Chapter - 3

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In the communal conception of nation, culture not only occupies a central place but defines its characteristics through its usage covering religion and its growing influence on the people. The nation, therefore, becomes a cultural construct, with culture understood as an integral part influencing its religion. Much against the grain of historical experience and contemporary reality, the communal assumption foregrounds two interrelated notions. The first notion determines each religious community as a homogenous culture. The second notion deals with the culture of each community as distinct and different. Such a characterization attributes a religious-cultural character to the social composition of the country. It is further qualified by dividing society into two unequal divisions: people of indigenous and foreign origin, separated by religious-cultural differences. These differences were so irreconcilable that they belonged to two different nations in practice, with entirely different cultural traditions.

Differences of that kind accounted for the struggle between communities in the past. Subsuming the assumptions of colonial historiography but improving upon such political and cultural interpretations, communal ideologues argued that religious communities acquired political identity through intercommunity struggles with which Indian history abounds.
More important, communities had distinct identities because of their separate cultural and social practices deep-rooted in their religion. As Vinayak Damodar Savarkar recounted in his work, *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* reflects, the history of India in terms of the Hindu resistances against the foreign invasions, the importance of the historical experience contributed to the formation of a self-identity of being a Hindu nation. But such a political experience alone, as it is held, was not sufficient to usher emotional bonds strong enough to bind a people into a nation. Something more abiding was necessary, which according to Savarkar was the allegiance to a composite culture. The religious communities, both Hindu and Muslim, were different due to their differing social and cultural allegiances that made Savarkar understand the question of difference in terms of the religious differences from the ‘Hindu and Islamic’ point of view.

During the 20th century, the cultural logic of communalism assumed an increasingly aggressive stance. Important instances of this development related the reading of Hindu-Muslim cultural differences by Bengali novelist Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyaya. In a brief essay titled ‘Barataman Hindu-Mussalman Samasya’, first presented at the Bengal Provincial Conference of 1926, he added a new dimension to the communal argument about the differences between Hindus and Muslims. Many before him were of the opinion that the differences between the two were irreconcilable because they were fundamentally cultural. The Two-Nation theory advocated by Savarkar and Mohammad Ali Jinnah rested on this debate. Sharat Chandra’s focus was not on cultural differences, which at any rate
existed, but on the lack of culture of Muslims, Hindus, high or low, were born with culture, whereas Muslims were born without it! worse still, Muslims could not even attain it, however much they tried. Their lack of culture accounted for their general behaviour which, according to him, was characterized by “brutality, barbarism and fanaticism” (Panikkar 1).

Communal ideologies in the past had sharpened the cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims or on the cultural superiority of Hindus. But Sharat Chandra’s concern was an altogether of a different order: to create the categories of the ‘cultured’ and the ‘uncultured’ on the basis of religious identity what he did was to reinvent the traditional category of mlecha in order to serve a contemporary purpose. One purpose was social discrimination by means of the demonization of Muslims. Another was to achieve the political objective of undermining the Gandhian project of Hindus-Muslim communal harmony, for according to him, the union between Hindus and Muslims was impractical and more important unnatural. He argued that instead of pursuing the mirage of Hindu-Muslim unity what was required was unity within the Hindu community, by ending, “the folly treating a section of the Hindus as low castes by discounting the possibility of Hindus and Muslims coming together and at the same time promoting the internal consideration of the Hindu community” (Panikkar 2).

The cultural logic of communalism seeks to unburden the secular cultural baggage that society acquired historically. In the process it ignored the heterogeneity that came into existence as a result of the social togetherness of
communities. The heterogeneity covered a wide spectrum: the creative and philosophical realms, on the one hand, and everyday cultural practices of the people, on the other. It gave rise to a variety of cultural processes—synthesis, assimilation, acculturation and eclecticism and, more important, the way people lived and shared the communitarian ideal.

It is arguable that what really happened was not any one of these processes, but a combination of all in varying degrees, which imparted to Indian culture, the quality of an invisible mosaic. One of the significance of this process was the immense cultural variety within religious communities in terms of everyday cultural practices and creative expressions. In other words, religious communities were not synonymous with cultural communities. Their boundaries did not coincide or overlap. The cultural logic of communalism is, therefore, a contrast to the historical experience of Indian society. What is central to the exploration of the meaning of culture is a methodology for its study that will take note of its complexity and social relatedness. The empirical and illustrative methods, which held sway for long, did not go beyond the logic of the narration of cultural practices. Moreover, subsequently, the meaning of a shared culture remained beyond their reach.

The early Marxist method mirrored culture as an epiphenomenon of economic base in the overall structure of productive force determinism, which failed to interrogate the culture of existence. A paradigm shift heralded with the
‘cultural turn’ in Marxist studies in the mid-20th century, which recognized the relative autonomy of cultural production and all forms of social consciousness (Panikkar 2).

People of different races and cultures have migrated to India over mountains and across seas, bringing with them a range of varying ideals and customs. For years, these different people have been able to balance their languages, race, religion and attitudes within the country and remain peaceful and harmonious. Yet within the last one hundred years, disunity, disharmony and disintegration have been intensifying among differing Indian communities (Pandey, The Hindu-Muslim 52).

Hindus consisted of eighty percent of population of India. The next largest religion in India is Islam, constituting around ten per cent of India’s population and Sikhism, becoming the third largest religion in India. The Hindus believed in Karma or actions, good karma, the good actions one performs in one’s life, results in being born into a higher being; bad karma leads to reincarnation as a lower being. Besides believing reincarnation, Hindus worship a number of Gods (thirty three-crores of gods). The three main manifestations of the omnipresent gods are Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, and Lord Shiva the destroyer. These three Gods are worshipped everywhere in India. The Hindus greatly believe in the three powers of God, like omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Their holy books are Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Islamic development in India
can be traced to the alien foundation, which reflected Islam’s founder with Prophet Mohammed who received visions from Allah and later composed Islam’s holy book, *the Koran (Quran)*. Muslims consider seeking God through idols a sin, and believe in one God Allah, and Mohammed, His Prophet. The goal of every Muslim is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak, who rejected the hegemony and the socio-economic divisions of the Hindu Brahminical hierarchy. Their holy book is *Grantha Saheba*. These three major communities and their political leaders created obscenity and communal turmoil in the social scenario. They used religion as a mighty weapon to devastate the faith of people before and after the Partition of India.

India had always been a country occupied by people of two separate religions, but there had never existed any deep cultural and social differences between the Hindus and Muslims. Both the communities shared in the development of Hindi and enjoyed studying each other’s religion and philosophies. They spoke the same languages, wore similar clothes and furnished their houses in the same style. Also, their occupations and industries were a part of a single national economic system.

Before the British occupation both Islam and Hinduism enjoyed representation in the government. Islam possessed enough political power in India’s government and never felt the need to organize its powers separately.
Yet the appearance of a third party, the British, broke their social and cultural unity leading each to organize themselves separately. When the British introduced their Western Education in India, they reduced the study of language, literature and philosophies of Hindus and Muslims. Instead, Hindus and Muslims learnt about British language, literature and philosophies. As a result, mutual understanding of each other’s ideals declined and each became alienated from the other. Yet with the rise of British power and their occupation of India, Islam’s power and authority resulted in a sort of deterioration. These circumstances engaged Islam in a depressing and powerless position further widened by the growing animosity between the British Raj and the Muslim people; Muslims believed that the British favoured the Hindus.

Lord Ellenbourough, a British ambassador to India, declared in an official communication to London that “the race (Muslims) was fundamentally hostile to us, and our future policy is to reconcile with the Hindus” (Pandey, The Hindu-Muslim 52). Muslims suspicions were boosted by European attacks on Muslim countries, such as their opposition to Turkey in the First World War. Muslims also saw Britain leading a Christian crusade against Islam, which cemented their opinions that the British favoured Hindus over Muslims (52).

When India became independent of British, the once united Hindus and Muslims had organized themselves into two separate religious communities residing in one nation. The British hatched a wedge between the two religious communities that could not be removed, even after the British left India.
The March of 1940 was a great year of turmoil; the logical culmination began in a longstanding communal separation. The root of communal demarcation and Muslims demand for separate state was based on the social milieu and cultural differences between the both the communities. Religion, which had an overwhelming influence on peoples' lives in this country played a major part in shaping the attitudes of the two communities towards each other. Hinduism's great quality of absorbing new groups and peoples within its fold filled Muslims with apprehension, particularly after they had lost political power, as they wanted to maintain their identity. Another characteristic of Hinduism was its exclusiveness in daily life, which forbade inter-dining and intermarriage with the people of different castes and religions. So, it was not astonishing that Hindus and Muslims living as neighbours for centuries, remained a distinct and separate religious community.

Though racially, it had a substantial percentage of Hindu converts to Islam, the Muslim population of the subcontinent had already absorbed layer-upon-layer of Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Iranians and others. The admixture of so many racial stocks, in course of time, resulted in the emergence of a new group that transcended the racial barriers. This became possible because Islam does not permit social barriers or restrictions on interracial marriages among Muslims. The same was true for Hindu converts to Islam, who were admitted not only to a new faith but a new society. Thus, there developed a community whose religion, dress,
cuisine and many daily chores of life were distinct from the rest of the local population with whom they could not eat together or intermarry. This new community also developed a new language, Urdu, written in the Persian script, which though it had a common Prakritic syntax with Hindustani, has a large percentage of Arabic, Persian and Turkish words (Khalique 113-14).

The most important event in the Indian history was the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny against the British. It is the first struggle for independence, both the Hindus and the Muslims soldiers revolted against the British, because the British humiliated both the religion by using the fats of cows and pigs for the cartridges and the religious stereotyping affected the normalization of the relationship between the communities easily feeling the threat of being the outsider.

In late January 1857, rumours started circulating among the Sepoys in Dum Dum near Calcutta that the cartridges of the new Enfield rifle, lately introduced to replace the old Brown Bess musket, had been greased with cow and pig fat. Both Hindus and Muslims felt offended by its introduction. Since the cartridges had to be bitten-off before loading, it confirmed the sepoys' old suspicion about a conspiracy to destroy their religion and convert them to Christianity. The cartridge rumour, which was not entirely devoid of truth, spread like wildfire in various Army Cantonments across the country. Although the production of those cartridges was stopped immediately and various concessions offered to allay their fears, the trust that had been breached could never be restored. On 29 March in
Barackpur near Calcutta, a sepoy, Mangal Pande fired at a European officer and his friends refused to arrest him when ordered by their European superiors. They were soon apprehended, court martialled and hanged in early April, but the disaffection of the sepoy could not be contained. In the following days, incidents of disobedience, destruction, violence and arson were reported from the Army cantonments in Ambala, Lucknow and Meerut.

Seps of both the communities aggressively opposed the systematic oppressing and stamping of their religions, customs, social and cultural practices. The communities were shocked at the rumors circulating about the religious attack by the colonizer. The cow is the sacred animal to the Hindus but the pig is inauspicious and unholy to the Muslims, both the community soldiers got bewildered and frightened by their own religious beliefs and dogmas. They united and were compelled to force the uprooting of the imperial rule from India but their attempts gave tremendous jolt to the British Raj, finally, the sepoy mutiny failed to banish the British from India. After 1857, the Hindu traders, stood firm behind the company and Muslim leadership became the chief pillar of British rule. The parallel development of the leadership got estranged between the two communities.

The history of communal divide had taken diversion in the time of India’s Partition. The social organizations of the nineteenth century stood responsible in creating the Hindu and Muslim cleavage. Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s *Brahma Samaj*
(in Bengal), Swamy Dayananda’s *Arya Samaj* (Maharashtra), Mahadev Gobind Ranade’s *Prarthana Samaja* (Bombay), Mrs. Annie Besant’s *Theosophical Society* (in the south) and the *Ramakrishna Mission* founded by Swamy Vivekananda, were social reforms adopted by various reformers that brought many changes in the Indian society, culture, religion and politics. Swamy Dayananda Saraswathi, gave a call to the Hindus to go back to the Vedas, as Wahabis had earlier given a call to the Muslims to go back to the Koran. According to Mrs. Annie Besant: “It was Dayananda Saraswathi who proclaimed that India for the Indians” (V.D. Mahajan 378).

In the Eighteenth century, the first Muslim leader, Shah Waliullah began the Wahabi Movement or the Waliullahi Movement to unite Indian Muslims, and he accentuated the role of individual conscience in religion. Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Barelvi spread the teachings of Waliullah. They convinced the Indian Muslims that Islam was in dire circumstances, they consoled with their teachings to protect Islam and their social and cultural way of life. Another outstanding leader Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, started the Aligarh Movement. He emphasized Western education and to learn English language because English language provided broader prospects to their social and cultural life. He established M.A.O. College at Aligarh in 1895 to give modern and advance mode of education to the Muslims. Soon afterwards, Aligarh became the most important centre of religious, social and cultural revival of the Muslim community. The Hindus and the Muslims
tried a lot to unite their own people to hold control over their own religion, culture, society, tradition, customs and practices by establishing many organizations and educational institutions for the sake of their community development. Both the communities struggled a lot to establish their own identity by using the strong weapon of the religion and its influence on the national scenario.

In the meantime, the National Congress emerged in 1885, which was secular and claimed to speak for all Indians. In fact, the concept of territorial nationalism had not emerged till then, and both Hindus and Muslims lacked the vision or leadership to knit them into a cohesive community. It was the British rule, which gave the country a pan-Indian character by bringing the entire country under one unified administration and thus provided the Congress with a countrywide platform for its activities. However, the Congress also antagonized Muslim leaders like Sir Sayyed who saw in the new party a threat to his community. Sayyed saw that the Congress agenda for autonomy and self-rule would harm the Muslims, as they feared being swamped by the Hindu majority. This fear, though legitimate, sowed the seeds of communal separatism.

Now, events started moving more rapidly on the political front. But, at this stage, it is important to briefly examine the role of the British in the unfolding scenario. Owing to a lack of insight into India’s social reality, they started treating different religious communities as distinct political interest groups, realizing little the extent of social divisions even among Muslims. But they soon recognized that
if the emerging nationalist trends were to be countered, they must pitch one community against the other. So they started close relationship with the Muslim community by treating them as a separate political entity with distinct interests.

A group of Muslim leaders decided to create a separate political organization pressing their demands and, consequently laid the foundations of the All India Muslim League in 1906. Then onwards both the religious fanatical people involved in riots, violence, arson, rape and murder had started exclusively in the name of religion, throughout the history of Indian Partition. The Two-Nation theory propounded by Jinnah was rejected by Congress, in fact its main intension was to create a separate Muslim nation. Year by year, the idea of separate nation was deeply rooted in the mindsets of Muslims. The Muslims stressed the focal point that Congress was Hindus party and Congressmen give priority to the Hindus only. In the spring of 1940, Jinnah told the press that the Muslims were not a minority but a distinct nation. In endorsing his classic argument, Jinnah asserted: “We are a nation of a hundred million, and what is more we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language, literature, art and architecture...customs and calendar, history and tradition, aptitudes and ambitions. In short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life” (Wallbank 196).

What Jinnah asserted was evidently true. Both socially and culturally the Muslims were entirely different from the Hindus. Jinnah would suggest that the
Hindu-Muslim fusion is impossible to achieve, he said: “Islam is not merely a religious doctrine but a realistic and practical code of conduct. I am thinking in terms of life, of everything important in life. I am thinking in terms of our history, our heroes, our art, our architecture, our laws, our music, our jurisprudence in all things, our outlook is not only fundamentally different but often radically antagonistic to the Hindus. We are different beings. There is nothing in life which links us together with the Hindus. Our clothes, our food—they are all different our economic life, our educational ideas, our treatment of women, our attitude to animals—we challenge each other at every point of the compass. Take one example the eternal question of cow. We eat the cow, the Hindus worship it—but the cow question is only one of a thousand” (S.A. Khan 28). Jinnah’s argument of the communal difference was indeed the argument, that was in actual practice, visible even to the higher echelons of the Congress party and the dominant Hindus. He called the Muslims as a different national subject involved with the Hindu nationalities against the colonial resistances.

Extending this elucidation, he occasionally determined the Muslims as ‘a nation’, stressing, their distinct religion, culture, society, civilization, and calling on them to “live or die as a nation” (S.A. Khan 29). Jinnah even called the League flag ‘the flag of Islam’, that Jinnah further argued that Hindus cannot separate the Muslim League from their embracement of Islam. Jinnah travelled across the other end of the political and ideological spectrum in his own ways. Previously he had
objected to Gandhi’s intersection of bringing religion into the arena of politics, now he was not averse to couch his appeals in Islamic terms and galvanizing the Muslim masses by appealing to them in a cultural matrix they were familiar with. Initially, he had called himself an Indian first and last, now, he opted for a distinct Islamic identity. In the very beginning, he had strived long and hard for a national consensus; now all his efforts remained directed towards a Muslim consensus. Jinnah, the erstwhile, ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, afterwards became the fiercest advocate of Hindu-Muslim separation.

Jinnah argued the case of Pakistan at two levels. First, he involved the universally recognized principle of self-determination. However, it involved not on the familiar territorial basis, but for the Muslim nation alone. This was in actuality a difficult compromise for both the Hindus and the British to realize and offer an alternative for the principle of self-determination.

As he stipulated in his lengthy talks with Gandhi in September 1944, the room for the plebiscite to decide upon the Pakistan demand would comprise only the Muslims, and not the entire population of the areas concerned. Second, he spelled out his reasons for reaching out towards the Pakistan goal in his Lahore Session (1940), address in more or less ideological terms, arguing that “Islam and Hinduism...Are not religions in the strict sense of the word but are...different and distinct social orders, that the Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature, ... with different epics, different
heroes and different episodes, we wish our people, he declared, to develop to the fullest our spiritual cultural, economic, social and political life in a way we think best in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people” (Mujahid 5).

Memorizing the history of the past, there was a possibility of a harmonious, mutual religious affiliation between the Hindus and the Muslims. The noteworthy attempts to harmonize relations between Hindus and Muslims were done by Guru Nanak (1469-1538), the founder of Sikhism and Akbar, the Mughal emperor who ruled from 1556-1605. Akbar abolished the discriminatory taxes on Hindus and appointed Hindus to his administration, and actually formulated a new religion, Din-e-Ilaahi (Divine Faith), which sought to fuse elements of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity (Merriam 7-8.). Alastair Lamb has suggested that if Akbar’s religious tolerance had been pursued by his successors, the Partition of India in 1947 might never have occurred (Merriam 8).

In discussing the alteration of Hindu-Muslim interaction, historians have noted areas in which the two groups influenced each other positively, such as dress, food, social manners, language, art, literature and particularly architecture. But such cultural assimilation was limited primarily to the educated, upper class from each community, while the masses of Hindus continued to view Muslims as rigid, iconoclastic, and unclean, while most Muslims viewed Hindus as Kafirs (infidels) and culturally inferior to the standards that was expected of Muslims as:
“...there was no sympathetic understanding of each other’s religion and culture, no give and take, in a real sense, and no renaissance whatever mutual impact there was during centuries of contact of the two civilizations was due to the accident of their living together in the same land rather than to any enthusiasm on their part to learn each other for their mutual benefit” (Merriam 8).

Perhaps the major reason why Islam and Hinduism failed to achieve social amalgamation despite their contacts extending thousand years is that they represented such widely divergent world views. Islam insisted on one God (Allah) whereas Hinduism cherished thirty-three crores of gods. Salvation in Islam comes from submitting oneself to God’s will as revealed through the prophets, especially prophet Mohammed declaring uniformity of worship is all mosques whereas, Hinduism emphasized individual meditation rather than dogma. Islam advocated a theocracy or religious state by Muslims as idolatry. Hindus reveal in artistic imagery statues, and ceremonial pageantry. The sacred literature of Islam is in Arabic, that of Hinduism is in Sanskrit. Islam professes belief in a final way of judgement, whereas Hindu doctrine suggests continual rebirth and reincarnation. Devout Muslims focus their spiritual attention outside India, toward Arabia and the holy city of Mecca, which they symbolically face five times a day during prayers. For Hindus, one’s spiritual life in India centers, with the Ganges River and Himalayan mountains held as sacred. The juxtapositions of religious practices shows that culture is profoundly rooted in both the communities. The religion is a predominant factor of the Hindus and the Muslims to live culturally and lead a contented life socially.
It was most probably Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s fond ambition that his college should reflect his own character; a quality that combined the best spirit of both the communities. He therefore declared: “To be Hindu or a Muslim is a matter of inner faith and belief. It has nothing to do with the worldly matters and mutual social intercourse. India belongs to both of us. Both of us breathe the air of India and in equal measure drink the waters of the Ganges and the Jamuna. We share the happiness and sorrows of birth and death in an equal degree. Socially and culturally, we have given to, and taken from each other. We have evolved a common language-Urdu. We by virtue of living in the same country, are one nation” (S.K. Bhatnagar 25). Syed Ahmed Khan showed his great love on both the community and he put hard efforts to galvanize the Hindu-Muslim unity.

Integration of Hindus and Muslims can also be seen evidently in the Khanqhas tradition among the Sufis. An institution of cultural adaptation, the Khanqhas provided a means of incorporating Hindu religious customs and beliefs into the eclectic fold with an Islamic colouring. The sufis adopted many practices from the Hindu yogis, extreme ascetic discipline, celibacy and vegetarianism. Many of them also had Hindu disciples. One Hassu Tarli in the Punjab for instance, had a number of Hindus disciples. Bengal evolved a new god called Satyapir a combination of the Hindu god, Satyanarayan and a Muslim Pir, Punjab was a important centre of Sufi activity which led to the conversion of many Hindus to Islam, particularly in the rural side, but they converted Hindus not through the sword but through love, humbleness and kindness (Hasan, Nationalism 99).
Even today, the holy tombs of the pious saints remain the star attraction for
the pilgrims drawn across different religions. The unique culture of India enjoins
upon his followers to follow the three great paths-Bhakti, Jnana and Karma of the
Hindu Dharma; or Shariat, tariquat, and haqiqat of Islam; or shila, prajna, and
samadhi of Buddhism; or samyak-charitra, smayak-jnana and samyak-darshana of
Jainism. All religions preach peace to the people in a mode of different socio-
cultural ways of life (Z. Husain 71).

The fire of religious hatred between different religious communities was
continuously neutralized by Gandhian ideologies. Most of the Indian Muslim
leaders were allured by the Gandhian principle and his way of life. Gandhi said: “I
will sell my soul to buy India’s freedom. And if I want Muslim friendship, it is not
for personal gratification, but for India’s sake” (Puniyani 99). Gandhi knew the
social cultural practices of the Muslims and he gave more importance and respect
to Islam. The egalitarian question of the unity and integrity of the communities of
both the communities depended on the force and control of the hegemonic
domination of the British imperial rule in India. Gandhi strived to eradicate the
British from the Indian terrain by healing the raptures within the differing religious
communities.

British imperialism could be maintained in India by emphasizing
differences of culture, religion and economic interests of the two communities.
Theodore Beck, therefore, openly declared on 30 December 1893 that: “Two
agitations have been for some year surging throughout the country—the National
Congress Movement and the Anti-Cow-Killing Movement. The object of the
National Congress Movement was to transfer political power from the British
Government to certain sections of the Hindu population to substitute as far as
possible a Hindu for the English element, in the administration—with these aims
the Musalmans can have no sympathy...The object of anti-cow-killing movement
is to prevent Mohammedans from killing cows as a religious sacrifice, and to
prevent Mohammedans and Englishmen alike from killing cows for food”
(Z. Husain 64).

Speaking before the society of Muslims in London in March 1897, Beck
further started that “Muslims and Englishmen could become friends but such a
friendship between Hindus and Musalmans was unthinkable” (Z. Husain 64). It is,
therefore, obvious that British Government used educational institutions to
produce a generation of communal feeling and utilized educationists as a tool for
creating gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. The Congress inquiry into
Dyerism in Punjab had just commenced when Mahatma Gandhi received a letter
of invitation to be present at a joint conference of Hindus and Musalmans that was
to meet at Delhi to deliberate on the Khilafat question. Hakim Ajmal Khan and
Asif Ali had also signed the invitation.

In the letter of invitation it was stated that not only the Khilafat question but
the question of cow protection as well would be discussed at the Conference.
Mahatma Gandhi did not like the decision of the conference to include the cow issue. In his letter in reply to the invitation, therefore, whilst promising to do his best to attend, he suggested that the two questions should not be untied up together or considered in the spirit of a bargain, but should be decided on their own merits and treated separately (M.K. Gandhi 439-440).

With these thoughts filling his mind, Gandhi went to the Conference which was held at Delhi on 24 November 1919. There he discussed the question of the Muslim proposal of the protection of cow with Swami Sharadananda, who was present at the conference. Swamy appreciated his argument and left it to him to place if before the Conference. In the conference he contended that, if the Khilafat question had just and legitimate basis, and if the Government had really committed a gross injustice, the Hindus were bound to stand by the Musalmans in their demand for the redressal of the Khilafat wrong. Mahatma Gandhi wrote: “It would ill become them to bring in the cow question in this connection, or to use the occasion to make terms with the Musalmans, just as it would ill become the Musalmans to offer to stop cow slaughter as a price for a Hindus’ support on the Khilafat question. But it would be another matter and quite graceful, and reflect great credit on them, if the Musalmans of their own free will stopped cow slaughter out of regard for the religious sentiments of the Hindus, and from a sense of duty towards them as neighbours and children of the same soil. To take up such an independent attitude was, I contended, their duty, and would enhance the dignity of their conduct. But if the Musalmans considered it as their duty to stop
cow-slaughter, they should do so regardless of whether the Hindus helped them in the Khilafat or not" (440-41). Gandhi’s argument pleaded to those Musalmans present and as a result, the question of cow-protection was not discussed at this conference. But in spite of Mahatma’s warning, Maulana Abul Bari said: “No matter whether the Hindus help us or not, the Musalmans ought; as the countrymen of the Hindus, out of regard for the latter’s susceptibilities, give-up cow slaughter” (451).

It would however be irrelevant to claim that the unity achieved during the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements was absolutely permanent and durable and that it had been so cemented by its main exponents that it could never be chinked even by the cruelest of blows by the staunch communalists. In fact, the policy of dividing and disuniting the Indian society has always been the only alternative for those who take unity as a stern challenge to their instinct of domination. When their urge of power inflames within them, the spark of communal feelings, thus, generates a force of total destruction. Thus, the Indian political history from 1923-1947 is a history of struggles between two forces, the one which widened the gulf between Hindus and Muslims, and the other which fought against it. The third force, the British witnessed it and vehemently encouraged the former, and ultimately succeeded in its patterns.

Towards the end of 1927, the British Government appointed a Statutory Commission to report the working of Reforms introduced in 1920 and which had been boycotted by the Congress and the Muslim League Organizations. The
summary of the Motilal Nehru Report was published in July, 1928. It had accepted the principle of Dominion Status for India. Dr. Ansari, Maulana Azad and Azad Sobhani supported the Nehru Report. But Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and even Jawaharlal Nehru were unhappy over the goal destined in the Nehru Report, because they preferred ‘complete independence’ to ‘dominion status’, as the country’s goal*. But All Muslim Parties Conference in Delhi under the Presidency of the Aga Khan rejected Nehru Report, finally Jinnah made amendments but Jinnah’s amendments were rejected, thus, the final rejection of it came from the Government.

Since from First War of Independence (1857) to final Independence (1947), communal violence to communal harmony, Two-Nation Theory to Partition, the leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Jinnah, Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad, Liaquat Ali Khan had tried unity of both communities and separated because of political, religious, social and cultural cleavages.

The Pakistani historian, Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, has given his terse view of the distance between Hindus and Muslims down the ages: They have lived with the minimum contacts. There had been low-rate of intermarriages because Islam forbids it with the Hindus and the Hindus are bound by their religious rules of

* Dairy of Political Events, 1908. Home Poll. No. 1, August, 1928, NAI (National Archives of India).
their respective castes. Except in a small sector of the highly Westernized class, inter-dining has been unthinkable. The festivals provide no social occasion for coming together; instead, they have often given a pretext for the communal rioting. The communities have remained different not only in religion but in everything, culture, outlook on life, dress, cooking, furniture and domestic utensils. There has been no sense of a common history. The heroes of the Muslim conquest and the rebels against Muslim domination inspire contradictory feelings among Muslims and Hindus. Common bondage to the British did not always inspire same feelings at all times (Qureshi 348).

Qureshi reminds that Islam in India was at risk by those who placed “the ritual and the communal sense... at a discount’ and taught ‘that the external aspects of religion had no significance’. However, he agrees that the Sufis and the Bhakti school ‘rendered great service’. They ‘strengthened the forces of conciliation’ and created ‘harmony...by reaching the hearts of the people’ that ‘the monarchs could not even with the most strenuous efforts, have achieved” (164).

Jawaharlal Nehru considered it necessary to protect the communal interests, which were no more than cultural bonds holding the essential fabric of all the Indians after independence. Every country in the world has cultural minorities and for Nehru it was well-recognized principle that such minorities should have the fullest autonomy, so far as their culture is concerned. ‘So also in India’, Nehru
remarked: "every considerable cultural group should be given freedom. Only thus can we build up a rich and varied and yet common culture for India. Culture would include the question of language, education and schools" (The Tribune 2). If the question of culture is settled satisfactorily and sufficient safeguards are provided for interests of minorities and groups which may be in danger of suppression (3), then for Jawaharlal Nehru nothing would remain of communalism.

The rising tide of Muslim politics remained quite visible in the first quarter of twentieth century particularly after the formation of the All India Muslim League in 1906. It gave birth to the Muslim communalism and inhibited the integration and assimilation of Muslims in Indian society. Aligarh Muslim University added enough fuel to the fire by giving communal colour to issues like Urdu language and separate electorates for Muslims and steadily accelerated the movement for communal politics in the name of religious brotherhood. Events like Khilafat Movement, Moopla riots in Kerala, propagation of Two-Nation theory, Pakistan Movement and finally the Partition of the country were the outcome of such communal politics that threatened the very fabric of the Indian nationalism. Consistent demands relating to the exclusive identity of the Muslims in Independent India were also linked with the same divisive concept.

For centuries, the Hindus tried to accept the Muslims as an inseparable part of Indian society but the ruling class in the community prevented such an endeavor only for their political interest. They aggressively reacted to the cry of
Shah Waliullah on the ‘imaginary’ danger to Islam and used the concept of religious brotherhood put to use for this specific purpose. The cry of Islam in danger crystallized the imaginary concept of Muslim brotherhood or the religious solidarity of the Muslims, which formed the primary ingredient of Muslim politics in India. The most unfortunate part of the contemporary politics in India is that the leadership in the community is still not ready to take lessons from the damage caused to Indian society due to propagation of the religious brotherhood for political gains. Instead of guiding the Muslim masses on positive lines, they continued to guide them towards the communal polarization which further widened the gulf of mistrust and discord between the two communities.

As a consequence of Partition, the two communities got plunged in massacre, rape, terror, orgy, arson, rioting, hostility, distrust, religious enmity, attacks and counter attacks etc., have found the hot places like East Punjab, West Punjab, East Bengal, West Bengal and Baluchistan etc. The effects and the permanent scars and imprints which have been left on the human mind and life are conspicuously absent. The humiliation, agony and despair of an individual and the complexities of the human values at such an abnormal time. The refugees have not found proper place to lead their life. Rehabilitation of the uprooted humanity was the biggest problem after the Partition but the way, people of the both communities settled down and their zeal, courage, hard work and patience of this period have got due recognition. It was a remarkable achievement invoking
traditional tolerance and forbearance of the Indian people, which in turn is an asset of the whole humanity. They were in the state of delirium; there was no surety when they would die. The Partition blindfolded both the communities; there was no hope and existence for their life hung in unequal balance.

The refugees had forgotten their religion, cultural and social life, at that bad time they wanted the basic existence like shelter, food and employment etc., but the unprepared governments failed to provide them basic needs. The divided families of the Hindus and the Muslims were immensely suffering and leading a pathetic life even now. For instance, the famous Pakistan folk singer Reshma came to meet Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi some years ago. During the course of their talk, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said, “Do tell me if I can do something for you”. Reshma promptly said, “Madam, please lift the border (Indo-Pak). We people have gone to the other side of the border but our “Pir Baba” (Holy Seer) is on this side of the border. The military personnel don’t allow us to come to his Mazar (Tomb). If the seer cannot listen to our songs, there is no fun in singing” (Puniyani 101).

Refugee stories are many, unpredictable and unforgettable, the feelings and pains of other people we cannot narrate in words, the deep wounds and mental agony (rupture) of Partition remains unerased by any religion. People remain people, their religion, race, caste, creed, custom, tradition, social and cultural way of life is unimportant because harmony, unity, feelings of love and peace should
bind together the people of India and Pakistan. The tales are plenty to recount as the futility of the border in offering a distinct, national identity lies within a cultural space of the United India.

Religion is one aspect of life and one element in the social structure. A person is born into a family or social group, which has a religion. The child grows into awareness as the member of a particular family: belonging to a particular ethnic group or caste, of a particular religio-cultural tradition. Religious identity supports social, cultural and political identities. Identity also means that one differentiates oneself from another group or tradition. During the time of pre-independence, after independence, and Partition, both the religious communities maintaining social and cultural life collided. Therefore, communal violence, fanaticism, Hindu fundamentalist or communal organizations like R.S.S., V.H.P., Jana Sangh, Shiv Sena, Bhajrang Dal and Muslim fundamentalist organizations like Jihad Committee, Al-Umma and Islamic United Front etc., are responsible for injecting the poison of communalism into the atmosphere. Communal terrorism, spread communal virus but those were contagious, so that amounts to the reason why many communal riots prevail even after Partition. The Communal riots like Madhya Pradesh (Jabalpur) in 1961, the first major riot between Hindus and Muslims after Partition, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat (Ahmadabad) in 1969, the other major riots were Ahmadabad (1965-1966), Bhiwandi (1970), Jamshedpur (1973), Meerut (1973, 1987), Moradabad (1980), Bhagalpur and then the large scale post-Babri Masjid riots in 1992-93 in Mumbai and other places
(Dhar, 2002), Gujarat, Godhra (2002) and demolition of Babri Masjid etc., were rejuvenated and are rejuvenating again and again (Jaishankar and Dwebarati 5).

Indian history, in fact, shows that sadhus, saints and sufis unfolded the wonders of India’s spiritual unity and prepared the Indian mind to receive the poets, philosophers, writers spreading the secrets of the communal unity throughout the world. The leaders, and reformers struggled and suffered to preserve it. In the eyes of all such great souls, India was an unbreakable monolithic unity reflecting variant ways of life and different modes of thinking, and welding them all into one composite entity. Hindus readily admit the social, cultural and spiritual characteristics of Islam and their value to Indian culture. Muslims were profoundly imbued with the spirit of Hinduism and accepted its influences on Indian Muslims and, as secularists, they declared unhesitatingly that India’s culture was a rich mosaic containing Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsees, Sikhs and other religions.

This sheer optimism may sound bit strange in the context of present day India. It is a bitter truth that the voice which proclaimed freedom was also the voice, which proclaimed India’s division into two political entities. Superficially, it appears to be a division based on cultural, social and religious grounds. Partition reflected a division based on the utter compulsion of the leaders and the Indian nationalists refuting a common consensus for providing a dialogue mutually agreeable for preventing the disaster of Partition of India.
It provides itself as a mere political division based on personal whims and fancies, intensions and desires, by using cultural and religious badges appropriate for each religious groups. All this, however does not prove that Islamic culture and religion required adequate protection from the contamination of Hindus religion and culture in a separate sovereign state. All that proves that, a few politicians started thinking that they required a separate state to resolve their identity crisis. Partition of India fulfilled this desire, but it could not suppress the century’s age-old query for an egalitarian national identity. Those people who had been once one, are still one, whether under one sovereign state or two, their culture, their traditions, their good or bad habits have not been Partitioned. Their music has the same rhythm, their paintings has the same tome and their literature, the same theme. Poetry is still the dominating force uniting the hearts of the people of the two independent nations. And, as such, there will always be a large India booming behind the states of India and Pakistan.

In view of this deep-rooted antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims, the creation of Pakistan can also be attributed to the fundamental differences between these two communities. They widely differ in culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, name and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, laws and jurisprudence, social and moral codes, customs and calendars, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions, outlook on life, mentality, attitudes, etc. They are entirely different societies, and in many respects antagonistic to each other. Thus, in the end, it can be concluded that
cultural conflicts of the Hindus and the Muslims led to the outbreak of Communal strife and moreover Jinnah’s dream, great desire and uncompromising leadership created Pakistan, the second largest Islamic state of the world. The dream for a separate nation of Jinnah was realized; in fact, made essential for providing a peaceful alternative; but as research and the continuing discourses on the aftermath effects of Partition reveal, it was not just the question of the religious separation that bothered both sides, but the fear and mutual antagonism that cherished their ideologies for a nation that they wanted to control and reshape on the basic premises of their respective religions. It can be said that Jinnah’s creation of Pakistan and Nehru’s India was indeed a boundary drawn, ideologically to separate the secular from the religious; keeping alive the tradition of mutual antagonism between communities alive and the communal anger open midst the formation of nationalism after the British left the sub-continent.

Partition reflected the socio-cultural lack of the national bodies involved with the process of nationalism. Gandhi was trying to unite the syncretic tradition of a composite culture but was too behind, and, on the other way, there were powerful cultural forces reworking in the opposite, trying to drag the communal question into Politics. Religious culture of the subjectivities experiencing the counter-effects of Partition alternatively renounced homogeneity in favour of a distinct socio-cultural fabric governing the basis of India and the demand for Pakistan.