones, op.cit., p. 96

48. Ibid., p.97


51. Ibid
53. Hilario M. Gomez, op.cit., p. 40
55. Ibid
57. See The Jama-ate-Islami Hind (Delhi; Publication Bureau, 1966), p. 3
61. Ibid., p. 26
62. Ibid., p. 155
64. Mawdudi, Nations Rise and Fall – Why? (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1979). This is a speech delivered in East Punjab on 10th May 1947, pp. 16-26
65. Mawdudi, *Process of Islamic Revolution* (Pathankot: Makatba-e-Jama-at-e-Islami, 1947). This is his address to the students of Aligarh Muslim University.
66. Ibid., pp. 54-55


68. Ibid., p. 275

69. Ibid

70. Ibid

71. See Altaf Gauhar, “Mawl-n-Abdu-A-l-Mawdudi – A personal Account” in Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of ... Mawdudi (eds.), K. Ahmad and Z-I Asari (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami 1987), pp. 265-288. In regions where Muslims were a majority, the ruling elite opposed Mawdudi. It was this reason that Mawdudi was branded as a threat in Pakistan.

72. Anwar Moazzam, “Resurgence of Islam: Role of the State and the Peoples” in Islam and Contemporary Muslim World (ed.), Anwar Moazzam (Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1981). During the medieval period there was only “cultural necessity” which means assuming change within the larger frame work of dominant Muslim World; that is the paradigm was a Muslim one. It was only later, as Islam entered a period of decline the conflict emerged between “cultural necessity and cultural identity”.


75. Mark Juergensmeyer, Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State (Delhi: OUP. 1994) p. 47

76. Ibid


81. Uma Kaura, op.cit., p.11


85. Viceroy Lord Linlithgow to king emperor, 4 June 1940, Linlithgow papers, Quoted by Uma Kaura, op.cit., p. 170


88. Ibid

89. Some resolutions and Recommendations of the conference of Islamic Organizations in Mecca. April 6-10, 1974, quoted in Al-Basheer, III, 2 April-June 1974, pp. 61-63, Secularism is viewed as a movement to “gradually de-Islamise the Muslim Society and Muslims are urged to thwart it. p. 6, see also R.E. Miller, op.cit., p. 264.


91. V.B. Kulkarni, *Problems of Indian Democracy* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1972), pp. 240 ft. See also Muslim India, 193, January, 1999, p. 17

93. Andreas D’Souza, Islam in Asia: Perspectives for Muslim – Christian Relations in India (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1992), pp. 68-83

94. The sections of the Criminal Procedure Code which pertain to this question are sections 125 and 127. The former deals with “order for maintenance of wives, children and parents”, “wives” include divorced women who have nor remarried [Clause 125 (1) (B)]

95. Andreas D’Souza, op.cit., pp. 81-83

96. They are against to establish a common civil code. They regard it as an attack on Muslim religious freedom through the abolition of Muslim Personal Law.

97. V.D. Savarkar, Hindutva (Poona: V.G. Ketkar, 1942), pp. 4-28


102. Ibid., p. 12


104. Aleyamma Zachariah, op.cit., p. 40


108. Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., p. 68


110. Ibid., pp. 69-71. Examples of Philosophy of Universal Truth & love, Theosophical approach, Universal love transcending religious walls, eclectic, humanistic and syncretic literature are given..

111. Ibid., p.72

112. Ibid., 73

113. Shaik Muinuddin Chisti (d. 1236) Baba Farid (1175-1265), was a Punjabi saint who had deeply influenced both Sant Kabir (1440-1518), and Gurunanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. He was equally revered by Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325), a Sufi poet philosopher was an outstanding pioneer of composite culture. Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-1605), who initiated the process of Hindu Muslim reconciliation at the political, social and intellectual level. Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khan (1556-1627), who was not only a known Krishna bhakth but a pioneer of Hindu poetry was famous for his folk traditions in *Braj* culture. Prince Dara shikuh (1615-1659), who translated fifty-two *Upanisads* in to person and wrote a comparative study of Islam and *Vedanta* in his book Majma-ul-Bahrain (commingling of oceans) and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), the briant intellectual who was a creative interpreter of the Islamic heritage as is evident in his *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* and a dedicated upholder of composite nationalism and culture.
For Pantheism, everything is God and of the same essence. For these the creed, "There is no god but God" means that besides Allah there is no existence. They are called Ittihadiya, i.e., monists. There is Ilhamiya group, they consider the transcendent Reality of God, i.e., God as pure Being.

L. Bevan Jones, op.cit., p. 127


Bevan Jones, op.cit., p. 127, Gandhi elucidated this Pantheism with a beautifully expressed "drop and the Ocean" analogy. "The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity and yet it is a part of the whole, "the one and the many". In this ocean of life we are little drops. My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God..." See also, The Hindu, 12 September 1927, in CWMG Vol. 34, p. 505

Rajmohan Gandhi op.cit., p. 74

Ibid., p. 131

Ibid


L. Bevan Jones, op.cit., p.132

Tait-Up.II.1 'He who knows Brahman as real (satya), knowledge (jaina), infinite (ananta), residing in the cave of the heart and in the highest heaven, he obtains all desires' and Tait-Up. III.1 'The mystic name of this Supreme Reality is 'idam-dra', Self-seeing, Chand Up. VII. 17; Brh. Up. IV, 56. 'He is the One in whom everything else is known'. Chand Up. VI.1,4 'Though him 'the
unheard becomes heard...the unknown becomes known' *Brh. Up.* III. 4, 2 ‘He is the seer of seeing...the hearer of hearing...the under- 

125. Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., pp. 79-80 - He presents the following from the saying of the prophet on learning and knowledge.

- “know ye! The worst of men is a ill educated man, and a good learned man is the best”
- “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.”
- “To spend more time in learning is better than spending more time in praying.”
- “Pursuit of knowledge is a divine commandment for every Muslim”
- “That person who pursues the path of knowledge, God will direct line to the path of paradise.”
- ‘Acquire knowledge. It enableth its possessor or to distinguish right from wrong”
- “With knowledge man riseth to the heights of goodness and to noble position.”
- “Who are the learned? They who practice what they know.”

126. Ibid., p. 82

127. See the prophet’s saying “Go in quest of knowledge even into China.” and “Learn to know thyself and “Acquire knowledge” cited in Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., pp. 79-80


131. Ibid., p.74.
135. See The Quran Surah 3:92, 93
136. Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., pp. 178-192
138. Ibid., p. 38
141. The Ulama called Syed an ‘atheist’, ‘renegade’ anti-Christ. See J.N. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 93; A.A. Engineer remarks: “The British rulers found it an opportunity to woo the Muslim elite and try to stem the tide of the Indian National Congress”, see *Imprint*, November 1980; Again A.A. Engineer alleged that the British government was using the Aligarh Movement as a counterpoise to the Nationalist Movement: He says, ‘that is the British Imperialists could perpetuate their rule only by keeping their subject divided.’ Ibid. See also Elizabeth Zachariah, op.cit., p. 40; Andreas D’Souza says Partition was a culmination of the thinking of Indian Muslims such as Sir Syed Ahmedkhan, who opposed National Congress and advocated autonomy for the Muslim community. His seminal ideas were completely elaborated by Mohammed Iqbal and were given further practical form by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Andreas D’Souza, op.cit., p. 36; See Muarri Lal. *Hindu Visva*, June 1985; says: “Aligarh University was the outcome of the British Policy of ‘divide’ and rule’. It was actually set in motion by the British but they made Sir Syed as a tool in their hands. It draw wedge between Hindu and Muslims”

144. See Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., p. 185


147. See the Quran Surah: 2:285 and also Syed Abdul Latif, Tarjuman al-Quran. Vol. 1., op.cit., p. 171

148. Ibid., pp. 121, 141

149. Ibid., p. 174

150. Ibid., pp. 158 f. Azad brought a Catholic outlook on Islam and maintained that one must distinguish between din and Shariah rituals, while Islam and Hinduism are in compatible at the Shariah level, while Shariah differentiates, tariqah (way of life) integrates, see A.A. Engineer Lifting the Veil: Contemporary India (Delhi: Sangam Books, 1995), p. 304


152. Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., p. 185

153. Ibid

154. Ibid., p. 186


156. Rasheeduddin Khan, op.cit., p. 186
CHAPTER - V

GANDHIAN APPROACH

TO

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNALISM